



Hillel Torah

בית ספר הלל תורה

# HILLEL TORAH RESPONSIBLE REOPENING 2020/2021



Aug 7, 2020

Dear Hillel Torah Families,

We are all living through a truly historic time. The world is changing at a rapid pace and it is affecting everyone in different ways. The changing tides have called on each of us to make changes to our own routines and we still aren't sure what tomorrow will bring.

While all this is going on, at Hillel Torah, we remain focused and committed to our mission. Despite the uncertainty surrounding us, we are committed to providing our students with excellence in education and nurturing relationships with their teachers, while inspiring their commitment to a life of Torah and mitzvot.

Ideally, we believe that a child's developmental needs are best met in an in-person school setting. This is also the position taken by almost every medical and educational institutions.

Even more important than their academics, this is what children need from a social and emotional perspective. Especially during a time of crisis, caring teachers along with the many student supports such as resource teachers and social worker can go a long way toward supporting a child's healthy emotional development.

We realize that returning to school in-person will feel very different and will continue to demand incredible effort and added resources. Is it worth it? Our answer is a resounding yes! This is what children need and, as long as they are able and we can make it happen safely, then it is our duty to do so.

While we believe that reopening in person is the right path for the school and community as a whole, at the same time, for each individual family or child, there can be a different choice that is equally correct. In our recent parent survey, the overwhelming majority of our families indicated their firm intention to send their child(ren) to school in-person. Nonetheless, we realize that each family has its own unique circumstances and preferences, and we fully respect each family's right to make the decision that works best for them and their children.

For this reason, we are committed to equipping each classroom with remote learning technology which will enable students at home to participate in the classes taking place in the building. This will also include a portal through which students home sick or in quarantine can still keep up with their classes and school routines.

Much work has been done to prepare school for an in-person return. On the medical side, we have been guided by an outstanding medical committee and will be adhering to all of the local and national health guidelines (CDC, IDPH, ISBE), many of which are detailed in this plan. In addition to all of the medical policies, school administrators and teachers have spent many hours reimagining every aspect of how school functions so that we can provide our students with a stellar educational experience while still adhering to all of the necessary safety measures for both staff and students.

To create a successful and safe start to the school year, we will be implementing a phased and gradual reopening. This will enable students and staff to adjust to the many changes and will give us an opportunity to see what's working well and what areas need readjustment to make them work better.

With all of that being said, the reality on the ground is changing daily. As the year gets underway, these policies and procedures will be updated with tweaks to make things run as smoothly as possible and to reflect the ongoing changing medical and state guidelines. While the future may still be uncertain, we are committed to being as flexible as possible to make the adjustments necessary to continue to provide our students with the education they need.

Best wishes for a safe, healthy and successful school year ahead,



Rabbi Menachem Linzer

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## THE 2020 - 2021 SCHOOL YEAR

- Full in-person return to school
  - Simultaneous remote option
  - Backup full remote HT Live plan in place if needed
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## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Physical Health and Safety
- Emotional/Social Wellbeing
- Academic Learning
- Balanced, Holistic Perspective
- Partnership, Working Together
- Flexibility

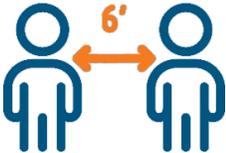
## MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Ben Katz , Pediatric Infectious Disease  
Dr. Leah Finkel, Pediatric Emergency Medicine  
Dr. David Marmor, Cardiologist  
Dr. Ken Polin, Pediatrician  
Dr. David Schreiber, Child Psychiatrist

## OUR FOUR LEVELS OF SAFETY



Symptom Screening/Keep Symptoms Out



Physical Distancing



Mandatory Masks



Increased Sanitation and Hand Hygiene

# PHASED REOPENING

To help ensure a successful, safe start to the school year, the first two weeks of school will follow a phased reopening plan. This gradual start will provide us the time and space needed to successfully implement all the new routines, help the students and teachers build up their mask tolerance, and generally adjust to all the changes this new school year brings.

## Grades K - 8

- Week One: Tuesday, August 25 - Friday, August 28
  - Tuesday and Wednesday, shortened school day, 12:00 dismissal, no lunch.
  - Thursday and Friday, shortened school day, 1:30 dismissal, with lunch.
  - Alternating groups of students--not all students attend each day, students in the same family will be in the same group and attend school on the same days.
- Week Two: Monday, August 31 - Friday, September 4
  - Shortened school day (1:30 dismissal).
  - All students attend every day of the week.

