



**Becker School**  
Congregation Emanu El

2020-21 COVID-19 Handbook



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## OVERVIEW

It is our goal to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which your child can grow emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. Our program may look slightly different as a result of COVID-19, but we are very much committed to providing a creative learning space that will stimulate and challenge your child's natural curiosity and inquiring mind.

### PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

As Congregation Emanu El and the Becker School prepare to re-open, our COVID-19 task force and synagogue leadership have reviewed best practices in the various program areas from across the country to provide a comprehensive protocol in response to COVID-19. Our task force created these guidelines with consideration of our Jewish values, including *pikuach nefesh* (preserving human life), *kedushat ha-kehillah* (sanctity of our community), and *achrayut* (personal responsibility) in addition to recommendations from local, state and national organizations such as the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Harris County Public Health, health professionals, and the Guidelines set forth for Child Care Centers by the COVID-19 Task Force of Governor Abbott's office.

### MISSION STATEMENT

We nurture children to grow intellectually, spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically through a developmentally appropriate curriculum and environment that respects each child. We encourage respect of others and the positive values of Judaism. We believe that young children learn through play and the opportunity to investigate their interests in a meaningful way.

### THIS HANDBOOK IS FLUID AND MAY BE UPDATED

If guidelines from local, state, or national health officials are updated, this handbook will be revised to comply with the new guidelines. If and when guidelines change, we will notify you promptly and implement those changes accordingly.

### WE ARE PARTNERS

In order to maximize the health and safety of children and their families and Becker staff, it is vitally important to create a partnership, understanding that each of us will play a critical role in maintaining a safe and healthy environment. We will be taking enhanced health and safety measures – for you, for your children, and for our staff. We cannot do this without your committed partnership. We thank you for your support and patience as we work to address needs and changes as they arise.

# COVID-19

*"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."*

- Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas – Child Care Centers Minimum Standard Health Protocols

\* Although severe cases of COVID-19 in children have been reported, most children appear to have asymptomatic, mild, or moderate disease and recover within one to two weeks of disease onset. A minority of children with COVID-19 require hospitalization, and very few require intensive care. A serious condition associated with COVID-19 called multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) has recently been reported. This syndrome is rare.

## SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported—ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with COVID-19 may display the following symptoms:

- Cough\*
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills – repeated shaking with chills
- Headache\*
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or measured temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported.

\*If this symptom exists with no other symptoms present, an assessment will take place.

## METHODS OF VIRUS TRANSMISSION

*"COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, 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 with whom they come in close contact, 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."*

- Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas – Child Care Centers Minimum Standard Health Protocols

## **WHO 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."*

- Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas – Child Care Centers Minimum Standard Health Protocols

The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our community. The Becker School will operate in accordance with the *Guidance for Child Care Programs* released by the Centers of Disease Control (CDC), available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>.

Based on above CDC guidance, we have created plans around the following prevention measures:

- Implement screening procedures upon arrival
- Modify drop-off and pick-up procedures
- Promote healthy hygiene practices
- Implement social distancing strategies
- Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts

## **PREVENTATIVE HEALTH MEASURES**

### **DAILY HEALTH SCREENINGS**

The following individuals will be screened every day before entering our facility:

- Operations staff and temporary/contract employees
- Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff
- Professionals providing services to children
- Children enrolled at the Becker School
- Parents who have children enrolled and present at the operation. Parents should only enter the facility when necessary.

It is important to stress that everyone – parents, teachers, and staff – will play a critical role in maintaining a safe and healthy environment.

The first step to limit spread of COVID-19 is in preventing those with a confirmed case of (or a high probability of having been in contact with a confirmed case of) COVID-19 from entering the facility. We will do this through our screening procedures, which include a self-screening prior to arriving at school and an active screening as people enter the facility that determines who we allow to enter school.

