

United Synagogue: COVID- 19

Guidance to Member Communities on Running Covid-Secure Sites and Resuming Broader Communal Activity Version 6: 13th April 2021 / 1st Iyar 5781

Introduction

This guidance supersedes our guidance issued on 30th November 2020.

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

Following a winter during which many of our shuls closed their doors, we look forward to gathering again as communities to daven, learn, volunteer, mark significant events and enjoy being in the company of each other.

The document outlines the key principles of the operating during the pandemic and provides **policy** and **advice** to United Synagogue member communities as they reintroduce aspects of communal activity. In preparing it, we have endeavoured to follow three key principles:

- We will align ourselves with government guidance and their published Steps but will reserve the right to be more cautious should we deem it necessary
- We will continue to take advice from experts including Chief Medical Officer and his office, Public Health England and local Public Health Directors
- We will aim to move to a situation where there is increased local decision making, based on local context

The guidance is published at a time when the vaccination rollout in the UK is at its peak. Please note that the Chief Rabbi has ruled that when a vaccine is offered to you, you have a religious imperative to take it in order to protect yourself and those around you. The United Synagogue does not currently require proof of vaccination for participation in our services or activities but urges all those who are able to be vaccinated to do so.

Please take the time to review the document in full to ensure that you are familiar with the revised protocols and policies, if you have any questions, please email Jo Grose at jgrose@theus.org.uk.

President: Michael Goldstein

Treasurer: Maxwell Nisner

Trustees: Andrew Eder, Claire Lemer, Fleurise Lewis, Nicola Rosenfelder, Barry Shaw, Saul Taylor, Jacqui Zinkin

Chief Executive: Steven Wilson



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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
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 - 1. [CST Guidance on Outdoor Services](#)
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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.** At this stage, 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 significantly 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:
- Those who have been required to self-isolate following a positive Covid test
 - Those who are awaiting the results of a Covid test
 - Those who show any symptoms of Covid or are in the same household or support bubble as those with symptoms of Covid
 - 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](#)
 - Those who are required to self-isolate having travelled recently, as required in [this government guidance](#)

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

It is strongly recommended that people who had been shielding and/or are clinically vulnerable use their judgment about attending services and events. Government guidance for this group can be found [here](#).

- Those who live in the same household as people who are clinically vulnerable should use their judgment as to whether to attend.
- Those who are aged over 50 and have not yet been vaccinated should also use their judgment about whether to attend.
- No person should be or feel pressurised to attend a service in order to make up a minyan.
- Employees who fall into any of these categories should be in touch with HR to discuss attendance for work purposes.
- 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

- Children and young people are at the heart of our communities. Children are encouraged to attend services as long as parents are 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

- 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.

- 15) 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.
- 16) 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.
- 17) Communities should ascertain their maximum capacity.
- 18) 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.
- 19) 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.
- 20) 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.
- 21) It is necessary to have someone on the gates or at the door, checking people in.
- 22) Queues at gates must be 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
- 23) 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 on Yom Tov, or on Shabbat where there is an eruv.

Cleaning, handwashing and infection control

- 24) 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.
- 25) If services are held indoors, attendees must wear face masks that cover the nose and mouth. Visors are not an acceptable alternative. If a person is not able to wear a mask (i.e. they have a stated exemption as listed [here](#)) they must liaise with the community Honorary Office or Covid Officer *in advance* to ensure that suitable measures can be put in place to protect all those

present. From 12th April, face coverings are not required outdoors. Children under the age of 11 are not required to wear a face covering.

- 26) The room must remain well ventilated at all times by opening windows and doors. If it is cold 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.
- 27) 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.
- 28) If the synagogue has an air-conditioning system that recirculates air (rather than bringing in a fresh air supply air) it should be off. Fans should not be used.
- 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.
- 32) Those who handle the Sefer Torah or any other ritual item other than books (e.g. the yad) should sanitise their hands before doing so or put on a new pair of disposable gloves. 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 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.

The service leader does not need to wear a face covering in the following scenarios:

- 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.

Ideas and Suggestions

- 43) 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.
- 44) 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.
- 45) In preparation for welcoming people on site and holding an increasing number of services, communities should build a team of volunteer ushers.
- 46) 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.
- 47) 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

- 48) 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.
- 49) 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)
- 50) 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

- 51) 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 sanitise their hands before doing so or put on a new pair of 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.

- 52) Calling up may be done either by the Gabbai (socially distanced from the bimah) or by the Baal Koreh.
- 53) 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.
- 54) 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.
- 55) 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.
- 56) 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.
- 57) Ideally different Sifrei Torah should be used for Shacharit and for Mincha on Shabbat .

Ideas and Suggestions

- 58) 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.
- 59) On Shabbat afternoons, communities might wish to hold a shiur between mincha and maariv. The same social distancing rules apply.

C. Lifecycle events

- 60) The current government policy on lifecycle events and the numbers who can attend can be found within its Places of Worship guidance [here](#).
- 61) The latest Marriage Guidance from the Office of the Chief Rabbi can be found [here](#). Please contact the office for the latest information on numbers of attendees.
- 62) The latest United Synagogue guidance on funerals and stonsettings can be found [here](#). Please note that the number of attendees at funerals and stonsettings changes with each Step. Currently, 30 attendees are permitted at a funeral. Please contact the Burial Office for more information on stonsettings.
- 63) 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.
- 64) 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.

65) 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

66) 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.

67) 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 and rooms must be well ventilated

68) 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.

69) Please see the United Synagogue Roadmap in Appendix F4 for details of the activities that can be reintroduced in line from 12th April. These include shiurim, lectures and meetings.

70) From 12th April, Rabbis and Rebbetzins are permitted to invite members for meals or refreshments outside in line with the guidance [here](#). Specifically, this means that they can meet with members outdoors in either of these groups noting that both include the Rabbi, Rebbetzen and members of their family or support bubble:

- A group of up to 6 people from any number of households
- A group of any size from up to two households/support bubbles.

If guests need to enter through a house to get to a garden or other outside space and there is no alternative access, they should wear a face coverings, wash or sanitise their hands when entering, and then go straight to the outside space. If they need to use the bathroom, they should wash their hands thoroughly and go back outside immediately. Hand gel should be available for guests throughout their visit.

71) Shavuot this year begins on the evening of Sunday 16th May. If the government's Roadmap continues to run to time, the country will move to Step 3 on Monday 17th May, first day Shavuot. Tikun leil programmes can run with the same restrictions as other events (social distancing, masks, ventilation etc.). As an exception, to help facilitate the night's programme, coffee and other drinks can be made available at stations. People must maintain distance, hand sanitise before using equipment and enjoy their drink in their seats.

As ongoing advice requires us to limit time together, especially indoors, please factor this into your planning of the tikkun leil programme and subsequent davening.

Online events

72) 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), 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

73) 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

74) Where necessary, a kaddish buddy system can be initiated to support those at home who wish kaddish to be said on their behalf.

75) All in-person shiurim that are not on Shabbat and Yom Tov should also be available online

76) 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

- 77) 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.
- 78) 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.
- 79) 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.
- 80) 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

- 81) 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.
- 81) 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.
- 83) 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 including when arriving at and departing from an activity.** Social distancing becomes significantly more challenging the younger the children. As a result, leaders should put in place all other measures (handwashing, ventilation etc) to mitigate these challenges.
 - **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
 - Arrange activities and rooms to avoid face-to-face interactions
 - 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

84) 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

85) The policy for numbers and capacity for activities **from 12th April** is detailed below. We recognise our services for younger members as age-appropriate communal worship. The detail for children’s services for children over the age of 5 is based on the government’s Places of Worship guidance but with additional precautionary limits on capacity. Children’s services, therefore, must take the form of a service, incorporating tefillah and divrei torah whilst also ensuring that the content is engaging and suited to the age group. Please note that singing can only take place if the service is held outdoors. Tribe resources to support these services will be available soon.

Type of activity	Indoor	Outdoor
Parent and baby group	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 adults not including leaders	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 adults not including leaders
Young children service Parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 adults and 15 children not including leaders or siblings under 3 years old	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 adults and 15 children not including leaders or siblings under 3 years old
Children’s service No parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 children not including leaders	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 children not including leaders

Children's service Parents attending	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 children and 15 adults not including leaders or siblings under 3 years old	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 children and 15 adults not including leaders or siblings under 3 years old
Youth service (Year 7 and over)	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 15 children not including leaders	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 children not including leaders
Youth programme for Years 7 & 8	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 15 not including leaders
Youth programme for Years 9 and above	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 not including leaders. The capacity for regular, weekly educational sessions with a speaker can increase to 25 (not including leaders) with social distancing at 2m.	Capacity based on social distancing at 2m to a maximum of 15 not including leaders. The capacity for regular, weekly educational sessions with a speaker can increase to 25 (not including leaders) with social distancing at 2m.

- 86) 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"> Movie nights Graffiti arts Magic shows Kabbalat Shabbat party Candle making Story time Treasure hunts Messy play Circus workshop Tribe Time parents and learning programme
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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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- 87) Singing is permitted outside but not inside.
- 88) 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.
- 89) Organised sport that does not require the sharing of equipment is permitted. Indoor sport is not yet allowed.
- 90) Events can be held at outdoor third-party venues such as mini-golf and theme parks as long as a risk assessment has been completed. Activities in indoor venues are not yet allowed.
- 91) Youth Directors are not permitted to hold events inside their homes but can host small groups for refreshments in their gardens - strictly in line with [government guidance](#) . See also point 70.
- 92) Residential or overnight programmes are not permitted
- 93) In most communities it remain important to continue to run online events (quizzes, social events, speakers) to supplement in-person activities
- 94) 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

- 95) 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

- 96) 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.

- 97) 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.
- 98) Parents should be encouraged to avoid public transport

Hygiene and Infection Control

99) 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 asked to self-isolate as a result of a positive Covid test
- those who have been asked to self-isolate by their school or NHS Test and Trace
- those awaiting the results of a test
- those who are in quarantine having travelled recently.

- 100) 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
- 101) 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
- 102) 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
- 103) Where possible all indoor spaces should also be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units. See Points 27 and 28 above.
- 104) Provide more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection
- 105) 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).

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

Cheder Policy

Please refer also to points 81-83 and 99-106

- 107) 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.
- 108) 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.
- 109) Year groups should remain separate from one another. They should be in separate classrooms and contact between groups should be kept to a minimum.
- 110) Classrooms should be well ventilated by opening windows and doors.
- 111) Seating should be arranged so that everyone in the classroom faces forward
- 112) Regular handwashing and sanitisation should be encouraged. All pupils and teachers should wash or sanitise their hands on arrival.
- 113) Snacks brought in by the children can be eaten outside only.
- 114) Singing indoors is not permitted.
- 115) Drop off, pick up and break times should be staggered to avoid classes mixing together.
- 116) In order to avoid crowds, and unnecessary contact, parents/ guardians should not enter the building, but drop off at the designated entrance.
- 117) The use of shared materials should be avoided. If this is not possible, materials must be cleaned between use.
- 118) The premises should be cleaned before and after every Cheder session
- 119) Attendance must be recorded and held for Test and Trace purposes
- 120) Teachers and pupils of secondary school age must wear masks. Children of primary school age do not need to wear masks. 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. [United Synagogue Roadmap March 2021](#)