

## United Synagogue: COVID- 19

### Guidance to Member Communities on Running Covid-Secure Sites and Resuming Broader Communal Activity

Version 5 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 / 14<sup>th</sup> Kislev 5781

All changes from Version 4 are highlighted in blue

#### Aims of this guidance

This guidance supersedes our guidance issued on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020. It is framed by and builds upon the Chief Rabbi's Guiding Principles for Exiting Lockdown which can be read in full [here](#).

**It has been approved by the Chief Rabbi, the London Beth Din and the United Synagogue Trustees.**

The document outlines the key principles of the operating during the pandemic and provides **policy** and **advice** to United Synagogue member communities as they resume communal activity.

This version of the guidance has been issued to coincide with the exiting of the second national lockdown and the publication of the government's Covid Winter Plan incorporating the Tier system. From 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Places of Worship can again open for communal worship, lifecycle events, children and youth programming and other activity. Please see Appendix 4 for our policy on the three-Tier structure. Please note, in particular, the additional mitigations required of a community in a Tier 3 area.

Following long months of restrictions and lockdowns, there is a growing optimism in society as we hear news of successful trials of vaccines and plans for their rapid roll out as well as a strengthened programme of community testing. There is a greater sense of positivity about what life will look like in 2021.

However, at this point, infection and hospitalisation rates remain high and there is still a very real risk that if we are not careful, the virus could spread rapidly again.

As we enter the winter months and look forward to celebrating Chanukah together in our shuls, we urge you to comply fully with the guidance below. In particular, please **maintain 2m social distance** from those in other households at all times and **wear face coverings** when indoors on site. Indoor spaces must be **well ventilated**.

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## Structure

**The guidance is organised into six sections:**

- A. Covid Secure Sites: Policy
- B. Services – content and format
- C. Lifecycle events
- D. Planning for Broader Provision
- E. Youth and Children’s Programming
- F. Appendix
  - 1. [CST Guidance on Outdoor Services](#)
  - 2. [Protective Equipment Policy](#)
  - 3. [Cleaning United Synagogue settings to reduce risk from coronavirus](#)
  - 4. [Categories of Communal Activity and the regional three-tier system: what can go ahead as tiers change](#)

## A. Covid-secure sites: Policy

- 1) This section of the guidelines has been written to support communities minimise the risk of spreading the virus. However, the risk of the spread of the virus can never fully be removed (in common with many other daily activities that we normally undertake) nor can we guarantee that our sites are COVID-free. It is imperative that this message is conveyed to members and that they understand the personal choice that they are making when attending services.
- 2) **All communities should follow these requirements. They are not optional.** In the same way, all those attending services are required to comply with these requirements. In order to protect all attendees, Honorary Officers have the right to ask those who do not comply to leave the site.
- 3) Our current guidance requires 2m social distancing to be in place both inside and outdoors. We will not be adjusting this guidance (i.e. moving to 1m plus mitigation). The basis for this decision, which is endorsed by the office of the Chief Medical Officer, is that there is a quantifiable difference in risk between 1m and 2m distance. This is particularly relevant for our settings where we are together for long periods of time. Further to this, should all members maintain 2m distance, if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, the risk that others who were in attendance will need to self-isolate is significantly reduced.
- 4) When running service and programmes the following principles should be taken into account:
  - a. Activities outdoors carry less risk than those indoors
  - b. Services and activities should take place in the shortest reasonable time
  - c. Where possible, the number of people on site at any one time should be minimised
  - d. Distance and orientation (i.e. avoiding facing someone) are both key mitigating factors
  - e. It is the responsibility of every individual to help protect the wellbeing of their fellow community member.
- 5) Our synagogue buildings need to meet COVID-19 safety requirements and allow for social distancing. The United Synagogue has provided a Risk Assessment template document for each of its communities to complete. When buildings have been closed for a period of time, communities should also refer to the document produced by the US Property Department entitled 'US Building Reoccupation', which advises communities on how to reopen buildings following their closure, as well as the 'Reoccupying Buildings Planner' which suggests a timeframe for planning to reopen.
- 6) The United Synagogue is working closely with CST on all aspects of running our sites safely. Please discuss these arrangements with local Security Officers and refer to relevant CST guidelines.

