

VANCOUVER HEBREW ACADEMY

**COVID
HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN**

Phase 2 Reopen

February 2021



VHA

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Introduction

Dear Parents,

We are fortunate to have our students returning to full-time, in-school instruction this fall. British Columbia has been spared much of the turmoil that COVID-19 has brought to many cities across the world. This is, in no small part, due to the proactive and careful measures enacted by our Provincial Health Authority.

We have now been issued specific guidelines to allow for a safe and healthy school environment for all students and staff. The Torah states (Devarim 4:15) “ונשמרתם מאד” (and you shall be exceedingly watchful of your souls). The Talmud tells us that this is a directive to protect ourselves from physical harm and illness. Thus, these safety protocols represent not just a legal and ethical imperative, but one that carries the weight of Halacha as well.

VHA’s procedures have been developed using the [BC Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#), produced in partnership with the Ministry of Education and our Provincial Health Officer.

Please familiarize yourself with the daily procedures that you will need to follow and explain them to your child(ren), so they will know what to expect on the first day of school. Your child’s return to school is contingent upon your adherence to these guidelines.

We thank you for your assistance in making this return to school possible and we pray for Refuot (healing) for those who are ill and that we see Hashem’s relief speedily.

Yours truly,

Rabbi Don Pacht

Head of School

Vancouver Hebrew Academy

COVID Health & Safety Plan: February 2021

Whole School, and Individual Classroom Measures.

*****ALL staff, students and visitors are mandated to observe these protocols to be allowed in our school building during this COVID 19 transitional period*****

All schools are required to observe certain safety protocols to return to school during Phase 2. We will work with students to create a culture of awareness and precaution. Having sanitary and healthy practices helps create healthy habits.

Access to School:

- All employees and students who have symptoms of COVID-19, have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days or have been part of a gathering in violation of Provincial guidelines, must stay home and self-isolate in accordance with guidance from the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#). Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered a close contact of a confirmed case.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their children daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease before sending them to school. Teachers and/or Administrators will also conduct a health check with parents prior to their children entering the school each day.
- If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and their symptoms have resolved. **If a child has any symptoms, they must not come to school.**
- If a student develops symptoms associated with COVID-19 **while** at school or under the care of the school, the following procedures will occur:

- Student will be asked to remain in the health room (not usually occupied by staff or students) thus providing physical distancing.
- Parents or caregivers of the student will be contacted immediately to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- Staff shall attempt to keep a 2-metre distance from the ill student. If not possible, staff will wear a non-medical mask or face covering.
- The student will be provided a non-medical mask to wear.
- Staff will avoid touching the student's body fluids (mucous, saliva). Staff will continue to practice diligent hand hygiene throughout the process.
- School staff will contact 811 or the public health unit to notify of a potential case and seek further input.
- Student to be picked up by parent or caregiver and office area to be disinfected (surfaces, door handles, and frequently touched surfaces).
- Student/family must seek assessment by a health-care provider.
- Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas recently used by them (eg. Classroom, bathroom, common areas).
- Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible.
- If a Staff Member develops symptoms associated with COVID-19 infection **while** at work, the following procedures will occur:
 - Staff will go home as soon as possible.
 - If unable to leave immediately:
 - Symptomatic staff will separate themselves into an area away from others.
 - Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others
 - Use a mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up
 - Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used recently by them (eg. Classroom, bathroom, common areas).
- If there is a prolonged or elevated staff and student absenteeism due to influenza-like illness, the Head of School will notify the local Health Authority.
- Vancouver Hebrew Academy will not provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school, including if they display symptoms of COVID-19, unless directed to by public health.
- Parents are encouraged to use the [K-12 Health Care App](#).

Visitors

- Visitors to Vancouver Hebrew Academy will be kept to a minimum and will be prioritized to those supporting activities that are of benefit to student learning and well-being.
- All visitors to Vancouver Hebrew Academy will be required to complete a health check and don a mask before entering.
- Vancouver Hebrew Academy will keep a list of the date, names, and contact information for all visitors who enter the school.
- Visitors may be asked to leave at the discretion of the administration.
- Public access will be limited. Parents and others will be encouraged to call or meet virtually instead of visiting the school.
- People will be asked to remain outside the office and keep a 2-metre distance from Office Staff.
- The Office at Vancouver Hebrew Academy has a plexiglass screen that will assist in protecting staff and guests.

