



Introduction:

Pursuant to the Department of Health's *Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency*, Gesh Yehuda Yeshiva has developed an individual plan for reopening and operating during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Our plan meets the standards set forth in the guidance issued by the NYSED for Religious and Independent Schools and reflects engagement with school stakeholders and community members, including but not limited to administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and affiliated organizations. Specifically, our plan covers: (1) reopening of school facilities for in-person instruction, (2) monitoring of health conditions, (3) containment of potential transmission of the 2019 novel coronavirus (Covid 19), and (4) closure of school facilities and in-person instruction, if necessitated by virus transmission.

I. Reopening of School Facilities for In-Person Instruction

Capacity: We are a K-8 special education school occupying approximately 10,000 square feet of classroom and office space. Student and teacher population is well under 100 allowing for an average of 100 square feet per person significantly above the recommended level for special education programs.

School will begin on September 9, 2020 for grades 1-8 and September 10, 2020 for Kindergarten. We will open to full-time in-person learning. After two weeks the school will re-evaluate the in-person format and make any changes to the ensuing protocol that it feels will enhance the safety of the entire school population. To reduce congestion, teaching staff will be divided into morning and afternoon cohorts, administrative educational staff will work alternate days, and administrative non-educational (business) staff will stagger days and hours.

Social Distancing:

- We will ensure 6 feet. distance between personnel, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance. Any time personnel are less than 6 feet apart from one another, personnel must wear acceptable face coverings. Tightly confined spaces will be occupied by only one individual at a time, unless all occupants are wearing face coverings.

- All classroom settings will allow for 6 feet of distancing. Floors will be marked to remind everyone to keep proper spacing. Teachers and assistant teachers will wear plastic face shields. Masks will be made available to students. As a special education school, we are cognizant of particular students' needs and tolerances. Frequent breaks will be incorporated in the day in which mask wearing will not be needed such as recess, gym (which will occur in outside spaces) and lunch. Students will not be required to wear masks when seated at their desks. They will when they enter, exit or move around the classroom. Windows in the classroom will be kept open to maximize ventilation. In addition, the school's HVAC system will be outfitted with hi-density filters to help mitigate the spread of any potential virus.

In the lower grades, each classroom has an accompanying bathroom. The middle school bathrooms are adjacent to the classroom. Daily instruction will be provided on proper hygiene with regular hand washing occurring throughout the day with a minimum of 6 times a day (Twice in the morning, twice around lunch, and twice in the afternoon).

- All children will stay within cohorts. Cohorts will conform to class. The range will be from 4 to 9 students per cohort. Within the cohort, teachers (who will receive professional development training on school safety policies) will provide daily instruction on proper use of PPE, social distancing and hygiene. Their instruction will include consideration of each student's vulnerabilities and mental well-being.¹

Within each cohort, each student will be encouraged to use only their own materials and supplies. However, certain materials will unavoidably be shared. These include desks, manipulables and supportive technologies. Protocols will be put in place to ensure that four (4) times a day desks and educational material (smart board and manipulables) will be wiped down with FDA approved disinfectant.

- Certain situations inside the school campus, but outside the classroom will not allow for social distancing such as therapeutic sessions. In these situations, the number of individuals allowed in the therapy rooms will be capped at six. Masks will be required for the occupational and physical therapists and for the school counselor and school psychologist. Speech pathologists will wear clear face guards. OT and PT sessions, when involving serious exertion, will, to the extent possible, employ 12 feet of separation in group settings. Therapists will disinfect equipment after each student's use.

¹ Our child psychologist supported by our school counselor will develop a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) suitable for our school population. They will lead a series of professional development sessions to properly train our staff in its implementation.

- Hallways: We will post social distancing markers using tape or signs that denote 6 feet of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas on the site including the lobby area, the hallways. The hallways will also be marked with traffic flow arrows to minimize congestion. For the most part students will stay in their classrooms for multiple subjects further limiting the possibility of congestion.
- Recess and gym: all physical activity will take place outside either in the front yard or on the roof playground. In case of inclement weather recess and/or gym will be replaced with an activity that allows for proper social distancing.
- We will limit in-person gatherings as much as possible and use tele- or video-conferencing whenever possible. Essential in-person gatherings (e.g. meetings of more than 5 people) will be held in the school's multi-purpose room. The multi-purpose room is well ventilated, having 6 windows, which will be kept open at all times until weather no longer permits. The size of the room will also allow for proper (6 foot) social distancing.