## Attendance

- 7) The following groups of people must not attend services:
- a) Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have been required to self-isolate
  - b) Those who are awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test
  - c) Those who show any symptoms of COVID-19 or are in the same household or support bubble as those with symptoms of COVID-19,
  - d) Those who have been asked to self-isolate by the government's Test and Trace Programme or App or who are doing so in line with the [government guidance](#)
  - e) Those who are required to self-isolate having travelled recently, as required in [this government guidance](#)
  - f) *If the community is in a Tier 3 area*  
Those that are in the same household or support bubble as people who are required to self-isolate. NB This does not apply to professional staff such as Rabbis, Rebbetzins, Chazzanim, Caretakers and Facilities Managers

There could be occasions when individuals know that they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid but have not yet received instruction from Test and Trace. These people should not attend shul until guidance has been received from the public health authorities

- 8) Older members (and certainly those over 70) should use their judgment to decide whether to attend services. They should take into consideration the heightened potential risk to their health should they catch coronavirus and the current heightened risk of infection.  
*If the community is in a Tier 3 area* it is recommended that older members do not attend services.
- 9) It is strongly recommended that people who are clinically vulnerable take medical advice before attending services.  
*If the community is in a Tier 3 area* it is recommended that those who are clinically vulnerable do not attend services.
- 10) Those who live in the same household as people who are clinically vulnerable should use their judgment as to whether to attend.
- 11) No person should be or feel pressurised to attend a service in order to make up a minyan.
- 12) Employees who fall into any of these categories should be in touch with HR to discuss attendance for work purposes.
- 13) Members should be advised to travel to shul safely. When travelling to shul during the week they should be advised to avoid public transport and they should also not travel in cars with people from other households. It is halachically permissible to wear a face covering or mask outside an eruv on Shabbat.

## Attendance of children at services

- 14) Children and young people are at the heart of our communities. Once Honorary Officers feel confident that they are able to manage social distancing and people flow, children are welcome to attend services. If children are to attend services, parents should be confident that they will be able to remain in one place. Children under the age of 11 do not need to wear a face covering. Those aged over 11 must do so. Please see **Section E** for advice and ideas on running children's and youth programming.

## Capacity, Seating, Layout and Access

- 15) Attendees to services must be sitting at least 2 metres apart from each other in all directions. Seating should be marked to make clear which seats should be used. Shuls might need to reconfigure. Clear signage will be important and a one-way people flow should be established, including separate entrances and exits. Please review the emergency evacuation procedure and make clear any changes.
- 16) Attendees must remain at least 2m apart from one another at all times including when entering and exiting the shul. If space is tight, someone rapidly passing along a gangway need not be at the full 2m from every attendee. Crowds must be avoided.
- 17) Attendees from the same household and support bubble may enter and exit the Shul site and building together. Males and females of the same household or support bubble, may sit together in their respective sections of the shul.
- 18) Communities should ascertain their maximum capacity.
- 19) The US has developed its online events system to enable men and women to book into services and to note particular needs (chiyyuvim/aveilim, those with yahrtzeit, those with smachot etc). The system, which will help communities to keep attendance within capacity, will be hosted and supported centrally and administered locally by those designated by the community. Members who do not have access to the internet or who are not confident to use the online booking system should be able to book via the synagogue office.  
Communities are permitted to use other means of pre-booking in for services. However, it is essential that the names and contact details of those who attended are stored for at least 21 days. This data may be required by the by the Test and Trace team in the case that there has been a confirmed COVID case.
- 20) The NHS COVID-19 App is a vital part of the NHS Test and Trace service. Whilst it does not replace the requirement for synagogues to record details of all attendees, communities are asked to encourage members to use it and must download a QR code for use on their sites for services not on Shabbat and Yom Tov.
- 21) Keypads to allow entry to the site should be avoided. If they must be used, signage should remind attendees to use hand sanitiser immediately afterwards. Keypads should be cleaned regularly.
- 22) It is necessary to have someone on the gates or at the door, checking people in.
- 23) Queues at gates must socially distanced using floor markings and should be avoided as much as possible for security reasons. Please liaise with CST on the most appropriate way to protect queues
- 24) Communities must not permit food and drink to be consumed on site, including kiddushim, seudot or snacks for children. Takeaway kiddush kits, packed in a COVID-secure manner and collected by members at the gates are an acceptable alternative, where there is an eruv.

