

# Torah School of Greater Washington

IN-PERSON LEARNING BLUEPRINT

**AUGUST 2020**

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# INTRODUCTION

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Our plans for in-person opening have been designed drawing on comprehensive guidelines for schools from the CDC, the Maryland Department of Health, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Harvard Global Health Institute. We continue to approach planning with health and safety as a top priority. All of our plans also consider what our students need to receive a high-quality education and to be supported socially and emotionally during this challenging time.

Flexibility is crucial to our success this year. We know that the COVID-19 situation is dynamic, and new evidence regarding the virus continues to emerge daily. Aspects of the in-person plan may change depending on the current evidence, the local COVID-19 situation, and our school staffing considerations and logistics.

In the days leading to opening, any changes made to the original TSGW In-Person Learning Blueprint (see [In-Person-Learning-Blueprint.pdf](#)) are being made in consultation with consulting physicians. Since Montgomery County, MD has been sustained for over 7 days at a risk level of yellow per the Harvard Global Health Institute, using the case rate per 100,000, and the known transmission level in our local Orthodox community is low, the school has been cleared to operationalize certain changes. However, should the local risk level move to orange or cases in the local Orthodox community increase, plans will need to be reassessed, with physician consultation.

## SAFETY + EDUCATION + WELLBEING



# SAFETY AND PREVENTION

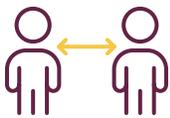
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## **MASKS:**

Everyone in the school building will be required to wear masks at all times except for lunch and snack times.

- Mask wearing is at the very foundation of our layered risk mitigation strategy. Evidence now overwhelmingly shows that wearing a mask is key to reducing the risk of transmission.
- Each child should come to school with a spare mask. The mask should fit snugly over the child's nose and mouth. We recommend having extra face masks for each of your children. We have a supply of child-sized masks available for children who misplace their masks during the day.



## **DISTANCING:**

Our classrooms are set up with 4-6 feet of distancing between students at their desks. Classroom activities and outdoor activities will be designed to encourage that distancing.



## **COHORTING:**

Our classes will operate as cohorts, meaning that contact between students of different classes is limited.

- Even with cohorting, masks and distancing continue to be the foundational risk mitigation strategies.
- Cohorting helps with contact tracing in the event that there is a positive case in school. The class in which there is a case would need to transition to virtual learning for 14 days, but the rest of the school could continue to operate in-person. Anyone in the same household as or with direct contact with the COVID-positive person outside of school would have to quarantine, as well.
- Our oldest grades, 4-6 will learn in the same classroom all day, with teachers moving between the classes. Some of our Kindergarten and fourth grade classes and all classes in grades 1-3 will switch rooms midday. Desks will be cleaned between groups.
- Our class sizes will remain the same as usual with four parallel (two boys, two girls) classes for most grades.



### **HAND HYGIENE:**

Hand washing with soap and water or use of hand sanitizer will be implemented when: – entering the school – entering the classroom – before and after snack breaks – before and after lunch – before and after recess – after using the bathroom – before leaving school.



### **CLEANING AND VENTILATION:**

The school heating and cooling systems have been inspected and upgraded and are now set for enhanced ventilation and filtration of building air. The school will undergo a complete cleaning and disinfecting each night. During the day, the school will have additional custodial staff focusing on enhanced cleaning of bathrooms, frequently touched surfaces, and lunch areas.



### **HALLWAY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT:**

To support distancing, staircases will be designated as unidirectional, and hallways will be marked to encourage everyone to walk along the right side. Locker use will be staggered to minimize congestion.



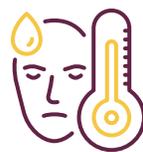
### **SIGNS AROUND THE SCHOOL:**

Signage in our hallways and classrooms will remind students about the importance of masks, distancing, and hand washing.



### **LIMITING BUILDING VISITORS:**

The school building will generally be closed to parents and visitors. If a parent needs to drop something off or pick up a student, the parent must wait outside the entrance, and a member of the office staff will assist.



### **SCREENING OUT SYMPTOMS AND EXPOSURES:**

Parents will use an app developed by ParentLocker to complete a daily screening for each student for COVID-19 symptoms and exposures. They will either get an automatic message that they are clear to attend school that day or that they need to consult with their doctor and then the school nursing staff to determine next steps. Maryland Department of Health Guidelines for schools were updated on August 27 and contain a decision tree that we will use for how to handle suspected and confirmed COVID cases and exposures.

