



**ÉCOLE
AKIVA
SCHOOL**
בית ספר עקיבא

Akiva School COVID Safety and Prevention Protocols v1.0

The following document outlines the Akiva COVID protocols for safety and prevention for students, families and staff. Protocols are based on government directives, CNESST best practices as well as input from the Akiva Health and Safety Committee. This document is a living document that may evolve as directives are updated and the situation in our community and Quebec changes.

Any questions or concerns related to these protocols should be sent to covidsafety@akivaschool.com which will be directed to the attention of the Akiva administrative team.

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Introduction

The Akiva approach to COVID-19 policies and protocols

At Akiva, we take great pride in being a mission driven school. This means that all of our decisions regarding the operation of our school flow from a set of philosophical principles that have guided us since our founding over 50 years ago. This was the vision of our founder, Rabbi David Hartman z”l, himself a philosopher and believer that institutions should be guided by vision.

While the COVID-19 crisis has changed so much about our daily lives, it has not changed Akiva’s modus operandi of mission-based decision making. In developing our protocols for the 2020-2021 school year, we first set forth the principles upon which our decisions are founded. Whenever possible, we have tied these principles to the Akiva mission set down by Rabbi Hartman. We have also developed guiding principles that are unique to the current reality, and here too we have endeavored to make these principles consistent with the culture and values of Akiva, The Akiva Way.

Pluralism

Pluralism is one of Rabbi Hartman’s central pillars of Akiva’s philosophy. Pluralism means that we embrace the fact that we are a diverse community of families who come to Akiva with different beliefs and values. In the COVID environment too, we must respect that there is a diversity of opinions of how to balance competing values relating to the pandemic, and everyone’s point of view must be treated with respect. While we must take a position when it comes to policy, we are sensitive to those who feel differently and make sure to make everyone feel heard.

Community

One of the things that distinguishes Akiva is that we are more than a school—we are a community. This means that we care for all members of our community: students, parents, grandparents, teachers, and staff. In making our decisions, we look out for the welfare of all.

V’higita bo Yomam Valayla

One of the paramount Jewish values is that study must take place at all times: v’higita bo yomam valayla -- you are enjoined to learn day and night. When Akiva went online in March it was with the determination that the learning process cannot be interrupted regardless of the surrounding circumstances. We will continue to ensure that all of our students receive a full education this year.

Dina D’malchuta Dina

Our rabbis teach us: dina d’malchuta dina, the law of the state has the same force as the law of God. It is a religious obligation to abide by the law of the land. While we do not necessarily agree with every mandate put forth by the Government, and may petition the Ministry for redress, in the end our policies follow the directives of the Government of Quebec.

Caring for the Vulnerable

The Torah admonishes us to always care for the most vulnerable in society. When making policy decisions we always look out for those in our community who are in the most danger.

Evidence-based Decision Making

In all of our policy decisions, we endeavor to use the most up-to-date evidence that is produced by the public health, medical, and scientific communities. Since the evidence is evolving because of the novelty of the coronavirus, our policies are subject to change as new evidence points one way or the other. When determining policy, we rely on the Akiva Medical Committee to make decisions based on their learned evaluation of the current situation. For example, as of the writing of these protocols, it is the opinion of the committee that even young children can be effective transmitters of COVID-19, and precautionary measures must be taken to prevent even our youngest students from spreading the disease to others.

Prioritizing Stability

Social-emotional wellbeing is at the core of Akvia's child-centric educational philosophy. One of the most important things children need is a sense of stability, and this need is amplified in times of great upheaval, such as the time in which we are now living. For this reason, our decision-making for the return to school has been designed in order to have maximal consistency in our students' schedules. For example, we have postponed many programs that would change the daily academic routine until there is a greater sense of stability in our students' lives.

A corollary to this is that we do not yet know what the "feel" of our building is when operating under COVID protocols. What does the movement of students through the building look like? Is there a different dynamic in the classroom? For this reason, we will prioritize stability at the beginning of the year, then slowly add and re-add co-curricular and extra-curricular programming to our day as we better understand how to do so logistically in our new reality.

Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh—We are All Responsible for Each Other

With this guiding philosophy in mind, in the interest of community, taking care of each other, and continued learning, we would like to re-stress the importance of all of us following the government directives at home as well as at school.

We all play a key role in ensuring the health, safety and successful re-opening of our school and together we can make a difference in how this school year unfolds.



Rabbi Eric Grossman
Head of School

Commitment to a seamless year of academic excellence and learning

Akiva School is excited to offer a full, interactive online program for the 2020-2021 school year. The online school will run daily from 8:00am to 4:00pm and will offer the same education program as our in-person school. *Akiva Online!* will be taught by Akiva's own teachers, assistants, and specialists.

Akiva Online! will run as our C class in each grade, parallel to our A and B classes that will continue to be taught in our building. During these COVID times, when we expect absenteeism to be higher than usual, students who are absent from school on any given day for any reason (quarantine, sickness, medical exemption) may join the C class to keep up with the curriculum and not fall behind in school.

No matter what the year may bring in terms of format for learning, Akiva will be able to provide a seamless, robust educational experience for all our students.

Prevention at home

Partnership between home and school has always been an Akiva strength and now more than ever, we will require our families and staff to be vigilant with us in our consistent adherence, checking and care regarding our health and safety protocols.

Safety protocols at home

At home, we will ask that Akiva families and staff adhere by government directives and specifically ensuring:

- No more than 10 people from a maximum of three families, socially-distanced inside a private home.
- No large children's birthday parties, gatherings or sleepovers inside a private home.
- Continued social distancing, proper hygiene and mask wearing when necessary.

Also please talk to your child(ren) about:

- The importance of not using the bathrooms for recreational purposes to chat with friends.
- Only going to the office when you are really not feeling well as the consequences could be your child and their siblings being sent home as a precaution.
- Not touching their face and washing their hands frequently.
- Being comfortable wearing masks and practicing before school starts.
- Practicing good mask techniques for putting on and taking off the mask. Please refer to the video below as a guide to mask use and hygiene:

[How to use a Mask Properly - Canada Public Health](#)

Self-check and care at home

Families

To ensure that no sick individuals enter the building, every morning, Akiva parents will be asked to do a screening of their children for the key symptoms of COVID and confirm that no one in their house is unwell.

- Akiva School will distribute a checklist for parents to use either in hardcopy or digitally to confirm that no one is sick.
- Prior to leaving for school, children should try to use the washroom to help limit use at school.
- Should someone be sick, the school must be notified as soon as possible with details concerning the sickness. (see Akiva document on Dealing with COVID Symptoms and Cases for more on this.)

Staff

To ensure that no sick individuals enter the building, every morning, Akiva staff will be asked to do a self screening of themselves and their family members for the key symptoms of COVID and confirm that no one in their house is unwell.

- Akiva School will distribute a checklist for staff to use digitally to confirm that no one is sick.
- Prior to leaving for school, staff should try to use the washroom to help limit use at school.
- Should someone be sick, the school must be notified as soon as possible with details concerning the sickness. (see Akiva document on Dealing with COVID Symptoms and Cases for more on this.)

Carpooling

- In order to avoid mixing of multiple families, carpooling should be avoided if possible.
- Should carpooling be necessary:
 - group sizes should be minimized and kept consistent.
 - The school must be notified of carpool members for tracing purposes.
- All members of the carpool should wear masks.
- Windows should be kept open and proper outside ventilation maintained.

International travel

- Any student or staff returning from international travel, whether symptomatic or not, must isolate at home for 14 days, following Quebec home isolation protocols.

Prevention at school

The following measure and protocols are being put in place to minimize the risk of COVID infection and outbreaks at school:

Self check in the morning in class

- In addition to the parent check at home, students will be asked every morning by teachers if they are feeling well at the same time as attendance. Answers will be documented and sent to the office. Anyone not feeling well with any of the COVID related symptoms will be sent home. (See Protocols for Student and Staff with Symptoms.)