## Preschool

- Week One: Monday, August 24 - Friday, August 28
  - Monday is Orientation day for Pre-Nursery and Tuesday is Orientation day for Nursery.
  - 8:00 am early drop off begins Wednesday.
  - Shortened school day, no lunch in school, 11:30 dismissal.
  - Wednesday and Thursday, alternating groups of students--not all students attend each day.
  - Friday, all students attend.
- Week Two: Monday, August 31 - Friday, September 4
  - 8:00 am early drop off is available.
  - Monday, all students attend, shortened school day, no lunch in school, 11:30 dismissal.
  - Tuesday and Wednesday alternating groups of students attend, regular 1:00 dismissal.
  - Thursday and Friday all students attend, regular 1:00 dismissal.
  - Aftercare will begin in Week 3.



## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL - GRADES K - 8



- In order not to mix between cohorts of students, there will be no early drop off at the start of the year.
- Each day, before coming to school, parents will self-certify that their child/children are symptom free and do not have any exposure risk factors (as detailed on page 11) with an easy to use health screening app.
- Drop off is between 8:15 and 8:45 am, there will be no early Minyan for 7th and 8th grade.
  - Drive in through the parking lot from Touhy and use the circular drive to drop off your child(ren).
  - During drop off, everyone in the car must be wearing masks.
  - Upon arrival, symptom self-certification will be checked and student's temperature will be taken.
  - Students will not be allowed to enter the building without confirmation of the self-certification.
  - For students who do not pass the screening, the school nurse will follow up with the parents with further instructions.
- Once in the building, students will proceed directly to their classroom, where their teacher will be waiting to greet them. To ensure social distancing students will not gather in the gym or auditorium. Staff members oversee and assist students walking from drop off to their classroom.
- Dismissal will be from 3:30 - 4:00 pm.
  - Students will stay in their classroom at dismissal time and will be sent to the front when their car has arrived. We are implementing an easy and efficient process to help dismissal run as smoothly as possible.

## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL - PRESCHOOL

- A teacher will greet you at your car, confirm your self-assessment symptom screening, take your child's temperature while still in the car, and then walk your child to their classroom where a teacher will be waiting to greet them.
- Early drop off is either at 8:00 am or 8:30 am at the Monticello school doors.
- Regular drop off will be curbside between 8:50 and 9:05 am.
  - Pre-Nursery students will have a drop off line along Monticello.
  - Nursery students will pull into the alley off of Monticello and turn into the circular driveway
- Masks must be worn by all adults and children ages two and older in the car.
- At 1:00 pm dismissal, Nursery will be dismissed through school doors on East Prairie and Pre-Nursery through school doors on Monticello.
  - Children will remain inside the building, the parent/caregiver will come to the door, check in with a teacher and the children will be dismissed one at a time to each caregiver.

## PHASED REOPENING CONT.

### MULTI-FAMILY CARPOOL

All carpools must register with the school.

If carpooling with another family, all passengers and drivers should distance to the degree possible and wear a mask while in the car.

When possible, the vehicle windows should remain open.

For contact tracing purposes, we ask that you do not take other children in your car who are not registered as part of your carpool unless you have received advance permission from the school.

### VISITORS TO THE BUILDING

Minimizing the number of visitors in the building will help support social distancing and contact tracing.

Nonessential visitors, including parents, will not be allowed in the school building. Essential visitors will only be allowed into the school building with prior approval.

All visitors will be surveyed by a school employee to verify that they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms and their temperature will be checked prior to entering the building.

Any essential visitors to the school will be required to follow physical distancing, hand hygiene, and mask policies.

Parent volunteers and give/get opportunities in the school building will be very limited this year.

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## SIMULTANEOUS REMOTE OPTION

**All students in grades 1 – 8 have the choice to zoom into the classroom for simultaneous, interactive remote learning.**

The remote learning option is available to all students who need to remain at home for any reason.

Each classroom will be equipped with a camera that faces the front of the room and provides a view of the smart board and the teacher.

The classroom teacher will open a 2-way, interactive zoom session at the start of class. The students on zoom will be able to see and hear the teacher and the board, and the teacher will be able to see and hear the students.

