

From the Principal

Mrs. Lea Goldstein



As I wrote in the parent email on Wednesday night, after another DHR teacher tested positive, people seem to be contagious up to 72 hours before they develop symptoms. According to recent studies (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0869-5>), viral load peaks shortly after the onset of symptoms, which indicates that people may actually be more infectious in the days before they become ill and before the immune system has a chance to kick in. Researchers have concluded that about 44 percent of COVID-19 infections spread from person to person before symptom onset.



Therefore, despite our precautions and five months of successfully keeping the pandemic out of DHR, it has now spread throughout our community. We were previously relying on testing, but it is becoming clearer every day that negative tests, whether PCRs or rapid antigen tests, are not very reliable at warning us when someone is sick with COVID-19. We are seeing, over and over again, people test negative numerous times, then get sicker and test positive several days to a week later.



The CDC's new recommendations for school closure in response to school-based cases of COVID-19 are based on the results of numerous recent studies and emerging data. It seems that temporary (short to medium length, i.e. 1-4 weeks) closure of face-to-face learning to stop spread, especially as part of a larger community mitigation strategy for areas with substantial community spread, and in response to significant absenteeism of staff and students (we are down to only 32 out of 115 students today and we have 6 teachers sick or quarantining), can make a significant difference.

Of course, we realize that there will be anticipated and unanticipated academic, social-emotional and economic impacts from our short-term transition to zoom, but after extensive deliberation and consultation, **we have decided to close in-person learning for this week until after Purim.** That will hopefully buy us a week, plus a weekend, for those who are sick to recover and for those in quarantine to either show symptoms or be cleared to return.

Will that be a perfect solution? Probably not. There is no easy answer or magic pill. COVID-19 will still be highly contagious and spreading. Will we definitely reopen in-person on March 1? We don't know yet, but we are hopeful. Next week, on Purim, we will send out a survey to each family and faculty member asking for your status (in quarantine, finished quarantine, symptomatic, tested positive, post-COVID/completely recovered, etc.). Based on those results, we are hoping to be able to reopen in-person learning right after Purim for most of our students.

As I described in the email, this is not a decision that was made lightly. We understand how difficult it is for children to learn on zoom and to not socialize with their friends. Our hearts break for these children who are lonely and bored watching a screen. We also realize that parents' parnassa is affected if they can't work. We are so sorry about this situation and I think that we can sincerely say that we are trying our hardest to do things correctly with the goal of reopening school as soon as possible. We pray every day that we make the right decisions.

Rabbi Chastain will be emailing a list of schedules and Zoom links for all classes to make things easier. Also, although Purim will look very different this year, we will try to bring some joy and fun by having a Virtual Purim Parade on Thursday (Taanis Esther) at noon. Please have your children get their costumes ready and we will send out Pre-Purim Home Parade details soon!

1st & 2nd grade trip to Altitude!



4/5 Boys Social Studies Project



Benching Superstars!

Since we had so many families quarantining, we did not gather a list of benching superstars. However, we hope that those at home also benched beautifully after eating bread.

Middos Menchen Stars of the Week

Rena S., Tehila S. Avital P., Chaya S., Ahuva K., & Naama R. (4/5 Girls) - These girls stayed after middos to make sure the art room was spotless and ready for the next class. Thanks, girls!

Avigail L. & Batsheva S. (2nd) - These girls helped organize the gym closet!

Mordy M. (3rd) - Mordy logged on to Zoom and tried so hard to Zoom with us! His headache finally got the best of him and he had to log off. He has COVID and still Zooms everyday! Amazing!

