



TRY – Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim



February 1, 2021

19 Shevat, 5781

Dear Students and Families,

I hope everyone is doing well. I know this email finds many of you with bated breath.

We are unfortunately forced to once again postpone the start of TRY 2021. We remain confident that students will arrive in Israel for this experience within the coming weeks, but, as we explain below, we will need a couple of days to determine the new expected start date.

As you may have heard, the Israeli Cabinet made the following decisions in their late night meeting on Sunday night:

- The country-wide lockdown (restrictions on local businesses, schools, internal travel, etc.) has been extended until Friday, February 5th.
- The closure of Ben Gurion Airport has been extended until midnight of Sunday, February 7th (between the 7th and 8th of February).
- **The Cabinet will meet on Wednesday, February 3rd to discuss possible additional extensions or changes to the above decisions.**

These updated guidelines have made a February 8th start date impossible for the following reasons:

Our students will eventually be issued *special tourist* visas by the Immigration Authority of the Israeli Ministry of Interior. As opposed to typical years, Israel is not issuing tourist visas to non-citizens. We've been granted special permission from the Ministry of Interior to receive visas for our students once the airport is open. Unfortunately, until the government opens the airport back up for business, the Immigration Authority has been instructed to not process any visa requests, including TRY's (in spite of our petitions).

Therefore, we will need a couple of days AFTER the airport is open and running before our students will be able to fly to Israel.

Additionally, from what we've been hearing, a likely outcome of the Wednesday Cabinet meeting is that the airport closure will be extended by approximately one week (around February 14th).

Please know that we have reached out to several Israeli government officials, both here in Israel and in North America, to see if there is anything that can be done, and they have all confirmed the above statements to be accurate.

In spite of these challenges, we remain optimistic that we will be able to bring our students into the country within the next several weeks.

Where does that leave us?

In order to decide on a new start date for TRY, we need to wait for the next Cabinet meeting. Their statement will likely not come out until late Wednesday night or Thursday morning, Israel time. Once this happens, we will do our best to quickly inform you of a new departure date for our students, based on the Cabinet's decision and available flights.

FOR STUDENTS NOT FLYING ON THE GROUP FLIGHT

We suggest that you speak with your airline or travel agent and request to suspend your departure flight without booking a new date. I hope that you are able to do so for free or a nominal fee. If you are unable to suspend the ticket or it costs too much, the next best option is to check if you can wait until Thursday, February 4th to request a change in departure date. We hope to have enough information at that time to decide on a new start date.

Should the airport closure be extended, the airlines will likely cancel all international flights to Israel.

If you have any additional questions, please contact [Elinor](#).

GROUP FLIGHT

If you purchased your tickets through Ramah Israel, we have already suspended the group flight tickets. We will rebook you on a new flight as soon as we have more information. Your return flights have not been changed and our last day remains June 13th.

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

Please do not forget to suspend, cancel, or delay all domestic flights.

It is critical that you avoid a "NO-SHOW" on the Israel and/or domestic flights, as this will forfeit your tickets. You must take action to suspend, cancel, or change your flight based on the above guidelines before the departure date.

Question and Answer session with Jonathan and the CEO of Ramah Israel

Meir Hoyzman, the CEO of Ramah Israel, and I will be holding a Q & A on Thursday at 9:00 PM Israel time. We would like a representative from each family to be present on the call, as we hope to have more information to share with you at that time. I would love it for all of our students to be on the call if possible. [Click here](#) to join the call.

We remain committed to bringing the TRY 2021 students to Israel as soon as possible.

In the meantime, Aliza Zeff (Director of Teaching and Learning) is working on creating a more robust academic schedule starting the week of February 7th. Also, Hillary Menkowitz, our Student Life Coordinator, is working with our *madrichim* (counselors) to prepare additional programming and community building activities for our students.

Thank you so much for your continued patience, commitment and understanding.

B'shalom,

Jonathan Madoff, Director, TRY
Meir Hoyzman, CEO, Ramah Israel

www.try.ramah.org.il

Useful links



Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim is a program of [Ramah Israel](#), a division of the [National Ramah Commission](#), which operates under the educational and religious supervision of [The Jewish Theological Seminary](#). Since 1962, Ramah Israel has provided substantive experiential education and meaningful Conservative Jewish living for North Americans in Israel in the spirit of the Ramah Camping Movement.

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