## Cleaning, handwashing and infection control

- 25) The importance of good and regular handwashing should be highlighted to all members ahead of their visit. Hand sanitiser should be available on site and signs on site should encourage attendees to wash/sanitise their hands on arrival and on departure. Signage should also display the correct and most effective methods of handwashing and using hand sanitiser. The US will facilitate central procurement of some signage.
- 26) If services are held indoors, attendees must wear face masks that cover the nose and mouth. Visors are not an acceptable alternative. In order to secure the safety of all those present, if a person is not able to wear a mask, they must not attend. Face coverings are not required outdoors. Children under the age of 11 are not required to wear a face covering.
- 27) The room must remain well ventilated by opening windows and doors, even in winter. As it gets colder outside, assuming the room is heated, it may be possible to achieve a good level of ventilation with fewer doors and windows open, however ventilation must not be sacrificed for comfort. The amount of fresh-air ventilation required will depend on the size and nature of the building i.e. more fresh air will be required in a small sanctuary on one level than in a large high-ceilinged cathedral-style shul. As the temperature drops, members should be advised to wear warm clothes.
- 28) The following heating systems may be used. Traditional hot water radiator systems, underfloor heating, gas heaters, and, in a ventilated space, fan convector heaters. However, communities should not use heating systems that recirculate air within the same space or move the air from one room to another.
- 29) Those who attend services cannot kiss the Sefer Torah, mezuzot or tallitot, nor can there be any handshaking or kissing. Community Tallitot will not be available for use.
- 30) Indoors, there can be no singing at any volume from any attendee other than from the service leader or a member of a choir (see below). This is in line with government guidance. Outdoors, everyone can sing, as long as they maintain 2m social distancing and do not face one another. It is preferable to sit whilst singing outdoors.
- 31) Choirs of no more than six people can sing in services. Each member of the choir must be at least 3m away from each other and any other individual. Under these circumstances, choir members do not need to wear a mask.  
*If the community is in a Tier 3 area* choir members must wear masks.
- 32) Those who handle the Sefer Torah or any other ritual item other than books (e.g. the yad) should wear a new pair of disposable gloves for the period that they are doing so. The gloves should be disposed of correctly. (There is no requirement for other attendees to wear gloves.)
- 33) Attendees should bring their own siddurim and chumashim from home. If this is not possible (i.e. on Shabbat where there is no eruv), they should select a book from a 'clean' shelf and replace it on a 'used' shelf. Assuming a book is not used again during the week, it need not be cleaned and can be used again the following Shabbat. Other books should be removed from the shul (alternatively, signs should remind people not to touch these books at this time.)
- 34) Cloakrooms should be closed and attendees should keep their coats and other belongings with them at all times.
- 35) A tzedaka box should not be passed around. Rather it should be set in one place for people to approach. Individuals should avoid touching the box. The box should be cleaned regularly.

- 36) The building should be cleaned between each service. Cleaners should wear a new pair of disposable gloves and should pay particular attention to door handles, hard surfaces, bathrooms and handrails. More detail on the level of cleaning can be found in the appendix.
- 37) Toilets must remain open during services. A hand sanitiser should be placed immediately outside toilet doors accompanied by signs reminding people to sanitise their hands before and after entering the toilet. Any queues should be socially distanced. Signs in toilets should remind attendees to maintain social distancing as much as possible. Attendees should be reminded to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds. Cleaning should take place regularly, focusing on flushes, taps and door handles.
- 38) If there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 at a service or event the Honorary Officers should inform both the United Synagogue (Jo Grose, Communities Director, or a member of the Community Division team) and their local PHE Health Protection team (<https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>) without delay. Attendees who were in close contact with the infected individual will be contacted by the Test and Trace team.

### **Service leaders and face coverings**

Communities are strongly recommended to move their Bimah or Amud to the front of the shul with the service leader facing away from the kehilla.

In the following scenarios, the service leader is not required to wear a face covering:

- If he is at the front of shul, at ground level and at least 2m away from any other individual in shul.
- If he is at the front of shul, on a raised platform and there is at least a 3m horizontal separation between him and any other individual in shul.

In both of these scenarios, the service leader should be in front of all attendees. They should not be positioned alongside him.

If it is not possible for the service leader to be positioned at the front of shul and he is, instead, on a central Bimah, he is required to wear a face covering, unless there is a separation between him and other participants of at least 3m if the bimah is on ground level and 4m if it raised. This applies even if a Perspex screen is in place.

- 39) If a screen is used, it must be cleaned between services and between service leaders using a disposable cloth and a combined detergent and disinfectant. The service leader should wear gloves when cleaning and should dispose of cleaning materials and gloves in the correct way. When cleaning the Perspex screen on Shabbat he must be careful to avoid squeezing any liquid out of the towel. As such, he must be careful not to use too much detergent and to wipe it up with a towel that is dry, designated for this purpose and large enough not to become wet.
- 40) The service leader must wear a face covering in shul whenever he is not leading a service or when he is carrying a Sefer Torah.
- 41) If a gabbai, Rabbi or steward is aware that someone is hard of hearing, they are permitted to temporarily lower their face covering to enable lip reading. However, 2m social distancing must be maintained at all times. Clear face masks, through which the mouth is visible are also being made available to each community.

