



Scarsdale Synagogue
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How we are keeping your children safe.....

Dear Families,

At Mazel Tots we remain committed to our Mission Statement* and we are committed to keeping your children and our staff safe and healthy during this Pandemic. In some respects our program has been reimagined to account for all the precautions we are taking. Through it all we remain committed to having warm and welcoming classrooms. Our teachers are ready to care for and nurture your children just as they always have.

Most importantly, the health and safety of every family and staff member is and will continue to be our top priority. In the following pages you will see some of the policies and procedures related to the precautions we are taking during this COVID-19 pandemic.

We look forward to a safe and healthy school year!

Fondly,

Jody

Jody Glassman, Director

**Mission Statement: Mazel Tots Early Childhood Program provides a warm and stimulating environment, which encourages children's curiosity and helps them to grow socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. Our warm and nurturing staff guide the children through a curriculum filled with a variety of child-centered and developmentally appropriate activities that are safe, fun and friendly. The children's spiritual growth is enriched by the study of Jewish holidays, traditions and family values.*

8/19/20



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COVID-19 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Mazel Tots Early Childhood Program is licensed by The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). All COVID-19 related changes are based on OCFS guidelines, The New York State Department of Health (DOH) and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). We will continually adjust our program's policies and procedures to align with the current guidance from these agencies. Updates to our policies will be provided to families via email.

We require that all families and staff follow state and local regulations related to COVID-19. This includes but is not limited to quarantine requirements stemming from family travel and any other ordinances.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Class start and end times will be staggered to allow for social distancing during drop off and pick up. Class hours will be adjusted within 10 minutes of their usual start and end times. We will advise you of those changes in a separate email. At this time, Mazel Tots will not be offering afternoon Enrichment classes or Early Morning Drop-off. If circumstances improve we will consider extending our hours.

CLASS PODS

Each class will be considered a pod and will stay together for the entirety of the school day and the school year. Children and staff will not interact with any other class pod.

WHAT A TYPICAL DAY WILL LOOK LIKE

This year, the children will spend an even larger portion of their day outside. We've identified multiple outdoor spaces for our use and each space will only be occupied by one class pod per day. Cleaning and sanitizing will occur between uses. Within each individual pod a school day will consist of opportunities for individual play, small group interaction and full pod time. Activities such as class meetings, story time, literacy, math and science activities, and gross and fine motor opportunities may take place either indoors or weather-permitting outdoors. We will go outside for a minimum of 1-2 hours per day (depending on the length of the class day) unless the temperature is dangerously low or extremely high or if there is a threat of a thunder/lightning storm, high winds or rain. Children should dress appropriately.

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Children will be provided with individualized supplies as much as possible (eg: their own play-doh, books etc). Sharing of supplies will be strictly limited. Shared items will be properly cleaned and sanitized between uses. Children's hands will be washed before moving between activities. Any toys or materials that come in contact with bodily fluids will be immediately removed and put aside to be properly cleaned and sanitized.

Close person to person contact will be limited when possible, while still providing a loving and nurturing environment. Table seating will be spread out to allow the children to sit a safe distance from one another. Each class will be provided with a second classroom for their exclusive use. The second classroom will be cleared of all furniture and supplies. This room will be used for activities that require more open space, virtual meetings with Specialists and circle time activities.

All staff members are required to wear face masks during the school day. Children above the age of 2 must bring masks to school in case they are needed. If families choose, children over the age of 2 may wear masks during the school day. Parents must provide these masks and take them home daily for washing. Our teachers will help to encourage children wearing masks with fun circle time games and activities. We ask that parents help to encourage their children as well by practicing at home. Most children are resilient and will be able to adapt to wearing a mask.

While in our school building children will participate in virtual classes with our specialists. The children will take these virtual classes in the second classroom assigned to them. Our Specialists will not go between classes. Exposing the children to these virtual experiences will help children transition to virtual learning at home if necessary. There will be no in person specialists or after school enrichment classes.

VIRTUAL LEARNING- *if necessary*

If school has to close because of COVID-19 related safety measures, we will immediately transfer all of our learning experiences to the virtual world. Children should be able to easily adapt to home virtual experiences since it was already a part of their in-school experience.

For our 3 and 4-year-old classes: Each school day will begin with a virtual morning meeting which will mirror the structured daily meeting that was already taking place in-person. A second virtual meeting will happen later in the morning. This second meeting will be more social in nature. Families will also be provided with learning activities to support the children in working towards reaching their developmental goals. These activities will be part of the weekly curriculum and will include art exploration, science experiments, math opportunities, literacy and small and gross motor activities. Throughout each week, teachers will also lead small group learning sessions, providing the children with opportunities for social interactions. Teachers will schedule check-ins with each child at least once per week. Parents may also request individual sessions with the teacher for guidance and support.

For our Toddlers and 2's: While we recognize that virtual learning for very young children can be extremely challenging we will offer much of what is detailed above. Our goal will be to maintain connections, support parents, and provide developmentally appropriate activities, ideas, and information.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Parents, visitors and prospective parents will not be allowed to enter the building during operating hours, unless for emergencies. Class start and finish times have been adjusted so that we can have staggered drop off/pick up procedures. Entrances at either end of the classroom level will be used for drop off and pick up. *More about this procedure in a future email.*

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

All staff and students will also be required to have a daily health and temperature check upon entry to the building. Any child or staff member with a temperature of 100° or higher will not be allowed to be in school. Children or staff members presenting with any fever (over 100°) will be required to stay home until fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. There may be times where a letter from your pediatrician will be required for re-entry.

