**BACK TO SHUL**

**Return to XXXXXX Synagogue Action Plan**

**Acknowledge Contributors Here**

**This template is provided through the NAASE Models and Examples Program by Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Southfield, MI.**

**It is intended to provide ideas and a possible structure for your synagogue’s plan. You should not adopt this plan wholesale, rather consider local conditions, government regulations, the extent of nearby infections, community norms, etc. in drafting your plan.**

# Keeping Everybody Safe

# Introduction

At XXXX , it is our priority to keep our members, our employees, and their families healthy, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a Jewish organization, we will be guided by the values of:[[1]](#footnote-2)

1. **Pikuah Nefesh** – “Safeguarding Life” is a bedrock principle of Jewish law, and supersedes most other obligations or mitzvot. To that end, we must ensure that any steps towards restoring physical proximity place preserving life first and foremost.
2. **Sakanat Nefeshot** – “Endangering Life” – members, staff, and clergy should not be in positions where they will be unduly endangering their own lives or the lives of their families due to pressure to restore activities. We must honor the needs of those who lead or participate in our communities when they have individual circumstances requiring the need to reduce risk to themselves or to those with whom they live.
3. **She’at Hadehak** – “Extraordinary Moment” – Jewish life has always made adjustments in times of emergency and crisis. We will need to come to terms with the fact that this crisis may last for well over a year, and that we will need to continue to change our expectations and operations. We will need continued flexibility in Jewish practice informed by our commitment to authentic modes of interpretation of our tradition.
4. **Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh** – “We Are Responsible for One Another” – It’s our job to look out for the mental and physical health and safety of one another. Those who have resources need to give tzeddakah to help others and to sustain our institutions. Our members are connected to others outside our community, and our policies and activities affect the broader rate of infection. And we must be sure that we act in ways in which clergy, staff, and participants do not feel discriminated against or unduly disadvantaged based on their health needs. And
5. **Hesed** – “Profound Love and Kindness” – Decisions around our operations and the risks involved create uncertainty, grief, and anxiety, and we must act with tremendous love and kindness towards the members of our families, communities, and the world at large.

We will also abide by governmental guidelines when possible as we strive to balance public health concerns with the needs of our sacred community. This *Return to Shul* action plan details how we plan to reopen our community and still keep everyone safe to every extent possible. This plan, which pulls from the State guidelines[[2]](#footnote-3), the White House’s Opening Up America Again Guidelines.[[3]](#footnote-4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)[[4]](#footnote-5) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance, Executive Orders of the Governor, professional Jewish organizations, community groups, local authorities, medical experts, and others, highlights the responsibilities of clergy, staff, lay leaders, members, and others, and outlines the steps we are taking to address COVID-19.

We will adhere to all legal requirements around gathering in the wake of COVID-19. Even after it becomes legally possible for us to gather, however, that does not mean that we necessarily should allow such gatherings. Our congregation contains many members who would be considered high-risk, halachah allows us to fulfill all mitzvoth without gathering in person, and the values above must take precedence over simple legality.

While we will implement various protocols to ensure your safety, it’s up to you and everyone in our community to execute on these protocols daily. By releasing this *Return to Shul* action plan, we hope to clearly communicate our plans moving forward, highlight protocols in place to protect your safety and establish a level of comfort for everyone as we make it possible for you to re-enter our congregational home.

We understand that many members will not wish to re-enter the building for some time to come. We encourage, support, and honor that decision, and would especially encourage those with higher risk from COVID-19 infection to avoid attending anything at our synagogue (or elsewhere that gatherings take place). These groups include:

1. Older adults
2. Those with pre-existing respiratory issues
3. Those sharing a household with people described above.
4. Those (including children) who don’t understand and are not able to practice social distancing

We understand that every person’s situation is different and encourage those with specific risks or concerns to speak confidentially with our *Return to Shul* Team.

*Return to Shul* Timeline

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating an exact timeline for resuming “normal” operations is not feasible. We will continue to monitor applicable state and local guidance, practices within the Jewish community, and surrounding religious and non-religious organizations to determine next steps for reopening services, programs, in-office staff operations, and outside events.

