ROADMAP FOR FALL 2020
AS OF JULY 20, 2020
LIVING OUR VALUES

As we adapt to new ways of operating during a pandemic, we hold steadfast to our school's mission and values including a commitment to equity in our community.
Dear Parents:

During the first phase of the pandemic, we were limited to distance learning. **Now, we have a plan for in-person learning, enhanced distance learning should that be necessary, and a remote option for in-person learning.** As we are still in a pandemic situation, we face many challenges. Ensuring the health and safety of our children and staff and following **state guidelines requires that we set limits on class sizes and space allocation for our students, thus limiting the number of students allowed in the building at one time.** These are challenges that all schools are facing as they finalize their reopening plans. We acknowledge that this plan asks a lot of our families and want you to know that we will be your partners, sharing the challenges with you.

In health,

Nicole Nash
Head of School
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DECISION MAKING

Guidelines are set with data, expertise, and balancing teaching and learning considerations with safety and health measures. There is still a lot unknown about COVID-19 and families and staff should expect that we will pivot as new information develops. In addition to guidance from the CDC; NYS Department of Health; NYS Association of Independent Schools; and medical, health, and educational professionals, we have a COVID-19 Task Group including school leaders and medical and health professionals who advise on important decisions related to the pandemic.

Decisions are guided by:

- The health and safety of our community
- Guidance from health professionals, state and local mandates, and educational leaders
- Our school's core values -- responsibility to others, openness to varied perspectives, and perseverance
- Understanding the way the crisis affects members of the school community differently and ensuring equity
- Building an engaging and meaningful academic program
- Reflections and feedback from parents, staff, and students via surveys and meetings
- Analysis of Spring 2020 distance learning program
TEACHING AND LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

- The educational, social, and emotional needs of students
- Quality instruction and student assessment
- Technology to support instruction and learning in new models
- Strong relationships between teachers and students
- A safe and nurturing learning environment
- Training and support for faculty and staff
- Flexibility in scenario planning for in-person, remote, and distance learning
- Groupings and schedules to support a lower student density model (smaller groups practicing physical distancing)
Hybrid Model: In-Person and Distance Learning

Lower School:
- K-4th grades: In-person learning on Mon-Fri.

Middle School:
- 5th-6th grades: In-person learning Mon., Tues., and alternate Fri.
  Distance learning Wed., Thurs., and alternate Fri.
- 7th-8th grades: In-person learning Wed., Thurs. and alternate Fri.
  Distance learning Mon., Tues., and alternate Fri.

Remote Streaming Option for In-Person Learning
Families who are not comfortable returning to school have a remote streaming option for our in-person learning model. This will also be available for children who are home due to illness.

Intermittent Distance Learning Program
We anticipate that there will be times when parts of our school will resume distance learning based on students or family members testing positive for COVID-19.

Distance Learning
Should New York State mandate that schools resume distance learning, our program will be a refined version of our Spring 2020 program.
To prepare for all scenarios and ensure quality education and equity for all students, we will have an individual device for each student in 2nd-8th grades to be used for in-person and distance learning. Students will travel to and from school with their device.

We have invested in the following devices:

- Chromebooks
- Tablets
- Video equipment in one classroom per grade to allow for remote student access
To achieve physical distancing measures and to minimize contact to reduce the risk of infection, we have organized students into pods. A pod is a small cohort of students who only interface with each other throughout the day. Establishing pods will help minimize the risk of infection and decrease the number of people who would need to quarantine should there be a positive case of COVID-19.
What Happens in a Pod

- Each grade will have three distinct pods.
- To minimize exposure to other pods, each pod will have its own classroom, where students will spend the entire school day.
- Students will keep all of their belongings in their classroom as lockers will not be used.
- Students will bring their own lunch and eat it in their classrooms with their pods. School lunch will not be provided.
- Children will only spend time in-person with others in their pod. They will interact with other pods for virtual learning and socializing.
- Pods offer the opportunity for more small-group learning and building strong community.
What Happens in a Pod Cont'd

- Each grade will have shared teachers who will move from classroom to classroom and teach each pod.
- Students in each pod will have their own individual desk and supplies (including a device), instead of sharing with others.
- Students in each pod will keep a distance of six feet apart from one another and will wear masks.
- Instead of large group PE and recess, students will have daily outdoor time with other students in their pod. We will also ensure students get movement and bathroom breaks throughout the day.
As students remain in one classroom, teachers will move from classroom to classroom teaching each pod in their grade.