The educational director's office will also be used for meetings of 4 people or less.

- There will be designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries. This will limit contact to the greatest extent possible with individuals outside the school community.

PPE and Face Coverings:

Face coverings will be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled. They will not be shared and will be properly stored or discarded. The school will purchase sufficient PPE so it will be able to provide on a daily basis all necessary equipment. PPE will be stored in a designated area.

The model we will follow through all these safety procedures will be as follows: 1. Communication to parents via letter so they will properly instruct their children. 2. Professional development for teachers relating to both their own health and safety practices and well as proper instruction for children. 3. Appropriate signage to serve as ongoing reminders until the practice is ingrained.

Teachers will wear plastic face shields in the classroom and masks when in the hallways. Signage will be placed around the building to reinforce social distancing and wearing of PPE.

We are well aware that certain populations in the school may have difficulty following new procedures. As a special education school, we have a great deal of experience working with sensitive populations. Our school counselor and child psychologist will work with such populations through a program of incentives to facilitate compliance. Parents will be part of such a program.

For students more vulnerable or at a greater risk for health reasons, we will do all we can to allow them to participate in educational activities which may include the provision of extra PPE or social distancing for the particular student, or teleconferencing and/or distance learning, when appropriate.

To the greatest extent possible, we will make accommodations for vulnerable faculty and staff. They will be encouraged to wear extra PPE such as gloves and/or face masks. We will also stagger hours whenever possible for educational and non-educational administrative personnel. The goal will be to ensure the proper functioning of the school in both its educational and business capacities, while reducing the total number of individuals in the school at a single time.

The space around the secretary's desk, which serves as a reception area will be cordoned off with a polycarbonate enclosure. Also the security desk and selected administrative offices will receive enclosures.

Extracurricular Activities and Field Trips

Extracurricular activity will be minimized and when they will occur, proper social distancing and/or face coverings will be required. All interscholastic sports will be cancelled until further notice.

Field trips will generally be limited. When field trips will occur, students, faculty and staff will be asked to social distance and/or wear appropriate face coverings as the situation dictates. Visitors will be limited, and facemasks will be required of visitors as well as temperature checks.

Transportation

As a special education school transportation is provided by the NYC DOE Office of Pupil Transport. Though not under our supervision we will advise and monitor to see that all school bus drivers and matrons wear a face covering. We expect that they will be trained (and provided periodic refreshers) on the proper use of personal protective equipment and the signs and symptoms of Covid 19.

Parents will be instructed via letter by the school to have their child wear PPE to the extent possible and to be aware if their child is not feeling well or has a fever. In such cases, parents will be instructed to keep their child home and notify the school immediately.

Children in the same family will be asked to sit together to maximize social distancing for others on the bus.

School Bus: Arrival and departure from the school will be staged and segmented to allow for maximum social distancing. Line-ups to come into and to depart from the school building will have marking at 6 foot intervals to keep children apart.

Parental Drop off/Pick-up: Traffic flow will be monitored to facilitate a staggered entrance into and departure from the school. Parents will receive specific instructions and

times to mitigate any rush into the school. Again as a special education school with a small student population diligence in planning will facilitate proper social distancing.

Food Services:

Student lunch will take place in the classroom where 6 foot social distancing will be enforced. Children will wash before and after lunch.

Staff lunch (capped at 10) will be staggered and will take place in the MP room discussed above.

In both situations, social distancing will be maintained and current practices to protect students with food allergies will be enforced.

Students and staff will properly wash their hands before and after eating. Appropriate hand hygiene will be promoted through signage and teacher reinforcement. The sharing of food and beverages will not be allowed and will be enforced by teachers. Food will be provided by parents. Foods prone to causing allergic reactions (i.e. nuts) will not be allowed in the school building.

Emergency Drills:

Procedures for **fire and other safety drills** will be reviewed to create a unidirectional traffic flow and maximize the use of multiple egresses from the building. The unidirectional flow of traffic will be reinforced by signage. All mandated fire drills and other safety drills will take place as scheduled.

Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services and Programs:

As a special education school, we have the infrastructure in place to observe and address signs of mental, behavioral, and emotional issues with students. Our child psychologist will develop a protocol to specifically address the unique stressors caused by the spread of Covid 19. These protocols will include communication with parents, teacher training, counselling and positive reinforcements to mitigate concerns and anxiety. If necessary, such students will be referred for evaluation to appropriate health and therapeutic authorities. As previously mentioned this will be embedded in a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

Communication:

Parents are essential partners in education. Letters will be sent via email periodically to parents and staff with updates and applicable instructions. The first of these letters will serve as an orientation to parents. It will include this plan with a request for both parents and staff to make suggestions as appropriate. The letter will emphasize: school opening; social distancing, PPE and hygienic procedures and, importantly what to do in case of suspicion or detection of Covid 19. The safety plan will be posted on the school's website.

Teachers and students will be trained in proper social distancing and hygiene protocol. Appropriate signage will be placed throughout the building and informational material will be kept for distribution in the main office.”

The school’s executive director and its director of human resources will be the designated coordinators and the main points of contact upon the identification of positive Covid 19 cases. They will be responsible for notifying the local health authorities of any positive cases and for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents or legal guardians of students regarding the Covid 19 public health emergency and the plan implemented by the school.

Continuity of Learning:

On March 13, 2020, the school terminated in-person learning. On March 16, 2020 the school launched its distance learning program, which as a special education school, has been approved by the NYC Department of Education. As we open up in fall 2020 we are taking two (2) steps to ensure that, if needed, the distance learning program will be as robust as possible. Each classroom will be outfitted with a smart board. Via technologies all sessions will have the capacity to be broadcast as necessary. We will use this capacity to teach children who may be out sick (even with a non-Covid 19-related illness). In addition, all education will be taught as modules that can divide into discrete sections to facilitate movement to hybrid or full distance learning platforms if necessitated by the external spread of the virus beyond governmentally permissible levels.

There will be clear opportunities for instruction that are accessible to students. Students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology. If needed suitable devices needed to participate in distance learning will be made available to all students.

Attendance Taking:

The school will collect and report daily teacher/student engagement or attendance, regardless of instructional setting via email and/or direct contact between the teacher and principal via the school secretary.

II. MONITORING OF HEALTH CONDITIONS

Opening the School Building

Protocols –including this safety plan- for opening the school building will be sent to all staff and parents on or before August 14, 2020. We will instruct all to read carefully and acknowledge in writing the protocols.

The facilities will have been properly disinfected and appropriate signage and disinfection stations will have been set up throughout the building. Marking for proper social distancing

and desk placement will be affixed to the floors. Hallways will have marking to create unidirectional traffic flows. The school will have procured the proper amount of PPE and face coverings for our students, faculty, and staff.

Hygiene Cleaning and Disinfection:

School wide cleaning and disinfection will take place on a daily basis with cleaning products approved by the CDC for use against Covid 19. Logs will be kept outside of each bathroom, each classroom and each office. It will be the job of the janitorial staff to keep the log. A designated employee from the school's administrative office will be charged with the responsibility to twice daily check the logs.

We will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.

For the K-4 students bathrooms are adjoined to each classroom. The middle school has two (2) adjacent bathrooms. For staff there are three (3) dedicated individual bathrooms. Appropriate supplies will be located in the bathrooms. In addition eight (8) hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed on walls throughout the building: two (2) in the lower grade wing; two (2) in the upper grade wing; one (1) in the therapy center, one (1) by the secretary station; one (1) by the waiting area; and one (1) by the administrative offices.

Hand sanitizers will also be available on the desks of all therapists, teachers and administrators.

Monitoring Health Conditions at School

Screening:

All employees (administrators, staff and teachers and children will undergo a temperature check before entering the building daily. In addition, administrators, staff and teachers will need to complete a brief questionnaire as well. The questionnaire will ask if they have had any Covid 19 symptoms in the past 14 days; have tested positive for Covid 19 in the past 14 days or have been in contact with any confirmed or suspected cases of Covid 19 in the past 14 days. If yes, they will be asked to list, to the best of their memory, the names of those individuals. Those names will be forwarded to the Department of Health.