The synagogue leadership has committed to gathering feedback from the Board, clergy, staff, and general membership to inform major decisions about the timing of our return.

At this time, we’ve created a tentative phased approach for allowing members to pray in person and asking our employees to return to work.

## Building Closure

This is the current stage we are in, as state and local guidance prohibits gatherings of 10 or more people and Jewish values suggest that any in person gatherings would be inadvisable. At this time, our building will remain closed to members, employees, vendors, and visitors. All services and programs are conducted online via Zoom and other platforms. Employees who are able to work remotely are asked to continue doing so until further notice. We maintain a skeleton crew of building staff to preserve the integrity of the building, its systems, and its contents. We have been allowing a single family of fewer than 10 people to be present in the sanctuary for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## Phase One

Under Phase One, we are able to hold services in the parking lot or outside of 100 or fewer participants and of a minyan (10 participants) in the building, with most participation remaining online. The expectation is that this will begin with a Friday evening drive-in service on June 26. Shabbat morning services may begin on a pilot basis when it is safe to do so and it makes sense from a worship perspective. A specific date has not yet been set. Daily minyan is not expected to move back to in-person during this phase.

During Phase One, “Office work that cannot be completed at home can be done in an office, but businesses are asked to allow any work that can be done at home to continue to be done at home.” For us, this means that staff which need access to files or equipment in the building to conduct their work can do so according to the policies and procedures in this plan. For example, the facilities team can begin preparing for future phases of the plan and financial staff can work in the presence of essential files. Other staff who feel it is important to be in the building for their work should discuss this with the Executive Director before returning to the building. This Phase of re-opening is scheduled to begin on Monday, June 8.

The following protocols will be put in place to promote social distancing efforts:

* **Building entry log and screening** — We will implement a tracking system for employees to request and record their attendance in the office, including the use of the MI Symptoms web screening tool each day.
* **Prohibition of in-person meetings**—During this phase, we ban in-person meetings. Instead, employees should conduct virtual meetings. Employees who are in the office should avoid gathering in groups.

Phase One will be an opportunity to test and refine our protocols described below. During Phase One, all adult education, daily minyan, and other programs will remain online.

## Phase Two

During Phase Two, we expect to gradually phase in larger allowable attendance at Shabbat services. Government guidance states that in Phase Two, inside gatherings of up to 50 people are permitted. During this phase, building entry will only be allowed for those who pre-register for services and the number registered will be capped. Small, socially-distanced programming outside of services may be considered. We will evaluate whether it is possible to open our office and permit a maximum of 10 employees at a time to return to work. Social distancing protocols will be put in place and should be followed. However, any employees who are able to do so should continue to remain home and work remotely.

We will modify the office layout to create at least 10 feet of distance between employee workstations, and separate rooms in which each person can work.

In addition to the protocols mentioned above, we may implement additional guidance during Phase Two that is designed to promote safety.

## Phase Three

Under Phase Three, we will reach sustainable limits for participation in services and programs. It is hard to say what this new normal will look like, but we will maintain social distancing and other policies to protect health until such time as they are no longer needed. The office may reopen to all employees, though opportunities to work from home will still be allowed for those whose jobs permit it. We will observe governmental guidelines related to occupancy and capacity given our square footage.

Social distancing protocols will remain in place and workplace modifications may be made to ensure social distancing can be maintained throughout the workday.

## Considerations

It’s important to note that these phases are tentative and are subject to change based on state and local guidance, congregational feedback, leadership judgment, and the pandemic itself. Should an employee test positive for COVID-19 after the office reopens, our plan may change in an effort to protect our employees. Likewise, if a member who has attended an event at the synagogue test positive, our plan may change. In addition, if cases of COVID-19 spike again in our state or in our local area, we will consider whether to remain open or close.

We recognize that each individual will need to make a personal decision as to when he or she is comfortable returning to the syangogue based on individual circumstances. Please reach out to our *Return to Shul* Team if you have questions or concerns.