<p><b>Staff Procedures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff members must answer the <u>COVID-19 Health Questions</u> (see below) each day to satisfy admission into school. If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the staff member will be asked to remain home.</li> <li>● All staff will have their temperature checked prior to entering school. Should their temperature exceed 100.4° degrees Fahrenheit, they will be asked to remain home.</li> <li>● All staff members must wash hands at a designated handwashing station upon entering school each day.</li> <li>● Our teachers and staff will wear personal face masks during the day.</li> <li>● Gloves will be used during specific times at school.</li> <li>● All staff possess current certifications in First Aid and CPR for infant, child, and adult.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Family Procedures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents must remain in the car for drop off and pick up. Children will be escorted into school by school staff. .</li> <li>● Parents must answer the <u>COVID-19 Health Questions</u> (see below) each day to satisfy admission into school. If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the child will be asked to remain home.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child Procedures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All children will have their temperature checked prior to entering school. Should their temperature exceed 100.4° Fahrenheit, they will be asked to remain home.</li> <li>● All children must wash hands at a designated handwashing station upon entering school each day.</li> <li>● Children must bring their own water bottles. Refill stations will be available throughout the day.</li> <li>● Face masks for children are optional and must be provided by the family.</li> </ul>

**COVID-19 Health Questions:**

- Have you or anyone in your immediate household had symptoms of COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
- Have you come in contact with anyone who has been lab-confirmed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days?

*\* Close contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time (10-15 minutes); OR having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).*

## **DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES**

The Becker School will implement a revised drop off and pick up procedure for the 2020-21 school year. Outside the school entrance, signs will be placed to direct you to a location to queue up for drop off and pick up. At drop off, school staff will escort children from the car into school.

While children are still in the car (prior to being escorted into school) staff will conduct the following procedures each day:

1. **Rapid Temperature Check of Child** (We consider a normal temperature one that is below 100.4°F. Should a child's temperature exceed 100.4°F, he/she will not be allowed to enter school.)
2. **Daily Confirmation of the COVID-19 Health Questions:**
  - Have you or anyone in your immediate household had symptoms of COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
  - Have you come in contact with anyone who has been lab-confirmed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days?

*If any of the health questions are answered with "YES," the child will be asked to remain at home. In the event that siblings are enrolled school, if one person in the family is exhibiting symptoms or has been exposed to someone who has been lab-confirmed with COVID-19, then the entire family has been exposed and cannot come to school.*

3. **School Staff will Escort Child into School** (Prior to entering the school building, children will wash/disinfect their hands at a designated station.)

At **dismissal**, each child will be escorted to his/her car at the designated time.

We understand that in prior years drop off and pick up are times when we have all enjoyed visiting with each other; however, for the coming school year we are requesting that parents remain in their cars at all times and do not come in to the school in order to restrict the number of contacts.

## WHO SHOULD STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL

Anyone who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 must remain at home:

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

*\* Close contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time (10-15 minutes); OR having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).*

## COVID-19 SICK POLICY

As a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have modified our normal sick policies to take special consideration in an effort to reduce the risk of possible infection. **We cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for parents to keep children home when they are sick!** We will require the following protocols to be followed by staff and families alike:

- Any sick children or staff are required to stay home.
- Children who have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher, or who are displaying symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, flush cheeks, shortness of breath, rash, fatigue, or extreme fussiness and other childhood ailments such as vomiting or diarrhea will be sent home.
- Children who are displaying symptoms of any illness will be placed in a supervised and comforting isolation area to help prevent the spread of the virus or infection.
- Parents must pick up a sick child within **30 minutes** of being contacted.
- Any person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 within 14 days of being at the Becker School is asked to notify the Becker School so that appropriate precautions/facility closures can be put into place as guided by local health officials.
- Persons with known close contact\* to a person who has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (but without lab confirmation) may return to the Becker School following a 14-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure.
- The Becker School will close off any areas used by the person who was ill until the areas can be appropriately cleaned and disinfected as recommended by health officials.
- Close contacts of the ill individual will be notified, as feasible and as advised by local health officials. For example, if a child or staff member becomes ill, other members of the

ill person's class will be notified while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- If a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a child, teacher, or staff member, local health officials will be notified and will guide plans for contact tracing and/or facility closures.

## RETURN TO SCHOOL (AFTER ILLNESS) POLICY

Persons who have been ill (both children and teachers) may return to the Becker School when **ALL** the following criteria have been met:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever *without the use of fever-reducing medications*); AND
- The individual has shown improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); AND
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

*Persons who wish to return to the Becker School prior to fulfilling these criteria must obtain a note from a medical professional clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or negative nucleic-acid COVID-19 test(s).*

## CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

### CLASS SIZE AND RATIO REQUIREMENTS

The Child Care Centers Minimum Standards has laid out new required childcare ratios, intended to support the state's policy of social distancing. Becker's class sizes are well within the new class size and ratio requirements for Young Toddlers and Twos. In the coming school year, our Threes and Pre-K classes will be limited to 10 children and two teachers per class. We will be hiring additional staff and forming additional classes to adhere to these guidelines.