Teachers will have the ability to screenshare the classroom smart board and will work to ensure students on zoom feel included in the classroom.

Students will be able to participate in class, raise their hands to ask questions or express a thought and be a part of the classroom activities to the greatest extent possible.

The zoom will be managed by either the lead teacher, assistant teacher (primary grades), and/or a Zoombassador (assigned student in the class).

If your child needs to miss a class and cannot attend the zoom there will be a form to submit in advance to request the lesson recording.

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# PHYSICAL DISTANCING



Based on the CDC's recommendation that limiting close contact is the best way to limit the spread of COVID-19, we will implement physical distancing practices both inside the building and in outdoor spaces.

- The entire daily schedule has been re-worked to enable social distancing between student cohort groups throughout the school day. In grades PN-4 each class will be their own cohort, and in middle school each grade will be considered a cohort. Students will remain within their cohort the entire day, including tefilla.
  - Tefilla will be by cohort and singing will be minimized and with a low voice.
- Students in grades 1-8 will each have an assigned desk in the classroom. In middle school, the shared tables have been replaced with individual desks.
- Seating and/or desks will be forward facing and separated at least 3'- 6' (avg 5') apart to comply with WHO and CDC guidelines.
- Excess furniture has been removed from all rooms to allow for more space.
- Students will each have individual school supplies. If items must be shared, they will be sanitized before and after use.
- Windows and doors in the classroom will be kept open as much as possible.
- Teachers will utilize outside spaces throughout the day when possible. We have purchased tents to help facilitate outdoor spaces for learning, lunch, etc.
- K-4 classes will remain in the same classroom all day and will start the year without lockers.
- In the middle school, movement from classroom to classroom will be minimized.
  - Each grade will be in only 2 - 3 different classrooms throughout the day.
  - Transitions between periods will be staggered and locker usage will be staggered to alleviate hallway crowding.
- Recess will be staggered.
- Restroom usage will be staggered with a limited number of students allowed in the restroom at one time.
- Signage will be installed around the building to communicate, promote and enforce physical distancing.

## LUNCH & SNACKS

We recognize that lunch and snack time can be challenging since masks cannot be worn.

- Students will be at least 6' apart while eating lunch and snack.
- We will use classrooms and other locations within the school as temporary lunchrooms to facilitate the 6' distance while eating lunch.
- Students will eat lunch outdoors when possible.
- Any lunch area used by multiple groups will be disinfected between groups.
- All school provided Hot Lunch meals will be in single serve containers with all disposable utensils.
- We will reinforce no sharing of any food or drinks.
- At the start of the year no milk or juice will be supplied.

### SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Assemblies and large in-person gatherings will be cancelled until further notice.

There will be no Fall Afterschool Programs.

Field trips and extracurricular activities will be on hold until further notice.

# MASKS AT SCHOOL



There is strong evidence that wearing a mask, which covers the mouth and nose, is an effective strategy in controlling the person to person spread of COVID-19.

- All students, teachers, staff, and visitors ages two and older must wear a mask while in the building, even if social distancing is maintained.
- At arrival, masks should be in place prior to getting out of the car; at dismissal, masks should remain in place until seated inside the car.
- Masks must cover the nose and the mouth, and fit snugly against the sides of the face.
- Masks can be removed while eating and drinking.
- Masks can be removed outdoors if social distancing (>6 feet) can be maintained.
- Teachers will schedule “mask breaks” for students throughout the day outdoors or while at least 6’ apart.
- The school recognizes that wearing a mask may be difficult for students in the pre-nursery and nursery programs and will work with the students and parents to help create the safest classroom environment.

# HAND HYGIENE



Hand hygiene is recognized by the CDC as one of the best ways to protect oneself from getting sick.

- Everyone in the school building will be instructed to wash or sanitize hands frequently.
  - Upon entering the building.
  - Upon entering or exiting a classroom.
  - Prior to eating.
- We are installing hand sanitizer dispensers in every room in the school as well as at every entrance/exit.
- Students will be taught proper hygiene techniques.
- All restrooms, including the four that were fully remodeled, will be outfitted with touchless toilets and urinals (new bathrooms only), sinks, paper towel dispensers, and soap dispensers.
- There will be signage reminders throughout the building regarding proper hygiene and safety.

