



# **COVID-19 SAFETY HANDBOOK**



# TDS COVID-19 SAFETY HANDBOOK

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# 1. LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents, Sheyichyu

As our staff works diligently to keep the school building open as often as possible, we offer this handbook to provide you with the necessary information to partner with us in keeping our doors open and our staff and students safe.

While we anticipate conducting classes on campus, it is inevitable that there will be temporary closures for individuals, classes and/or the entire school building (as described in this handbook). Should a temporary closure occur, please know that TDS is prepared to continue our program online. Classes will continue without interruption.

Should your family need to self-quarantine, or if any student is unable to attend classes in-person for health reasons, your children from first grade and up can participate in class from home. Every class will feature a daily live broadcast of all lessons.

Regarding tuition, we recognize that having your children online, even temporarily, requires more involvement and may take you away from your jobs at times. Yet, with all sincerity, we ask that you understand that the costs of building overhead and operations, faculty salaries, and supplies, have risen nationwide and are forecasted to continue rising during this pandemic.

Furthermore we now realize that there are hidden costs, such as the necessity of hiring additional staff as proctors in classrooms. The proctors will support our high-risk teachers by supervising the physical classroom environment while our experienced, high-quality teachers instruct their classes via large screens and conference camera technology installed in classrooms. All these points and more require us to band together like never before.

**Please know that your tuition dollars and the financial support for our campaigns are crucial for the long term viability of TDS. Many of our families need our assistance more than ever!**

*Finally, but most importantly, we will be working on our end to make sure that, despite the many challenges and necessary precautions, school remains a happy place where our students feel safe and secure. Remember that your children will pick up on your cues. You can set them up for success simply by talking to them in a positive way about how the school is working to keep everyone safe. You can model patience and resilience which will make their school day better and will give them important life skills.*

Thank you,  
TDS Administration and Staff



## 2. PREFACE

**(Please be advised that our COVID policies stated in this handbook will remain in a fluid state and may be amended according to local, state, or national health officials)**

We will be following the guidelines of the TEA, CDC, and specifically Dr. Edward Septimus, MD, FIDSA, FACP, FSHEA. Dr. Septimus is the Medical Director at Memorial Hermann Hospital, Infection Prevention and Epidemiology at Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), and Professor of Internal Medicine at Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine in Houston, Texas.

While we work to keep the Torah Day School building open, we can not do it alone. Your constant vigilance and monitoring of your children's health is required in order to keep school open and protect the vulnerable members of our staff and community. Please see the following information, courtesy of the Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas.

*"The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years of age and older, persons in every age group can get COVID-19 and some will have a severe illness. We should all be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable."*

*"COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking, and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19."*

*"The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas."*



### 3. COVID SYMPTOMS

The following are the current known symptoms of COVID-19 illness. People who are ill with COVID-19 may or may not have all of the symptoms listed. This list may be updated as knowledge of the virus expands.

- Feeling feverish, or measured temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or more
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Known close contact (within the 14 preceding days) with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19



## 4. ARRIVAL

### a. Before School

Each morning, please look out for any of the following symptoms:

- Feeling feverish, or measured temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or more
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Known close contact (within the 14 preceding days) with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19

If your child has any of these symptoms, please keep the entire family home. Contact your physician for directions on what to do.

### b. Arrival Times and Class Locations

To minimize the spread of COVID within the TDS Community we will be expanding our campus to include classes operating in the TDS annex building as well as a master schedule that staggers lunch and recess sessions for all classes. Every class will have their own location and schedule:

**EC- 2nd Grade - 8:40 AM: Main Building and TDS annex building**

**Grades 3-5: 8:00 AM: Main Building**

**7-8 Girls - 8:00 AM: Location to be Announced**

**6 Boys - 7:30 AM: Gemara with Rabbi Cagen: Location to be Announced**

**7-8 Boys - 7:20 AM: Chassidus with Rabbi Ceitlin: Location to be Announced**

*(All students that are unable to arrive in-person at that time due to the morning commute should contact Rabbi Francis to discuss a remote solution).*

Should you need to consistently drop your child off earlier than the allotted time slot, please contact us and we will do our best to accommodate when possible. Our regular early care system is not available this year, due to the need to keep all classes separate.