42) The Rabbi, or other speakers, should deliver a sermon to the kehilla from the front of shul. Given that speakers are facing the kehilla they should be at the furthest distance possible from members. They must wear masks unless they are at least 3m away from any other individual if at ground level and 4m away from any other individual if on a raised platform. This rule is also applicable to members of the kehilla delivering Divrei Torah or announcements, including a Batmitzvah girl or gabbaim.

43) *If the community is in a Tier 3 area:* All service leaders and speakers must wear masks. This includes the Rabbi and person leyning. There is one exception to this rule: if a Batmitzvah girl or Barmitzvah boy are concerned about wearing a mask when speaking publicly or leading the service on the day of their simcha, they do not need to wear one.

### **Ideas and Suggestions**

- 44) Communities should consider, where practicable and when the weather allows, holding services outdoors on the synagogue site. Wherever possible, spaces should be marked out to assist with social distancing. If outdoor services are held, please consider neighbours; it might not be practicable to hold shacharit. Please see appendix for CST guidance on holding outdoor minyanim.
- 45) A named individual should be appointed as responsible for the oversight of these safety and social distancing requirements. Some communities may wish to assign this responsibility to a member of the Honorary Officer team or to another lay leader. In some communities, Chairs may wish to retain responsibility for this area. In either case, the HOs, Rabbinic team, Council and volunteers should be notified about who holds this portfolio.
- 46) In preparation for welcoming people on site and holding an increasing number of services, communities should build a team of volunteer ushers.
- 47) In order to accommodate need, communities might need to run several minyanim sequentially or with staggered starts. In either case, sufficient time must be allocated for cleaning and for people to avoid meeting at the gates or doors.
- 48) Communities might wish to introduce an informal community behaviour agreement that not only asks people to abide by the health and safety instructions but also reminds them of their responsibility to keep each other safe. The agreement could be displayed on site as well as included in the online booking confirmation.

### **B. Services: content and format**

- 49) It is essential that we are responsive to medical, scientific or government advice that prescribes the amount of time that people can be together indoors. In any event, services should be run without an unnecessary delay and, if there is a sermon, it should be short.
- 50) There might be several reasons for communities to choose to adjust the content of services:
- a) To limit the time that people are together indoors
  - b) To allow for staggered services to meet demand
  - c) To enable social distancing
  - d) To ensure that all aspects of the service are safe (i.e. handling of objects, singing)



51) In order to adjust the service for the reasons mentioned above:

- (i) Weekday Shacharit can begin at Rabbi Yishmael Omer
- (ii) Shabbat Shacharit can begin from 'Shochan Ad'

Those parts of the service that are not said in shul should be said at home prior to arrival.

### Leyning

- 52) Only the Baal Koreh may take out and carry the Sefer Torah from, and return it to, the Aron Hakodesh. No one may kiss it. He and anyone touching the Aron Hakodesh, Sefer Torah or Yad must wear disposable gloves. Gloves should be put on and taken off following best practice. The Aron may be opened and closed by another person who should move away when the Baal Koreh takes the Sefer Torah out of the Aron.
- 53) Calling up may be done either by the Gabbai (socially distanced from the bimah) or by the Baal Koreh.
- 54) Ideally, but only if the Baal Koreh is wearing a face covering, individuals who are receiving an aliyah should come to the bimah, following all the rules of social distancing (with the Baal Koreh stepping away to be at a 2m distance whilst the brachot are said).  
If this is not feasible or if the Baal Koreh is not wearing a face covering, those who are given an aliyah should move to a designated space from where they can see the Sefer Torah. They should recite the brachot from this space, which could be the other side of the bimah or the pulpit. They should remain there until the next Oleh is called up.
- 55) Hagbah and Gelilah should be done by two members of the same household (it is permissible to call up a father and son or two brothers if they are called up without using their names). If this is not possible, the Baal Koreh should lift the Sefer Torah, display it to the community and then put it back on the bimah before doing Gelilah himself.
- 56) Members of the same household e.g. a Barmitzvah boy and his father, may stand on the bimah together in order to leyn and/or recite the haftarah.
- 57) One communal Mi Sheberach should be made at the end of leyning for all those who were called up, together with one Mi Shebeirach for cholim and one communal Azkarah.
- 58) Ideally different Sifrei Torah should be used for Shacharit and for Mincha on Shabbat .