The hallways and stairwells will be clearly marked to help manage the direction and flow of traffic, with a limited number of students outside the classroom at any one time.

There will be staggered arrival and dismissal times.
To reduce the transmission of germs, **only students, faculty, staff, and essential personnel will be admitted into the building.**

The use of common spaces and large group gatherings will not be permitted. We will continue to be innovative and **create virtual ways to connect** and have grade-, school-, and community-wide events.

**SETSS providers and tutors are deemed essential and will be allowed** in the building during school hours.

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**REPURPOSING SPACE**

To maximize the number of students in school, **all spaces in the building will be utilized as classrooms**, including the gym, beit midrash, library, and art room.

The gym will no longer be used as a lunchroom and **school lunch will not be provided**. Students will bring their own lunch and eat it in their classrooms.

To ensure adequate space to care for our children, the art room will become the **student healthcare room**.

In addition to our three outdoor spaces, **we are looking to secure more outdoor space for our students** during the school day as fresh air and movement breaks are so important.

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**VISITORS & GATHERINGS**
For the health and safety of our community, grade-level start and end times will be staggered to ensure there are less people coming and going into the building at a time.

- Instead of gathering in the lobby and gym, all grades will have a specified arrival and dismissal plan where they will be warmly greeted by their teachers.

- For the safety of our community, all parents/guardians and students are asked to wear masks at arrival and dismissal.

- Due to health, safety, and staffing, we will not be able to offer earlybird drop-off and students will enter school only at their assigned arrival time.

- The school is working to secure additional outdoor space for families to wait for assigned arrival times.
To create a safe routine, **K-3rd grade families will have assigned arrival/dismissal spots** in the side yard.

To foster independence, **4th-8th grade students will enter and exit through the main entrance**. Physical distancing will be required outside the school.

Upon arrival, **all students and staff will have a daily health screening** before entering school, including temperature checks and screening questions. Parents/guardians who drop their children off at school will be asked to wait to ensure their child is able to stay.

**Parents/guardians will say good-bye at their designated school entrance** and faculty will take younger students to their classes.

For the health and safety of our community. We ask parents to do their best to arrive on time for school. **Late arrivals will need to wait outside the main entrance until the nurse is available to conduct a health screening.**

For this first phase of reopening, **we will not be able to offer our afterschool program.**
School hours were determined by the following:

- School hours will be staggered to minimize contact and ensure physical distancing measures for the health and safety of our community.

- In this new schedule, teachers will be teaching and having contact with students throughout the day. Time before and after school will be allocated to teacher planning and meetings by department and grade-level.

- Our new in-person plan eliminates student transitions as students remain in their classrooms in small groups for the entire day. This will allow for an educational program that is more productive, efficient, and meaningful.

- While we will build in developmentally-appropriate break times for students, we are aware that it will be a challenge to remain in one classroom and observe physical distancing for the entire day.
Middle School 8:15am-3:30pm (Friday 8:15am-2:30pm)
Students will enter the school through the main entrance at 8:15am
Students will self-dismiss through the main entrance at 3:30pm

Fourth Grade 8:30am-3:00pm (Friday 8:30am-2:00pm)
Students will enter the school through the main entrance at 8:30am
Students will be dismissed to parents through the main entrance at 3:00pm

Third Grade 8:45am-3:00pm (Friday 8:45am-2:00pm)
Families will find their assigned spots in the recess yard at 8:45am
Parents/Guardians are asked to wait for their child(ren) in their assigned spots in the recess yard at 3:00pm

Second Grade 8:45am-3:00pm (Friday 8:45am-2:00pm)
Families will find their assigned spots in the recess yard at 8:45am
Parents/Guardians are asked to wait for their child(ren) in their assigned spots in the recess yard at 3:00pm

First Grade 9:05am-3:15pm (Friday 9:05am-2:15pm)
Families will find their assigned spots in the recess yard at 9:05am
Parents/Guardians are asked to wait for their child(ren) in their assigned spots in the recess yard at 3:00pm

Kindergarten 9:05am-3:15pm (Friday 9:05am-2:15pm)
Families will find their assigned spots in the recess yard at 9:05am
Parents/Guardians are asked to wait for their child(ren) in their assigned spots in the recess yard at 3:00pm
Parents will be asked to ensure that children arrive at school wearing masks (cloth face coverings are allowed). Students will wear masks throughout the day except when eating.

