



Becker School
Congregation Emanu El

2021-22 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 because 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.

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 A LIVING DOCUMENT 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. 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

While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared with adults during the pandemic, children can be infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick with COVID-19, and can spread the virus to others.(1,2,3,4) Most children with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, and some have no symptoms at all.(5) The symptoms of COVID-19 in children are similar to symptoms of other common illnesses, like colds, strep throat, influenza, or allergies. Like adults, children who have COVID-19 but have no symptoms can still spread the virus to others.

-CDC's Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs during COVID-19

* 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.

METHODS OF VIRUS TRANSMISSION

COVID-19 is mostly [spread through close contact and inhalation of respiratory droplets](#) released when people talk, sing, breathe, sneeze, or cough. Although less likely, it is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by **touching a surface or object that has the virus on it** and then touching their own eyes, nose, or mouth.

-CDC's Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs during COVID-19

WHO CAN SPREAD COVID-19?

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:

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

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH MEASURES

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

The Becker School will continue to implement the carpool method at drop off and pick up. At drop off and pick up, school staff will escort children from the car into school and from school to their car.

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

1. Parent/Caregiver will scan a QR code for digital check-in using the Procare App.
2. Parent/Caregiver will take their child out of the car.
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.

On Friday afternoons, parents/caregivers are invited to come into the building and pick up their children from their child's classroom. Carpool will NOT be an option for pick up on Friday afternoons.

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 except when helping their child in/out of their car seat** and do not come into the school without prior approval or on Friday afternoons in order to restrict the number of contacts.

WHO IS REQUIRED TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL?

Anyone who has any of the following symptoms must remain at home:

- Cough
- Congestion
- Runny Nose
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills (repeated shaking with chills)
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4° Fahrenheit
- Known close contact (within the 14 preceding days) with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19
- Any student that has any household member awaiting a COVID-19 test result.

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

WHAT IF A STUDENT BECOMES SICK AT SCHOOL?

As a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have modified our normal sick policies to take special consideration 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 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, congestion, runny nose, 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.
- If a child is sent home from school with symptoms listed above, they must follow the Becker Sick Policy protocols before returning to school. Students must be fever-free (without medicine) for 72 hours before returning to school.

WHAT IF A STUDENT IS EXPOSED TO COVID-19?

- If a student has known exposure to COVID-19 please contact Sarah Williams or Erika Roberts immediately for further instruction.

WHEN CAN A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER EXPOSURE?

- Each case of exposure is unique and the quarantine/isolation is dependent on the circumstances around the case.
- If the student is not showing symptoms, take a PCR test 5-7 days from last exposure.
- If the student is showing symptoms, take a PCR test immediately.
- Once test results are submitted to Becker, further instruction on next steps will be given.

WHAT IF A STUDENT HAS A CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19?

- If a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a child, local health officials will be notified and will guide plans for contact tracing and/or facility closures.
- A notice will be sent to the families and staff with direct exposure to COVID-19 that will include information about classroom closings and any additional information that is pertinent to the particular case.

WHEN CAN A STUDENT RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER A CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19?

Students who test positive for COVID-19 and **had** symptoms may return to the Becker School when **ALL** the following criteria have been met:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving* **and**
- Received a negative PCR COVID-19 test

**Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation*

Students who test positive for COVID-19 and **had no** symptoms may return to the Becker School when the following criteria have been met:

- 10 days have passed since the student had a positive viral test for COVID-19.

REQUIRED COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR ALL STAFF

Beginning August 1, 2021, the COVID-19 vaccination will be mandatory for all employees and major contractors who will be entering our campus.

CLASSROOM 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.

Students will spend the majority of the day with the children from their class, but will also mix with other children in the same age level during playground and enrichment times. Students in different age levels will only mix during our weekly Shabbat service. During this time, the students will be spaced out. Students 2 years and older will be required to wear masks during Shabbat.

At nap time, we will ensure that children's naptime mats are spaced out as much as possible. 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

Everyone 2 years and older should wear a mask covering their mouth and nose when around people who do not live in their household, except when eating or sleeping. A mask is not a substitute for physical distancing. Masks should still be worn in addition to physical distancing. Wearing a mask is especially important indoors and when physical distancing is difficult to implement or maintain while providing care to young children.

-CDC's Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs during COVID-19

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 2 years and older are preferred and must be provided by the family.

Face masks for children 2 years and older are required during Shabbat Service of Fridays.

Teachers will be masked regardless of vaccination status. Teachers may remove masks when conducting a literacy or social-emotional learning activity under 15 minutes in durations. During this time teachers will be distanced from students.

Students and Teachers may remove masks when outside, eating, and sleeping.

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 into 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 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.

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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8-14-21

As you may already be aware, yesterday, due to the rising number of cases of COVID-19 among children in Houston, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo issued an order requiring face coverings to be worn in schools. The order states that all public and non-religious private schools, along with licensed child care centers, must follow the guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on the use of masks.

According to our Jewish value of *P'kuach Nefesh*, protecting life and health, we will be heeding this order and **requiring** masks for **all students ages 2 and up**, along with staff, teachers and visitors to our campus, in both the Becker and Helfman Religious Schools, regardless of vaccination status. Our experience over the past year has shown that children two and older are able to wear masks if provided with a well-fitting mask and appropriate support of parents and teachers. Our teachers and staff will be diligent and patient in helping our young learners keep their masks on, while offering short breaks throughout the day. Masks may be removed during outside time, and during snack and lunch for Becker students. We truly hope that this requirement will only be until this current wave calms down. We will continue to monitor the situation and to make and communicate changes to our policies as appropriate.