

Covid-19 School Reopening Plan

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Bnos Leah Prospect Park Yeshiva

Brooklyn, NY

Rabbi Leib Kelman, Dean

We are very excited to plan our return to in person school and we hope that this proposal, with Hashem's help, will be sufficient to allow the school to reopen. The school encompasses Preschool-Grade 12 in a building complex of approximately 75,000 square feet. We have prepared and planned for student re-entry to school and an alternative plan (similar to the distance learning teleconference program used from March until June 2020), either for short-term or long-term distance learning as a result of a local incident or community-wide pandemic changes. We will endeavor to offer a simultaneous Zoom feed for students unable to attend school on a regular basis. This proposal was formulated based on current knowledge from reports, medical advice (Dr. Ira Hollander, Internist and Dr. Akiva Norowitz, Pediatrician, and reviewed by Dr. Tamar Norowitz, PhD in Microbiology and Immunology, SUNY Downstate), administrative staff discussions and bulletins from the CDC and BOCES. The Responsible Party is the dean of the school.

Transmission of the COVID virus takes place primarily through droplets pushed out by sneezing and coughing as well as aerosol droplets which are exhaled and remain aloft in the air for considerable time and can easily travel on air currents. Certain practices can lower the risk of future outbreaks at school and keep students, staff, and families safe. These practices and factors will be the basis of our plan to open school in a safe manner. We are reducing the number of students per room or using barriers and will insist on everyone wearing face masks and possibly face shields as well. Face masks are cloth face coverings or surgical masks that cover both the nose and mouth. All classrooms, whether using air conditioning or not, must keep one window and the room door open in order to facilitate a rigorous flow of air. We want to avoid small enclosed areas with no ventilation. Surface transmissions may or may not play a role in spreading the virus, however, vigorous daily disinfecting should reduce such possible transmissions; cleaning will be performed per established protocols followed by disinfection using the disinfectants outlined in the "additional items" section. Staggering arrival, recess, lunch and dismissal to whatever extent possible will help us avoid areas of congestion. We will also emphasize social distancing, face covering, hand hygiene, and staying at home when feeling sick. Signs about face covering and other relevant warnings will be distributed

throughout the school. Staff opening school orientation will include training for Covid-19 prevention steps.

I. Classroom Plan

To return to in-person instruction, we require social distancing (6 feet of space, marked on the floor or the wall), mask wearing, or barriers, in classrooms and in halls. The division of classes will remain constant (cohorts) throughout the day, although High School may not be able to maintain cohorts for all classes.

A. Elementary Division

- When we cannot divide a class, we will enclose each desk in a plastic barrier according to OSHA guidelines.
- Some classes may be in rooms that are large enough to practice social distancing between the students.
- We are eliminating assemblies, cafeteria lunches, and all group activities. Therefore, all school spaces including specialty classrooms, gym, lunchroom, etc., will be utilized as classrooms. Box lunches will be sent to the classrooms. Children will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water before and after eating lunch and snacks.

B. High School Division

- Each class will be divided into 2 rooms with no more than 15 students per class. The adjunct classroom will be connected via video camera and monitor so that the students will be able to view and listen to the teacher through the classroom's smartboard. The teacher will be able to see and hear the adjunct classroom as well.
- The adjunct room will not have an adult present. However, the High School administrative staff will circulate on a regular basis through the halls observing each room.
- On alternate days, the teacher will teach in the classroom where she was not physically teaching the previous day.
- Another alternative, when we cannot divide a class, is to enclose each desk in a plastic frame/barrier according to OSHA guidelines.
- All school spaces including specialty classrooms, gym, lunchroom, etc., will be utilized as classrooms.

- Unlike the past, teachers will be switching rooms for each subject instead of the students. Students will stay in the same classroom all day.

C. Preschool

This age group includes Nursery, Kindergarten and Pre1A. All groups will be in social distance settings. We will try to work with the Pre1A to encourage mask wearing. Outdoor recess, as for the rest of the school, will take place in small-supervised groups.

II. Transportation

Our school uses the NYC Board of Education bus reimbursement system; however, the situation is very unclear as to what transportation arrangements the city will have in place by September. Some bus companies have gone bankrupt and the remaining ones are unsure of what to do as there are no regulations in place. We assume that, because of social distancing, buses will only be able to transport one child per seat, approximately half their regular student load. To service our current student population, we may require double the amount of buses and it is unknown who will pay for it. Therefore, we encourage children to walk or bike to school when possible and we will also try to facilitate carpools. Both buses and carpools will be asked to have open windows; drivers and students must wear face masks. The school will provide a separate area for bus drop-off and carpool drop-off to the extent possible; we will try to stagger arrivals to ease congestion. **Parents who need transportation may have to undertake a one-month transportation tax to enable us to hire additional buses in September depending on the Board of Education reimbursement amount.**

As students and teachers enter the building, their temperatures will be taken by security personnel or teachers. Parents may take their child's temperature at home and send it with their child as well. Students will go directly to their classrooms in a single file line while maintaining social distancing. The same will apply to dismissal. Carpool students and all others will join their classes' assigned location.