A temperature “screener” will be dressed in proper PPE with a mask, goggles or face shield and gloves. The “screener” will perform a temperature check for each student and staff member using an infrared (no-touch) thermometer and then ask the parent/caregiver/staff member a list of required questions (see below). If a child being tested is approved to enter school staff members will escort the children to their classrooms. As each child arrives in their classroom they will wash their hands immediately.

Staff and Children should stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- any signs of illness and/or if they are sick or not feeling well
- if anyone in the household has been in close contact with someone that has been positively diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days
- if they have received any fever reducing medication
- fever of 100° or above
- cough
- sore throat
- nasal congestion or runny nose
- shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- gastro-intestinal symptoms
- headache
- muscle pain
- chills
- new loss of taste or smell
- recently traveled to a state or country requiring quarantine upon return

OPENING PHASE-IN SCHEDULE

We understand that after so many months at home the transition to school needs to be gentle and carefully planned so that the children can adjust as easily as possible. We are committed to partnering with you to meet the individual needs of your child(ren). It is our hope that if we are all patient through a thoughtful phase-in period the children will say goodbye to you as they happily join their teachers in anticipation of a great day at school.

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FOOD

In order to minimize food handling by staff, the school will not provide any food for your child this year. Each family must pack all snacks each day. Food should be healthy and balanced, based on USDA guidelines for young children. Please send food in the manner in which you want it served (e.g., cut into small pieces) and please limit sugary treats. Teachers will wear food gloves when it is necessary to handle children's food. Parents must provide a labeled water bottle (which will be sent home each day for cleaning and sanitizing). Please be alert to the fact that Mazel Tots is a Nut Aware School and as a result please **DO NOT SEND IN ANY PRODUCTS WITH NUTS IN THEM**. Food will NOT be offered for any birthday or holiday celebrations.

FAMILY/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Communication is paramount, particularly this year when parents and teachers will not be interacting "face to face." Teachers will communicate with every family each week. Families can easily reach out to their teachers through email, or by calling the Mazel Tots office at any time.

MODIFICATIONS TO POLICIES

All Mazel Tots policies may be modified or amended, in whole or in part, to align with the current guidance from The OCFS, The DOH, The CDC or other regulatory agencies. Updates to our policies will be provided to families via email from the Early Childhood Program Director.

FAMILY VISITATION POLICY

Unfortunately, no visitors will be allowed to participate with the class pods. However, through the use of technology, we will develop creative opportunities for family members to virtually play a role in our school.

BUILDING ACCESS/SECURITY

Parents, visitors and prospective parents or employees will not be allowed to enter the building during operating hours unless for emergencies. There will be an armed security guard on the premises during school hours. The security guard will not enter classrooms except in cases of emergencies.

HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

Children and staff will follow rigorous hand washing routines. Frequent hand washing procedures include washing hands upon arrival, before meals or snacks, after outside time, after toileting/diapering, and prior to leaving for home. Children will be monitored to ensure proper technique. The children will be guided and taught how to properly wash their hands. Hand sanitation stations are located throughout the building. If hand washing is not available, teachers will provide hand sanitizer for children that the teachers are confident will not put their hands in their mouth. Staff and children are required to have multiple sets of clothing left at school in case they are contaminated with any bodily fluids.

CLEANING AND SANITIZATION PROCEDURES

To help you understand our process- cleaning means washing with a soapy water solution: sanitizing means using bleach solution. Toys and items that are not easily cleaned or sanitized will not be used. Teaching staff will adhere to a Daily Cleaning and Sanitization schedule which includes cleaning and sanitizing frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, tables, toys, etc.) and toys multiple times per day as per the CDC's Guidance for Cleaning & Disinfecting Public Spaces. Class pods will use designated bathrooms. The maintenance staff will clean and sanitize the bathroom several times each day. After the children and teachers have left for the day, the classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized by our maintenance staff. Outdoor areas will be cleaned and sanitized daily as well. MERV-13 filters have been installed in all classrooms.

ILLNESS POLICY - *Response Procedures for COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure*

In the event that a staff member, a student or the family member of a student exhibits symptoms during the health screening or at any point during the school day the staff member, the student or the family member of that student will not be permitted to enter the building.

If a child or staff member displays symptoms during the school day, the child/staff member will be immediately separated from their group into a designated isolation room. The parents will be notified and the child will be cared for by a staff member (maintaining 6' social distance if possible) until they are able to leave the facility. The child should be picked up as quickly as possible.

All rooms and equipment used by the ill person will be cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidelines.

The school must be notified if the child/staff member received a positive diagnosis of COVID-19.

In the event that there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 we will:

- Notify all of the families and staff in Mazel Tots.
- Report the incident immediately to the local The OCFS and The NYS DOH. Health officials will provide guidance on whether the center will cease operations (if needed) and for how long.
- All rooms and equipment used by an infected person will be cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidelines.

RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICY

Children with symptoms of COVID-19 who have tested **positive** should stay home and away from others until at least 14 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared, AND until they have had no fever for at least 72 hours (three full days without the use of fever-reducing medicine) AND other symptoms have ceased to exist. A doctor's note will be required to return to school. Children/Staff who have symptoms and have tested **negative** should stay home and away from others until 72 hours after their fever has ended without the use of fever-reducing medications. A doctor's note will be required to return to school.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL

Staff members or families that travel out of state must comply with NY State self-quarantine mandates. It is expected that parents traveling out of state for work or pleasure to a state that is on NYS' Travel Advisory List (<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>) will quarantine in their home for 14 days, remaining socially distant from their children that attend our program. If they are unable to remain socially distant, then their children must also quarantine for 14 days.

STAFF TRAINING/SUBSTITUTES

All staff (including substitutes) will receive specific training regarding identifying COVID-19 symptoms and daily procedures for minimizing exposure. When possible, families will be notified in advance if there will be a substitute in the class on a given day.