### c. Drop-off Line

If you are driving your children to school, please pull to the front of the carpool line and put on your masks correctly before opening car doors. ONLY open your car doors once directed to do so by the greeter.

#### **d. Assigned Entries**

**EC 1 and EC 2-** Please park (after dropping off older children if applicable) and bring your children directly to the TDS annex building. The teacher will greet your child outside the door of the room.

**EC 3-Kindergarten-** Please bring your children to the back door (past the Mikvah). Your children will be greeted and checked in at the back door and escorted to their classrooms.

**Grades 1-8-** Will only enter through one door. This will be the door between the blacktop area and the front door. Children who walk or bike to school should enter through the Portal gate, next to the Lazaroff's house and enter through this same door.

**Grades 6-8 boys-** Will be checked in by their first teacher.

#### **e. Health Checks Upon Arrival**

The greeter at each door (EC and Day School) is tasked to ascertain the health of students arriving at school. Should a student arrive at school exhibiting symptoms listed in our handbook, the student will be asked to return home until the status of his or her health can be clarified by a doctor.

All students will have their temperature taken before entering the building. The front door greeter will confirm that students' masks are on correctly and ask a number of COVID related questions (fever, general illness, coughing, etc.)

Upon entry, each student will receive "Happy Hands Cleaner" (hand sanitizer).



## 5. SCHOOL DAY SAFETY

**a. Separation of Class Cohorts:** Classes will not be combined for indoor assemblies, recess, lunch, or special activities. Each class will remain in the same classroom throughout the day.

**b. Cleaning and Sanitizing:** All surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized when necessary. All high-touch areas will be sanitized more frequently, such as door knobs, light switches, toilets, etc.

Elementary and Middle School students will have their supplies and books at their own desks. Shared manipulatives or materials will be sanitized after each use.

EC classrooms have toys that are easily cleaned and sanitized. Toys will be cleaned after each use. Teachers will encourage children to use the toys they have been given rather than switching out toys with friends during play. Additionally, craft supplies will be separated per child, and they will avoid sharing materials as much as possible.

### **c. Hand washing**

- All children and staff are required to wash hands upon arrival and at the following times:
- Before and after snack and lunch
- Before and after assisting toileting/diapering each child
- After using the restroom
- After blowing the nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Any time the group re-enters the class after being outside.

**d. Access to Classrooms** Although we welcome and appreciate parent involvement and participation during non-COVID times, unfortunately, the following policy is necessary until further notice. No parent is to enter the building at any time, unless prior approval has been granted. Should you come late, or need to pick up early, please call the TDS office and we will meet you in the parking lot as soon as someone is available to bring your child out.

**e. Talking to Children About COVID Precautions** We plan to have an upbeat outlook on maintaining health and safety and will speak with children accordingly using age-appropriate language. We will create an expectation with all children about healthy habits and safety habits and will use this language throughout the day. We will be sure to share the language and expectations with you so you can help reinforce these habits with your children at home.



## 6. DISMISSAL

All of the students will be brought to the concrete area and will sit with their own classes and teachers. Children will be dismissed as their parents arrive. Please note that on rainy days, carpool will take longer and we appreciate your patience in advance with this.

## 7. MASK POLICY

We all recognize that wearing a mask is not comfortable. Like all clothing, it takes time to get used to it. Surgeons wear them all day in surgery. Salespersons have been wearing them all day in stores. Many report that after wearing a mask for multiple days, they forget that they are even wearing it. Perhaps it is similar to using a helmet, car seat, or seat belt.

