

OZ Covid Policies for In-Person events Updated 8-29-2022

OZ's updated COVID-19 policies are consistent with the updated CDC guidelines. We agree that the risk of contracting severe illness by attending synagogue services and OZ events is low for most individuals due to the high vaccination rate, vaccine efficacy, treatment options and good availability of COVID testing. We have updated our masking policy to make masking optional but encouraged based on the new data and we will continue to meet regularly and we will adjust our recommendations as indicated. See policy details below please.

I. IN-PERSON EVENTS:

1. **Masking:**

Due to currently low COVID-19 levels in Chittenden county as determined by the Vermont Department of Health and the CDC, mask use will now be **optional** but **encouraged** during all synagogue events. The only exception to this rule is that mask use will still be required on the bimah **except** if the person tests negative with a rapid antigen test within 24 hours of being on the bimah .

OZ reserves the right, for the protection of staff considered high risk, to mandate masks where necessary.

2. Vaccination: Once again, we strongly urge members of our congregation to be fully vaccinated including boosters.

3. Please do NOT come to services if:

- You feel sick or have symptoms consistent with COVID.
- You test positive for COVID-19

4. If you have been exposed to COVID-19, please follow the updated CDC guidelines which urges masking with an N-95 mask or similar for 10 days following exposure and testing on day 5:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html>

5. Singing is allowed during services and Hebrew School/Preschool. Masking is optional for singing.

6. Food preparation and eating is allowed at the synagogue without restrictions. Seating areas will be provided at OZ events for those who wish to maintain physical distance when eating.

7. Group size for gathering will not be limited. This includes events, services, parties, OZ tours, and school events.

87. OZ may reopen to outside groups without additional safety restrictions, with the usual permissions of the OZ leadership.

II. EDUCATION about COVID-19 MASKING AND SAFETY:

MASKING:

OZCTF is following the guidelines from the Vermont Department of Health and the Burlington School District to make masks optional in all departments and events at Ohavi Zedek including the Full Circle PreSchool, Hebrew School, and sanctuary.

We are very excited about this decision, but at the same time, we realize that this pandemic is likely not over and in the near future, we could experience case surges and new variants and our course of action could change. We encourage that each and everyone of you still continue to take precautions to prevent spread of illness despite this new and exciting change. Our decision to lift the mask mandate does not mean that masks are discouraged. In fact, masks are strongly encouraged. Here are some recommendations to help you take precautionary measures.

You should consider wearing a mask when you are:

1. Older, immunocompromised, or in close and continuous contact with a person who is unvaccinated and is at risk for COVID- 19.
2. If you are a close contact to someone who has COVID-19
3. If you are still recovering from illness (COVID or non-COVID) and have returned to work .
4. If you are recovering from COVID, we recommend that you wear a mask until 10 days have passed from when you tested positive or when you started to develop symptoms.
5. Please review the CDC guidelines for isolation and mask wearing following a Covid-19 infection:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

SAFETY

Here are other ways to stay safe:

1. Stay up to date on your vaccinations.
2. Stay home and get tested if you're feeling sick. Do not return to work or school until you test negative and you are feeling better. .
3. Consider choosing outdoor versus indoor activities
4. Continue maintaining good ventilation in rooms by keeping windows and doors open if possible
5. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after prolonged contact with people.
6. Do not share food from the same plate, utensils or drinks