COVID-19 REOPENING PLAN
2020-2021

Protocols and procedures for a safe and healthy school year
August 7, 2020
17 Av, 5780

Dear Fasman Yeshiva High School Community:

We hope this communication finds you and your family healthy and safe during these unprecedented times. We also hope you are enjoying a restful summer break.

The new school year is rapidly approaching. We are eager to welcome everyone back and begin the 2020 – 2021 school year at FYHS!

Thank you to those students, parents/guardians, faculty, and other staff members who took our recent “climate” survey about coming back to school. Your feedback was incredibly informative to our decision making.

As the health and safety of our community is paramount to the FYHS administration, in consultation with our medical advisory board and institutional senior leadership, we have developed the following hybrid re-opening plan for the 2020 – 2021 school year, presenting a blend of both in-person and online learning for our students.

Together with HTC leadership, the high school administration will continue to monitor trustworthy sources of information, consult with our medical advisors, and adjust our protocols as needed, to ensure Fasman Yeshiva High School provides as safe and secure a learning environment as possible.

We appreciate your flexibility, understanding, positivity, communication, and overall support of the high school as we navigated the last several months, and as we prepare to navigate the months ahead.

Please feel free to be in touch with any of the institutional administration if you have questions. Please make sure you are checking your email regularly for important updates and information.

Looking forward to a wonderful school year ahead.

Kol tuv,

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Menahel/ Head Principal
Fasman Yeshiva High School

Rabbi Mordechai Ginsparg
Assistant Principal
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FYHS/HTC has the advantage of having operated our Yeshivas HaKayitz summer camp in this environment, and what we have seen on campus during the summer helps informs our thinking about the coming school year:

▷ For starters, our experience in Kayitz has helped us come to the firm conclusion that students—regardless of age—cannot wear masks all day. Our campers and staff are putting forth their best effort, but they also have the advantage of being outside most of the day; to expect students to sit in classrooms all day in masks, is, in our opinion, extremely challenging. We understand other schools disagree with this thinking, and we truly hope they prove successful in their approach; our committee, however, is focused on our students, and on setting up a structure that provides for the best possible learning experience while balancing their physical health and safety, emotional well-being, and realistic expectations.

▷ We have also seen the significant advantages of a cohort-based model, with regards to containment of a potential case of COVID-19. Thanks to our strict adherence to the pod approach that restricted all bunk activities (sports, activities, shiur) to stay exclusively within the bunk and its counselors, when a counselor recently tested positive for COVID-19, the Village of Skokie Health Department required only that specific bunk to be quarantined at home; the rest of the camp was permitted to continue the camp program.
Additionally, earlier this month we conducted a thorough survey of our entire population of students, parents, faculty, and staff. The survey drew more than 320 responses, and provided significant feedback that also helped inform our decisions for the coming school year. Key findings included:

▷ 80% of students indicated they were very comfortable or somewhat comfortable in a well-planned return.

▷ One-third of all HTC students (33% FYHS, 43% Beis Midrash; and 30% Blitstein) surveyed acknowledged that they could not strictly adhere to wearing approved face masks indoors at all times.

▷ Only 39% of college and high school faculty members indicated they were very comfortable with a return to campus with social distancing precautions in place, though our rabbinic faculty, in particular, has overall indicated a strong desire to return to the classroom.

▷ 98% of Blitstein and 86% of our men's division students reported to be either very comfortable or somewhat comfortable with online education during this past Spring and Summer Semesters.

▷ In FYHS, 44% reported being very comfortable, and 39% were somewhat comfortable with online education in the Spring Semester. Also among FYHS students, 40% preferred in-person instruction while the remaining desired either online (20%) or a blended (40%) form of education starting in September.

▷ 62% of faculty reported being very comfortable with Zoom instruction and 24% were somewhat comfortable. 78% of faculty are eager to learn about new online education options for the Fall.

▷ 25% of FYHS parents reported being uncomfortable with exclusively online education in the Fall Semester.
WITH ALL OF THIS IN MIND, and again, with the extensive consultation of our medical committee, we have settled on a hybrid learning approach for the coming school year and for the foreseeable future—at least until after the Sukkos vacation ends, and then we will re-evaluate.