We all want the maximum of in-person instruction for our students. If we can implement a good mask-wearing policy and achieve compliance, we will be able to offer in-person instruction for many more days. If one student or teacher contracts an illness with fever or even COVID, with mask-wearing and proper physical distancing there is a good possibility that the classroom (and at times the entire school) may still be able to continue with in-person instruction. If, however, there isn't mask compliance and physical distancing, the classroom and perhaps the entire school will have to turn to online instruction.

**Age 2 and under:** May not wear masks at all.

**Age 3-5:** Encouraged to wear masks.

**Grades K-8:** Required to wear masks.

**Adults:** Required to wear masks.

To help the students succeed in mask-wearing, there will be designated times throughout the day for a “mask break.”

Please use the next several weeks to get your children used to wearing masks at home so that they are better prepared to wear them at school.



## 8. COVID-19 SICK POLICY

### a. When a Child Will Be Sent Home

Children who have a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher, or who are displaying symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, flushed cheeks, shortness of breath, rash, fatigue, vomiting, or diarrhea will be sent home. Should your child begin to not feel well, the teacher will bring your child to an administrator who will evaluate the symptoms. Should the administrator feel that there are possible signs of illness, you will be contacted, and asked to pick up your child within 30 minutes. Your child will be isolated from other children so as not to spread possible illness.

### b. Returning After an Illness

Anyone who has been ill may return to TDS when all of the following criteria have been met:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since having any symptoms of illness (including resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)

AND (if ill with COVID)

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared or a positive COVID test result. (A negative test result is not necessary.)

Anyone who wishes to return to TDS prior to fulfilling these criteria must obtain a pediatrician's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or negative COVID-19 test(s)..

## 9. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

During these difficult times, we will be putting a great emphasis on teaching and modeling coping skills. Many of our teachers and administrators are being trained in the Conscious Discipline method and will be sharing what they learn with the rest of the staff. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive, trauma informed, brain-based self-regulation program. It focuses on building relationships and resilience. It includes teaching students breathing techniques and other techniques to stay calm.



## 10. WHEN SELF-ISOLATION IS NEEDED

Closure of HISD Schools does not necessarily mandate a TDS school closing. At the same time, TDS might need to close due to extreme community spread (G-d forbid) while HISD remains open. The following guidelines for self-isolation are in place in order to keep as many classes in TDS learning in-person as possible.

- a. A student who has close contact with someone exhibiting COVID symptoms (as described above) must stay home for 14 days. This rule applies whether or not the student who was exposed becomes symptomatic. The 14 days may end early if a doctor confirms that the person with COVID-like symptoms did not, in fact, have COVID.

### Definition of close contact:

- i. Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for more than 15 minutes. Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a waiting area with a COVID-19 case.  
– or –
  - ii. Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)
- b. If a student or teacher tests positive for COVID, the medical committee will determine which student(s) or class(es) need to self-isolate. Self-isolation may be required for a COVID-positive student's siblings and/or class, depending on the circumstances.
  - c. Any child who travels will report the travel to TDS. The TDS medical committee will decide whether the student must self-isolate for 14 days after returning home.

**IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT YOU INFORM THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY OF ANY POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO COVID AND POSSIBLE COVID SYMPTOMS YOUR CHILD MAY BE EXHIBITING.**



## 11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (Please sign and return)

### CONTRACT:

- I have read the entire TDS COVID Handbook and agree to all guidelines.
- I will read all TDS communication so that I am aware of any changes to policy that will be necessary as the medical community learns more about COVID-19.
- I will inform TDS immediately of any possible exposure to COVID-19 and possible symptoms in someone that my child had direct contact with as described above.
- I will notify TDS of any student travel plans and follow the instructions given. I understand that this means that my child may need to participate via TDS online school for 14 days after returning.
- I understand that the guidelines are based on medical advice and will not debate the instructions given by the school. Our teachers and administration are putting in a tremendous amount of effort into keeping TDS up and running and can not be bogged down by complaints about the policy. I will follow the instructions, knowing that they are intended to keep everyone safe.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_