Protocols and procedures for a safe and healthy school year
Dear Blitstein Institute of Hebrew Theological College Parents, Faculty, Students and Staff,

We hope this letter finds you in good health and we daven for the continued wellness and safety of our community and all Klal Yisrael.

We know that this has been a time filled with uncertainty and complexity and this communication is meant to clarify our intentions based upon current conditions. This plan was developed over a period of weeks with input from our medical advisory group, faculty, staff, parents, students and administration.

It is our plan to open the women’s campus for Fall Semester beginning Tuesday, September 8th, 2020. Student residences will open after the Succos break. Please read the entire document as details, policies and procedures are all listed below.

It is our aim to provide an outstanding learning experience for the young women of our community in the safest possible environment for all. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with questions or concerns.

With very best wishes,

Rabbi Binyomin Olstein
Menahel

Dr. Chani Tessler
Dean

Rita Lipshitz
Assistant Dean
STRATEGY & INTENT

The guiding principles behind our plan are to:

▷ Protect the health and safety of the HTC community by taking actions based on scientific data and government and health department guidelines. To that end, HTC endeavors to be compliant with all current and future Illinois state mandatory requirements for physical distancing, protective equipment, hygiene and cleaning, communication and screening.

▷ Continue to deliver high-quality academic programs, compliant with all applicable accreditation standards, in an inclusive manner for all students in all divisions. We will continue to offer classes in order to enable students to successfully progress in their academic program, earn credits, graduate on time and enter the workforce in their chosen fields and professions.

▷ Adopt and adapt necessary changes in our plans due to real-time changes in the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic emerging laws, regulations and executive orders from all levels of government.

Our plan is organized into four main components:

▷ Opening the campuses for students, faculty and staff with a culture of shared responsibility for public health and compliance with federal, state and local guidelines while offering distance learning where appropriate.

▷ Strategies for monitoring health and safety of the campus community in accordance with mandated public health best practices at the time.

▷ Containment, should an outbreak of COVID-19 occur at any of our campus locations.

▷ Plans, should any of our campuses be required to temporarily suspend in-person activities.
CAPACITY:

- Blitstein Institute will reduce the capacity in all classrooms and in all shared office spaces to comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC) and IBHE guidelines.

- All guidelines of the Illinois Board of Higher Education and Department of Public Health will be followed.

- Employees and faculty will be invited back to workspaces that do allow for six-foot distancing. Supervisors will devise a schedule for affected employees consistent with HTC HR policies.

- Students and faculty will begin to return to campuses consistent with Phase IV reopening guidelines issued by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

- Faculty who share office space will develop a schedule with their department chairs or deans so that only one faculty member is in the office at a time where a six-foot distance cannot be maintained in that office space.

- Physical and social distancing will require a distance of at least six feet between individuals on campus (except in student dorm rooms) and all individuals will be required to wear a face covering while in all public spaces within the campus.

- Sufficient quarantine and isolation accommodations for residential students will be designated prior to opening student housing (see section on Residential Living below for more information).
CLASS SCHEDULING:

Based on conditions at the time of final scheduling, some courses will be offered in-person, and others will be offered remotely.

The College will ensure that every in-person didactic course will be simultaneously offered remotely for students who cannot attend in person due to documented health concerns or the inability to travel to campus at that time. Experiential classes (labs, fieldwork and student teaching) will proceed as long as conditions and regulations allow.

In addition, for the Fall 2020 semester, academic leadership has designated certain courses to be delivered fully remotely via Zoom and Canvas. These classes will be designated as such in the Online Fall Bulletin. Larger size classes, requiring in-person participation, may be moved to a different location. These classes will be designated as well in the Online Fall Bulletin.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):

▷ While on campus, with the exception of private offices if the individual is alone, all members of the Blitstein Institute community must wear a face covering, either cloth or disposable, consistent with CDC criteria:
  ○ Covers the individual’s mouth and nose
  ○ Fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
  ○ Secured with ties or ear loops
  ○ Allows for breathing without significant restriction, and
  ○ For cloth face coverings, able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to shape

▷ PPE does not have to be worn in private offices if a staff member or faculty member is alone. Should someone else enter the office, PPE must be worn.
**COVID-19 SCREENING, TESTING AND POLICIES:**

**SCREENING:**

Blitstein Institute will require students to self-certify and inform administration of the following:

- COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days
- Close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases in the past 14 days
- Personal temperature check if feeling unwell
- Assessment of taste and smell changes
- Presence of cough and/or sore throat

In case an individual’s self-assessment is cause for concern, the student should immediately notify the Blitstein Institute office and schedule testing for COVID-19. The office will notify the Blitstein Institute deans and HTC administration. (The student will need to remain off campus until a negative result is ascertained.)

If a student has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, please inform the college administration right away, who will alert local or state health department for further instructions. Employees who have a confirmed COVID-19 test should alert HTC’s HR department right away.

