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## BE'ER YAAKOV TALMUDIC SEMINARY COVID-19 REOPENING PLAN

### I. INTRODUCTION

Be'er Yaakov Talmudic Seminary is an Institution of Higher Education located at 12 Truman Avenue, in Spring Valley, NY, comprised of 567 students who attend classes daily on its 18 acre campus. The campus is comprised of four buildings. Three of the buildings are approximately 15,000 square feet and one at approximately 60,000 square feet.

In an effort to address the ongoing concern of COVID-19 in the community and within the institution, Be'er Yaakov Talmudic Seminary (hereinafter referred to as BYTS) has developed the following Reopening Plan in compliance with New York Department of Health Interim Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education.

This plan has been developed through a collaborative process involving students, faculty, staff, administration, facilities management, and the Board.

The plan is designed to address four key areas:

- 1- The reopening process of all facilities of BYTS
- 2- The monitoring of health conditions
- 3- Containment and prevention of potential transmission
- 4- The shut-down process if required

It is critical to understand that the demographic of BYTS is such where nearly all students live in the immediate region of New Square, many are married with families. The overwhelming majority of students do not have internet access in their homes due to their religious tenets, as per the personal direction of their religious, Rabbinical leaders. The institution's mode of remote instruction is therefore by phone conference, and this modality is not suited to engagement with students and leads to many students struggling with their studies. It is with this mind that the stakeholders are all in agreement that it is of utmost importance to set up and maintain a system of face to face instruction while adhering to all guidelines set forth. However, BYTS will ensure that continued remote instruction is made available for those who are unable to participate in in-person instruction.

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The Plan ensures that students, faculty, staff and the general public can feel confident that appropriate safeguarding measures have been put in place while balancing health, safety and compliance considerations with students' urgent need to resume educational activity. Additionally, The Plan has been modeled after the Interim Guidance for Higher Education During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and is designed to address the requirements set forth therein in a way that is most practical and applicable to BYTS.

The Plan will be updated as needed, as the situation and guidance from the CDC and the NY DOH is updated and additional information is provided.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES**

Rabbi Yakov Taubenfeld will be responsible for the entire plan. This includes:

- monitoring the health situation on campus
- ensuring that all COVID safety measures and protocol are implemented
- ensuring that COVID Coordinators carry out their responsibilities.

The Facility Managers of each building will be responsible for all matters pertaining to facility. Included in this is:

- monitoring the standard of cleaning maintenance
- ordering and maintaining stock of supplies and PPE  
[http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials\\_minerals\\_pdf/covid19.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf)
- setting up tape markings
- Maintain signage
- Moving furniture and room setup to allow for social distancing.

Rabbi Yakov Taubenfeld will be responsible for Testing and Follow-up. Included in this is:

- Ensuring that all persons have a negative COVID test result before entering campus
- Overseeing the screening process
- Working with the local health department to arrange contact tracing when necessary.
- BYTS is within close proximity to Refuah Health Center which provides COVID testing. BYTS has a working relationship with Refuah. Students are able to schedule with Refuah to get COVID testing as necessary.
- Global testing – mobile
- Rabbi Fischer will be responsible for Quarantine. Included in this is:
- Monitoring quarantined students and ensuring their needs are met
- Arranging transportation home to any student infected with, displaying symptoms, or exposed to COVID.

BYTS Administrative offices will be responsible for Communication. Included in this is notifying students of any changes in CDC/ health guidelines, Yeshiva policies and protocols, state regulations, and executive orders.

Rabbis Felberbaum and Taubenfeld will be responsible for Shutdown. They will make all shutdown arrangements should the need arise. This includes arranging transportation to send students home.

## REOPENING

### I. Capacity

BYTS has developed contingencies to provide full-time academic programs to allow as many students to return as can be safely be accommodated. This means assuring that all standards of safety, cleaning, and social distancing are properly adhered to. There will be adequate PPE and cleaning supplies available to accommodate all students allowed on campus.