- Faculty and staff will wear masks
- PPE, such as gloves, gowns, sneeze guards, and face shields will be used by staff as needed.
- We have increased hand sanitizing stations and will provide hand sanitizing supplies at school entrances, classrooms, and offices.

Senesh is committed to having the necessary PPE in accordance with public health guidelines for the health and safety of our community.
ENHANCED HYGIENE AND DISINFECTION

The school will provide hand sanitizing supplies at school entrances, classrooms, and offices.

The school will implement hand hygiene routines for students, faculty, and staff to wash/sanitize hands frequently including upon arrival, after using the restroom, before eating, upon entering classrooms, and more.

Improvements made to school bathrooms include: middle sinks in bathrooms are closed; eliminated hand dryers that blow air; installed paper towel holders.

Water fountains will be eliminated and students are responsible for bringing a filled water bottle to school each morning.

The school will increase cleaning and sanitizing measures during school days, on the weekends, and during school breaks.

Improvements have been made to the school ventilation system including power washing, installing higher grade filters and high performance belts, and increasing outside air intake. HEPA air purifiers have been installed in windowless classrooms.
Upon arrival, **all students and staff will have a daily health screening before entering school.** This will include temperature checks and screening questions. Parents may be required to take a child home based on the results of the screening.

There will be a new threshold for health care with a **zero tolerance policy for sick children and staff.** We will not allow anyone with a fever of 100 or above, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, sore throat, muscle aches, cough, stomach aches, or any other maladies to remain at school. **For the health of our community, children at school with any illness will be sent home.** Students may participate in class from home via our remote streaming option.
WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD IS SICK?

- If the school determines a child is ill during the school day, parents/guardians will be required to pick up their child as soon as possible. Children will wait in the designated healthcare room.

- If students or staff become ill with symptoms of COVID-19 at school, they will be isolated, supervised by an adult utilizing appropriate PPE, and immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider or to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center. Senesh is developing a partnership with a local urgent care center that can be a resource and testing site for our community. Returning to the in-person learning environment will entail at a minimum, documentation from a health care provider evaluation and symptom resolution.
If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 we will follow the CDC and NYS Department of Health guidelines. At a minimum, students and staff will be allowed to return to school after at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms or after the first positive test, if they remain asymptomatic. The students and teachers in the specific pod or grade that had a person test positive for COVID-19 will be considered primary contacts and will need to be tested and quarantine for 14 days. During this time the entire pod will do distance learning and then return to in-person learning.

Full guidelines related to testing and containment of positive cases will be updated and shared with our community in mid-August based on NYS Department of Health School Guidelines.
WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD IS SICK? CONT'D

- Parents who have questions about the welfare of their child and/or concerns related to their child being immuno-compromised should reach out to their pediatrician.

- We will continue to keep data on all COVID-19 cases in our community. Email ncabot@hannahsenesh.org if you or someone in your family tests positive for COVID-19.
We understand that our community travels to school using various modes of transportation including walking, biking, public transportation, school busing, and cars. **If using public transportation**, we recommend wearing a mask, washing hands/using hand sanitizer after exiting, and leaving space between people to allow for physical distancing.

**If carpooling**, we recommend that everyone wear masks, ride with windows open, and leave space between passengers.

**If using the school bus**, students should wear masks and sit one child per seat (unless siblings) and only use every other row in the bus. We will notify parents when information is available about busing.
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

We are committed to providing social and emotional support to families, particularly as we all navigate this challenging time and return to school in a new way.

- Our school counselors and staff are receiving training to support and develop a consistent and responsive approach to helping families.
- A thoughtful orientation will take place in August for parents and students to visit Senesh, meet their teachers, learn about new schedules and protocols, and establish a connection with others in their pod.
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT CONT’D

- Daily morning meetings will provide teachers an opportunity for informal check-ins and a safe space for sharing experiences and building community. We will continue to guide students to help them build resilience and develop the habits needed to thrive in this challenging time.