# SCHOOL DAY AND TRANSPORTATION

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- School hours will be from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm for all grades.
- The early and aftercare programs will not operate this year.
- Mishmar and Sunday classes will operate virtually.

Our usual school schedule of davening, class blocks for learning, recess, and specials will continue with certain adaptations to promote physical distancing and decrease contact between cohorts.



## **ARRIVAL:**

Parents and/or carpools will be assigned staggered arrival times from 8:30 – 8:50 am, with those that have Kindergartners in the 8:50 am arrival slot. We will be utilizing multiple entrances to reduce congestion. Each student will be assigned an entrance. Drop off will be in the carpool line as usual, but, once students exit their cars, staff will direct them to their assigned entrances.



## **DISMISSAL:**

Carpool will begin at 2:55 pm. Kids will need to sanitize their hands before leaving. Multiple exits will be utilized to decrease congestion.



## **CARPOOL POLICIES:**

We highly recommend that families drive to school individually. If families need to carpool, the recommendation is that all persons over the age of 2 years old wear masks in the car, children of different families sit together in their own rows, and windows are cracked open for increased ventilation. Families who do carpool will need to register their carpools with the school for contact tracing purposes. If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the carpool, the carpool members will need to quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure.



## **SNACK AND LUNCH:**

Since lunch is a time without masks, distancing becomes even more important. Some classes will eat lunch in their classrooms and some classes will rotate through the gym for distanced lunch time. Tables will be cleaned between cohorts.



### **RECESS:**

Classes will be assigned times and spaces for outdoor recess, staggered to keep cohorts from interacting with each other. Rather than several recesses throughout the day, each class will be assigned a slot for one longer recess. In addition to recess, teachers can take their classes outside for walks as needed.



### **VIRTUAL CLASSES:**

Some of our teachers are either high-risk or have family members who are high-risk, so they need to teach virtually this year, even when we are operating in-person. Each of these teachers will partner with a facilitator to teach their class. The teacher will zoom into the classroom, while the facilitator helps manage the class.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY** LEARNING

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### **EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT:**

A number of our students benefit from educational support or outside tutoring to ensure their success. Our Educational Support team usually operates with a combination of “push-in” and “pull-out” support. For safety, the focus will be on prioritizing pull-out support. ES teachers will pull out individual students or small groups and take them to work in a designated space that can accommodate generous distancing. Some students may be pulled out to work in a supervised ES room where they will have 1:1 or 1:2 zoom sessions with ES teachers.



### **SPECIALS:**

Teachers of some specials will visit the classes to teach, while other specials will be zoomed into the classes. We plan to offer art, physical education, library, and music, all adapted to support health and safety.

# TECHNOLOGY

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## IN THE CLASSROOM



### **STREAMING ZOOM TO STUDENTS WHO CANNOT BE PRESENT:**

Each classroom has been equipped with an upgraded laptop, a wide angle camera to capture the teacher (and as much of the class as possible), and a sensitive microphone to pick up the teacher's voice as s/he moves.



### **GOOGLE CLASSROOM:**

Google Classroom will be used across grades and subjects. Assignments will be posted and collected through Google Classroom, so students who need to be out due to symptoms or who are completely virtual can keep up with both in-class assignments and homework. Our universal use of Google Classroom will also allow for easier transitions to and from virtual learning as needed.



### **CHROMEBOOKS:**

We will be outfitting each student with his/her own Chromebook for the year, for classroom use. Due to the great demand for these devices at this time, supply is low across the country and some of our Chromebooks may arrive 1-3 weeks after the start of school. Chromebooks will be available to families when a class needs to quarantine or in the event that the whole school needs to pivot to virtual learning for a period of time. We will be able to make Chromebooks available to families who opt to start virtually.



### **SCHOOL INTERNET STATUS:**

We are upgrading our Internet with new firewall/filter devices, resulting in a smoother, school Internet experience. Over the course of the last year, we have gradually transitioned to a fiber Internet connection which supplies much faster speeds. These changes will support multiple, simultaneous zoom sessions and school-wide Chromebook usage.

# CARING FOR STUDENT HEALTH



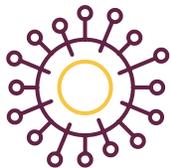
## **IMMUNIZATIONS:**

- As is our standard policy, each student must have a complete immunization record to participate in school. The school does not accept religious exemptions to vaccination, and all medical exemptions must be reviewed by our school nurse.
- This flu season, the school hopes to achieve 100% flu vaccination for our students and staff.