III. Additional Items

- All teachers will reinforce the importance of minimizing virus transmission by using face covering, frequent hand washing (for at least 20 seconds) or disinfecting and 6 feet distancing in appropriate areas. Teachers must reinforce the idea that a decrease in hospitalization does not mean that the virus has

disappeared and that it can reappear as we have seen in other states and communities. All teachers will complete weekly questionnaires regarding their health.

- The school social worker will be available to address any mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff.
- Students' temperatures will be taken on a daily basis upon entering the school building. They will complete questionnaires at random times during each month. We will urge parents to notify us immediately if any member in their family is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Any student or staff member returning from a visit to a State with high Covid 19 infections must quarantine.
- School trips, assemblies, and group prayers will not take place; students will daven in their classrooms.
- The student recess schedule will be staggered by grade to limit the number of children in the schoolyard at any one time.
- All students must wear face masks to school. If a student forgets her mask, she can get one in the school office. Students will be allowed to remove their masks during lunch, recess and other selected times provided that social distancing is respected.
- Nursery and Preschool students, as long as they remain in a stable group all day and all week, are considered to be a "cohort" and have different rules, especially for mask wearing which is then NOT required. However, when they are in the buses and in the halls, they need to wear face covering.
- Teachers must wear face masks and are encouraged to use face shields as well.
- We will provide PPE (personal protective equipment) for our staff.
- Teachers and students should bring water bottles to school every day and water fountains will be shut off.
- Teachers should frequently encourage children to use the restrooms to avoid lineups in the bathroom before lunch and before recess.
- All bathrooms have antibacterial soap dispensers and there are hand sanitizer dispensers in the entry areas, halls, and all classrooms.
- Toys used in the school must be sanitizable (no fuzzy animals).
- Entry to school is limited to students and staff. Repair people and deliveries should be scheduled after the children have left the school.
- Signs will be posted for mask use, hand hygiene, and social distancing throughout the school.

- **Flu shot:** We advise all students and the entire staff to get the flu shot at their earliest convenience. Our medical advisers have stated that it is likely for both the flu and COVID-virus to resurge in early fall and the combination of both could be very overwhelming for people. We therefore seriously advise flu shots as early as possible.
- **Disinfection:** Our housekeeping staff uses a 2-10% bleach solution, or at least 60-80% isopropyl alcohol, which will remain on the surface approximately 5 minutes, to disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as desks, mezuzot, doorknobs, and light switches. The cleaning is done every night.
- Parents and staff will receive our weekly newsletters, hard copies and online, at the end of each week, indicating any new government information or directives.
- Staff contracting the virus must stay at home, as required by the Board of Health, and will continue to be paid.
- All employees over the age of 65 and all those with existing conditions, which make them vulnerable to the virus, can choose to leave employment at the Yeshiva.
- Fire drills and lockdown drills have to be conducted with social distancing or with the students wearing masks.
- We have an attendance program.
- Students or parents may choose to have only distance learning.

IV. Protocol for Incidents of Infection

We have developed a protocol for dealing with a virus infection incident among the students and staff. If a student or staff member is presenting with possible Covid-19 symptoms during school hours, they will be escorted by the school nurse (wearing protective gear) to the secure waiting area, outside the Nurse's office, until they are picked up by a parent or family member. Staff members will be sent home. Suspected cases will be asked to visit a health care provider to confirm possible Covid-19 infection before returning to school. We will use the CDC decision tree to determine if the school needs to be closed for a thorough cleaning (approximately 2-5 days or longer depending on the status of community health). During such closings, teachers and students will revert to using distance teaching methods. Our obligation to do contact tracing requires us to notify the Department of Health about any new case of infection. Any new case of infection will be reported to the parents as well.

The school will request guidance from the Department of Health as to when to allow infected students to return to school. Students and staff who recently tested positive should stay home. Virus related absences will be treated differently than all other absences.

V. Conclusion

The health and well-being of our students and staff in our school is of paramount importance to us and it is our fervent wish and prayer that the COVID-19 virus will recede and no longer be a problem worldwide. A committee of one administrator and one teacher will meet weekly to review compliance to new protocols and to community health status changes. No one knows what the future months will bring in terms of the pandemic. At Prospect Park Yeshiva we will continue to carefully monitor local conditions and plan according to NY State and CDC guidelines.

SCREENING Questionnaire

LAST NAME:

FIRST NAME:

GRADE:

HOME NUMBER:

1. Have you been exposed to somebody diagnosed with Covid-19? Yes No

If yes, when did this happen? _____

2. Have you recently traveled to a state with high Covid-19 infections? Yes No

3. Do you have any of the following symptoms? Please circle

Fever of at least 100.4 Yes No

Chills Yes No

Cough Yes No

Shortness of breath Yes No

Sore throat Yes No

Congestion/runny nose Yes No

Loss of taste or smell Yes No

Nausea or vomiting Yes No

Diarrhea Yes No

Fatigue Yes No

Muscle or body aches Yes No

Headache Yes No