Like all schools dealing with COVID-19 and planning for either a partial or full return to campus, our plan starts with the “basics”:

▷ **Masks:** All students and faculty are required to wear masks inside any FYHS or HTC building at all times, per the state requirements.

▷ **Social distancing:** Social distancing will be emphasized and enforced; desks will be spread apart to conform to the ISBE and IBHE guidelines.

▷ **Increased sanitization:** Our facilities staff will be increased and ongoing sanitization will take place across our campuses.

▷ **Good handwashing and hygiene:** We will provide many new hand sanitizer stations across our campuses and replenish these stations and our soap dispensers vigorously.

▷ **Ventilation:** As much as possible, windows in classrooms will remain open, and our HVAC filters will be changed regularly.

▷ **Increased signage on campus:** Everyone will be reminded visually and in other ways to maintain all of these practices.

▷ **Screening:** Following the practices of Touro College and University System, we will send out information on how each student/faculty member will be required to self-certify they have no symptoms and are not feeling sick before entering our buildings each day.
DAILY SCHEDULE

ARRIVAL:
Each morning, all staff and talmidim will be required to self-certify that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19. More information will follow.

SHACHARIS:
7:45 – 8:30 AM (ALL 9th thru 12th graders)
▷ Students will be split between the High School and the College Beis Medrash. Prior to the start of school, each student will be notified where to report, and where to enter the building for Shacharis.
▷ Each Beis Medrash will house two grade levels of talmidim, allowing six feet of social distancing between each student.
▷ Masks must be worn properly – covering both the nose and mouth – at all times.

HALACHA SEDER & BREAKFAST:
8:30 – 9:20 AM (rotating schedule)
▷ To maintain social distancing in the cafeteria, each grade level will have a separate, staggered Halacha Seder and breakfast schedule. More information will follow.
▷ Masks must be worn properly – covering both the nose and mouth – except when eating or drinking.

SHIUR:
9:20 AM – 12:20 PM (Sunday through Thursday)
9:20 AM – 12:00 PM (Friday only)
▷ Shiur sizes will be carefully determined to allow proper social distancing within a classroom.
▷ Larger shiurim will be assigned to larger classrooms and learning areas.
▷ Masks must be worn properly – covering both the nose and mouth – at all times.
▷ Students will be assigned seats which they must maintain.
▷ In compliance between with the ISBE guidelines, desks will be set six feet apart as much as possible, but always at least three feet apart, and always facing forward. Students will always wear masks indoors.
▷ A clear plastic barrier will be placed between the rabbi and talmidim.
▷ Our IT department is working to provide amplifying devices, so rebbeim do not have to raise their voice, yet can remain easily heard.
▷ Technology will be incorporated into each classroom or learning area, allowing absent students to learn remotely, via Zoom.
▷ Chavrusa learning is key to the Gemara learning process. We are exploring safe ways of incorporating technology to make that chavrusa learning continue. More information will follow.
MORNING BREAK:

- To avoid too many students moving through the campus at the same time, shiurim will stagger their morning break times.

- We will have a CLOSED CAMPUS! When students are on campus, they are not allowed to leave. We will enhance the student-run canteen, allowing students to find tasty treats without having to leave our campus.
  - The gas station and stores in immediate proximity to the campus are considered off-campus.

- Signage delineating “one-way lanes” will be visible on doors, throughout hallways, stairwells, etc. to guide safe passage for students and staff around campus.

- Weather permitting, students will be allowed outside, on the Yeshiva campus, during morning break periods. Masks are optional when students are outdoors and if social distancing of at least six feet is maintained. Masks always are mandatory inside HTC buildings.

- The game room will be open for morning breaks. A schedule will limit the number of students allowed in the room at one time. Masks will be mandatory.

- Classrooms/learning areas will be cleaned and sanitized, during morning recess breaks and throughout the day.

DISMISSAL:
12:20 PM – (9th thru 11th graders)

- Bus transportation will be provided to those in need. More information will follow.