We will maintain a continuous log of every person, including staff and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the school.

If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, the individual will be denied entry into the facility or sent directly to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. In those cases, the area will be sealed for 24 hours. Approved disinfectant products will be used by our janitorial staff. Products, such as disinfectant, disinfectant wipes and sanitizers will have been purchased as part of the school overall procurement of supplies and will be stored and available in the school.

Testing Protocols:

Staff and students will be referred to their primary care physicians for diagnostic testing for Covid 19, in consultation with local health department officials, when needed.

Symptomatic individuals, close contacts with suspected or confirmed Covid 19 cases and individuals with recent international travel or travel within a state with widespread transmission of Covid 19 (as designated through the New York State Travel Advisory) will be encouraged to be tested by their primary care physician before such individuals return to school.

Testing Responsibility:

The local health department will be the community organization primarily responsible for referring, sourcing, and administering testing.

Early Warning Signs:

We will follow the metrics signs established by state and local health departments that will serve as early warning signs that positive Covid 19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

III. CONTAINMENT: RESPONSE AND PREVENTION**School Health Offices:**

If an individual develops symptoms of Covid 19 during the school day, he/she will be isolated from everyone and, in the case of a student immediate arrangements will be made for the child to be taken home. Others in the child's cohort will be notified as well. We will ask others in the cohort to self-quarantine until the results of the test are known. During the period of self-quarantine we will implement the distance learning platform –through the smart board module model- for those students unable to participate in in-person learning.

Collection:

Parents or guardians will be contacted and told to pick up their child. They will also be instructed that the child see a health care provider. We will advise that the child is tested and that the results of the test be made available to the school as soon as the parent has the test results. The child will be allowed to return to school upon receipt of written confirmation that test results were negative and a doctor's note that the child is able to return to school and does not pose a risk to others in the building.

Infected Individuals:

Individuals that have tested positive must recover and be certified in writing by a qualified medical professional that they no longer transmit the virus before they will be allowed to return to in-person learning. We will establish a mechanism (or be informed of a mechanism established by the local health department) by which this information will be transmitted to the local health department. The area in which the individual tested positive will be sealed for 24 hours. Approved disinfectant products will be used by our janitorial staff.

Exposed Individuals:

Individuals who were exposed to the virus must complete quarantine before returning to in-person learning. This will be conducted in coordination with the local health department as stated above.

Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection:

We will adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by DOH and CDC and as outlined earlier in this safety plan.

Contact Tracing:

We will support our local health department in contact tracing efforts. This will be, in large measure, enhanced by the administration of daily questionnaires that will have the names of contacts. If an individual tests positive, we will forward the lists generated from the questionnaire to local health authorities.

Communication:

As outlined above, we will share protocols and safety measures with all relevant parties, including but not limited to, emails and newsletters.

IV. CLOSURE AND CONTINGENCY PLANS**Closure triggers:**

We will closely monitor the situation. If the infection rate reaches 5% or 9% infection rate as determined by the state in our area will close in-person learning and open distance learning for a minimum of a two-week period.

In addition to this trigger, we will be in communication with state and local health department officials to identify other conditions that may warrant reducing in-person education or closing of the school, and we will plan for an orderly closure with them.

Operational Activity:

All business related activity of the school will occur on a time staggered basis to reduce congestion.

Educational operations will be decreased and ceased via phases and milestones as the specific situation arises and determinations as to appropriate closures or partial closures will be done in consultation with the local health department based on the triggers stated above. All changes and updates will be communicated to staff and parents and all other relevant individuals as quickly as possible.

Continuity of Learning:

As stated previously, on March 16, 2020 the school launched its distance learning program. As we open up in fall 2020, we are taking 2 steps to ensure that, if needed, the distance learning program will be as robust as possible. Classroom will be outfitted with smart boards. Via technologies all sessions will have the capacity to be broadcast as necessary. In addition, all education will be taught as modules that can divide into discrete sections to facilitate movement to hybrid or full distance learning platforms if necessitated by the external spread of the virus beyond governmentally permissible levels.

There will be clear opportunities for instruction that are accessible to students. Students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology. If needed suitable devices needed to participate in distance learning will be made available to all students.

~~~~~