

20 November 2020

Dear Parents,

With cases rising across the region and emerging in our community, YGW continues to closely monitor the situation and update our plans and policies in accordance with the ever-changing reality. Especially with the Thanksgiving break approaching, we would like to make clear the priority the Yeshiva places on safety, and share some updates to our practices that we are implementing to mitigate some of the risk.

As was presented at the start of the school year, our medical team prepared a two-tiered approach for our handling of potential exposures and symptoms. Until this point, we have been using an algorithm that addressed a situation of relatively low risk of viral transmission. We have now reached the point where we must transition to the stricter algorithm that is relevant in a situation of higher virus transmission rates. In this scenario, cohorts may be required to move to virtual learning for brief periods while a Covid test is pending for students with known exposures or highly concerning symptoms. You should also anticipate an updated daily screening questionnaire that takes secondary exposure into account. A flowchart view of this algorithm will be available shortly on the Yeshiva website.

For the Thanksgiving break, we will be enacting stricter guidelines regarding travel and get-togethers to ensure the safety and health of our community, as we did over Succos break. Currently, with almost every region in the United States at or nearing the “hotspot” designation (<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>), overnight travel outside of our community is strongly discouraged. We understand the desire to spend time with family and friends, and wish the situation were different. However, in the present environment, the Yeshiva will require any student who travels outside of the Greater Washington area for an overnight stay, or who hosts non-household guests overnight, to learn virtually for a designated period of time (14 days, or 7 days followed by a negative PCR test).

An additional precaution that YGW will implement over this time period is the extension of our simcha policy to smaller meals and get-togethers. If a student wants to return to in-person learning immediately following the Thanksgiving break, they may not attend any meal or get-together with non-household members, including in your own home, where masking and physical distancing do not occur. If you have a situation where you believe maximum safety can be ensured with an alternate arrangement, please be in contact with CovidBoys@yeshiva.edu or CovidGirls@yeshiva.edu before the break to determine if your child will be able to return to in-person learning.

A one-time expanded health screening will be sent out prior to 11/30, when classes resume.

One final important note: because the Yeshiva may now temporarily move cohorts to virtual learning while waiting for Covid test results on students when appropriate, it is imperative that the most expedited form of testing be utilized. Therefore, all students must use either the local Accureference test through YGW’s referral system or an alternate PCR test that is guaranteed to

have results in less than 48 hours. Montgomery County testing does not fit this requirement at this time.

We recognize that there may be questions with regard to testing and quarantine. If you need clarification on this or any COVID issue, please make use of our Covid Resource Center on www.yeshiva.edu or email CovidBoys@yeshiva.edu or CovidGirls@yeshiva.edu

Sincerely,
Rabbi Yitzchok Merkin
Headmaster