- Our school counselors and division directors will provide workshops for parents and will be available to support individual students and families as needed. The school will partner with families to address the social challenges of this time.
Senesh will hold **required orientations** to help faculty, staff, parents, and students understand the new protocols and feel prepared to begin the school year. **Students will have an in-person orientation, while parents will have designated times for a virtual orientation.** These orientations will provide an opportunity to meet one another, gather as pods, and learn new routines.

**During in-person student orientations, students will:**
- Gain confidence so everyone feels comfortable and safe when school begins
- Practice routines prior to the first day of school
- Connect with teachers and classmates in pods
- Learn about new spaces and in-person protocols

**In-person orientations for students will be held:**

- Sept. 1, 2, or 3 (Kindergarten) Families will sign-up for 20-minute meetings with teachers
- Sept. 8 (Kindergarten) Students will attend a 2-hour orientation (either morning or afternoon)
- Sept. 1 (grades 2, 3, 7, and 8) Students will have a 90-minute in-person orientation
- Sept. 2 (grades 1, 4, 5, and 6) Students will have a 90-minute in-person orientation

Specific times for all orientations including parent orientation will be shared with families in August. It is very important that students attend these orientations in-person. A virtual orientation for students will not be offered as students will be learning and practicing new routines in the school.
Together we will support our children. Please review all the material in this booklet so you can prepare your children for what to expect. Below are some phrases to use when you speak with younger children. Please adapt as makes sense for your child.

How to Talk to Your Children about the Fall

We are so excited to go back to school! School is going to be a bit different than before, but you will still have lots of fun and learn with your teachers and friends.

Keeping Us Healthy

- The school is working with doctors and is following government guidelines to make sure school is a safe place for all students and teachers.
- To ensure our school is a healthy place, even if we have the sniffles, we will stay home. You'll be able to zoom into class from home.
- We want to stay healthy, so we will be extra careful and wash or sanitize our hands many times throughout the day.
- We have a new larger space in school to take good care of anyone who is not feeling well (art room.)
- We will always take care of you and keep you safe.
Masks

- Just like we do whenever we go outside, you will wear a mask when you go to school.
- We will get several masks so you always have a clean one. We can even buy a special one that you pick out.
- The weeks before school begins, we will practice wearing our mask and how to safely put it on and take it off. You will not wear a mask when you eat or drink.

Arrival and Dismissal

- Just so the building doesn't get too crowded, every grade will start and end school at different times and enter and exit from different doors.
- Instead of gathering in the lobby and gym for earlybird, K-3rd grade students will line up in the recess yard and 4th-8th grade students will enter through the main entrance.
- Parents will say good-bye at specific spots outside the school building.
- Students will get their temperature taken every morning so that anyone who is sick can go home and get better soon and come back to school.
Classroom Learning Time

- You used to be in classes of about 12-15 students, now you will be in smaller "pods" of 8-9 students.
- A pod is the group of children you will learn and play with throughout the day; including for lunch and recess.
- You usually walk from classroom to classroom, but now you will stay in one classroom and the teachers will come to you.
- Recess will still be outside with your friends in your pod and your PE teacher.
- We know you are used to sitting at tables and sharing at school. To keep everyone safe, children will each get their own individual desk, school supplies, and device to use.
- So we don't spread germs, the water fountains won't be used. All children will bring their own water bottle to school each day.
- We may not meet in the gym for big group events, but we will still get to do them online, like we did for Kabbalat Shabbat in the Spring.
Connecting in New Ways

- In classrooms, we might not sit right next to each other, but we will still have the same kinds of conversations.
- Because we need to be careful not to spread germs, we won't hug or high-five right now. We can use our words to say hello and show how we feel.
- We have to be careful when playing with our friends. Teachers will have many new ways for students to play together, including at recess where we can keep a safe distance. We will still have fun together, just in new ways.
Arrival and Dismissal

Q: I have children in different grades. Can I drop them off at the same time?
A: We understand the challenges facing parents, but for the health and safety of our community, everyone must accommodate the set arrival and dismissal times. Our hope is that the span of staggered times will be limited to 30 minutes.