Social distancing in the school

Classroom setup and procedures

- Classroom furniture will be arranged to provide as much space as possible between students.
- If cubby space is shared, students will not use the space together simultaneously.
- To limit cubby use, during the fall months at least, please try to minimize the amount of outdoor clothing that your child(ren) brings to school.
- Teachers will maintain a two-metre distance from students at all times, and plexiglass dividers will be installed around teacher desks.
- Wall and floor signs/markers will be placed to reinforce hand hygiene, social distancing and respiratory etiquette (ie. coughing, sneezing into elbows rather than hands).
- Hugs, high-fives, handshakes and other physical contact must be avoided.
- Whenever possible, windows will be kept open.

Staff room procedures

- Staff room will be sectioned with plexi-glass to enable staff to sit, remove their masks and eat when needed.
- A limited number of staff people will be allowed in the staff room at a time. (Number TBD upon completion of partitioning.)
- Minimum two-metre distancing must be maintained between staff members, both in the staff room and in the rest of the building.
- Minimum two-metre distancing must be maintained during breaks and lunch hours.
- Before and after use of all appliances in the staff room, appliance handles and related surface areas must be wiped down by the user.
- Staff are encouraged to eat in classrooms, outside, or in their own offices when possible.

Staff meetings

- In-person staff meetings will only be held in small groups where two-metre distancing is possible.
- All other meetings will take place via teleconference.

Movement throughout the school

- Students and staff will be guided in a one-way hallway traffic pattern.
- Movement will be limited throughout the school.
- Students and staff will social distance when moving throughout the school.
- Students will go to the bathroom one at a time and with spacing in between bathroom visits.
- Class movement timing will be staggered to avoid crossing.

Coordinated entry and dismissals

- Procedures will be put in place to ensure that students are not congregating in the school entrances and quickly move in and out of the building.
- Akiva morning arrival and entry will be monitored for social distancing.
- Dismissals will be done alphabetically (A-E, F-M, N-Z), starting at 4:00pm.

Recess by grade

- Recesses will be staggered by grade, and with classes in separate yards or different areas of the school.

Limiting the amount of people in the building

In order to minimize exposure and ensure social distancing, Akiva will limit the number of people allowed in the building at one time:

- Parents will be allowed in the building by scheduled appointment only.
- No grandparents or caregivers will be allowed in the building.
- Suppliers and other visitors will need written permission from the school to enter prior to arriving.
- No events or gatherings will be held in the school.

Wearing of PPE

Please refer to the summary chart below for wearing masks in the school:

	At all times	When circulating in building	In classroom	Outdoors (recess)	Indoor Recess	Gym
Kindergarten			Recommended if they are able to.			
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Staff						
Visitors						

Masks for students

Grades K-2

- Masks to be worn by K-2 students who are able to while circulating in common areas.

- Recommended to be worn for K-2 students who are able to in the classroom.
- After hand washing, masks can be removed while eating or drinking.

Grade 3-6

- Masks to be worn at all times when circulating in the classroom and when circulating in common areas.
- Masks to be worn at all times when seated at desks, with the following exception:
 - After hand washing, masks may be removed while eating and drinking.

For all students:

- Families can choose the type of mask that will be most appropriate and comfortable for their child(ren).
- A fanny pack, with careful hygiene, should be used in school to store masks when not being worn.
- Masks should be replaced if soiled, humid or wet.
- Students should bring 2 masks for the day as well as a back-up mask in case one is lost or needs to be replaced.
- Masks can be removed once outdoors for recesses.
- Due to heavy respiration, movement, social distancing and safety of staff, masks must be worn in gym class.
- Gym will be outdoors when possible, and that when indoors we'll avoid activities that involve strenuous exertion while masked.

Masks for visitors and parents

- Visitors must wear a mask at all times when they are inside the school building or school yard.
- Parents must wear masks in the schoolyard at drop-off and pickup times.
- Masks must be worn at all times during carpools with members of more than one household.

PPE for staff

Masks

- Must be worn by all staff members at all times in the building, except when alone in a room or when eating/drinking.
- A back-up mask should be brought in case the first mask needs to be replaced.

