



Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, *Director*
Susan Friedberg Kalson, *Chair*
Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

Arthur and Sara Jo Kobacker Building
2027 Massachusetts Avenue NW, at Kivie Kaplan Way
Washington, DC 20036
202.387.2800 @theRAC RAC.org

2021 Policy Statement on Vaccine Status of Participants, Staff, Faculty, and Their Families Attending the Religious Action Center's *L'Taken* Social Justice Seminars

Vaccination has a Jewish context

Among our most cherished Jewish values is the imperative for preserving life and maintaining health. We embrace this value specifically by taking preventive measures to protect the public health of our program community as a whole. ***This is why we require all children, staff, faculty, and their families planning to attend our URJ youth programs to adhere to the immunization standards described below.***

Vaccination is a shared responsibility and is our expectation

Parents send their children to program and expect that their children will enjoy themselves, have positive social interactions, learn from the rich Jewish environment and most of all be safe and healthy. All the fun, friendship building, Jewish identity affirmation and character development can only happen if we are absolutely confident that individual safety and public health remain at the center of every decision made throughout the URJ programs. Reducing the risk of vaccine-preventable illnesses from entering any of our programs is simply the single most effective strategy to protect public health. This goal can be accomplished only through the appropriate vaccination of all members of our program. Individual families may choose to defer the vaccination of their children, at the URJ we cannot and will not defer the safety of our programs.

What we require

- **COVID-19 vaccine** - Vaccines against COVID-19 continue to be developed and approved, and will become increasingly available during 2021. As different subgroups of people are able to obtain access, vaccination is REQUIRED where it can be obtained. Youth under the age of 12 are exempt from this requirement until such time that COVID-19 vaccines are



The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism is the social justice office of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose more than 800 congregations across North America encompass 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose membership includes more than 2,000 Reform rabbis.





Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, *Director*
Susan Friedberg Kalson, *Chair*
Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

Arthur and Sara Jo Kobacker Building
2027 Massachusetts Avenue NW, at Kivie Kaplan Way
Washington, DC 20036

202.387.2800 @theRAC RAC.org

authorized for this age group. Youth 12 and over, all staff, and faculty are expected to seek out the vaccine in their local communities and, when available, to complete the relevant vaccination series at least two weeks prior to joining the program community.

Highly recommended for everyone

- **Influenza** - 1 dose (2 if never previously immunized). Influenza remains a serious illness for all age groups. Seasonal influenza patterns have extended into the school year. Since we do not yet know the probability this year if influenza will extend into this coming school year, we **VERY STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that all participants and staff receive the **flu vaccine** this and every year.

Yes, there are exceptions to the URJ vaccination policy, and they are rare

We recognize that individuals who have had a *documented* allergy or severe adverse reaction to a particular vaccine may not be able to complete the immunization schedule outlined above. Additionally, individuals with medical conditions such as congenital immunodeficiency or HIV, cancer and who are receiving chemotherapy, transplant patients, and persons receiving immunosuppressive drugs and chronic steroids, and others also may not be able to receive certain vaccines. **In these extremely rare circumstances, current documentation from a licensed Physician (MD or DO), or a Pediatric/Family Practice Advanced Practice Nurse (ARNP or PNP) not related to the individual describing the reason for exemption from immunization must be furnished to URJ Programs.** We are happy to discuss case by case management of these *rare* circumstances of medical contraindication to partial or complete vaccination.

Thank you!

The appropriate vaccination of *all* members of our community is essential in order to maintain a safe program and travel environment for your child. We thank you for your timely attention to these requirements.



The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism is the social justice office of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose more than 800 congregations across North America encompass 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose membership includes more than 2,000 Reform rabbis.

