

August 19, 2020

Dear Fuchs Mizrachi Families,

Over the last six months, as we've all learned to adjust to the "new normal" of the COVID age, there are still some things that haven't changed. In planning the safest return to school possible for our students, teachers, and community, the Fuchs Mizrachi School wants to express to our families that every effort at disease prevention is of paramount importance.

To this end, **we are reminding you of the school-wide universal vaccination policy adopted in 2019.** While the quarantine initially may have made visits to your health care professional more challenging, most medical offices are now operating at full pre-pandemic capacity. Timely administration of routine childhood vaccinations is strongly endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Additional support for this practice is offered by the Orthodox Union (OU) and the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA). If your child's immunizations are not up-to-date, no matter the reason, now is an ideal time to rectify that, for their sake and to protect those around them.

The nature of contagious illness is such that vaccination can prevent a pocket of disease in the community before it even starts. The concept of "herd immunity," a critical threshold of immunized individuals that keeps disease from spreading, serves to protect the most vulnerable individuals — babies under one year of age, pregnant women, the elderly, cancer patients and others whose immunity is compromised, and patients who are medically unable to be vaccinated.

As we approach the Flu season (which is also Croup season and RSV season and Strep season and cold season) we will no doubt see an increase in children with symptoms of fever, sore throat, runny nose, decreased appetite, and other signs of illness that overlap with COVID-19. Because this school year is different than any before it, policies written by leading health professionals recommend excluding children with any of these symptoms from school attendance. If enough students or teachers in a grade or department fall ill, we will find ourselves in a situation of mandated school closure. This uncertainty is not just inconvenient, it forces an interruption in learning and may compromise yet another semester of schooling.

Along with frequent sanitizing of surfaces, hand-washing, mask-wearing, and social distancing, vaccinating appropriately is at the top of a short list of important ways that we can protect ourselves, our children, our school, and our community. **For that reason, every student in the Fuchs Mizrachi School community must be up-to-date on all recommended vaccinations. It is also the expectation that every member of our community will receive an influenza vaccination at the earliest possible point in the flu season (at the very latest, within 6 weeks of the first day that this year's flu vaccine becomes available).** We urge you to contact your primary care provider as soon as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.



In addition to the *halachic* obligations to care for the health of the individual, the *Torah* instructs us to protect our fellow Jews. With safe prevention measures readily available, there is no excuse for allowing unnecessary danger to lurk among us. For the sake of our school community, especially the most susceptible and defenseless among us, please fulfill your role in protecting everyone.

Thank you for working hard to protect all of us.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ira Taub, on behalf of the FMS Medical Advisory Committee