BYTS expects to open for the Fall 2020 Semester at a limited capacity with continuous monitoring and assessment until 100% capacity is reached. Additionally, the facilities will have a modified setup to allow students to maintain social distancing at all times. The dormitory facilities will be open in a limited capacity with priority given to students who live far away. As the dormitory capacity increases students who live closer will be allowed to return.

### II. Personal Protective Equipment

On campus everyone will be required to wear a mask in any situation where maintaining social distancing is impractical. Included in this is public areas, when riding in elevators, when exiting or entering classrooms/study halls, and when walking around campus. Students are expected to maintain and monitor their own supply of masks. However, ample supply of free masks will be available for those needing one at the main office located at 111 Washington Ave. All employees will be trained to adequately put on, take off, clean, and discard PPE.

### III. Testing

All students, faculty, and staff must have a negative COVID test result within 14 days before returning to campus. Any individual that does not have a negative test result will not be allowed to enter the campus. Visitors will not be allowed on campus unless cleared by the COVID coordinator.

### IV. Residential Living

As indicated above the dorm will initially operate at a limited capacity to accommodate proper social distancing. Visitors will not be allowed into the dormitory without proper clearance. **Electronic chips** The dorm will be cleaned daily using approved sanitizing agents. The Dormitory Counselor has assigned Room 112 to be designated to quarantined students should the need arise.

### V. Operational Activity

BYTS has two forms of study: "classroom" study and "study hall" study.

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Classrooms will initially operate at limited capacity. All faculty and students have been requested to wear PPE. Additionally, desks have been setup to maintain social distancing and face the same direction. When social distancing is not feasible, faculty and students are requested to be vigilant in wearing protective equipment.

The study hall will be reconfigured to operate at a limited capacity. Additional study halls will be opened as required to help maintain social distancing requirements. Class schedules and study times will be staggered to help avoid congestion in the hallways and common areas.

### VI. Restart Operations

The following will be implemented to help assure a healthy environment:

- Prominent signage will be displayed throughout every facility to guide and remind students to maintain social distancing, frequent hand washing and disinfecting as well as face coverings.
- An adequate supply of antiseptic wipes will be maintained throughout the facility for the students use.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed prominently in accessible areas, with signage encouraging students and staff to use them continuously. Dispensers will be checked and refilled as necessary throughout the day.
- All facilities will be served by high capacity HVAC systems with superb microfiltration.
- Additional facilities will be utilized to maximize student capacity with social distancing.
- Water fountains will not be used

### VII. Extracurricular

Meals will be served in our cafeteria. All meals produced by outside vendors will be requested to comply with COVID-19 guidelines. The dining hall where the food is served will be modified to ensure that students who do not reside together maintain social distancing guidelines. This will be accomplished by a combination of instituting more shifts and providing additional area for meals. Appropriate hand hygiene before and after eating will be promoted through signage. Additionally, cleaning and disinfection prior to the next group of students arriving for meals will take place, if served in the same common area.

The BYTS library will be reopened in accordance with state guidelines for libraries. BYTS does not have a gym nor does it sport many extracurricular activities. No activities will be allowed to commence without clearance from the COVID coordinator who will ensure that it is in compliance with all state, federal and health guidelines.

### VIII. Vulnerable Populations

Remote learning options will be available to students who are immunocompromised, infected with COVID/quarantined, or who cannot return to campus due to COVID.

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IX.

X. Hygiene Cleaning and Disinfection

BYTS will constantly maintain a sanitized environment in accordance with the CDC and NYDOH guidelines. Logs will be maintained indicating when areas were cleaned and/or sanitized. The following is the initial cleaning and sanitizing schedule:

- The following spaces will be cleaned twice a day and sanitized nightly:
  - Study Halls
  - Low traffic common areas
- The following spaces are used less frequently and will be cleaned and sanitized daily unless otherwise deemed necessary:
  - Classrooms
  - Dorm Rooms
  - Libraries
- The following will be cleaned and sanitized 2-3 times daily depending on their specific traffic volume:
  - Hallways and high traffic common areas
  - Bathrooms
  - Dining Facilities (before and after each meal service)

## **MONITORING**

### **I. Testing Responsibility**

The COVID Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing all testing, screening, and contact tracing arrangements as well as reporting any possible cases to the appropriate authorities as required by law.