## **HEALTH ROOM OPERATIONS - ROUTINE MEDICATION AND PROCEDURES, FIRST AID, AND SICK VISITS:**

- Scheduled medication administration, scheduled procedures, and first aid will be conducted in their own designated area, away from anyone being evaluated for symptoms.
- Teachers will be equipped with band aids, gauze, and disposable ice packs to deal with minor first aid in the classrooms.
- Students and staff who present with symptoms will be evaluated and quarantined in a separate area.



## **WHEN STUDENTS AND STAFF ARE EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS:**

(CDC) People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- |                            |                              |   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| • Fever or chills          | • Muscle or body aches       | • Sore throat                                 |
| • Cough                    | • Headache                   | • Nausea or vomiting                          |
| • Fatigue                  | • New loss of taste or smell | • Diarrhea                                    |
| • Congestion or runny nose |                              | • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing |

Anyone with any of these symptoms will be sent home from school unless they have submitted documentation from their primary care physician showing evidence of a preexisting condition that presents with these symptoms.

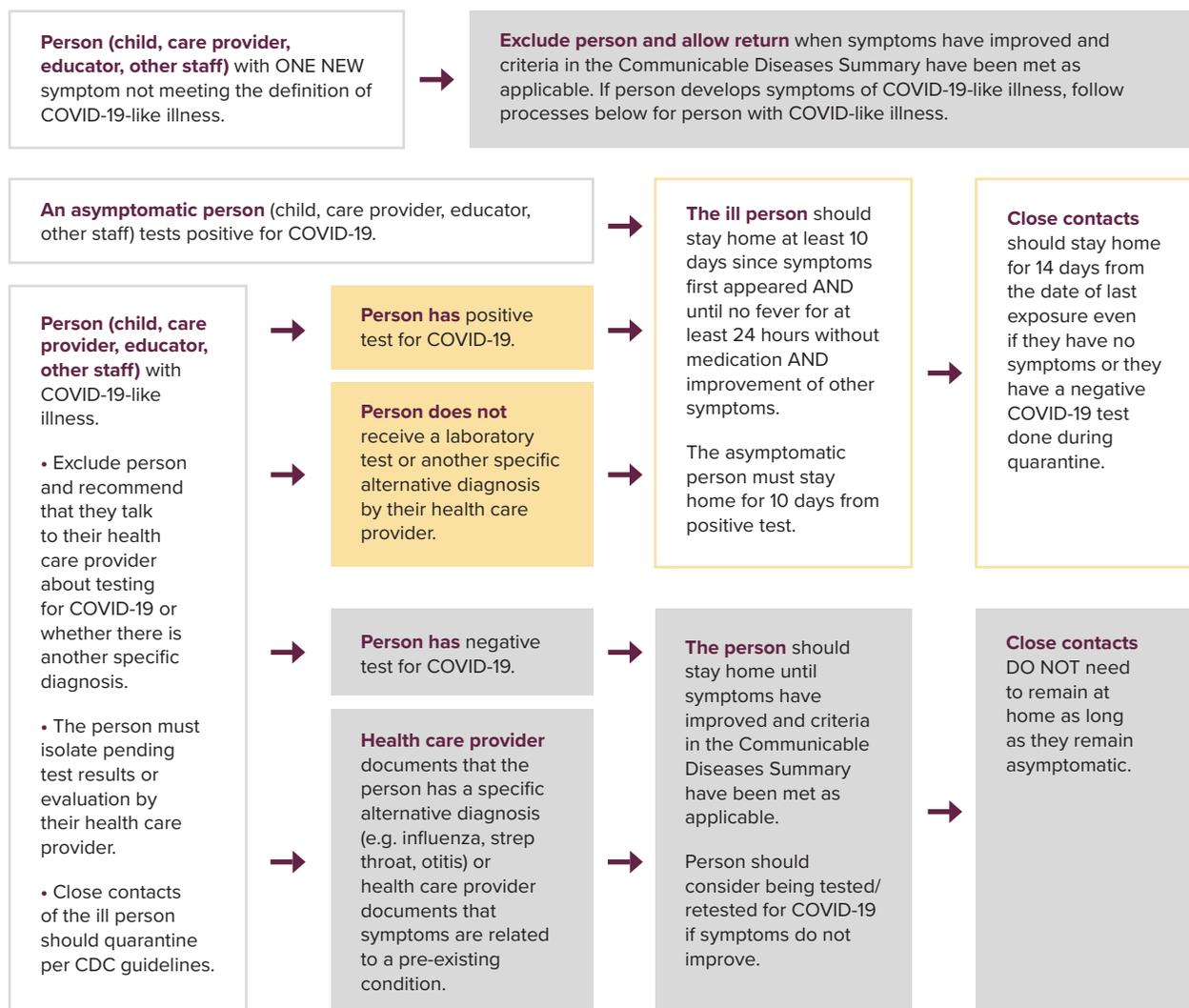
We will use the Maryland Department of Health decision tree to determine the appropriate next steps.