**COVID-19 POLICIES:**

- **Symptomatic individual with positive test:** exclude for 10 days from symptom onset AND at least 3 days after fever resolution (if present) AND improved respiratory symptoms.

- **Symptomatic individual not yet tested:** exclude for 10 days from symptom onset AND at least 3 days after fever resolution (if present) AND improved respiratory symptoms.

- **Symptomatic individual determined to have an alternate cause or illness by their primary medical doctor:** exclude until symptoms resolve.

- **Symptomatic individual with test negative:** exclude until afebrile for 24 hours (if fever present) AND improved respiratory symptoms.

- **Exposed and asymptomatic:** exclude for 14 days from last exposure if remains asymptomatic; exclude until meets criteria #1/2 if becomes symptomatic.

- The COVID-19 positive individual does NOT need a repeat COVID test or a doctor’s note in order to return to school.

All students and staff in the same classroom or who have come in close contact with (defined as greater than 15 minutes of interaction less than 6 feet away) should quarantine at home (or quarantine dorm space) unless given alternate guidance from health department officials. Anyone who develops symptoms during that time should contact their health care provider and schools should follow guidance #1/2 above.
BLITSTEIN INSTITUTE STUDENT RESIDENTIAL LIVING:

▷ Student residences will open after the Succos break, per the academic calendar. All classes will be available to students via distance learning.

▷ A maximum of two students will be assigned to each room.

▷ CDC and Department of Public Health sanitization and disinfecting requirements will be adhered to in all common areas, including all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces within the residential facilities.

▷ Acceptable face coverings (as described above) are required in common areas of the dormitory apartments. Masks are not required in the student’s bedroom.

▷ Non-essential gatherings and/or activities are not permitted in the students’ residence.

▷ No outside visitors will be allowed in residential halls. Students are not permitted to visit other students in other residence hall units.

▷ All State of Illinois and City of Chicago reopening guidelines will apply to Blitstein Institute students residing in student housing.

Students who fail the COVID 19 self-certification or who test positive for COVID-19 will be provided with separate accommodations. These students will be allowed to isolate or quarantine in student housing in accordance with specific rules and requirements necessary to ensure the safety of the other residence hall occupants.

RESTART OPERATIONS:

In order to maintain the health and safety of our community, and in accordance with the reopening guidelines of the State of Illinois, Blitstein Institute will enforce the following policies:

▷ Check all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, especially ventilation systems.

▷ Use high quality air filters in all facilities where possible.

▷ Establish frequent disinfecting and cleaning schedules to be enforced via cleaning logs.

▷ Create modified entrances and exits, and alter other building circulation routes to avoid congregating.

▷ Post CDC & directional signage abundantly and visibly throughout Blitstein Institute facilities.

▷ Create layouts for classrooms and other student spaces that comply with social distancing standards.
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

▷ Masks are required indoors at all times.

▷ Limit employee in-person gatherings as much as possible and use tele-conferencing or video-conferencing whenever possible. Essential in-person gatherings (e.g. meetings) will be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.

▷ Establish designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

▷ Bathrooms:
  ○ A quick disinfecting cleaning will be required using provided wipes, following use of the facilities.
  ○ Frequent in-depth disinfection will occur throughout the day.

▷ Hallways:
  ○ Directional arrows will be put in place on floors to keep traffic flowing in one direction, with limited chance for interaction by individuals on either side.

▷ Library:
  ○ Blitstein Institute will limit the number of students allowed entry at a given time.
  ○ Library users will be requested to clean all workspaces before and after use with disinfectant provided.

CAMPUS VISITOR POLICY:

▷ Visitors will be required to self-certify per guidelines listed above.

▷ Visitors will sign in and be required to wear face coverings and adhere to all established health and safety policies.

▷ Visitors who do not have a face covering will be provided one from Blitstein Institute. Any visitors refusing to wear a mask will be denied entry.
HYGIENE AND CLEANING:

▷ HTC will establish campus-wide cleaning and disinfection protocols for classrooms, student residence halls, and other facilities. CDC and Department of Public Health sanitization and disinfecting requirements will be adhered to in all common areas, including all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces facilities.

▷ HTC will maintain cleaning logs on site that document date, time and scope of cleaning.

▷ HTC will limit the sharing of objects and discourage touching of shared surfaces; or, when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched areas, wear gloves (trade-appropriate or medical); or sanitize or wash hands before and after contact.

▷ HTC will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations in the facilities including: handwashing soap, running warm water, disposable paper towels, lined garbage cans, as well as an alcohol based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.

- Appropriate hand hygiene and/or products will be available at every entrance to every building, in every corridor, every bathroom and near high-touch common objects, where appropriate

- HTC will promote good hand hygiene by posting signage near hand hygiene stations

▷ HTC will conduct regular cleaning and disinfection at least after every shift daily or more frequently as needed, and frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects (e.g. tools, machinery) and surfaces, as well as high transit areas, such as restrooms and common areas, will be completed.

