



KEEPING SAFE WHILE LEARNING

KEHILA HESCHEL SCHOOL COVID-19 Reopening Plan Handbook

Education is Too Important for Us to Make Compromises





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A Message from our School

As the 2020-2021 school year approaches, **KEHILA HESCHEL** Board and administration have been focused on developing a comprehensive plan that would keep our students engaged and learning in a safe environment. This focus has guided our plan and actions as we reopen our school this Fall. This past March, the COVID-19 pandemic thrust us all into a new educational reality and Kehila Heschel was able to pivot into a full-distance learning program two days after the physical school closure. We are proud of the work of all of our educators and staff who responded positively and creatively to the challenges before them and were open and flexible in adapting to changes that were needed to better support our students learning and their home situation. We would also like to thank families for their participation, collaboration and support which contributed a great deal to the success of the spring program.

As we now move forward to a return to in-school learning, this plan describes how we are preparing for learning at Kehila Heschel this year.

We are looking forward to welcoming our “Kehila” back to our school.

Anita Bernstein, *Education Director*



Overview: What learning will look like

2020-21 Classes at Kehila Heschel will look different but learning will be engaging, creative, interactive and inclusive

In the past few months, we had the opportunity to review our spring program, rethink and plan for a variety of possible return to school scenarios as we welcome students back to full day learning on site to our school on September 8th. Health and safety protocols at Kehila Heschel school are designed to meet and/or exceed the guidelines and recommendations for school reopening by the *Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, City of Hamilton Public Health Services* and the *Hospital for Sick Children*. The ‘new normal’ at Kehila Heschel is intended to optimize learning and social-emotional development, while ensuring that the health and safety of students, teachers and school staff remain a top priority.



This handbook was developed following the guidelines provided by Hamilton Public Health for reopening of private schools and includes information on how Kehila Heschel plans to implement:

1. Physical distancing

- Physical distancing will be promoted whenever possible
- Educating students on avoiding physical contact with others

2. Adjusted School Environment

- Capping class sizes at 12 students
- Outdoor classrooms
- Modification of Indoor classrooms' environment
- Orientation of classrooms to promote 2 m distance
- Adjusted routines for movement in and out of the school
- Blended learning options

3. Adjusted Processes and Routines

- Daily health screening of all staff, students or anyone entering the school
- Educating students on appropriate hand hygiene
- Hand sanitizer stations
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting procedures throughout the school

4. Personal Protective Equipment

- Teachers and staff will wear face masks and eye protection while inside the school
- Students in grade 4 and 5 will be required to wear non-medical masks while inside the school
- Students in K-grade 3 will be encouraged to wear masks/face covering while inside the school

We continue to follow updates for reopening guidelines as released by the government and will adjust our procedures accordingly.



Our Experts: Health and Safety Advisory Panel

A Health & Safety Advisory Panel was struck to advise the Board of Directors, school administration and teachers in developing guidelines and protocols for the opening of school. Members of the panel have expertise in:

- ⇒ Public Health,
- ⇒ Medicine,
- ⇒ Scientific Research,
- ⇒ Emergency Preparedness

Panel members include:

Dr. Laura Waltman, *Pediatrician*, Kehila Heschel Parent

Ms. Elissa Press, *Public Health*, Kehila Heschel Parent

Ms. Sherri Bavli, *Community Public Health Nurse*

Dr. Daniel Kollek, *Community Emergency Preparedness*, Kehila Heschel Parent Alumni

Kehila Heschel will be strictly adhering to the recommendations made by experts at the *Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, City of Hamilton Public Health Services* and the *Hospital for Sick Children*.



In-depth: What will Kehila Heschel school, classrooms and learning look like

#1 Physical Distancing

- Classrooms and routines have been adjusted to promote 2 meters between students and staff
- Opportunities to educate students on avoiding physical contact with others has been integrated into the curriculum across all grades
- Desks, tables and work areas have been rearranged to allow for social distancing in accordance with public health guidelines.
- Signage and visual cues, both indoors and outdoors will assist with spacing and traffic flow when moving about the school
- Students and staff will be using the two side doors to enter and exit the school. Side doors ensure students and staff enter directly into the school area and minimize their contact with others in the building by avoiding the main entrance.

#2 Adjusted School Environment

Learning at School

Kehila Heschel students will be learning in-person, face-to-face at school as the preferred method for delivering our curriculum. In order to achieve this safely, many practices will be implemented:

- Each classroom is equipped with a sanitation station at the entrance.
- All materials within the classroom are now able to be sanitized. All other items have been removed to allow for thorough cleaning and social distancing to be maintained.
- Each child's material will be kept separately in a bin and will not be shared.

Class sizes and composition

- Class sizes will continue to be capped at a maximum of 12 students.
- Grade specific pods will have students learning, playing and eating together. Students will remain in their groups and classes (whether outdoors or indoors).



- Teachers will rotate to teach within their language expertise (English, French and Hebrew).
- Our teachers (including our substitute teacher) are dedicated to only teaching at our school to minimize spread of the virus.

Outdoor classrooms

All grades will participate in outdoor classrooms ensuring reduced time in an enclosed setting.

- Kehila Heschel's Eco-school curriculum supports students' learning outdoors as they incorporate the natural environment into their studies.
- Each class pod will have their own outdoor classroom tent in designated areas which will be utilized as much as possible. Wifi has been boosted to ensure technology can be accessed in these classrooms. We will be specifically programming for curriculum delivered in outdoor classrooms to maximize learning in this outdoor environment.

Indoor classrooms

- The school has undergone thorough cleaning and sanitization.
- Classrooms have been freshly painted. And windows and screens were repaired to support open windows ventilation in every classroom.
- Furnishings have been minimized to allow for social distancing and ease of ongoing sanitization. Desks, tables and work areas have been rearranged to allow for social distancing in accordance with public health guidelines.
- Classroom will NOT be shared.
- Students will keep their own materials in designated bins and these will not be shared.
- Each class will have designated supplies, and equipment and toys which will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Each classroom is now equipped with their own projector and various devices, such as computers, to allow for students at home to Zoom in to the classroom. Teachers have been provided with training and support to best meet the needs of students who are not able to be physically present in class.

Blended learning or Transition to Virtual Learning

- Blended learning options have been developed in the event that a student is not able to attend classes.
- Should it be required, our staff is prepared to quickly pivot to full virtual



learning as capabilities are in place to allow for a seamless transition.

Personal Belongings

- Personal belongings brought to school should be minimized. All personal items (e.g., backpack, clothing, supplies, water bottles, food, etc.) should be labeled and will be kept specifically for the individual student.
- Students will be required to bring their own facial masks, kippot, and other items and these may not be shared.
- Masks/Face coverings should be stored in a breathable container or paper bag
- Students will be required to provide their own set of basic supplies for their exclusive use.
- Minimizing sharing and frequency of touching objects, toys equipment and surfaces and other personal items

Movement throughout the School

Entry and exit protocols

- **Entry Protocol**: Students and staff will be using the two side doors to enter and exit the school. Side doors ensure students and staff enter directly into the school area and minimize their contact with others in the building by avoiding the main entrance.
- The parking lot will be closed to traffic during arrival and dismissal times. Grade 1, 2 and 3 will enter by the back door. JK/SK and Grade 5 will enter by the first door.
- For entry, students will be expected to wait in their designated entrance area. We discourage parents from waiting with their children in order to maintain social distancing.
- Signs will ensure social distancing is maintained and that congregating is discouraged.
- Staff members will be on duty in at the entrances in the morning to welcome and screen students.
- Screening stations will be set up at both entrances. Students will be called up to enter and screened by staff in order to safely enter the building.
- **Dismissal Protocol**: Students will be dismissed through the side doors in



family groupings. Parents will alert the school through text or call that they are waiting at the side door and those students will be dismissed. A teacher will be on duty at the door to ensure safety.

Staggered entry for JK/SK

JK/SK will enter 15 minutes after the other students to allow for support from staff.