### SOCIAL DISTANCING

*"Some protective measures that we can expect from adults are, for a variety of reasons, simply not possible for infants, children, and youth to practice in schools and childcare centers. In some cases, the child will be too young to understand and practice these precautions. We cannot, for example, expect a group of toddlers or schoolchildren not to engage in interactive play or share toys."*

- Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas – Child Care Centers Minimum Standard Health Protocols

While we take the medical guidelines and health protocols very seriously, we also understand the social-emotional complications that arise as a result of these new protocols. Our teachers and staff will do the best they can to meet the protocols while still creating a warm and nurturing environment for your children.

Each class will remain in its own separate room for most of the day, thus minimizing the mixing of larger numbers of children together. As always, classes will include the same group of children and the same teachers each day. Each class will be assigned its own playground time.

At nap time, we will ensure that children's naptime mats are spaced out as much as possible, ideally six feet apart. We will place children head to toe to further reduce the potential for viral spread. Mats will be disinfected before and after each use.

Our goal is to keep these small groups as distinct as possible, but we acknowledge that within each small group, there will be interaction between children. Our staff will attempt to mitigate the risks of those interactions as much as possible.

## **GUIDANCE REGARDING MASKS OR CLOTH FACE COVERINGS**

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Cloth face coverings provide an extra layer to help prevent the respiratory droplets from traveling in the air and onto other people. Our teachers and staff will wear personal face masks during the day except when outdoors.

Face coverings should NOT be placed on children under the age of two years, or anyone who has trouble breathing or who cannot remove the face covering without assistance. It is recognized that face coverings may be challenging for children over the age of two years and may even be discouraged if wearing the face covering causes the child to touch his/her face more frequently.

Face masks for children are optional and must be provided by the family.

## **HANDWASHING**

All children, teachers and staff will be required to wash hands upon arrival at school. Additional required handwashing times include:

- Before and after preparing food and drinks
- Before and after eating or feeding children or themselves
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- Before and after diapering
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids
- After playing outdoors or in sand
- After handling garbage

Children and teachers will wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Teachers will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion. Teachers will assist children with handwashing. After assisting children with handwashing, teachers will also wash their hands.

## LUNCHES AND SNACKS

Lunches and snacks will be eaten in the child's classroom. Lunches sent from home should be packed in a closed, self-contained lunchbox including disposable utensils and napkins. If you choose to order a catered lunch for your child, those meals will be served with disposable utensils, napkins, and plates. Each child should bring his/her own water bottle daily.

All snacks will be pre-packaged individually in disposable containers.

Teachers will ensure that children wash their hands prior to and immediately after eating. Tables and chairs will be cleaned and disinfected after use.

## ENHANCED CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Before reopening, the cleaning service employed by Congregation Emanu El will be doing an extensive cleaning of the Becker School facility. Cleaning and disinfecting efforts will be intensified over pre-COVID-19 standards. All teachers and administrative staff have participated in a four-hour health and sanitation class in preparation to maximize compliance with the latest protocols. Additionally, informational signs will be posted throughout the campus on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.

### CLEANING PRODUCTS

- A schedule for regular cleaning and disinfecting has been developed.
- The cleaning crew and teachers will ensure safe and correct application of EPA-approved disinfectants and sanitizers to treat for COVID-19.
- EPA-registered disposable wipes are provided to teachers and other staff members so that commonly used surfaces such as keyboards, desks, and remote controls can be wiped down before use.
- All cleaning materials will be kept secure and out of reach of children

### CLEANING AND SANITIZING TOYS

- Surfaces that are frequently touched – classroom tables and chairs, toys and games – will be frequently cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.
- Toys and equipment that are not easily disinfected will be removed from classrooms.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths will be set aside until they are cleaned and disinfected by hand by a person wearing gloves.
- Toys that need to be cleaned will be set aside in a container of soapy water.

## **CLEANING AND SANITIZING FREQUENTLY USED AREAS**

- Objects and surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap cots, cubbies, and playground structures will be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected daily.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected three times throughout the day.
- High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal such as grab bars and stair railings will be cleaned several times throughout the day.
- Water fountains will not be available.

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING BEDDING**

- Cots will be labeled for each child. All cots will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Each child's bedding will be kept separate and stored in an individually labeled bag.
- Bedding sent from home (pillows, blankets, and sleeping bags) will be sent home to be washed each Friday and should be returned to school each Monday.

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