## Social Distancing Protocol

All those within the synagogue building should follow social distancing best practices while at the facility, including but not limited to the sanctuary, lobby, restrooms, outdoor areas, workstations, common areas, and office spaces. Specifically, everyone is asked to:

* Stay 10 feet away from others whether praying, walking, working, or otherwise engaged[[5]](#footnote-6). Where a minimum distance cannot be maintained, engineering or administrative controls will be in place.
* Avoid conversations and tasks that require close face-to-face contact with others when possible.
* Avoid contact with others whenever possible (e.g., handshakes, hugs).
* Avoid touching surfaces that may have been touched by others when possible.
* Distance themselves from anyone who appears to be sick.
* Avoid gathering when entering and exiting the facility. Everyone should also only enter and exit designated areas.
* Follow any posted signage regarding COVID-19 social distancing practices.
* Disinfect any surfaces touched with wipes, if possible.
* Avoid touching their face.
* Avoid nonessential gatherings.
* Limit the number of individuals in common areas at all times.
* Avoid using common areas.

We may extend our social distancing guidelines after the building reopens. Please monitor your email and posted signs, and adhere to any additional guidance as it is provided.

## Masks/Facial Covering

Until further notice, all those within the building are required to bring masks and wear them. Those unwilling to wear masks will be required to leave. The only exceptions to this policy are:

1. For those clergy leading prayer who are not required to wear masks. They are asked to put on masks upon the conclusion of their prayer-leading.
2. Employees in their individual offices alone, with the doors closed or no more than slightly ajar.
3. Children less than 2 years old and others medically unable to wear a mask

Congregants and Employees will be asked to provide their own face coverings in accordance with CDC guidelines. we will maintain a small inventory of disposable masks and gloves as a backup to congregant- and employee-provided PPE. Inventory quantities will be regularly tracked and documented but cannot be guaranteed.

## Gloves

Gloves should be used by those cleaning synagogue facilities, and they should be instructed in the proper method of removing them after use. Also, anyone touching items that will be distributed to others should wear gloves. Gloves are not required for other reasons.

## Compliance and Enforcement

It is essential to everyone’s health that the above procedures be followed consistently while in the building. Security guards, staff, and volunteers will be appointed to monitor compliance and to politely remind anyone who fails to comply. We expect to enlist and train ushers in the specifics of the policies and procedures, and have them monitor key locations while the building is open for events and services. For example, entry/exit corridors, wearing of masks, seating, and safe use of bathrooms may need some monitoring by volunteers.

Volunteers will ask politely that people comply with the policies. If that doesn’t work to change the non-compliant behavior, the security guards may be called to help. If someone remains defiant, they will be asked to leave. If that doesn’t work, synagogue officers, clergy, or the executive director will be asked to intervene.

Repeated non-compliance with the protocols will result in removal from the building. We will do everything we can to avoid such a removal, but pikuach nefesh needs to take priority over anyone’s personal preferences.

## Health and Safety Protocols

The success of our *Return to Shul* action plan relies on how well everyone follows social distancing and health and safety protocols. As such, the following protocols have been implemented to ensure your health and safety. Please bring any concerns regarding the following protocols to the *Return to Shul* team.

### General Health and Hygiene

Practicing good hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Do your part by practicing good hygiene at work and at home:

* Regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds throughout the day with warm water and soap, specifically before eating.
* Cover coughs and sneezes
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

To help everyone to remain healthy, we have hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and disinfecting wipes available throughout the building. We have limited amounts of these supplies and will continue to restock as we are able. It is suggested that you wash their hands more frequently than normal. Additionally, building management has instructed the office cleaning crew to disinfect key areas such as faucets and door handles on a daily basis.

Employees should take the time to comply with the hand washing guidelines above throughout the day.

When traveling on public transportation, or otherwise in public places, it is encouraged that employees and members wear masks and frequently use hand sanitizer.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol

Employees should do their part to help keep the office as clean as possible by cleaning and disinfecting their workstations and surfaces they commonly use. Employees should also avoid using others’ workstations, tools and equipment. Additionally, whenever an employee uses a common piece of equipment (e.g., printer or fax machine), it should be wiped down prior to and following use. Proper cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be provided. Employees should wash their hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds after cleaning or sanitizing a surface.