Lunch and Breaks

Meals and Snacks:

Students will eat lunch in their designated pods. When possible, students will be eating in their outdoor classrooms. Students and teachers will perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating. Water bottles will be used as there will be no access to water fountains or filling stations. Each student should come to school with 2 full water bottles that are labeled, kept with them during the day, and not shared. Each student will bring their own individual meal and snacks with no common/shared food items. All remaining food and garbage will be returned home in the lunch boxes.

Health Breaks and use of park equipment:

At health break, students will remain with their pods. Staggered exit and entry routine will ensure physical distancing during all breaks. Students will continue to use the two-step sanitization protocol when reentering and exiting the school, pre and post play. Only one pod will be allowed to use equipment at any one time. Students will continue to be reminded not to touch their face.

Schoolwide Assemblies and Celebrations

Large gatherings will be cancelled for foreseeable future. When possible, we will consider outdoor environments for schoolwide gatherings where physical distancing can be implemented. We will consider virtual options (e.g. Zoom) where applicable.

Activity within the school

Only Kehila Heschel students and staff will be using the school premises this year. After school programs Temple programs will be virtual.



Guests and Visitors

No guests will be permitted inside the school. Experts in the class program will take place virtually.

Parents are discouraged from entering the school unless special circumstances require entry. In this case, clear communication with the school is expected and screening and mask procedures must be followed.

3 Adjusted Processes and Routines

Infection Prevention and Control Practices

Teachers and staff will be provided with training on hand hygiene, use of PPEs, mask use, disinfection practices and other practices as needed.

Hand Hygiene

- Performing, promoting and supervising frequent, proper hand hygiene. Hand washing using soap and water will be emphasized with washing taking place on arrival, before lunch breaks or anytime the students' re-enter the school after outdoor activities.
- Sanitization stations are located in every classroom, at the entrance to the school corridor and at the two outdoor entrances to the school

Mask Policy

- Anyone who enters the school building is required to wear a mask
- Teachers, staff and students are required to wear a non-medical mask/face covering while indoors (hallways and classrooms)
- If a child has a medical condition (physical or emotional) that requires them to be exempt from wearing a mask or necessitates a break from wearing a mask this must be noted on the medical form and you may be asked for documentation from a health care provider (e.g. physician) to support this request. We will work with you to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made.
- Students will be taught how to put on and take off their masks, as well as store them appropriately (e.g. hand hygiene before placing and removing mask)
- Masks should be changed if soiled or damaged.



Environmental Cleaning

- Ensuring all toys and equipment used at Kehila Heschel are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected (i.e. no plush toys, playdough) or are single use and are disposed of at the end of the day (e.g. craft supplies)
- Increasing the frequency daily of cleaning and disinfecting objects, toys, equipment and frequently touched items
- Restrooms will be monitored and cleaned more frequently throughout the day
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, including doorknobs, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, electronic devices, tabletops, and chairs.
- Spray bottles with disinfectant, gloves and paper towels will be provided for staff to wipe down any surfaces and other equipment

Screening and Reporting:

Active daily screening for staff and students:

All students, teachers and staff will be screened including daily temperature checks upon arrival prior to entry.

Parents will be asked to complete a hard copy of a daily questionnaire. Students will be expected to hand this form in, and have their temperature taken, as part of their daily entry protocol into the building.

- Screeners will be wearing (PPE) and maintain social distancing.
- Thermometers will be disinfected between each use.

This form will be used to maintain a log of all people who enter the building in case tracing is required.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content will be placed at all screening stations and entrances to the School. Signage at the entrance will remind people not to enter if they are ill.

Any individual who has any of the symptoms outlined in the COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms on the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website (insert link) or who has come in close contact with a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days will NOT enter the school.

Staff or students with conditions that mimic COVID 19 (e.g. Seasonal allergies) are encouraged to take caution when symptomatic but may seek approval to attend school with medical consultation/documentation.



Record Keeping and Contact Reporting:

Daily attendance records (e.g., name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, screening completion etc.) will be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.

Kehila Heschel school will contact the Hamilton public health as needed. The local public health unit will provide specific advice on what control measures should be implemented to prevent the potential spread and how to protect and, if needed, isolate staff members and students.