When testing is required for return to school, we will only accept laboratory confirmed or hospital-based test results.

# DECISION AID

## EXCLUSION & RETURN FOR LABORATORY CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES & PERSONS WITH COVID-19-LIKE ILLNESS

For the purposes of this decision aid, COVID-19-like illness is defined as: Any one (1) of the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or new loss of taste or smell OR At least two (2) of the following: fever of 100.4o or higher (measured or subjective), chills, shivering, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion or runny nose. Identification of persons with COVID-19-like illness is used to exclude persons from school, to identify who should be tested for COVID-19, and to identify persons who may need close contacts quarantined.





### SUPPORTING OUR STAFF:

To create an environment where our teachers and staff are supported and encouraged not to come to school if they are not feeling well, we are implementing a more flexible paid sick leave policy for this year. Teachers who are out but well enough to teach virtually will zoom into their classrooms while their classes are managed by an in-person facilitator.

## EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

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The success of an in-person opening plan is reliant on this layered protection strategy, but the plan can only be successful with true partnership from our parents. When we as a community take the step of having in-person school during this pandemic, we are by definition taking on a responsibility for the health and safety of our fellow community members.

- 1.** Complete the daily screening for each child with honest reporting of symptoms and potential exposures.
- 2.** Parents must report suspected and confirmed COVID-19 exposures.
- 3.** Do NOT give your child fever-reducing medication (e.g.: Tylenol, Motrin) on a school morning for any reason. If you feel your child may need medication during the day, you must keep your child home and contact your doctor.
- 4.** Eligibility for return to school will be determined using the Maryland Department of Health decision tree, and may sometimes warrant direct consultation with the Montgomery County Department of Health and our Medical Team. Parents must work with our School Nurse to gain clearance to return to school after a child exhibits any symptoms or has any exposures.
- 5.** Availability: Parents or a backup caregiver are expected to be available to pick up a student from school within 45 minutes notice.
- 6.** Parents' partnership is key in supporting our children's understanding of and motivation to adhere to mask wearing, distancing, and hand hygiene in school. **Parents must join us in supporting the importance of these precautions, habituating children to mask wearing, and promoting healthy habits.**

# TRAVEL AND GATHERING POLICY

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We are grateful to Hashem that our children will be able to return to school.

In order to allow this to continue, BE”H it is crucial that all of us abide by all health recommendations.

This includes mask wearing and social distancing- even out of school. The school also needs to be informed about travel plans that do not follow our safety guidelines. We are truly responsible for each other’s well-being, as our individual actions will impact many other people.

This is, obviously, an “honor system”, and we pray that we can count on each other to make the system work. Please read the travel and Simcha policy very carefully.

**The following travel activity by a student or staff member requires a 14 day quarantine OR an 8 day quarantine followed by a subsequent negative covid PCR test:**

- 1.** Any international travel
- 2.** Any travel to an area identified as a high risk “hotspot” either at the state or county level, as defined by Harvard Global Health (25 cases per 100k). Please refer to <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/> for individual state and county data.
- 3.** Any travel in which masks were not worn for the duration of the flight/trip. This applies to travel by public bus and train, as well as air travel.
- 4.** Attendance at a high-risk level Simcha or gathering. Use the following parameters to determine which Simaechos and gatherings are ok for continued school attendance and which require 14-day quarantine:

**DOES NOT REQUIRE QUARANTINE:**

- Indoor event, 6-feet of distancing maintained between guests, masks worn at all times except during eating, capacity limits meet local state and county regulations
- Outdoor event, 6-feet of distancing maintained between guests, masks worn at all times except during eating

**REQUIRED QUARANTINE:**

- Indoor or outdoor events where there is less than 6-feet of distancing maintained between guests OR no masks worn at all times except during eating OR capacity limits do not meet local state and county regulations.

# AM CARPOOL

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As we work through each process of this year's school day, carpool is a very important factor in ensuring the safety and health of all of our students and staff.

In order, to be able to have students enter the building in a safe manner, we will be spreading out morning carpool.

- **WHAT TIME DOES SCHOOL START?**

9 am

- **AT WHAT TIME CAN MY CHILD BE DROPPED OFF?**

Any time between 8:30-9:00 am

- **WILL I BE GIVEN A SPECIFIC TIME TO DROP OFF AT?**

No. You can drop off anytime between those times.