Building management will clean common areas and other frequently touched surfaces throughout the day. The cleaning contractors will also clean and sanitize all likely-touched surfaces within the sanctuary and lobbies weekly. CDC-approved sanitizing chemicals and procedures will be used. The frequency of this cleaning may change depending on the situation.

A checklist of items to be cleaned and sanitized, and the frequency at which this is to be done, will be maintained by the Director of Facilities.

### Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains will be turned off to avoid use. Members and staff are encouraged to bring their own water bottles when entering the building for any reason.

### Mezuzah

Kissing or physically touching the mezuzot on and within the building is not allowed. A symbolic gesture in that direction is recommended instead.

### HVAC

The maintenance team is exploring how to increase the filtration in our building’s ventilation system, consistent with engineering requirements.

### COVID-19 Exposure and Confirmed Illness Protocol

Members, Guests, and Employees who test positive for COVID-19 or believe they have been exposed are instructed to follow the advice of a qualified medical professional and self-quarantine. When self-quarantining, they should:

* Stay away from other people in their home as much as possible, staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom if available.
* Not allow visitors.
* Wear a face mask for essential medical visits..
* Do not share household items, including drinking cups, eating utensils, towels and bedding.
* Clean high-touch surfaces daily.
* Continue monitoring their symptoms, calling their health care provider if their condition worsens.
* Follow the CDC recommendations for self isolation and discontinuation of isolation.[[6]](#footnote-7)

When anyone who has been in the building tests positive for COVID-19, deep-cleaning procedures will be triggered. Furthermore, those who have been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be instructed to self-quarantine until the metrics above are reached.

### If Sick, Stay Home

Anyone who is feeling sick is asked to stay home from synagogue. If you have symptoms of acute respiratory illness, you should immediately seek medical attention and follow the guidance of a health care provider. Employees with symptoms are required to work remotely or take PTO. Employees who have been diagnosed with or are aware they’ve been directly exposed to COVID-19 should notify Synagogue management immediately. Synagogue policy prohibits discharging, disciplining, or otherwise retaliating against employees who stay home or who leave work when they are at particular risk of infecting others with COVID-19.

### Reporting Transparency Protocol

Any person who was in the building and subsequently experiences COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 must notify synagogue management as soon as practicable. We will assist with contact tracing and informing those who may have been exposed, keeping the identity of the person infected confidential. This information will be tracked separately from personnel records, and names will not be released. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the building, we will notify the public health department, impacted members, guests, and employees within 24 hours. We will close the building for a period up to 72 hours following a confirmed case to allow for natural deactivation of the virus.

# Keeping Employees Safe

### Employee Screening Protocols

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission permits employers to ask about health information related to maintenance of a COVID-19-free workplace and/or measure employees’ body temperatures before allowing them to enter the worksite. Any employee screening will be implemented on a nondiscriminatory basis, and all information gleaned should be treated as confidential medical information—specifically, the identity of workers exhibiting a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms should only be shared with members of company management with a true need to know.

At this time, we require employees to confirm the status of their health each morning and submit a certification[[7]](#footnote-8) before reporting to work, and to stay home if they are experiencing any symptoms. We reserve the right to implement a screening protocol for symptoms, such as temperature checks, at any point. Results will be tracked separately from any personnel records and will be kept confidential.

### Office Procedures

In addition to the guidance outlined above, we have implemented the following workplace procedures to be followed until social distancing guidelines are lifted. All staff will be trained[[8]](#footnote-9) on the appropriate procedures:

* **Desks/workstations –** Each administrative staff person and clergy will be assigned an individual office, with a door. While in the office with the door closed (or slightly ajar), a mask need not be worn. Janet will move into the office formerly used by Jeri. Employees are requested to wipe down their workstations with disinfecting wipes at least twice per day. We will provide these supplies.
* **Entry/Exit** – All staff must enter the building through the designated doors and exit through the separate desiganted doors to avoid passing in the halls and doorways.
* **Circulation through the administrative wing –** In order to avoid having to pass each other in the hallway, all staff should only proceed clockwise through the administrative hallway. Arrows will be placed on the floor to remind people of this policy. Only one person should be in the mailroom/copier room at a time.
* **Deliveries**— We will set up contactless drop zones for all deliveries in the lobby, including for mail and packages. The receptionist will process mail and packages at least three times per week, utilizing gloves.
* **Shared items** – Unless unavoidable, physical items should not be shared between employees.
* **Mail/copiers –** Anyone accessing the mailboxes or copiers should wash or sanitize their hands before and after touching the shared items.
* **Office restroom** – Anyone using the office restroom should wash or sanitize their hands before and after touching the restroom door.
* **Office suite door** – The door to the office wing will be propped open during office hours until further notice, so that nobody need touch the doorknobs.
* **Visitors**—Until further notice, all nonessential visitors during business hours are prohibited and any interviews should be conducted virtually. For business-critical visits (e.g., material deliveries or maintenance contractors), we will take steps to safeguard employees and visitors by:
  + Requiring that visitors complete a health status certification before being allowed to enter.
  + Requiring visitors to go directly to their assigned work area without unnecessarily interacting with employees.
  + Requiring visitors to practice social distancing and good hygiene while on-site.
* **Food services**— Until further notice, all communal food service is canceled, and employees are urged to keep their own food (compliant with our kashrut policy) within their own offices whenever possible.
* **Social gatherings** - Social gatherings and meetings that do not allow for social distancing or that create unnecessary movement through the office are prohibited.
* **Remote work** –We continue to ask that employees seek to accomplish work remotely if that does not harm their ability to reach their goals. Remote work plans should be discussed with individual supervisors.

We may add to this list of workplace procedures as we gradually return to more normal operations. Congregants and employees should monitor our communications to ensure they’re up to date on all health and safety procedures.

Furthermore, while the strategies highlighted in this document can protect you from COVID-19, it’s important to follow CDC guidance at all times. For more information, click [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html).

# Keeping Members and Clergy Safe

### Services and Programs Attendee Screening Protocols

The first and most important screening procedure is conducted by anyone contemplating entering the building before they leave home. **If you are ill in any way, we urge you to stay home** and participate in our activities through virtual means. This especially includes anyone with fever, achiness, cough, or other upper respiratory symptoms.

All those entering the building will be required to either pre-register (e.g., for a service or program they attend) or complete and submit a check-in form (electronic or paper). This pre-registration process and form will require a self-certification of health and agreement to follow the procedures (below) while within the building.

We will check for fevers via thermal imaging of anyone entering the building for services or programs. Anyone showing a fever or visibly ill will be asked to leave discretely and immediately. Any screening will be implemented on a nondiscriminatory basis, and all information gleaned will be treated as confidential medical information—specifically, the identity of anyone exhibiting a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms will only be shared with members of synagogue management with a true need to know.

The thermal screening will be conducted by a nurse or medical assistant in the main foyer, using a handheld device, at activities and services taking place in the building. Those who show a fever above 100.4 degrees and those refusing to be screened will not be allowed to enter further. People yet to be screened will line up outside the building on markers (placed on the ground) 10 feet apart.

### Safe Ritual Procedures

### Limited Attendance

### During Phases 1 and 2, attendance at services will be capped at a predefined number, starting at 10 families (defined as living in the same household) and increasing as our procedures mature and it is perceived by the Return to Shul team and synagogue leadership that it can be safely managed.

We propose that a first-come, first-served method and “Signup Genius” type tool be used to control the available participation. Special exceptions from the general participation request process can be made by the clergy for those participating in bar/bat mitzvahs and/or leading the service.

### Seating

### When services commence in the sanctuary, specific seats will be marked out to maintain at least a ten foot distance between family units. This means at least four rows between families and 4 seats between them. Family units living in the same house can sit together, but all others must be distanced at all times. We expect that, as the attendance grows, we will open the walls to allow for seating within the social halls (as in past high holydays) if sufficient distance is unavailable in the main sanctuary pews.

Initially, we expect to seat one family per row in each section, skip two rows, and then seat another family. Allowable seats will be marked with colored tape.

### Entry/Exit

We will focus on maintaining a safe, socially-distanced environment from the front door until exit. Members will enter the building through the right-most building door. The security guard will use the automatic door opener and then step out of the way of entering members, so that nobody need touch the front door. Thermal imaging will be taken before people are allowed to continue, administered by the security guard. Pathways will be designated for safe passage through the Lobby and Reception Lobby to the right-most entry door to the sanctuary, which will be marked “enter only” and left open. The members will proceed to an allowable, marked seat through the rightmost aisle. When they leave, members will proceed to the center or leftmost aisle (looking toward the front) and back to the rightmost door. A pathway to the rightmost main entry door will be marked. Basically, people just need to remember to “keep right” and signs will be posted to that effect.

The coat room will be closed until further notice.

### Siddurim

A rolling rack will be placed near the right-most sanctuary door for people to pick up a siddur and chumash, and another near the left-most sanctuary door for them to drop off their siddur and chumash. Between weekly services, these will be rotated, so that nobody (except for maintenance staff wearing gloves and masks) will touch a siddur or chumash fewer than 7 days after someone else does.

### Restroom Usage

Doors to the main Men’s Rooms can be left open to maintain social distance when entering and leaving the restroom. Those entering or leaving the restrooms should not touch the doors with their hands, rather they should use their elbow on the automatic door opener panel. Alternating stalls, urinals, and sinks will be marked as off-limits. Members will be asked (via signage and other communications) to wash their hands before using the restrooms and after using the restrooms. Hand sanitizer will also be made available immediately outside of the restrooms. Disinfecting wipes will also be available to wipe down toilet seats and faucets if desired.

Cleaning staff will be scheduled to wash and sanitize faucets and toilet handles in bathrooms every hour during services. This will include all surfaces likely to be touched within the bathrooms. We are turning off the forced-air hand dryers, and will provide paper towels instead.

Only the clergy should use the bathrooms behind the bimah.

The family restrooms can also be used, though these require touching the door to open them.

No restrooms should have more people within them at any time than is consistent with social distancing of ten feet between those not residing in a single household. Greeters, security staff, and others in the Lobby will keep watch to prevent this from happening.

### Aliyot

Standing microphones will be placed at the front of the left and right aisles. Aliiyot will be conducted from those microphones, so as to maintain distance from the clergy on the bimah. Nobody except clergy will be allowed on the bimah, and the clergy will not leave the bimah (including backstage areas) during the service. Those called to Aliyah are asked to bring their own siddur to access the blessings, if needed.

### Clergy on the Bimah

Spacing of at least ten feet will be maintained between the clergy at all times. In general, they will use their own wireless microphones and shtenders/lecterns throughout the service. Chairs will be provided for them near their respective lectern. A clergy member reading the Torah will be the only one to approach the main Shulchan.

Only clergy will touch the Torah. Hakafot around the congregation will be suspended until further notice.

### Children

In the initial phases, it is strongly encouraged that children under 13 do not attend services or programs in the building. Children have a tendency to touch everything, and could easily expose themselves to the virus in doing so. We will plan safe, probably outdoor activities and services for such children.

# Informing Everyone

# Communication of These Procedures

We will use all of the media available to communicate the relevant safety procedures to members and potential guests. This includes, but is not limited to:

* Email
* Hard-Copy Mail
* Social Media
* Website
* Videos
* Signage in the Building
* Oral announcements

### Signage

We will display signage in public areas to help communicate the safe procedures described here, including:

1. Requirements for social distancing and wearing of masks
2. Requirement that anyone feel the least bit ill turn around and go home
3. Traffic patterns to maintain at least ten feet between people
4. Seating allowed in the sanctuary
5. Safe use of the restrooms
6. Reminders about personal hygeine

# Conclusion – Looking Forward

We look forward to a future of approaching a more normal prayer, learning, community-gathering, and work environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertain times and resulted in unprecedented changes. As communicated throughout this *Return to Shul* action plan, we are prioritizing the health of our community every step of the way as we consider reopening our doors.

We will execute on our plan cautiously, following applicable federal, state and local guidance as much as possible. We also understand that each member and employee has different needs and situations as our doors begin to reopen. The clergy and staff are always available to help. You can call or email us. If you have any concerns about returning to the building, you can contact our *Return to Shul* Team.

Finally, we ask that everyone remain patient and understanding of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic may require our *Return to Shul* plans to change. The membership and employees will be given as much notice as possible in the event of an unforeseen setback or building closure.

Together, we will get through this situation with a stronger, more connected, and more healthy synagogue community. Let us continue to pray for peace, for strength, and most importantly for life.

# Appendix – Questions and Answers

* **Room capacities**- Each employee office should only contain the employee working within it. If a brief conversation is needed between two employees, they should maintain 10 feet minimum separation at all time.
* **Cleaning frequency and standards for different spaces: bathrooms, classrooms, sanctuaries, offices....** – We expect facilities team members and custodial crews will clean and sanitize all used bathrooms daily. As building usage increases, the frequency of cleaning will increase. For example, during services and events, a restroom attendant will be present and clean the facilities after each use. Public spaces such as the sanctuary will be cleaned after each day of use. Individual offices will be kept clean by the occupant during the day and cleaned and sanitized by the custodial crews twice weekly.
* **Who is allowed in the building and who isn’t? -** Currently, only staff who have been pre-approved by the Executive Director to work in the building are allowed inside.
* **Masks - who must wear them? when and where? –** Other than clergy praying on the bimah and staff inside their offices alone with the door closed, masks must be worn at all times within the building.
* **Screening (for symptoms) / enforcement of** – Each day, staff must complete the MI Symptoms online screening and then certify in the entrance log that they have done so. This includes taking your temperature before leaving home.
* **Program/meeting duration** – During the current phase, we are not planning programs or meetings to take place in the building.
* **Ritual object handling, including siddurim** – Only clergy will handle the Sefer Torah or anything else on the bimah. Prayerbook cycling is described in the plan above.
* **Food and drink**  - No food and drink service in the building is approved.
* **Water fountains** – Water fountains are out of service.
* **Kitchen -** Staff should avoid using the kitchen unless necessary. If they do, be sure to wash or sanitize hands before and afterwards.
* **Preregistration for any/all events** – When we do open for programs, advance registration (including a health certification) for each attendee will be required.
* **Rentals –** Any rentals must conform to the broader guidelines for use of the building for our events, and be consistent with all state and local requirements for the intended use. For example, we expect a community service project (through NCJW) to pack items for distribution to needy schools to take place in the social halls in August. We would allow a wedding to take place in late August in our outdoor pavilion provided that all relevant safety procedures are followed.
* **Contractors - under what conditions can work be done in our building?** – Necessary work can be authorized within the building and on the grounds. The Facilities Superintendent must verify that safety procedures are being followed.
* **Singing** –Hazzan Propis is exploring what can safely be done in this realm.
* **Signage –** Signs have been/will be installed in the building as described in the plan.
* **Hand sanitizer use** – Sanitizer stations are spread around the building and should be used regularly as described in the plan.

1. This values section is adapted from Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal’s essay at <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/jewish-values-regarding-physical-reopening-of-our-institutions/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Reference state and local (if any) guidelines here. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. This will be enforced through policy, supervision, ground markings, signs, and physical barriers as appropriate. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. This daily entry self-screening protocol for all employees or contractors entering the workplace currently involves completing the MI Symptoms ([misymptomapp.state.mi.us](http://misymptomapp.state.mi.us)) online questionnaire covering symptoms and suspected or confirmed exposure to people with possible COVID-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. This training will include all policies and procedures outlined in the *Return to Shul* Plan and other relevant guidance. It will focus upon workplace infection-control practices, the proper use of personal protective equipment, steps the employee must take to notify the business or operation of any symptoms of COVID-19 or a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, and how to report unsafe working conditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)