# CLEANING & DISINFECTING

Frequent cleaning and disinfection will be implemented to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

- We will follow the specific sanitation procedures recommended by the CDC, IDPH, and local health departments.
- There will be additional sanitizing throughout the day of high touch surfaces.
- Desks will be sanitized before students eat.
- There will be additional deep cleaning each night following all CDC, IDPH, and ISBE guidelines.
- All water fountains will be closed and replaced with water bottle filling stations.
- HVAC filters throughout the building have been upgraded to Merv 13 filters in order to improve the air quality in the building.

# SUPPORTING OUR FACULTY

The safety of our faculty and staff is of utmost importance as we return to in person learning.

- Faculty and staff have been actively involved in the reopening planning process.
- The school will be providing faculty and staff with all of the necessary PPE including regular masks, clear masks, face shields and protective glasses.
- If individual teachers have a specific need (such as a protective barrier or microphone), the school will work with them to provide what is needed to ensure their safety.
- Faculty and staff should not remain within 6' of students and each other for more than 15 min at a time.
- Faculty and staff will be provided with additional work and lunch/break spaces to enable appropriate social distancing, including outdoor break space. During August in-service, all staff and faculty will be trained in the new policies and procedures.
- During the first two weeks of school, faculty and staff will work together to reflect on the implementation of these new procedures and make any necessary adjustments.
- Faculty will be provided with ongoing professional development in strategies for teaching and meeting needs of students in a remote and hybrid learning environment.

**Safeguarding the health and safety of our students and staff is our top priority.**

**Our primary focus is to ensure a safe environment from a medical, operational, and educational perspective.**



## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR PARENTS: Preventative Measures and Health Monitoring



Due to the contagious nature of COVID-19, we will be following the CDC and ISBE guidelines of symptom screening self-certification for all students and staff prior to entering the building.

- If a symptom or illness is reported, the school nurse will follow up with the individual family regarding what measures to take in order to return to school in-person, based on CDC guidelines.
  - The school nurse will follow up with students on a daily basis when they are absent from school with any COVID-19 related symptoms.
- If a student exhibits symptoms during the school day, the school nurse will be notified and the student will immediately be separated from others in a designated area to wait to be picked up.
  - The designated quarantine room will allow 6 feet of distance should there be multiple people in the room at one time.
  - When interacting with students who may be sick, the school nurse and all staff will follow CDC guidelines and precautions.
  - The parents will be notified and the student will need to be picked up.
  - The school nurse will provide parents guidance on next steps.
- In addition to our standard immunization policy, all students are required to get a flu shot prior to November 1, 2020, unless documented as medically contra-indicated.

### ARE YOU TRAVELING OUT OF TOWN?

Hillel Torah will follow the guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) in regards to returning to the school building after travel for students, teachers and staff.

Any student or staff member returning from a location with sustained widespread transmission (Travel Warning of Level 3) may not attend school in person for 14 days after the return date.

Current information on which states/countries are level 3 is available at

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance/>

Students will be expected to attend school remotely via Zoom while quarantined at home.

Due to the situation continually changing, we will closely monitor changes and updates will be sent out via email.

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**We ask all Hillel Torah families to follow CDC, state, and local guidelines while outside of school to help protect the entire community.**

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**\*\*The policies outlined in this document are subject to change along with the ongoing changes to medical and state guidelines. We are committed to being as flexible as possible to make all adjustments necessary to continue to provide our students with the education they need in a safe, healthy environment.\*\***

# IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR PARENTS: Preventative Measures and Health Monitoring cont.



It is essential that parents do not send their children to school and staff do not come to school if they are displaying any symptoms or exposure risk factors including:

## SYMPTOMS

- |   |                              |                            |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| * Fever or chills (>100.4 F, 38.0 C)          | * Fatigue                    | * Congestion or runny nose |
| * Cough                                       | * Muscle or body aches       | * Nausea or vomiting       |
| * Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | * Headache                   | * Abdominal pain           |
|   | * New loss of taste or smell | * Diarrhea                 |
|   | * Sore throat                |                            |

## EXPOSURE RISK FACTORS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| * Close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19                          | * Traveled to or lived in an area where the local, or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases |
| * Close contact with person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19 | * Live in areas of high community transmission while the school remains open   |

**Contact tracing:** In the event of a case of COVID-19 within the school community we will inform local health departments and we will notify parents/staff who may have been exposed while maintaining appropriate privacy for the individual(s) with a positive diagnosis or symptoms. We will additionally send an email to all parents/staff that there was a confirmed positive case in the school community.