Positive Screening or Diagnosis of COVID 19:

Kehila Heschel will strive to ensure sensitivity to anyone who is symptomatic or diagnosed with COVID 19. We will educate the students to reduce the stigma of a positive diagnosis to reduce any shame or guilt.

Management of staff or students who are symptomatic BEFORE coming to school

If a student, teacher or staff exhibits symptoms they must:

- Remain at home
- Report the absence with the reason “illness / COVID related” by calling or messaging the school
- Seek a COVID-19 test, self-isolate until the results are available and follow the orders of Public Health; OR in the absence of a COVID-19 test, self-isolate for 14 days

Failed Screening: Next steps

We will follow the protocol encouraged by Public Health. Anyone who fails a screening has 3 follow-up options:

1. **Arrange for a physician assessment.**; doctor can decide if testing is not necessary and provide a note (i.e. symptoms are due to different cause).
 - Child/staff may return to school 24 hours after symptoms resolve
2. **Get tested;**



- if negative (and child/staff was NOT a close contact of a suspected/confirmed case) they can return 24 hours after symptoms resolve.
- If positive they must remain at home for a full 14 days (note: absence of symptoms (with the exception of a lingering cough) is required prior to re-attending school. If the student feels well enough, he/she may join the class virtually.

3. Do not get tested

- student must remain at home for a full 14 days and can return to class 24 hours after symptoms resolve. If the student feels well enough, he/she may join the class virtually.

The Head of School is responsible for communicating with the school community with Ministry Guidance and relevant privacy legislation (e.g. notify all family, staff and essential visitors of the facility's outbreak status through letters and signage).

Management of students with possible Symptoms of COVID-19 AT SCHOOL

- The student will be isolated in a designated space should they present with symptoms while at school
- The school will notify the parent that the student needs to be picked up immediately. Close contacts living in the same home as the symptomatic child (e.g. siblings) must also be picked up for monitoring of symptoms
- Symptomatic staff and students will be referred for testing, with follow through at the family's discretion

Return to school:

Students who screened positive may return to school if one of the following conditions are met:

- COVID 19 swab is negative AND the child is 24 hours symptom free, OR
 - Student has not obtained a COVID swab but has self-isolated for 14 days AND is minimum 24 hours symptom free
- Close contacts/siblings of a student who has screened positive may return to school as long as they are asymptomatic, and the symptomatic sibling has a negative COVID swab



- If a symptomatic staff/student has a negative COVID swab but remains symptomatic and the clinical suspicion is high they should consider contacting public health/physician and possibly a repeat COVID swab.
- Students who are diagnosed with COVID 19 should follow the protocol below for return to school.

Management of students who test positive

- If a student is diagnosed with COVID 19 the family must notify the school immediately and follow public health recommendations for self-isolation.
- Those who test positive for COVID-19 must remain at home for 14 days after the onset of symptoms and clearance has been received from the local public health unit.
- If a student is well enough to participate in virtual learning, efforts will be made to allow the child to participate in daily learning activities.
- Kehila Heschel will report any positive case to Hamilton Public Health. Public Health will determine the necessary steps including declaration of an outbreak and possible closure of the school.



Appendix A: General Resources

Many online resources are available through public health to assist with training, including but not limited to:

- a [video](#) and [handout](#) on how to properly put on and take off on non-medical masks
- a video on how to properly [put on](#) and [take off](#) medical masks and eye protection (for staff)
- [information](#) on how to properly store a mask and how often it needs to be changed
- [symptoms of COVID19 and how/when to get tested](#)
- [what to do after you've been tested](#)
- how to [self-isolate](#) or [self-monitor](#)
- [videos](#) and handouts about correct [respiratory etiquette](#) , [hand washing](#) and [hand hygiene](#)
- how to [physically distance](#)

Government of Ontario Resources
[Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#)

Public Services Health and Safety Association of Ontario:
[Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 For School Employers: Access to School For Persons And Educators](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada:
[COVID-19 guidance for schools Kindergarten to Grade 12](#)