### **II. Testing Frequency and Protocols**

BYTS does not offer on campus COVID testing. However, testing is available at Refuah Health Center, at 728 N. Main Street, New Square, NY. The facility is within walking distance of all campus building. Refuah provides a free shuttle to transport students as needed. Transportation will be arranged for any student on campus that has difficulty getting to Refuah and is experiencing possible COVID symptoms.

As mentioned above all students will be required to attain a negative test result before getting clearance to return to campus. Any student returning from international travel will be required to wait 14 days before returning to campus along with providing proof of a negative COVID test. Once cleared students will only be required to get tested in the event of a possible exposure or when exhibiting COVID symptoms.

### **III. Early Warning Signs**

Any student displaying symptoms of COVID or fever for over 24 hours will need to be tested for COVID and remain in quarantine until he receives a negative test result.

### **IV. Contact Tracing**

Refuah Health Center is the primary caregiver of COVID testing for BYTS students, Refuah will communicate with the New York Contact Tracing Program as necessary. BYTS will work with the health departments to accommodate contact tracing while maintaining the privacy of the infected individual.

### **V. Screening**

As mentioned above all students and staff will be requested to attain a negative test result before getting clearance to return to campus. Any student returning from international travel will be required to wait 14 days before returning to campus along with providing proof of a negative COVID test.

Any person returning to campus or anyone visiting the campus will be requested to take his/her temperature upon entry. Facial non-contact thermometers have been installed by all entrances for student and staff use.



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At the onset of the semester persons entering will be asked the following questions to gain entry to campus:

1. Did you have any COVID symptoms in the past 14 days?
2. Did you have a positive COVID test in the past 14 days?
3. Were you in close contact with any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID in the past 14 days?

Students living on campus will only need to be screened if they left and are returning to campus. Visitors other than students are not allowed on campus without going through the screening process at the BYTS administrative offices located at 111 Washington Avenue, Spring Valley, NY or by calling 845-362-3053, extension 213 to gain entry.

## **CONTAINMENT**

### **I. Isolation and Quarantine**

Any student who suspects he or someone else is infected with COVID will be expected to immediately report this to the COVID coordinator. Students exposed to COVID, displaying symptoms of COVID or infected with COVID will be sent home immediately. Transportation will be arranged where needed. The Dorm Counselor has designated Room# 112 as the short-term isolation/quarantine area where students will stay until their ride arrives. In the event that the student requires any other support, food or care the Rabbi Fischer will make appropriate arrangements as necessary.

### **II. Hygiene Cleaning and Disinfection**

Everyone on campus will be encouraged and expected to wash their hands frequently and use hand sanitizer on a constant basis. Designated sinks will be equipped with liquid soap and paper towels. Hand sanitizer will be placed in common/high traffic areas.

### **III. Communication**

The communication coordinator will be responsible to share all the safety guidelines with students, faculty and staff. He will be available to answer student and employee questions regarding COVID 19 and BYTS's COVID 19 guidelines and protocol.

Signage will be displayed prominently throughout the campus and announcements will be made reminding all students and staff to social distance, wash hands, and disinfect their areas after use, and report any suspected cases of COVID.

## **SHUTDOWN**

### **I. Operational Activity**

In case of scale back to a prior Phase, or additional Executive Orders requiring a scale back, BYTS will comply with the appropriate instructions, such as discontinuing student learning in large study halls and classrooms.

It is understood that BYTS will comply with all legal requirements and guidelines while providing possible “capsule study”.

