**Sandy Spring Friends Meeting COVID Safety Guidelines**

The Ad Hoc Public Health and Safety Committee has been tasked with providing reasonably safe practices for the Meeting’s in-person gatherings. The committee consists of members of Sandy Spring Friends Monthly Meeting (SSMM) including Trustees Committee and Religious Education Committee. The Ad Hoc Public Health and Safety Committee are incorporating guidelines for determining safe practices in the Sandy Spring Meeting, both for Meeting for Worship and other social gatherings. These guidelines are meant to be helpful and provide a degree of transparency in the decision-making process. The guidelines are based on what was instituted at the Bethesda Meeting in May 2022 but adapted to fit the needs of SSMM.

Members of the committee will be monitoring CDC and Montgomery County COVID risk indicators on a weekly basis. Based on the information on the level of risk in the community, the committee will determine whether to maintain the current risk level or adjust the risk level to the appropriate level. People who are immunocompromised should follow safety guidance from their health care provider.

To help decide what is reasonably safe, the Ad Hoc Public Health and Safety Committee considers two basic sources of information about COVID-19 conditions in Montgomery County:

1. **The CDC’s COVID-19 hospitalization -by-County web page at {https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps\_new-admissions-rate-county}**
2. **Montgomery County’s COVID-19 Data Dashboard at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/data/. This site provides a wealth of data for our area, including trend graphs and level status for eight different indicators.**

We want to maintain acommitment to a balanced consideration of *safety* (based on sources above), as well as, *maintaining and strengthening our spiritual and community* life in the manner of Friends.

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| **Risk Level** | **Indicators** | **Safety Measures** |
| 1 | 1. CDC community level **Low,** and 2. None of Montgomery County’s indicators **High**. | -In-person Meeting for Worship in the Meetinghouse  Virtual (Zoom) meetings also available  -Masks optional except in designated areas of Meeting house  -Food and drink permitted during fellowship in the Lyceum  -First Day School activities indoors or outdoors\*  -Child care services provided in Lyceum\*  -Notification of COVID infection or test positivity to meeting coordinator by person attending an in-person community event so SSMM can inform attendees of the same event  - People with cough, sore throat, or fever should only attend Virtual meetings  - COVID vaccination and boosters strongly recommended |
| 2 | 1. CDC community level **Low,** and 2. No more than one of Montgomery County’s indicators **High**. | -In-person Meeting for Worship in the Meetinghouse.  Virtual (Zoom) meetings also available.  -Food and drink permitted during fellowship in the Lyceum  -Masks strongly recommended indoors  -First Day School activities indoors or outdoors\*  -Child care services provided in Lyceum\*  -Notification of COVID infection or test positivity to meeting coordinator by person attending an in-person community event so SSM can inform attendees of the same event.  - People with cough, sore throat, or fever should only attend Virtual meetings  -COVID vaccination and boosters strongly recommended |
| 3 | EITHER of the following:   1. CDC community **level Medium** 2. Two or more, but less than half, of Montgomery County’s indicators **High**. | -In-person Meeting for Worship in the Meetinghouse.  Virtual (Zoom) meetings also available.  -No food or drink inside buildings.  -In-person requirements for Meeting for Worship or other gatherings   * Masks required * Social distancing (6 feet) required except households may be seated together   -First Day School activities outdoors if indoors risk is high \*  -Child care services provided in Lyceum as long as risk is reasonable\*  -Notification of COVID infection or test positivity to meeting coordinator by person attending an in-person community event so SSM can inform attendees of the same event.  - People with cough, sore throat, or fever should only attend Virtual meetings  -COVID vaccination and boosters strongly recommended |
| 4 | EITHER of the following:   1. CDC community level **High** 2. Half or more, but more than half, of Montgomery County’s indicators **High**. | -In-person Meeting for Worship outdoors only. Virtual (Zoom) meetings also available.  -No food or drink inside buildings  -For any other in-person gatherings   * Masks required. * Social distancing (6 feet) required except households may be seated together   -First Day School activities outdoors\*  -Child care services not provided in Lyceum\*  -Notification of COVID infection or test positivity to meeting coordinator by person attending an in-person community event so SSM can inform attendees of the same event.  -People with cough, sore throat, or fever should only attend Virtual meetings  -COVID vaccination and boosters strongly recommended |
| 5 | National, state or county-wide shutdown of all activities. Closure of schools and public activities. | All in-person activities suspended.  Meeting for worship to be held only as a Virtual (Zoom) Meeting.  Other committee and social gatherings will also be held as Virtual (Zoom) meetings. |

\*The current guidelines (October 2023) for First Day School and Child Care services(level 1 risk level) are:

* + Sick children should be kept at home to prevent infecting other children and adults in First Day School.
  + All First Day Teachers should be vaccinated for COVID, after consultation with the health care providers.
  + In the nursery, teachers and other volunteers are required to use masks.
  + In the other First Day Classes, use of masks by the teachers is optional

The guidelines for First Day School and Child Care services will be adjusted to conform with changes in risk levels.