### Ideas and Suggestions

- 59) Friday night kiddush and Havdalah on Motzei Shabbat can take place. However, only the service leader (wearing gloves) can handle the items required (including the disposable cup and wine bottle) and only he can drink.
- 60) On Shabbat afternoons, communities might wish to hold a shiur between mincha and maariv. The same social distancing rules apply.

### C. Lifecycle events

- 61) The current government policy on lifecycle events and the numbers who can attend can be found within its Places of Worship guidance [here](#).
- 62) The latest Marriage Guidance from the Office of the Chief Rabbi can be found [here](#).
- 63) The latest United Synagogue guidance on funerals and stonesettings can be found [here](#).

64) Other lifecycle events are permitted to take place if they form part of a synagogue service following the guidelines above and with maximum capacity determined as it would be for any other service. Examples of such lifecycle events include a brit, a Barmitzvah and a Batmitzvah in which the girl gives a Dvar Torah at the end of the service.

65) A shiva service may also be held as part of a synagogue service. Whilst attendees cannot sit with those sitting shiva, communities could arrange for attendees to pass by the mourners at the end of the service. It is important that whilst waiting to pass by the mourners, attendees maintain social distancing. Please note that no other aspects of the shiva can take place on the synagogue site. It is not permitted to arrange timeslots for people to visit the mourners before or after services.

In addition to this, over the shiva period, communities may also facilitate a single, daily commemorative event on their premises. No more than 15 people should attend each event. (anyone working i.e. the Rabbi is not included in the 15). The shiva can be made up of all or some of the following elements: a service, Hespel (Eulogy), Dvar Torah, Hazcara (Memorial prayer), learning and Kaddish (where a minyan is present). This event should take place for no longer than one hour.

66) A Batmitzvah ceremony on a Sunday may also take place if it forms part of a service. Specifically this means that it takes place in the sanctuary, mincha (or another service) is davened, the ceremony consists of tefillot, brachot and divrei torah and men and women sit separately. The ceremony should not incorporate elements normally seen at a party (such as speeches by friends) and food and drink must not be consumed.

#### **D. Planning for Broader Provision**

67) In ordinary times, when communities come together, in addition to praying, we learn, socialise, celebrate and mourn together. Our buildings are intergenerational spaces, filled with a diverse range of programmes, meetings and events. Over the last few months much of this has migrated online with considerable success. Whilst social activities will need to remain online for some time, there are aspects of in-person programming that can be resumed.

68) The key principle of any activity on site is to ensure that there are minimal interactions from people in different households. Two metre social distancing must be maintained at all times between people from different households or support bubbles. Face coverings must be worn indoors.

69) Capacity should be calculated based on the application of 2 metre social distancing and all attendees must book in advance. In order to mitigate risk, communities might choose to limit capacity further. All other health and safety requirements (outlined above in Section A) should be followed.

70) Please note that no food and drink can be consumed at any event or programme. The only exception to this is kiddush for the service leader on Friday night and at Havdalah.

71) Examples of activities that can now be resumed on site, depending on interest are:

- Shiurim that take place within or immediately after services in a synagogue (no longer than an hour)

- Standalone shiurim or lectures (maximum recommended length of an hour and strictly no longer than 90 minutes)
- Formal Support groups i.e. for those bereaved
- Parent and baby groups (see notes in Section D relating to shared equipment)
- Meetings with Rabbinic or welfare teams

72) *If the community is in a Tier 3 area:* all the activities listed in 71) are not permitted to take place in person and must, instead, move online or be cancelled. The only exception to this is a meeting with the Rabbi or welfare team which can go ahead if it cannot easily take place online.

### **Public spaces**

(This refers to parks and other publicly owned land. It does not refer to private gardens)

- 73) For a service to take place in a public space, a risk assessment should be completed and shared with those responsible for the open space. i.e. the local council
- 74) It is essential that advice from CST is sought at any early stage of planning.
- 75) Communities should choose a sensible maximum capacity based on the space available. All attendees should book in advance and attendance records should be held.
- 76) At the event it is essential that a representative from the community takes responsibility to ensure that social distancing and all other health and safety requirements (such as hand sanitisation) are met.
- 77) Food and drink should not be consumed. Rather, takeaway bags or boxes could be made available for people to consume at home.
- 78) *If the community is in a Tier 3 area:* all planned events in public spaces must be cancelled.

### **Online events**

79) Whilst some members have returned in person to our buildings or spaces, others will be unable to attend or will not wish to return yet. As a result, it is essential that the online provision remains strong and that those that cannot or are not ready to return do not feel excluded.

