

Information and Guidelines about Covid-19 and our Retreat at Ignatius House
August 31-September 10, 2020

Ignatius House closed for more than two months in the spring as a precaution to help slow the spread of Covid-19. They are opening for day long programs in June, and small retreats beginning in July. After careful consideration and in consultation with management at Ignatius House about the precautions in place for retreats, Shaila Catherine has decided to hold the retreat. Shaila and Ignatius House are doing everything possible to mitigate the risk of contracting Covid-19, however, any venture outside our own homes entails risk. We leave it up to your good sense to determine if this retreat is right for you.

Anyone who is feeling unwell prior to traveling, or believes they have been exposed to the coronavirus in the 14 days prior to the retreat is asked to please not travel to this retreat. If you must cancel at the last minute due to illness, we will transfer your payment, less the deposit, into a voucher credit for a future Bodhi Retreats event.

Each retreatant at Ignatius House will have a private room with private bathroom. Each room is equipped with its own HVAC system. A thermostat on each unit controls the temperature. The HVAC units are similar to PTAC systems which are found in many hotels. It is not a central air system, so they do not share ductwork with other rooms.

We will design the program schedule to combine responsible communal elements, along with maximum opportunities for seclusion. Self-scheduled practice periods will stagger occupancy of the common rooms and reduce the number of people in the meditation hall at any one time. Retreatants will have the option of practicing in the meditation hall (Main Chapel), library, their own rooms, or outside. Live daily dharma talks and meditation instructions will be broadcast via the internet giving retreatants the option to listen via their smartphones and computers from other areas on the property. Students have the option to listen via their smart phones, view the teachings on the large monitor in the library, or attend the live presentation in the meditation hall (Main Chapel). Wi-fi improvements are underway at Ignatius House; currently the private rooms do not all have a strong wi-fi signal, but we are hopeful that by August you will also have the option of connecting via laptop from the privacy of your room. Seating will be spaced out at least 6 feet from others in the meditation hall, in the dining hall, and for group and individual interviews. Social distancing from others of at least 6 feet will be required at all times, both indoors and outdoors. When weather permits, some elements of the program may be held outdoors. There are a multiple outdoor seating areas on the property that we can enjoy located on several decks along the Chattahoochee River and next to the waterfall.

To attend this retreat, each retreatant must agree to respect our guidelines, remain on the property after arrival until the end of the retreat, wear a mask in indoor common areas including the meditation hall, permit the Ignatius staff to check their temperature daily, and agree to leave the retreat immediately if they become ill or have a temperature above 100F.

Some highlights of Ignatius House's Covid-19 prevention measures include:

1. Retreat size will be limited. Currently Ignatius House is restricting the retreat size to 22 guests which will allow them to rotate room assignments between programs (the Retreat House has 45

private guest rooms). By August it is possible they may increase the allowable number of guests, but the retreat will nevertheless be kept quite small. The previous program will have ended over 48 hours prior to our arrival.

2. Guest rooms are cleaned using a three-step procedure that includes at least two passes of a CDC-approved cleaning solution. A CDC-approved disinfectant fog is applied in guest rooms between each guest.
3. Common areas are cleaned throughout the day and immediately after group use. A CDC-approved disinfectant fog is applied periodically each day in common areas.
4. Linens are cleaned using a commercial-grade solution by EcoLab and high heat.
5. Upon arrival, every guest will be asked to sanitize hands, apply a face mask, and receive a courtesy temperature check.
6. Temperatures will be checked daily for all guests, staff, and volunteers. Those with a temperature above 100F will be asked to leave.
7. Ignatius House staff will serve guests at meals to limit the number of buffet utensils and objects guest might touch. The buffet area is protected by a glass “sneeze guard”. The food service team stands behind the buffet wearing masks and gloves to serve the meals for guests.
8. Seating in the dining room will be spaced more than 6 feet apart. Guests have the option of eating their meals outdoors. Ignatius House does not prohibit guests from eating in their rooms, however, one might need to carrying their food tray upstairs to get to some of the bedrooms. If stairs are difficult for you, be sure to request a downstairs room in advance.

In addition to the above, Ignatius House adheres to protocols for training, sanitation, and maintenance that align with professional standards and best practices found within the restaurant, hotel, assisted living, and healthcare industries. All Ignatius House kitchen personnel are ServSafe certified – the nationally recognized certification administered by the National Restaurant Association. ServSafe instructs proper storage and food preparation, and industry standards for cleaning and sanitation of all surfaces. Both Kitchen and Housekeeping staff receive regular training provided by Ignatius House’s vendors in the form of instructional videos, literature, and in-person demonstrations. Ignatius House is subject to unannounced health inspections by Fulton County Public Health to ensure its adherence to these industry standards and laws. The most recent three inspections at Ignatius House revealed 100% compliance. All inspections 2017-2020 generated a score of “A.”

Hopefully the above will answer any questions you may have about protections in regard to Covid-19 and the retreat at Ignatius House. As they serve other retreats between now and our arrival, Ignatius House staff will continue to evaluate their procedures and make improvements as necessary. Please don’t hesitate to get in touch with our retreat registrar if you have questions or concerns.

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