Face shields or goggles

- Two reusable masks and a face shield will be made available for all staff.
- Are mandatory for teachers during class time when students are unmasked.
- Are encouraged for staff when in a room where two-meter distancing is not possible.
- Please note that a face shield or goggles are not replacements for masks, and should be worn only in conjunction with masks.

A full set of PPE (mask, gown, gloves, goggles) will be available in the main office should the need arise.

Building modifications

Signs

- Signs reminding students and staff about hand hygiene, social distancing, respiratory etiquette and other health reminders will be placed strategically around the school.

Ventilation

- This summer we engaged an expert in air quality and performed a thorough evaluation of the school's ventilation system in order to ensure that Akiva would achieve the highest standards possible for safe environmental conditions.
- At the recommendation of our consultant, we have begun the process of installing an ultraviolet germicidal irradiation system in all of our HVAC units. This new system will remove pathogens from all of the air that enters and circulates in Akiva through our heating and cooling system.
- The system we are installing has been deemed effective in killing any virus, including coronavirus, and is in use by major hospitals, airlines, and food-service industries. It has been studied and recommended by the department of global health and social medicine at Harvard Medical School.
- When possible, windows will be kept open to bring fresh air into the building.
- Outdoor learning will take place when feasible.

Plexiglass

- Plexiglass dividers are being installed around teachers' desks, in the staff room, in all other rooms used by students, and in the main office.

Hygiene protocols

The importance of hygiene in preventing infection is clear, and while we will be adhering to strict protocols, we will implement these protocols in a calm and reassuring manner. We will be reviewing hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and social distancing with the students during the first days of school, to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Hygiene training

- Staff will receive hygiene training from health professionals before school begins.
- Students will receive hygiene training from staff on the first day of school, and will receive frequent hygiene reminders.

Handwashing

Handwashing is necessary for at least 20 seconds in the following circumstances:

- Upon entering and leaving school.
- Before or after touching the face (eyes, nose, mouth).
- After coughing, sneezing or wiping/blowing nose.
- Before and after eating (as part of netilat yadaim routine.)
- After handling a frequently-touched item.
- Before putting on and after removing masks or any other PPE.
- Before and after any sports or physical education.
- Before and after recess.
- Hand sanitizers will be made available in every class and around the school but students are encouraged to also bring their own.

Respiratory etiquette

- It is important to cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue or the crook of the elbow.
- Only single-use tissues should be used, and disposed of immediately in a trash can.
- Discourage touching of the mouth, eyes or nose with a bare or gloved hand.
- Hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds after sneezing, coughing or wiping/blowing the nose.

Eating and drinking

- Parents should send students to school with water bottles (disposable or refillable) and hand sanitizer for personal use.
- Water fountains will be used for filling water bottles only -- not for drinking.
- Students should not share personal items, especially food, water bottles, kippot, eating utensils, etc.
- Hot lunch will be an available option for students this year. Details will be sent in an upcoming communication.

School cleaning protocols

- A professional cleaning team will deep-clean and disinfect the building every evening.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned every two hours, as well as after each recess and lunchtime.
- Staff bathroom will be cleaned hourly.
- Only one staff member at a time to use staff bathroom.
- Frequent cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces in classrooms and staff room.

- Staff should take special care when touching frequently-touched areas in the staff room. (microwave, fridge handle, chairs, etc.) and should wipe down surfaces and wash hands after touching/using surfaces and equipment.
- Non-essential items will be removed from common areas.
- Sports equipment (balls, hockey sticks, etc.) will be cleaned after each use.
- Pinnies should not be used.

Appendix 1

Sample Morning Checklist

Please confirm that your child(ren) does (do) not have any of the following COVID related symptoms:

- Fever (38.0+ orally)
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sore throat
 - New rash
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Loss of taste/smell
 - Runny nose
- Yes I confirm that my child is well with no symptoms.

Is everyone in your family not feeling well today?

- Yes
- No

Appendix 2