Since the pandemic began, we have learned that many online activities have attracted higher attendance and engagement than their 'real-life' counterparts, perhaps due to their immediacy and ease of access. Communities should therefore aim to take a holistic view on their provision integrating the physical and the virtual where possible

Communities need not feel that they need to offer a wide range of home-grown online programming. Whilst there is tremendous value in maintaining or initiating regular opportunities for members to connect socially with each other, many educational events and programming can be shared across communities.

The United Synagogue has launched USTV ([www.theus.tv](http://www.theus.tv)), an online video on-demand-service that will enable members and people in the wider Jewish community to watch live or catch up on a wide range of online programming.

## **Suggestions for maintaining connections with members**

- 80) Where possible all in-person services in the week should also be available online so that those at home can participate. In order to connect those at home with those in the building, some communities have installed a screen so that those in shul can see - and at the end of the service talk to – those who are joining them online
- 81) Where necessary, a kaddish buddy system can be initiated to support those at home who wish kaddish to be said on their behalf.
- 82) All in-person shiurim that are not on Shabbat and Yom Tov should also be available online
- 83) While it is still not possible to run social activities in person it is essential the members have means to connect to other.  
This could be achieved by:
- Phone calls to all members or elderly members. The purpose of the call might be to identify welfare needs but could also simply be a catch-up conversation between two members
  - Online coffee mornings or social catch ups that could be unstructured or could provide opportunities for members to share interesting life experiences with each other
  - Conversations on doorsteps where volunteers and members of the Rabbinic team visit members' homes, perhaps with a delivery
  - Arranging a time when the Rabbinic or lay team visit a particular road in the week or on Shabbat in order to greet people on their driveways and allow them to connect with each other
- 84) Older members can struggle to connect to online programming. Communities might set up a team of younger people who could offer support over the phone to enable them to access online events.
- 85) We recommend that communities collaborate and share programming ideas. If details of all online events are uploaded to the US Events System, HOs, Rabbis, Rebbetzins and members will be able to search for, view and access online programming across all US communities.
- 86) Communities might also choose to participate in the community buddying programme which brings two (or more) communities together enabling them to share digital content and welcome each other's members to their events.
- 87) All of the suggestions below should be considered in the context of each community's capacity and resource. A risk assessment of every activity must be carried out and logged to ensure that it is COVID-secure. It is important for community expectations to be set appropriately to avoid staff members becoming overwhelmed.

### **E. Children and Youth Programming** **Bringing children & youth back into our communities**

- 88) Our community spaces have always been open to children and young people for programmes, meals, social events, learning and services. This year is different in many ways but the desire to see children and young people engaging in community life has not waned. The challenge is to find creative ways to achieve this in a safe way.

- 89) Children and youth programming and services in communities fall under different sets of government guidance. In pulling United Synagogue guidance together we have sought to find ways to enable events to take place, whilst retaining a level of caution. Whilst children may be following bubble guidelines in schools and summer camps this does not apply our settings and full social distancing rules must therefore apply.

### Key Policies

- 90) The following are key policies for any COVID-secure youth or children activity:
- **Two metre social distancing must be maintained at all times by parents and children in all activities** (recognising that those children under 5 will find this difficult)
  - **Face coverings must be worn by children aged 11 and over when indoors**
  - **It is essential that there is sufficient adult supervision to ensure compliance.** Please refer to the ratios listed in on page 32 of the [US Child Protection policy](#).
  - Events held outdoors bring with them less risk than those indoors and are therefore preferable
  - When events are held indoors rooms must be well ventilated
  - All policies relating to hygiene and hand sanitisation in Section A above are applicable. See below for children and youth specific guidance
  - All attendees, including parents, must book in advance and details of those who attended must be held for at least 21 days
  - All attendees must be asymptomatic and must not be required to self-isolate as highlighted in Point 7
  - Children and young people are not permitted to eat food on site. Rather takeaway kiddush, snacks, party bags or meals can be provided at the gates as participants leave.
  - Clear communication with parents ahead of any programme is essential
  - The normal [US Child Protection policy](#) applies.

### Definitions

- 91) In this guidance the following definitions apply:
- **Young children** are defined as children from new born – Nursery
  - **Children** are defined as children in school years Reception – Year 6
  - **Youth** are defined as students in school Years 7 - 13
  - **Children's Service** is not to be considered a Religious Service, rather a children's programme
  - **Youth service** (either full or partial with an activity) is to be considered a religious service
  - **Households** are people resident in the same home (e.g. parents, guardians, children and siblings); households are able to sit together without social distancing.)

