



## From Rabbi Wilkinson and the Vaad of Ahavat Yisrael

### Introduction

The Chief Rabbi began his advice to shuls on re-opening with the following and we want share it with you and emphasize that we are following his message, in spirit and in practice:

*“Every step on the long road towards reopening our communities must be governed by the overwhelming priority of Pikuach Nefesh - the protection of life. Our greatest strength - our close-knit nature, the scope of our communal activity – is, during COVID-19, also our greatest weakness. Over the last few months, we have experienced tragic losses. Whilst every day that we do not open our shuls is painful, it is essential that we follow a cautious path centred on the wellbeing of our members, Rabbinat, staff, volunteers and visitors and take a risk-managed approach”.*

**We are, therefore, delighted to be planning for re-opening on Shabbat Parasha Pinchas, 10 & 11 July 2020 and to tell you of the adjustments which are required to safely return and keep everyone well.**

### Who can come to shul?

The ethos of Ahavat Yisrael is to be a warm and welcoming shul which we will always strive to be. We will continue to welcome everyone, men and ladies with a pre-booking system (see below) but we have to stress:

1. Those who are shielding should not come to shul at present. Government guidance has extended the period of shielding to 31 July 2020. Please check with your doctor before re-joining us for services after that date.
2. If you are vulnerable or unsure, or there is someone in your household who would fall in to this group, please do not feel any compunction if you do not feel you wish to come to shul. You must follow your instincts (and medical advice); your safety and physical and mental wellbeing is paramount.
3. If you have any symptoms or have travelled or been in proximity with anyone, within the previous 14 days, who has Covid19, please DO NOT attend shul but PLEASE ALSO LET US KNOW. We want to be able to offer you support.

### Layout

4. The men's section will be to the right of the shul as you enter the main door and the Ladies will use the French door entrance and will be on the left of the room. The two entrances will be clearly marked with signs for men and women.
5. The aron will be placed by or to the left of the doors to the board room (previous children services' room) at the back.
6. The bima will be positioned next to the aron on the same back wall to its left.
7. We will use the bima for davening and leyning and not the shtender.
8. Tables for the men and ladies will be positioned 2 m apart.
9. Men from the same household can sit at the same table (likewise in the ladies' section).
10. Tables will all face towards the aron.
11. The kitchen will not be partitioned off to allow hand washing and greater air flow.
12. Air conditioning will not be in use but the doors will be left open.

### PPE and Cleaning

13. We have purchased cleaning products, masks and hand sanitizer from head office.
14. Everyone attending is asked to wear a face covering. Disposable ones will be provided if you don't have your own.
15. We would ask that gloves are not worn in shul but hand sanitizers should be used when you arrive and as necessary and this will be made available to you (see below for during the service requirements).

16. The tables, chair, table and chair legs, all hard surfaces and door handles will be cleaned before each shul service.
17. Table coverings will not be used.
18. Disposable paper towels are to be used instead of fabric towels for handwashing.
19. We ask that you ensure that tissues are disposed of immediately after use in the bins provided.

#### Services and Format

20. We are planning to re-open for Shabbat 10-11 July.
21. We have been advised by the Chief Rabbi that we should aim for a quick service and we will start the service with Rabbi Yishmael.
22. No singing is permitted except by the Baal Tefillah and Baal Koreh.
23. Call ups - we hope that the Baal Koreh will do all the call ups and will step away from the Torah to allow the person who is given an Aliyah to step forward to read the brocha and then they stand back to allow the Baal Koreh to stand at the Bimah and leyn. .
24. Gloves are to be worn by the Baal Koreh and those who are called up or have hagbah
25. Books - we would prefer it if people brought their own books. If you don't wish to do so then books used for a service will be placed in a box marked "used" and will not be used again until the following week (leaving the required 72 hours between uses).
26. Please do not kiss whether by your hand, Tallit or directly the Sefer Torah, Paroches, Mezzuzot or books or any other item in shul
27. No kiddushim will be held.
28. To start with we will only have Friday night and Shabbat Morning services and will keep everything under constant review.

#### Times of Services

29. These are approximate times.
  - Shacharit: 9.30 am prompt
  - Leyning: 10.00 am
  - Musaf: 10.30 - 11 am
  - Rabbi's Dvar Torah after the service  
(outside, weather permitting)

#### Capacity and Bookings

30. Pre-registration will be required by midday on the Wednesday before. The Gabbayim will review the list to prioritize those who are a chiyuv or have a special Simcha. We will send a special link for booking soon.
31. Booking will be open from Sunday to Tuesday prior to the Shabbat in question. If you have not been allocated a place because we have reached full capacity we will give you a priority place for the following week.
32. In the men's section we will have 3 rows of 3 tables with the lay out as outlined above.
33. Those who live in the same household can sit on the same table and therefore we have assumed that there will be at least one or two tables with have more than one person from a household. On that basis we can accommodate c14 men and c8 ladies.
34. We may be able to fit in one or two people on single, 2m apart chairs at the back of both sections.
35. Regrettably children under 12 should not attend for the time being.

All of these arrangements will be reviewed each week and in accordance with changes in the guidance from the government and the United Synagogue. We are also planning for the Yamim Norayim and Yom Tovim and will send further information in the near future.

We look forward once again to davening together.