Student Management and Hygiene:

- Students will be encouraged not to touch their faces
- Students will be taught to wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If sinks are not available (eg. Students and staff are outdoors), alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol will be used.
- Students will be required to wash their hands:
 - When they arrive at school and before they go home
 - Before eating and drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After sneezing or coughing into hands or tissue
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
 - When moving between different learning environments (eg. Outdoor-indoor transitions, from gym room to the classroom)
 - Teachers will assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed

Physical Distancing:

- During drop off and pick up, parents and caregivers will remain outside of the school.
- Students and staff will avoid greetings like hugs or handshakes. Students will be reminded to keep their hands to themselves.
- Outside learning will occur more frequently and when deemed practicable.
- For younger students, shared items will be reduced. Individual activities will be incorporated more frequently and as well as activities that encourage more space between students and staff
- Classes at Vancouver Hebrew Academy are comprised of 15 students or fewer and classes will remain in these smaller groups whenever possible.
- Staff will endeavour to maintain consistency in seating arrangements, where practical.
- Staff will avoid seating students face-to-face, whenever possible.
- Teachers and staff will be mindful to keep classes separated, to prevent crowding and gathering of students.
- Students will remain with their class teachers for the majority of their learning.
- Students in classrooms will be physically distanced from their peers as appropriate.
- There will be no allowance for food and drink sharing.
- Students will be discouraged from sharing items that may allow transmission.
- Recess and break times will remain the same for all students.
- Each classroom is equipped with a sink thus students will be able to maintain proper hand hygiene without visiting shared washrooms frequently. Hand washing will be mandatory before and after outdoor play.
- Apart from before school care there are no extra-curricular activities offered at this time at Vancouver Hebrew Academy.

Learning Groups:

- Vancouver Hebrew Academy will have two learning groups. These groups will be housed in two separate buildings. Daycare-Grade 3 will be based in the new building and grades 4-8 will be based in the original building. A limited number of staff will move between learning groups but they will consistently maintain social distances and/or wear a mask when in the second learning group.

- Minimized physical contact will be encouraged but a 2-metre distance does not need to be maintained within the learning group.
- Students in each classroom will have an assigned seating arrangement and spaced desks to support minimized physical contact.
- Socializing at recess and break times is permitted as students will remain in their learning groups while outside.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Non-medical masks are recommended when a person cannot maintain physical distance for extended periods of time, but they are not mandatory during school/class time in the elementary setting.
- Students at Vancouver Hebrew Academy are brought to school by their parents or caregivers and not a shared bus, so non-medical masks are not required.
- No student is required to wear a non-medical mask if they cannot tolerate it. If necessary, an alternative will be arranged.
- Staff must wear a face mask when interacting with students. This is not to replace the need for physical distancing or other preventative measures.

After School Bus Transportation

- Busses will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with BC CDC Guidelines.
- If space is available, each student will have their own seat unless sharing with a member of their own household.
- Seating will be kept consistent and students will have assigned seats where possible.
- VHA will keep an up to date passenger list to share with public health if contact tracing is required.
- Students will wash or sanitize their hands prior to boarding the bus.
- Students may be required to wear a mask if distancing cannot be maintained.

Safety for Staff:

Physical distancing

- The Learning Groups at Vancouver Hebrew Academy are housed in separate buildings and students and staff will be encouraged to maintain physical distance at all times and to not greet others by hugging or shaking hands.
- School gatherings will not exceed the maximum cohort size in the setting, plus the minimum number of additional people required (e.g., school staff, visitors, etc.) to meet the gathering's purpose and intended outcome.
- These gatherings will happen minimally, and schools should seek virtual alternatives for larger gatherings and assemblies where practical.
- If staff need to travel between school and field trips, maintain physical distance in vehicles wherever possible. Consider separate vehicles if possible. Larger vehicles may be able to accommodate physical distancing by using a seat configuration that maximizes distance between people. If necessary, masks will be worn.
- Staff will ensure the use of prevention measures in staff-only areas, including meeting and break rooms.

Hygiene

- Staff will be encouraged to remain on site and not to leave during lunch or at break times.
- Staff will wear face masks unless alone in a room/office, or a Plexiglas barrier is in place.
- Hand washing supplies are available at all times (i.e., soap, clean towels, paper towels and, if needed, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- Handwashing policies and procedures are posted for all staff and others at the school.
- Teachers, and administrators will wash their hands frequently to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Staff will be provided with appropriate supplies and facilities with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be made available. Hand hygiene stations are set up at the school entrances.

- Staff will be oriented in effective hygiene practices. Refer to [WorkSafeBC's hygiene practices](#).
- Additional hand hygiene stations have been installed.

Interacting with Learning Groups

- Vancouver Hebrew Academy will minimize the number of adults (staff and others) who interact with our cohorts, while supporting learning and providing a positive, healthy, and safe environment.