### Capacity

- 92) The policy for numbers and capacity for activities is as follows.

Type of activity	Indoor	Outdoor
Parent and baby group	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m Remove this line
Young children service Parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m
Children's service No parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 not including leaders	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of <b>15</b> not including leaders
Children's service Parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m
Youth service (Year 7 and over)	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m
Young children/families programme Parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m
Children's programme/club No parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of <b>15</b> not including leaders	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of <b>15</b> not including leaders
Youth programme for Years 7 & 8	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of <b>15</b> not including leaders	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of <b>15</b> not including leaders
Youth programme for Years 9 and above	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of <b>15</b> not including leaders	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m

- 93) Whilst some popular weekday programmes might not yet be possible (programmes involving food and eating together, sports, some social activities) there are many activities that can be run in a COVID-secure environment.

Young children and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Movie nights</li> <li>Graffiti arts</li> <li>Magic shows</li> <li>Kabbalat Shabbat party</li> <li>Candle making</li> <li>Story time</li> <li>Treasure hunts</li> <li>Messy play</li> <li>Circus workshop</li> <li>Tribe Time parents and learning programme</li> </ul>
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Youth	Bnei mitzvah programming Chesed Programmes Quizzes Bet Midrash Graffiti art Israel education Speakers Leadership programmes Arts and craft Movie nights Uni prep series
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94) *If the community is in a Tier 3 area:* the following events must no longer run in-person

- Parent and baby groups
- Programming for children and families
- Youth programming indoors

If local Honorary Officers are confident that religious services for youth and children are able to run in a Covid-secure manner and that there is sufficient adult supervision, they can continue to run

- 95) Singing is permitted outside but not inside.
- 96) Toys and equipment cannot be shared. All toys and equipment must be thoroughly cleaned between users as well as at the end of the session.
- 97) Sport indoors or outdoors is not permitted.
- 98) At this stage, it is not permitted to hold events at third party venues such as bowling, mini golf, laser tag. This will be reviewed.
- 99) Youth Directors are not permitted to hold events inside their property nor are they permitted to invite young people for meals
- 100) Residential or overnight programmes are not permitted
- 101) In most communities it remain important to continue to run online events (quizzes, social events, speakers) to supplement in-person activities
- 102) The role of the Youth Director remains essential, particularly in connecting young people to their communities and Jewish life. Whilst numbers at events can be limited, other ways of reaching out should be encouraged such as doorstep deliveries and conversations, phone calls and small meetings in gardens.

### **Support for Youth Directors and those running children's programmes**

- 103) It is essential that Youth Directors and those running children's programmes receive support from Honorary Officers and line managers. Maintaining social distancing in an informal setting with children and young people is challenging and it will be necessary for communities to find volunteers to support, children service leaders and Youth Directors. Room set-up and cleaning will also be complex and caretakers should be available to support these programmes.

### **Parents**

- 104) Parents should be made aware of the COVID-19 policies. They should also be aware that contact details will be shared with NHS Test and Trace if required.
- 105) Communities should consider allocating drop off and collection times on a staggered basis to reduce contact between parents and carers when dropping off and picking up their children.
- 106) Parents should be encouraged to avoid public transport

### **Hygiene and Infection Control**

- 107) Ensure that the following groups of people do not attend programmes:
- those who have COVID 19 symptoms
  - those who have someone in their household with symptoms
  - those who have been advised by NHS Test and Trace to self isolate
  - those who are in quarantine having travelled recently.
- 108) Encourage frequent handwashing, cleaning hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered. Provide hand sanitiser in multiple locations
- 109) Using signs, posters and regular reminders to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into your arm rather than your hand
- 110) Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces (e.g. handrails, gates, tables and chairs) often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach. This cleaning should take place (at least) between and after each use of a space by a separate group
- 111) Where possible all indoor spaces should also be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units. See Points 27 and 28 above.



- 112) Provide more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection
- 113) It is not necessary for each group/age group/service to use a separate toilet. However, communities should limit the number of children using the toilet at any one time and, where possible, you should avoid different groups using the same facilities at the same time. As with all frequently used surfaces, toilets should be cleaned thoroughly using standard products such as detergent and bleach.

The frequency of cleaning required will depend on usage but is advised to be more frequently than might have been previously considered appropriate (at least twice a day, and in particular between use by different classes and groups).

- 114) All arts and crafts or other equipment should be one-off-use or cleaned thoroughly between sessions.