An exposure or close contact is defined as an individual who spent time closer than six feet for at least 15 minutes with an individual who has tested positive.

- Anyone in a student’s classroom cohort is considered a close contact. In the event that a whole class needs to quarantine, learning will continue remotely via Zoom.
- Siblings, carpools and other persons reported by parents are considered a close contact.
- Teachers in grades 1-8 are not considered a close contact as they will maintain the necessary 6’ physical distance from students.
- The school nurse and administration will work closely with the local health department to guide us on the level of risk in regards to community transmission and at what point we may need to close the building.

If a student or staff member is informed that they are a close contact with a positive case, they must quarantine.

- If the individual has NO symptoms, quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to contact.
- If the individual has symptoms, seek advice from a healthcare provider regarding the need for a COVID-19 test and quarantine for at least 14 days and until symptoms resolve.

If a student or staff member has a household contact that has a positive COVID-19 test, they must quarantine.

- If the individual has NO symptoms, quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to contact.
- If the individual has symptoms, seek advice from a healthcare provider regarding the need for a COVID 19 test and quarantine for at least 14 days.

# IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR PARENTS: What Should I Do . . .

**If your child has a possible COVID-19 symptom but does NOT have any of the exposure risk factors (listed on page 11):**

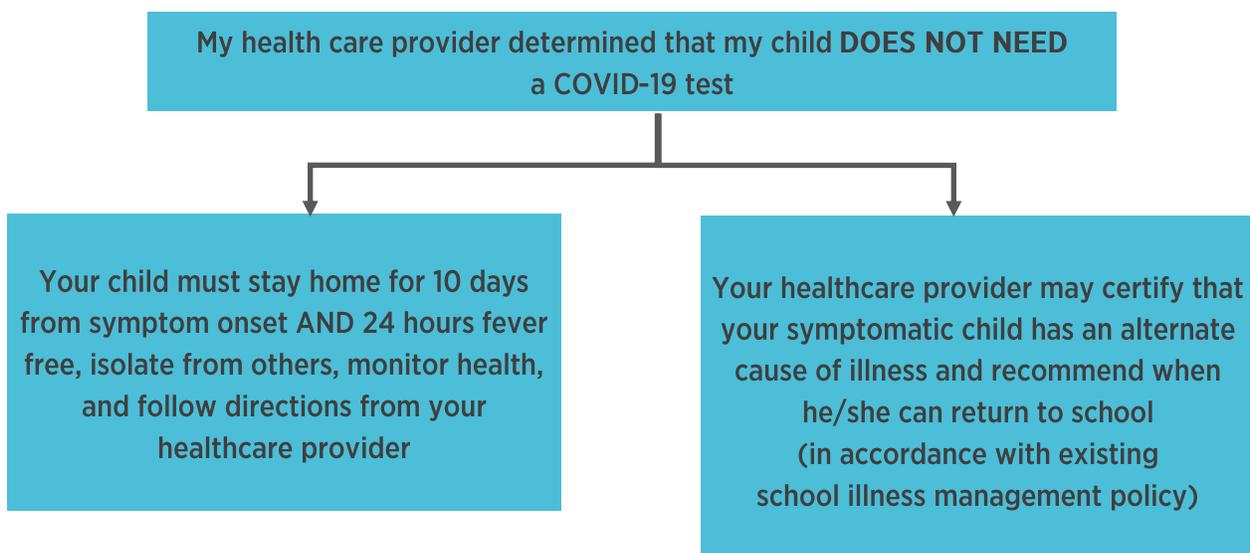
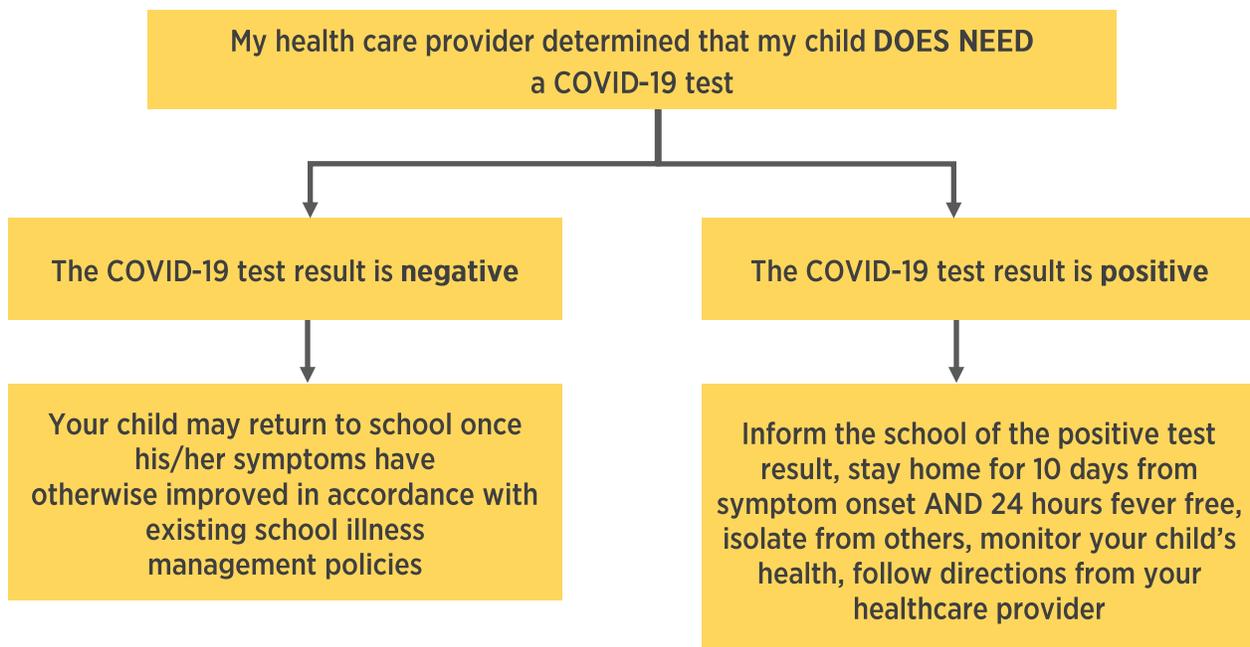
→ Your child must stay home from school in accordance with our existing illness management policy until he/she is symptom-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medications.

