

Jewish Community COVID-19 Guidelines

17 March 2020

1. Education

On Sunday it was decided at the Jewish National Educational Cluster (consisting of leadership of all the Jewish schools) that there will be a temporary closure of Jewish schools for a week. This was later superseded by the President's speech last night in which he closed schools throughout the country until the 14th of April. Each School will implement their own educational strategy during this time.

2. Self-Quarantine Guidelines for those who may be confused

People who may have come into contact with COVID-19 through travel or contact with a person who may be infected, should self-quarantine. This entails confining yourself to your home, going out only if absolutely essential and then avoiding or minimizing contact with people. Precautionary guidelines for the prevention and control of coronavirus have always been based on a balance between the risk of transmission of the virus versus the consequences of the preventive restrictions. It has become clear that there is considerable difficulty with adhering to the directive to quarantine all household members of returning travellers or contacts of a Covid-19 case.

We therefore advise the following: –

2.1. Adults in the same household as a healthy person in self-quarantine need not themselves be in self-quarantine provided everyone in the household is meticulous with good personal hygiene practice, e.g. thorough hand washing, social distancing, cough etiquette and cleaning of surfaces as detailed previously,

2.2. Young children, who do pose a significant risk of disease transmission, should still be in the same self-quarantine as the returning traveller(s).

NB. The above, of course, does not apply if there is a Covid-19 test positive person in the household. All members of that household must be in self-quarantine.

Self-quarantine is always for 14 days.

3. Guidelines for shul observance and related issues (issued by the Chief Rabbi's office)

3.1. Shul services can continue as normal, but people should take all necessary precautions, such as hand-washing, etc., as per original guidelines. In addition, it is advisable to maintain safe distances (around 2m) when sitting in shul.

3.2. No kissing or direct touching of the Torahs or mezuzahs.

3.3. It is advisable that the elderly and immunocompromised not come to shul.

3.4. Anyone returning from overseas must go into 14-day self-quarantine. Other members of their family can come to shul, except for children under bar/batmitzvah as per schools' guidelines. However, if a member of the family is tested as positive for having the virus, the whole family must go into quarantine.

3.5. Shul brochas should be cancelled until further notice.

3.6. Shiurim can continue, but with a safe distance between people and all the other necessary precautions taken.

3.7. Mikveh use can continue as normal, except for women who have the virus. Those in quarantine should contact the mikveh for special guidance on how they can use it. The Beth Din will be providing the mikvehs with instructions in this regard.

4. Guidelines regarding observance of simchas (issued by the Chief Rabbi's office)

4.1. Family simchas such as weddings and barmitzvahs can go ahead, but the attendance should be as small as possible, ideally limited to close family, with all the correct precautions taken.

4.2. Family members from overseas should not attend the simcha until their 14-day quarantine

period is completed.

4.3. At simchas, there should be no physical contact between people even when dancing, and with a safe distance maintained at all times.

5. **Funerals**

The Chevra Kadisha will shortly advise the community on this issue.

6. **Local and International Travel**

5.1. President Rampahosa last night “discouraged all non-essential domestic travel”

5.2. It is recommended to avoid non-essential international travel, especially to countries with local transmission of Covid-19.

7. **Communal Gatherings**

The President in his speech prohibited gatherings of more than 100 people. In light of this communal events such as Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha’atzmaut will be commemorated or celebrated through innovative alternative ways which will be communicated to you in the coming weeks.