

Beth El-Norwalk



Hello,

We are certain you've seen the major changes to the [CDC's COVID-19 guidelines](#), released on May 16. Our Beth El ReOpening Committee convened as soon as possible after this announcement to discuss the ways in which the new guidelines will impact our in-person community gatherings. We based our conversation on the very high rate of vaccination in the State of Connecticut and the extremely high rate of vaccination among our congregants (thank you again for completing the most recent survey!). We are pleased to share this update with you.

With the CDC lifting all restrictions on those who are fully vaccinated (2 weeks after the final dose), we will do the same:

- **All members and guests of Congregation Beth El who are fully vaccinated will be able to remove their masks in our synagogue and will no longer need to follow social distancing protocols.**
- **Those who are not yet fully vaccinated will be afforded the space to sit socially distanced by pods, wearing masks. This includes families with younger children, even if the accompanying adults are fully vaccinated.**

All members and guests will continue to be fully included in our services, whether in our sanctuary or via Zoom.

Let's talk details.

Changes in Pre-Registration

Until now, every individual has been required to pre-register each week in order to attend services in person. As of this communication, our online registration will include a question about your vaccination status.

- If you're comfortable sharing your status, including the date of your final dose, you won't need to pre-register again. You will be able to attend any service or event in person going forward without registering. This policy also extends to guests of B'nei Mitzvah. *Note:* Sharing vaccination information is completely voluntary, and all vaccination information will be stored in a secure location.
- If you're not yet fully vaccinated, please consider informing the office when you are and you'll be able to stop pre-registering.
- If you prefer not to share your vaccine status with the office, you will be able to continue to pre-register each week, attend, and sit with your pod, masked and socially distanced.

Changes in Procedure

- **HEALTH SCREENER** Until now, in-person attendees have been met by a greeter/health screener. As of this communication, there will no longer be a health screener. Your pre-registration will give you the chance to affirm that you are feeling healthy and have not had a direct exposure, or that you are vaccinated. If you're not fully vaccinated and have had a direct exposure, please join us via Zoom.
- **SEATING** Other than for a major celebration, we will no longer create seating charts. Those who have informed the office (either via the registration form, an email, or a phone call) that they're fully vaccinated will be able to sit anywhere in the sanctuary, including next to anyone else who is fully vaccinated. An area will be reserved for those who prefer to remain masked and socially distanced.
- **CLEANING** Until now, we have had very frequent cleaning in our bathrooms and other

high-touch locations; we will adjust our cleaning to a more moderate schedule.

Some Things Stay the Same

- MULTI-ACCESS SERVICES For the foreseeable future we will continue to offer participation via Zoom as well as in-person.
- NO KIDDUSH We'll hopefully get back to our bagels and schmear, but we're not there yet.
- MINYAN Morning minyan continues to flourish on Zoom, so we're staying put for now.

A Note about Friday Night Kabbalat Shabbat

June brings a host of [exciting Friday night programs](#), followed by 2 months of outdoor services. See [this schedule](#) for times and locations, and please come on out!!

These changes represent a real shift toward that sense of normalcy we're all craving. Vaccination is the very best way we can protect ourselves and society at large from COVID-19, and the Conservative Movement has deemed receiving the vaccine a mitzvah ([see the full paper here.](#)) We are grateful that so many in our community have been vaccinated and we are hopeful that more will follow--particularly as eligibility expands. But rest assured that we'll continue greeting each other with the warm and welcoming smiles that are such an important part of our community--whether in person or on Zoom; masked or not. Yishar Koach on reaching this amazing milestone. See you in shul!

Rabbi Ita Paskind
David Hirshfield, President
Steve Stein, Past President
Ellen Wasserman, Past President

ReOpening Committee:

Jody Dietch	Steve Frey	Stephanie Gordon	Abram Heisler
Josh Kesselman	Danielle Mittleman	Gary Mozer	Nancy Oberst
Marvin Rosenbaum	Amy SantaLucia	Keith Satter	Hilary Shaefitz
Jim Sugarman			