- **WHERE WILL MY CHILD GO IF I DROP MY CHILD OFF AT 8:30?  
WHAT WILL THEY DO? WILL THEY NEED TO BE WEARING A MASK?**

Teachers will be in the classrooms by 8:30, and the students will be able to go to their classes when they are dropped off. There will be books and socially distanced games for the kids in classrooms during that time. The students will have to wear masks any time they are in school.

- **CAN MY CHILD ENTER THROUGH THE MAIN ENTRANCE  
AS IN REGULAR SCHOOL YEARS?**

No. The Torah School has 5 entrances. All the different grades and classes will be divided up to enter through all the different entrances. We are arranging for each class to come to school the week before school starts to meet their teachers, and everything will be clearly explained to them.

- **CAN I LET THE CHILDREN IN MY CAR OUT AS SOON  
AS I AM PARKED IN THE CARPOOL LANE?**

The parking lot will be clearly split into 3 different color zones. If your car is parked in the green zone, you may let your children out of your car and they can enter through their specific entrances. The green zone will be the carpool lane closest to the building and will have room for about 6-7 cars to drop off. We ask that, once you enter the "green zone," children should exit as quickly as possible, so cars can come in and out.

- **IF I WORK AT YGW OR I HAVE YGW GIRLS IN MY CARPOOL,  
MAY I DROP OFF THE TORAH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON THE YGW SIDE?**

Torah School students may be dropped off at YGW side, BUT they cannot go in through the YGW entrance. They must walk to the correct entrance assigned to their class. It works the opposite way, as well. If you are dropping off on the Torah School side and have YGW girls in your carpool, the YGW girls need to walk around the building and not through the building to the YGW side. We are hoping that this works and there might need to be some changes made if we see this is not working out as expected. We are always open to suggestions if you feel you have an idea to make carpool smoother.



# PM CARPOOL

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Once again, in order to ensure the safety and health of all of our staff and students, we need to make sure that PM carpool is done in a way that the students can be spread out and socially distanced. While exiting the building we must make sure that students in one carpool do not interact with students of other carpools, as the students are picked up.

- **WHAT TIME WILL PM CARPOOL START?**

Carpool will start at 2:55 PM.

- **WHAT TIME WILL PM CARPOOL END?**

3:30 PM

- **WILL I BE GIVEN A SPECIFIC TIME AT WHICH TO PICK UP?**

We will be having 2 time slots to pick up. One time slot will be from 2:55-3:10, and the second time slot will be from 3:15-3:30.

We will be sending out a google sheet early next week for you to list the families in your carpool and for each carpool to choose a time slot. Each driver of the carpool needs to come at the time slot that they choose.

**IMPORTANT:**

We have added many more jersey barriers to our parking lot to allow for more carpools to pick up safely at the same time. We will be splitting the carpool lane into different color zones for PM carpool pickup. We will be splitting up each time slot into different color zones. Once we get all of your carpool info with families and time preferences for PM carpool, we will let you know your color zone for carpool pickup. All drivers in a given carpool must come in the time slot chosen for that carpool.

- **OUT OF WHICH DOORS WILL CHILDREN COME?**

All 5 entrances will be used to exit the building. As a rule, the students will exit the building from the same door that they entered for morning carpool.

Thank you for partnering with us!

*Rabbi Yitzchak Charner*  
Headmaster





# INTRODUCTION

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Our plans for in-person opening have been designed drawing on comprehensive guidelines for schools from the CDC, the Maryland Department of Health, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Harvard Global Health Institute, and working closely with our medical team.

All guidelines predicate in-person school openings on first having adequate control of the virus in the local area. This in-person plan is to be used when local risk levels are low enough that we can responsibly think about bringing every student back to school every day.

Flexibility is crucial to our success this year. We know that the COVID-19 situation is dynamic, and new evidence regarding the virus continues to emerge daily. Aspects of the in-person plan may change depending on the current evidence, the local COVID-19 situation, and our school staffing considerations and logistics at the time that we implement the plan.

When you read the blueprint, your first feeling may be a sense of being overwhelmed, along with sadness for being unable to have “normal school.” Those of us on the task force and the administration have all been there. It takes time for these feelings to dissipate. Give yourselves that time.

We continue to approach planning with health and safety as a top priority. All of our plans also consider what our students need to receive a high-quality education and to be supported socially and emotionally during this challenging time.

**SAFETY +**  
**EDUCATION +**  
**WELLBEING**