### **II. Move-out**

If the need for a complete shutdown and move-out arises, BYTS will work quickly and diligently to arrange for students to be transported to their homes. The nature of the BYTS student body is such that the vast majority of students live in close proximity to BYTS. Arrangements for the students who live further away will be made to return home, or quarantine within BYTS dormitory as necessary. As soon as practical, instruction will resume with Remote Education Learning.

### **III. Communication**

In case of a scale-back or complete shutdown, the communications coordinator will immediately notify students of the updated situation through signage, announcements, and robo-calls.

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT PROTOCOLS

*Much of this information has been mentioned above and is repeated here for the purpose of clarity and simplicity. It does not replace the above guidelines.*

### **Physical Distancing**

- Measures will be taken to establish social distancing in classrooms, residence halls, restrooms, and other areas as appropriate.
- Faculty, staff, students, and visitors will be required to use face coverings indoors in line with the current mandate, except when doing so would inhibit the individual's health. Reminder signage will be posted conspicuously. Complimentary masks will be made available throughout the campus.
- Where appropriate, furniture will be reconfigured to minimum 6-foot social distancing between each student, and to observe capacity limits.
- Visitors will not be allowed on campus without proper clearance
- Individuals presenting with symptoms or a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 will be directed not to attend in-person instruction and will be sent home.
- Large in person gatherings will be avoided whenever possible. If a gathering is necessary, the area will be disinfected prior, and all participants will need to social distance or where appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Classrooms will initially operate at limited capacity. Desks have been setup to maintain social distancing and face the same direction. When social distancing is not feasible, wearing of Personal Protective Equipment is required.
- The study hall will be configured to operate at a limited capacity. Additional study halls will be opened as required to help maintain social distancing requirements. Class schedules and study times will be staggered to help avoid congestion in the hallways and common areas.
- The facilities manager will be responsible to ensure that all deliveries are handled in a safe manner.

### **Facility Setup**

- As appropriate to the safeguarding stage, limitations will be placed on the number of students who may return to residence halls, and access to residential common areas will be restricted where applicable.
- Signs will be posted in all hall and thoroughfares reminding students not to congregate in these spaces, and they are to be used as entry and exit passageways only.
- Rooms are configured to the required social distancing standards and capacity limits, where applicable, and with protective measures in place. Prominent signage and marking throughout every facility that will always be used to guide and remind students to maintain social

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distancing. BYTS will provide faculty members with optional desk shields should they desire an extra measure of protection in addition to the required PPE.

- Signage will be placed throughout the buildings, at sinks and other locations, encouraging frequent handwashing by employees, faculty and students.
- BYTS will increase janitorial staff to ensure capacity for frequent cleaning and sanitization. In some instances, access to high-touch areas that cannot be cleaned regularly may be restricted.
- All sinks on campus will be equipped with soap and paper towels. Hand sanitizer will be placed in high traffic and common areas that do not have sinks. Signage will be posted in prominent areas reminding all persons to wash their hands. Receptacles will be placed throughout campus for proper disposal of masks/ PPE. Classrooms, study halls, dining areas, and other common areas will be equipped with disinfectant wipes/spray and paper towels, and students will be requested to wipe down their table/ desk and personal area after use. Each area of the campus will be cleaned according the cleaning schedule listed in reopening section. A log will be kept of all cleaning

### Screening Processes

- Any person returning to campus or anyone visiting the campus will be required to take his temperature with a non-contact thermometer and to answer questions about their exposure or symptoms of COVID. Students and employees that do not reside on campus will need to have their temperature checked and answer the questions each time they return to campus. Students living on campus will only need to be screened if they left and are returning to campus. Any individual who screens positive to COVID will be sent home. When this is not immediately feasible, he will be sent to the designated quarantine area in the dormitory.
- Mr. Yakov Taubenfeld will work together with the local health department to trace contact in accordance with the New York state Contact Tracing Program, while ensuring the confidentiality of the infected party. All individuals that have come in contact with the infected person will be notified in accordance with the contact tracing protocol.