**If your child has a possible COVID-19 symptom AND has one or more exposure risk factor (listed on page 11):**

→ Your child must stay home from school while you check with your healthcare provider for further guidance.

→ Your healthcare provider must communicate, via letter to the school, whether or not your child needs a COVID-19 test prior to returning to school.

While at home, if your child feels up to it, he/she will be able to zoom into the classroom for simultaneous remote learning (for grades 1-8).



# HILLEL TORAH COMMUNITY PLEDGE

As we move forward together starting school this fall, we are asking that all Hillel Torah families commit to the Hillel Torah Community Pledge. The goal of the pledge is to create an ongoing safe and healthy school environment for our students and staff. In addition to our Responsible Reopening Guidelines that apply to IN-school procedures, we ask for your commitment to follow these OUT-of-school procedures, as well. Your family's strict adherence to this pledge is imperative to maintaining the health and continued wellbeing of our school community.

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## PLEDGE

As Hillel Torah community members, we pledge to:

- Social distance in group situations or in public spaces.
- Wear masks indoors and outdoors when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Undertake responsible hand-washing/sanitizing.
- Inform the school if anyone in our immediate family has been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- Inform the school when someone in our immediate family shows any of the COVID-19 symptoms outlined by the CDC.
- Inform the school if anyone in our immediate family contracts COVID-19.
- Follow state travel guidelines, including staying home for 14 days after travel to hot spots.

**We ask that you and your family members please review and commit to this pledge, as well as the guidelines outlined herein. We thank you in advance for your help in keeping our community strong, healthy, and connected in these unprecedented times.**

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\*\*\*This document is a guide for school reopening and COVID-19 policies relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. This guide should not be taken as medical advice to anyone. Medical advice and direct medical care should be handled by a certified medical provider. \*\*\*

## ADMINISTRATION

Rabbi Menachem Linzer, Principal

Tamar Friedman, Director of Judaic Studies

Karin Felix, Director of Admissions

Miriam Kopelow, Director of General Studies

Ed Plotkin, Director of Development

Dov Shandalov, Business Administrator

Jennifer Wasserman, Director of Early Childhood

Aron Wolgel, Director of Student Services

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