Cleaning and Sanitizing:

- Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces.
- Vancouver Hebrew Academy will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#). Cleaning practices should be in line with the provincial health officer's [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings](#). **This includes:**
 - General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises **at least once every 24 hours**
 - Cleaning and disinfecting frequently-touched surfaces **at least twice every 24 hours** (door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, and chairs used by multiple students, keyboards and toys)
 - Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty
 - Use common, commercially-available detergents and disinfectant products and closely follow the instruction on the label
 - Limit frequently-touched items that are not easily cleaned
 - Empty garbage containers daily
 - Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or bodily fluids (runny nose, vomit, stool, urine). Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves
- A cleaning and disinfecting schedule has been created to ensure the above is completed daily.
- Shared items where cross-contamination is possible (e.g., shared school supplies, coffee and water stations, and snack bins) will be removed or cleaned between uses.

- End-of-day wipe downs will be completed by teachers and staff for all shared spaces.
- Custodians will be provided adequate instruction, training, and supplies on the cleaning protocols developed for the workplace.
- All staff will clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty and limit frequently touched items that are not easily cleaned.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to bring only items that are necessary and can be easily sanitized.
- Personal items should be labeled to avoid accidental sharing.

Food Services:

- VHA will continue to include food preparation as part of learning.
- If food is prepared as part of learning and is consumed by the student(s) who prepared it, no additional measures beyond those articulated in this document, the VHA Parent Handbook and normal food safety measures and requirements need to be implemented (e.g., Foodsafe trained staff, a food safety plan, etc.).
- If food is prepared within or outside school for consumption by people other than those that prepared it (including for sale), it is expected that the [WorkSafeBC Restaurants, cafes, pubs, and nightclubs: Protocols for returning to operation](#) are implemented as appropriate and as relevant to the school setting, in addition to normally implemented food safety measures and requirements (e.g., Foodsafe trained staff, a food safety plan, etc.).
- As always, we do not allow homemade food items to be made available to other students (e.g., birthday treats, bake sale items).
- Food provided for students by a family (birthday treat, etc.), must be a pre-packaged item or be delivered to the school directly from the food service provider. Food delivered by parents will not be shared. As always, please see VHA's Kashrut guidelines in the VHA Parent Handbook.
- We will continually emphasize that food and beverages may not be shared.

Communication Strategies:

- Staff will be reminded that all health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- This information will be reviewed with staff before the start of school.
- Frequent check-in meetings with staff will occur to provide them with new information and review any concerns.
- Parents and caregivers will be given online, written and verbal reminders to ensure an understanding of our policy that students must stay home if they are sick.
- The number of non-essential people coming into the school such as parents and caregivers and contractors will be minimized greatly.
- Parents and caregivers will be frequently informed about what we are doing in school regarding taking extra precautions.
- Staff will be informed as of how to raise safety concerns. This can be done through our Administration or office personnel
- New information relating to COVID-19 in our school will be posted in the staff room, and shared electronically with staff.
- We will document risk assessments and appropriate site-specific control measures.
- We will ensure that all resources (information, authorization administrative changes, technology, training, human resources) and materials (personal protective equipment, equipment, cleaning and disinfecting products and systems) required to implement and maintain plan are reasonably made available as practical when required.
- We will ensure that supervisors and workers are informed about the content of safety policies.
- We will conduct a periodic review the effectiveness of the plan. This includes a review of the available control technologies to ensure that these are selected and used when practical.
- We will maintain records of training and inspections.

Remote Learning and Zoom Guidelines

If a student will be away from school for an extended period of time due to a COVID-related concern (i.e. positive diagnosis, quarantine or isolation order), VHA will endeavour to support that child's remote learning.

Individual support programs will be created that will consider the student's age, learning style and educational goals. It may include synchronous Zoom classes, asynchronous learning, project-based learning and/or check-ins with the teacher. Parents will be responsible to support their child's educational goals from home.

To ensure that our virtual classrooms remain safe and secure we must insist that ALL families adhere to the following guidelines:

Students MUST:

- Use their name (or a parent's) as the user ID (the teacher will not admit a name they do not recognize)
- Enable video camera
- Keep microphone off until the teacher asks you to turn it on
- Display proper 'classroom behaviour' by not calling out and following the rules of the classroom.

Your child's teacher will review specific classroom rules with the students. Teachers will use the 'Waiting Room' function at the start of each class. It is recommended that your child join the meeting 3-5 minutes early to ensure a timely start.

Note: Your child's teacher will likely disable the chat function during lessons as this can be a big distraction when they're trying to teach.

Closing Note

The responsibility to help maintain a healthy learning environment for our students lies with *every* member of the VHA Community both in school and at home. Unfortunately, the last several weeks have shown us how quickly COVID-19 can spread when Provincial safety guidelines are ignored. At VHA, we must insist that our guidelines are strictly followed, and that families follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer. If you have been outside of Canada, or have been part of a gathering larger than that allowed by Provincial guidelines, we must insist that your children not return to school until they have self-isolated and/or been cleared by a medical professional. We recognize the potential inconvenience of these additional protocols and thank you for your strict adherence.

Be Kind

Be Calm

Be Safe