Q: I work late and need to drop off early and have afterschool coverage.
A: Due to health, safety, and staffing we will not be able to offer earlybird drop off or afterschool programming at this time. We will work with the Parent Association to guide parents in supporting one another.

Q: Are non-parent guardians/babysitters allowed to pick up children?
A: Yes, as long as they are pre-authorized by parents and this information has been shared with the school.

Parents and Other Visitors to the Building

Q: Will I be allowed in the building if my child forgets their lunch or mask?
A: While parents will not be allowed in the building, necessary items may be left at security. Our hope is families will set routines to ensure students come to school with all their belongings.
Q: If parents no longer spend time in the building, how will we communicate and remain partners with our child's teachers?
A: Teachers will continue to be accessible for one-on-one meetings and communications through email, phone, and zoom. Additionally, we will have opportunities to gather virtually for back-to-school night, holiday events, parent-teacher conferences, and more.

Q: How can we be together as a community?
A: We will continue to host virtual gatherings, as we did in the spring, until it is safe to gather in person.

Q: How can parents remain involved in building the school community?
A: The PA is building new avenues for parent engagement and the school is creating volunteer opportunities that align with our health protocols and guidelines.

Q: My child receives SETSS in school. Will they still be able to do that?
A: Yes, SETSS providers and tutors will be allowed in school during school hours.
Health and Safety

Q: I have to work and cannot stay home when my child has the sniffles or with my middle school student on distance-learning days. What do I do?
A: We know the impact of the pandemic is challenging for all of us, but the health and safety of our community is our top priority. Our hope is that being back in school much more than last spring will benefit everyone.

Q. How long will we have to follow these procedures?
A: There are a lot of unknowns about the virus. We will continue to follow guidelines from health and medical professionals and mandates by the city and state.

Classroom Learning

Q: Will my child still have all the same subjects including general studies, Judaic studies, and Hebrew?
A: Yes, your child will have all those subjects, they will just be in smaller groups.
Q: What do I do if my child's best friend isn't in their pod?
A: Pod groupings were made by the faculty who know your child and the class as a whole. Pods were created with academics and social emotional needs of children in mind. It is a good experience for our children to build new relationships. Remember, children and their relationships grow and change quickly!

Q: Do parents need special supplies at home or will supplies be sent to my child, as they were in the spring?
A: All students will receive individual supplies when they return to school in September.

Q: Can I choose a remote option if my children are in grades that are doing in-person learning?
A: Yes, families who are not comfortable returning to school have a remote streaming option for our in-person learning model.

Q: If my child is out sick, can they join class remotely?
A: Yes, the school is set up for sick children to join class via our remote streaming option for in-person learning.
Q: Can my child spend time with friends outside their pod after school hours (e.g. birthday parties, playdates)?

A: The distancing behaviors of our community -- parents, students, and staff -- is an understandable concern. Our community is similar to others; we have varied degrees of behaviors, which will continue to evolve as parents return to work, children socialize more, and families reunite with family and close friends. The school will offer guidelines in August for best practices around physical distancing, but it will be up to individual families to follow these practices in their daily lives.

Transportation:

Q: How will I ensure there is distancing practiced on the bus?

A: The NYC Department of Education provides our free school bus and determines whether the bus will operate in the fall. If using the bus, students should wear masks and sit one child per seat (unless siblings) and only use every other row in the bus.

Q: Can Senesh coordinate carpooling for families?

A: Senesh staff will not coordinate carpooling, but we do expect parents will work with one another to coordinate carpools, if that is something they are comfortable doing. We recommend that all who carpool wear masks and ride with windows open, whenever possible.
Food

Q: Will the school still offer the school lunch program?
A: No, the school will not offer the lunch program. Please ensure that you pack a snack and lunch everyday for your child.

Q: We usually visit the classroom and bring in snacks for our child's birthday. Can we still do this?
A: For the health and safety of our community, parents will be able to join virtually and we ask that parents do not send snacks to school with their child.
We will continue to update you with more information as we get closer to the start of school.

Thank you for being our partners as we navigate this challenging time together.