

**Statement by the President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies  
relating to the limited reopening of Synagogues for services**

In light of the NSW Government's (**Government**) most recent announcements relating to the reopening of establishments to conduct religious services and following consultation with Rabbis and health experts, the President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (**BOD**) makes the following statement for the benefit of Shules, their congregants and the Jewish community:

**When to reopen and with what services**

1. A decision as to when, in accordance with the Government's announcement on or after 15 May, a Synagogue can reopen and the nature, extent and timing of services, is a matter for each individual congregation.
2. The reopening of any Synagogue will be gradual and subject to Government mandate.
3. The BOD will continue to liaise with the Government regarding any easing of restrictions and in particular, the maximum number of people that can attend services and, to the extent possible, will consult Synagogue Presidents as to their requirements.
4. Public davening should be as short as possible.
5. If Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are conducted, they must not be exempt from the restrictions and limitations that will apply generally.
6. No outdoor services should take place.
7. The maximum number of people attending weddings, is subject to the Government's limits on numbers. The BOD is liaising with the Government on that issue.

**Who can attend services**

8. The number of congregants at any one time will be limited in accordance with Government rules or guidelines (most recently made on 15 May), however, a congregation may take a more conservative approach.
9. Only congregants who are members of or usual attendees at the Synagogue should attend any synagogue service.
10. No one who is unwell should attend any services.
11. People over the age of 70 should be discouraged from attending any services.
12. In order to control and monitor the numbers of congregants attending services and to maintain the ability for tracing to occur, Synagogues will be asked to record attendees and it is suggested congregants wishing to attend will have to complete a health questionnaire.

**Social Distancing and hygiene**

13. Strict social distancing and hygiene protocols must be observed at any such services, after services and going to and leaving services.
14. Systems need to be implemented to manage:
  - a) pre-registration of attendees (so as to avoid people turning up in excess of the permitted number and having to be turned away, and to screen out in advance those whose age and/or state of health preclude attendance);
  - b) checking the identity of attendees at entrance to ensure only pre-approved attendees are admitted;
  - c) Where halachically permissible, the temperature of each attendee will be checked at point of entry;
  - d) monitoring and enforcement of social distancing during service and on leaving;
  - e) maintenance of toilets and hygienic treatment of surfaces; and

- f) maintenance of a readily-accessible list/register of names, addresses and contact details of all attendees at each service – a separate list/register for each service.
15. The distance between congregants must be at least 1.5 metres (there should be at least 4 sq m per attendee) and congregants should minimise moving around and obviously should not kiss or shake hands.
  16. Seating should be set up accordingly, with the rows of seats and seats to be marked with spacers or free seats blocked to ensure the minimum 1.5 metres distance (4 sq m area) is maintained.
  17. Each congregant should use their own kippa and their own tallit.
  18. Each congregant should bring and store in the Synagogue, their own siddur and chumash or, although not preferable, any supplied Siddur or Chumash should be sanitised.
  19. The Synagogue must supply hand sanitiser and insist on its use before entry and at appropriate intervals, including on exit.
  20. Sufficient disinfectants must be provided at the entrances to the synagogue and in the washrooms. Soap and disposable (paper) towels must be provided in the washrooms instead of cloth towels.
  21. The Chazan should conduct the kiddush from the Bimah. Children must not come to the bima as usual and drink from the wine/grape juice.
  22. Kiddushim and Smachot should not occur.
  23. Due to the risk that the virus can spread, Mezuzot should not be kissed or touched. The same applies to Tzitzit and the Torah.

#### **Torah reading**

24. Each Synagogue should be responsible for implementing limits and restrictions on access to the Torah e.g for aliyot, hagbaha, gelila, maftir and, if it occurs, the procession through the Synagogue.

#### **COVID APP**

25. The rabbinic leadership of each congregation will determine whether the COVID APP for tracing, can be used by congregants on Shabbat and Yom Tov.

#### **Review**

26. The operations of Synagogues and these protocols, will be reviewed every 2 weeks from 18 May.

**18 May 2020**