

Feb. 23, 2022

Shalom,

As we come to the end of February, I want to share the next steps in our COVID protocols. As previously announced, this Shabbat will be the last Shabbat of our temporary Omicron surge restrictions. While I understand that this may have been difficult for some, these steps were necessary for everyone's health, especially for our youngest and most vulnerable children who cannot as yet be vaccinated. We also wanted to make sure that the surge was over before removing our extra restrictions. The latest 7-day average positivity rate in the Capital Region is just under 4%, so our plans match the continued reduced COVID 19 infection rate.

Starting with Shabbat March 5th, we will remove our vaccination requirements and return to the COVID protocols that were in place prior to the Omicron surge. To remind everyone, those protocols are:

1. Anyone can attend services regardless of vaccination status.
2. All people entering the building must continue to be masked. What type of mask you want to wear is up to you! If you are concerned about quality of protection, the medical experts continue to share that the N95 and KN95 masks provide much better protection than the cloth masks.
3. We will restart eating kiddush together in the building, family style. We ask that people do not change tables or move the chairs so that we can maintain distancing.
4. Kiddish bags will continue to be available for those still not comfortable eating with others.
5. When the weather permits, tents and table will be available for eating outside on the concrete slab.

And especially to our younger families, please know how much we miss seeing you at services. Our children's corner is so empty and quiet; we really want you all to come back and join us. I hope that removal of the vaccination restriction coupled with the overall reduction in positivity rates will encourage you to think hard about returning to services. As the weather improves, we will be doing our best to move outside as much as possible for services and programming. For those still concerned with the health risk, I understand completely and just want you to know that we care and we miss you. You, our young families, are Ohav's future. We want to make sure that Ohav remains an important part of your life, as you are to Ohav's.

Finally, thank you again for your patience. Our lay leadership is doing our best to move our Ohav community through the Pandemic Please understand that we will always look at the data and pivot as and when needed. The pivot could be towards relaxing the current restrictions or if needed, adding restrictions.

Thank you and Shabbat Shalom,

Gregg Fox

Ohav Shalom President