- Please contact Mrs. Joan Brunwasser at fyhsoffice@htc.edu if your son(s) will need bus transportation in the middle of the day.

- A minimal fee will be assessed for bus transportation.

LUNCH BREAK:
12:20 – 1:05 PM – (9th thru 11th graders)

- 9th through 11th graders will eat lunch at home.

LUNCH BREAK/SECOND SEDER or BIKIYUS SHIUR:
12:20 PM – 1:30 PM – (12th graders)

- 12th graders will remain on campus for lunch and Second Seder or Bikiyus Shiur. More precise scheduling information will follow to 12th grade families.

- Transportation will be provided for 12th graders upon dismissal, if needed.

- Please contact Mrs. Joan Brunwasser at fyhsoffice@htc.edu if your son(s) will need bus transportation in the middle of the day.

- A minimal fee will be assessed for bus transportation. More information will follow.
GENERAL STUDIES:

- More information about student course placement/registration will follow.
- For the safety of our students and teachers, General Studies will remain completely remote as the school year begins.
- When we feel we can assure a completely safe phasing of students and staff back onto campus for the General Studies learning portion of the day, we will do so.
- The following schedule is subject to change as the school year progresses and there are new developments.

1:10 – 1:50 PM (9th thru 11th graders) REMOTE GENERAL STUDIES LEARNING - 1ST PERIOD; Possible Mincha at 7:00 PM with Night Seder rebbbe.

1:50 – 2:10 PM (All students) MINCHA

2:10 – 2:50 PM (All students) REMOTE GENERAL STUDIES LEARNING – 2ND PERIOD

2:55 – 3:35 PM (All students) REMOTE GENERAL STUDIES LEARNING – 3RD PERIOD

3:35 – 3:50 PM (All students) EXTENDED PASSING PERIOD

3:50 – 4:30 PM (All students) REMOTE GENERAL STUDIES LEARNING – 4TH PERIOD

4:35 – 5:15 PM (All students) REMOTE GENERAL STUDIES LEARNING – 5TH PERIOD

5:20 – 6:00 PM (All students) REMOTE GENERAL STUDIES LEARNING – 6TH PERIOD

DINNER BREAK:

6:00 – 7:00 PM (All students)

- All students will eat dinner at home.

NIGHT SEDER:

7:00 PM (On appropriate evenings)

- 9th graders – Monday & Thursday evenings.
- 10th through 12th graders - Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday evenings.
- We are exploring in-person Night Seder opportunities, both at local shuls and in the High School Beis Medrash. More information will follow.
STUDENT LIFE

DORMITORY:

▷ Unfortunately, the high school dormitories will remain closed at beginning of the school year.

▷ We are evaluating information and formulating the safest plan possible for inviting students to live on our campus once again. We will update our dormitory students about a plan to return to campus following Sukkos.

ROSH HASHANAH/YOM KIPPUR HIGH HOLY DAYS:

▷ Sadly, this year, we cannot safely accommodate the student body in our dormitories for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, as we usually do.

▷ We are exploring ways for local students and their families to be together for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur off campus. More information will follow.

INTRAMURALS/PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE):

▷ We are exploring which sports will be permitted for Fall intramurals. We cannot promise flag football, but we are committed to providing healthy outlets for the students.

▷ We are exploring outdoor options for PE, as well as safe indoor activities we can offer at the JCC, during the winter months. More information will follow.

ATHLETICS:

▷ The Illinois High School Association (IHSA), announced on Wednesday, July 29th, 2020, that in-person games/competitions will not be taking place this Fall and Winter.

▷ The IHSA is also still deliberating on whether it will allow Fall and Winter athletes to meet for practices/workouts, and what health and safety precautions will need to be put in place, if such activities are allowed. More information will be shared when it is made available through IHSA.

CLUBS:

▷ We are committed to working with our student body presidents, to arrange for school clubs to function, as best they can, given our current circumstances.

ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES:

▷ Our Special Education Services/Learning Center team, our School Social Worker, and our Career and College Guidance Counselor will be available during the school day and they are prepared to work remotely with our students.