### **Cheder Policy (See also Points 112-114 and 131-138)**

- 115) For many communities Cheder is an integral part of community life. Whilst it has migrated successfully to online platforms recently, many communities have now revived in-person sessions. The guidance below has been prepared for Cheder settings only and do not apply to other children or youth activities.
- 116) Two metre social distancing should be maintained at all times between pupils and between pupils and teachers. Maximum class sizes should be set based on the space available in classrooms when social distancing is applied.
- 117) Year groups should remain separate from one another. They should be in separate classrooms and contact between groups should be kept to a minimum.
- 118) Classrooms should be well ventilated by opening windows and doors.
- 119) Seating should be arranged so that everyone in the classroom faces forward
- 120) Regular handwashing and sanitisation should be encouraged. All pupils and teachers should wash or sanitise their hands on arrival.
- 121) No food and drink is allowed to be consumed on site.
- 122) Singing indoors is not permitted.
- 123) Drop off, pick up and break times should be staggered to avoid classes mixing together.
- 124) In order to avoid crowds, and unnecessary contact, parents/ guardians should not enter the building, but drop off at the designated entrance.
- 125) The use of shared materials should be avoided. If this is not possible, materials must be cleaned between use.
- 126) The premises should be cleaned before and after every Cheder session
- 127) Attendance must be recorded and held for Test and Trace purposes

128) If the policy above is followed, it is not necessary for pupils or teachers to wear face coverings, although teachers can do so if they wish. If medical assistance is needed, the first aider should wear PPE if a 2m distance cannot be maintained.

**Appendices**

1. [CST Guidance on Outdoor Services: click here](#)
2. [Protective Equipment Policy: click here](#)
3. [Cleaning United Synagogue settings to reduce risk from coronavirus: click here](#)
4. [Categories of Communal Activity and the Regional Three Tier system: what can go ahead as tiers change](#)

**Appendix 4**

**Categories of Communal Activity and Covid Alert Levels (Tiers)**

This table aims to show, at a glance, the categories of communal activity that will be permitted at each Covid Alert Level (Tier) and lists any additional mitigations required.

Activity	Tiers and What Changes
Synagogue services	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b> As guidance (Sections A and B)</p> <p><b>Tier 3 (Very High)</b> Members that are in the same household or support bubble as those who are required to self-isolate should not attend services or in-person events. (This does not apply to professional staff.)</p> <p>Older members (i.e. aged 70 years and over) and those who are clinically vulnerable should be encouraged not to attend.</p> <p>Service leaders and speakers must wear face coverings. If a Batmitzvah girl or Barmitzvah boy is anxious about wearing a mask when</p>

	speaking publicly or leading the service they do not need to wear one.
Lifecycle events as part of services such as brit, Bar/Bat mitzvah and Shiva	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b> As guidance (Sections A and B)</p> <p><b>Tier 3 (Very High)</b> Members that are in the same household or support bubble as those who are required to self-isolate should not attend services or in-person events. (This does not apply to professional staff.)</p> <p>Older members (i.e. aged 70 years and over) and those who are clinically vulnerable should be encouraged not to attend.</p> <p>Service leaders and speakers must wear face coverings. If a Batmitzvah girl or Barmitzvah boy is anxious about wearing a mask when speaking publicly or leading the service they do not need to wear one.</p>
Adult education events	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b> As guidance (Section D)</p> <p><b>Tier 3 (Very high)</b> Cancel in-person adult programming Run programming online if possible</p>
Parent and baby groups	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b> As guidance (Section D)</p> <p><b>Tier 3 (Very high)</b> Cancel in-person parent and baby groups</p>
Children’s services (primary school)	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b> As guidance (Section E)</p> <p><b>Tier 3 (Very high)</b> Children’s services can continue to run if local HOs are confident that they are following guidance and there is sufficient adult supervision</p>
Youth services (secondary school)	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b> As guidance (Section E)</p> <p><b>Tier 3 (Very high)</b> Youth services can continue to run if local HOs are confident that they are following guidance and there is sufficient adult supervision</p>
Children’s and family programming	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b> As guidance (Section E)</p>

	<p><b>Tier 3 (Very high)</b>  Cancel in-person children and family  Run programming online if possible</p>
Youth programming	<p><b>Tiers 1 &amp; 2 (Medium &amp; High)</b>  As guidance (Section E)</p> <p><b>Tier 3 (Very high)</b>  Cancel in-person youth programming indoors.  Outdoor programming can continue with  appropriate adult supervision  Run programming online if possible</p>
Cheder	<p><b>Tiers 1, 2 and 3 (Medium, High &amp; Very High)</b>  As guidance (Section E)</p>