▷ The facilities department will increase the frequency of previously established cleaning schedules and abide by EPA and DOH guidelines to ensure products are environmentally safe and effective against COVID-19.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

▷ To ensure access to participation in all student campus activities, social distance and PPE guidelines will be enforced.

▷ As a general rule there will be minimal on-campus presentations or events during the Fall 2020 semester. All activities are encouraged to be planned for and offered in a remote fashion so as ensure full participation by all interested students. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved in writing by senior management and must occur in accordance with the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

▷ Residential campuses may have alternative guidelines for extracurricular activities, as approved by the dean and senior management.
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS:

- In the case of a student who has a disability, is unable to attend classes and/or requires other assistance and/or access, a request for reasonable accommodation shall be made in accordance with existing College policy to the student disabilities coordinator (Dr. Richard Aronoff, aronoff@htc.edu) at the program where the student is enrolled or the Human Resources department. All reasonable accommodations will be made in accordance with the College’s policy.

STRATEGIES FOR MONITORING HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE HTC COMMUNITY:

INCIDENTS OF COVID-19:

- HTC requests all members of the HTC community to notify their dean or Human Resources should they test positive for COVID-19.

- The dean or HR Department must immediately notify the HTC Chief Operating Officer, who will be the point of contact with the local health departments.

- HTC will work with the applicable county and city local health departments to notify them of positive cases and to cooperate and partner on tracing and notification efforts.

- HTC will abide by the recommendations of the local health department, including temporarily suspending activities at a particular location, if so warranted.

- All required notifications to employees and students about COVID-19 on campus will be made by the Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Operating Officer.

- Students who test positive for COVID-19 and are well enough, or students in a mandatory quarantine situation who are well, will be able to participate in classes (except certain labs and experientials) remotely. To the extent that the illness prevents students from participating even remotely, during the COVID-related absence from class, and after requesting accommodations through the existing accommodation process, students may be permitted to make up all work in accordance with applicable school and course policies.

TRACING:

- HTC will provide the information below to the appropriate public agency responsible for the State of Illinois Contact Tracing Program.

- HTC will communicate with all faculty, staff and students to gain more information, if instructed to do so by the State of Illinois Contact Tracing Program.

- If instructed by the State of Illinois Contact Tracing Program, close contacts, as defined by the local health department, will be informed of potential exposure and that they shall not return to work or school until they satisfy a 14-day quarantine period with no symptoms.
**CONTAINMENT:**

- Any member of the HTC community who tests positive for COVID-19 or who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 is required to self-quarantine for a minimum of 14-days.

- In addition, anyone who is suspected of having been exposed to a person suspected of, or confirmed with, a COVID-19 case must also self-quarantine for 14-days unless the person suspected of having COVID-19 has a negative test at least five days after the exposure and before the end of the 14 days.

- In consultation with the local health department, Blitstein Institute will identify where students who are exposed to, or infected with, COVID-19 will be residing throughout the duration of their isolation.

- In the event a student living in student housing must be quarantined, Blitstein Institute will create a support system that will be provided including food, medicine, psychosocial, academic and/or other support as needed.

- The coordinator will contact occupants of any contaminated spaces by email/text message to inform them of contamination and to advise them on next steps.

- HTC will clean applicable contaminated areas in the event of a positive test.

**SHUTDOWN PROCEDURES:**

- Should the government mandate a shelter-in-place or shutdown, HTC will comply as it did in March 2020 or in accordance with the then current laws, executive orders or guidance. In such an event, all in-person classes will automatically switch to remote instruction. Faculty and staff will be instructed to work remotely from home.

- Residential students who may not be able to depart campus quickly may be able to shelter-in-place for a temporary period and will be required to leave campus housing to shelter-in-place at their permanent residence or other premises in accordance with the State Guidance in effect at the time.

**COMMUNICATION:**

- The campus community will be updated on a regular basis through communications from the president of the Touro College and University System, HTC’s chief executive officer, the chief academic officer and the deans with respect to all aspects of the campus operation as impacted by COVID-19.

- HTC will establish a communication plan for employees, visitors and customers with a consistent means to provide updated information, including but not limited to, conspicuously posting and updating safety plans on-site.
OTHER:

While this Plan was created to provide enhanced health and safety measures for our campus community, with the intention of mitigating the risk of COVID-19 on HTC campuses and any potential spread within our campus community, HTC acknowledges that elimination of all risk on campus while still operating with on-campus classes, residential housing and campus events, is impossible.

HTC is committed to ensuring the fulfillment of this policy in all decisions including, but not limited to, recruitment, the administration of educational programs and activities, hiring, compensation and all other terms and conditions of admission, matriculation and employment.

For Tracing and Tracking, confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations.