

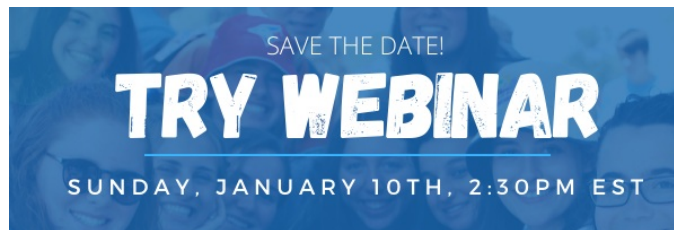


TRY – Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim



December 23, 2020

8 Tevet, 5781



Dear TRY Students and Families,

Before moving on to the main topic of this email, please note that we are holding an orientation webinar session for all TRY students and families on **Sunday, January 10th at 2:30 PM (EST)**! This is a very important meeting and we ask that all families be represented. We will share updated information, answer any questions you might have, and review some of our policies and procedures. [Click here to register.](#)

In this email, I'd like to focus on COVID-19 and its impact on our program. It's no secret that this year has been an entirely new and strange experience for everyone across the globe. Social norms and etiquettes have changed, distancing and isolation have altered the way we interact with each other, and international travel is a shadow of the seemingly effortless way people used to hop around the globe. And yet despite all the hardships and uncertainties this pandemic poses, we see that people haven't given up hope and that if we work hard, make some changes in our lifestyle and exercise flexibility, we can learn to live through this the best we can. In fact, there are some hidden opportunities that some of us have discovered amid this new reality. That's why we're so excited for TRY 2021. It will no doubt be a unique year. I believe that this year will actually be quite *special* - and I want to emphasize the positive nature of that word. Having regular, face-to-face interactions with peers, travelling throughout Israel (even if limited at times), and practicing Judaism as a community are some of the incredible blessings that we will receive this semester, along with many many more.

Below I will review some important topics related to COVID-19 and the policies and procedures we've created in order to mitigate or avoid the group's exposure to the virus and expand upon COVID-19's potential impact on your TRY experience. You can also find much of this information in the [handbook](#) and on our [website](#).

## A note about the current travel restrictions to Israel

Some of you may have heard that Israel has closed down the airport to foreign citizens, a ban that would include TRY students. While I can imagine this has caused you a great deal of stress, please keep in mind that this is a temporary policy as the world makes sense of the newest COVID strain coming out of England. It is possible (and even likely) that the move will be reversed. To add a bit more stress to our lives (as if we don't have enough), it appears that Israel is headed for a 3-week lockdown, restricting people from travelling more than 1 kilometer from their homes. The upside to this situation is that, if put into place, the country will be much healthier as it relates to COVID by the time the program starts. However, should these restrictions last longer than we are expecting, it is possible that it can impact your flights to Israel. Please know that we are open and ready to begin TRY after our scheduled start date if necessary, although we are hoping that this will not be the case.

## General Guidelines

We ask that you review our protocols closely and never hesitate to ask questions or seek clarification. We know that in these times, more than ever, parents and students are putting their faith in us that we will keep our participants safe while also running a fun, meaningful, and safe program.

### A. Ministry of Health

It is our mandate to follow all requirements and recommendations of the Israeli Ministry of Health in order to keep our teens safe and healthy. At times, we may implement stricter policies should we see fit, but our rules will never be less stringent than those of the Government. We will be in touch with the Ministry of Health should questions arise or to receive guidance.

Please understand that our policies may not always align with those of your respective families and home communities. For that reason, we want you to be aware of the above guiding principle.

### B. TRY's Medical Advisory Board

Detailed protocols have been established in coordination with a volunteer board of medical professionals from the US and Canada. Should specific issues arise, I will be in touch with medical professionals in North American and Israel for consultation and guidance. Many members of the board have been treating COVID-positive patients since the start of the pandemic.

### C. Prevention, Prevention, Prevention

Throughout the program, students and staff will be reminded that not following our protocols can put our program at risk for infection/spread of COVID-19, and also the need for student(s) to quarantine for up to 14 days due to exposure. While both infection and quarantine are a possibility, we will do everything we can to avoid these scenarios. This does not mean that TRY 2021 will be a hermetically sealed bubble. Families, though, can trust that we are taking this pandemic seriously and are putting measures into place to prevent exposure and minimize risk.

### D. Flexibility

This semester will require all of us (students, staff, and parents alike) to be flexible. We look to you, our families and students, to understand that our staff on the ground will be making COVID-related decisions in an ever-changing environment. This relates to decisions regarding quarantining, expanded or restricted freedoms (i.e. free nights), opportunities for interactions with those outside of our community, and travel/programming as discussed below.

### E. Impact on Programming and Travel

You may have looked over the 2021 calendar with excitement, noting all of the incredible opportunities we are planning for our teens. For those of you old enough to understand the reference, this is not a *Dead Poet's Society* moment where I will ask the students to take out their calendars, stand on their tables, and rip them up, but I do want to remind you that **the calendar is subject (and likely) to change**. While we hope to include every aspect of the program we have been planning, it is likely that we will have cancellations, alterations, and alternative programs. As I wrote earlier, flexibility is the name of the game. The expectation needs to be that our plans will change, we will all do our best to be flexible, and let's all enjoy the journey together!

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## Before TRY

### A. Distancing Measures Prior to Travel

Students are asked to **shelter in place starting two weeks prior to the flight**, avoiding any unnecessary interactions with people outside of your family unit (those living in your home). If interacting with others outside of your home is a necessity, please make sure such meetings are masked, socially distanced, and preferably outside. If you are generally attending in-person learning, **please switch to virtual learning two weeks prior to the program**. In addition, in-person activities such as sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities must be avoided two weeks prior to the flight. The guiding principle is **not spending more than 15 minutes over a 24 hour period with people outside of your family unit**. We know this is not an easy request and we appreciate your cooperation.

**Any student who comes into contact with a COVID-19 positive individual MUST notify [Elinor Kaufman](#) immediately and quarantine for two weeks prior to flying to Israel. If this means you will need to delay your arrival, we will work with you to ensure that you can still join the program.**

### B. Testing

All TRY students **must be tested for COVID-19 twice** before leaving home. **The first test should take place one week prior to your departure, with a second test being administered between 48-72 hours before your scheduled flight.** Please note, the second test must be a PCR test; not one of

the faster, less accurate, versions. Please check ahead with your local testing centers regarding availability and how fast results are received, and schedule your tests accordingly. Once you receive the results, families should email Elinor a declaration that the student received a negative result. **Following the first test, please shelter in place fully**, avoiding all contact whatsoever with individuals outside of your home. If the 2nd test results do not come back prior to the day of your flight, you **MUST** notify Elinor immediately.

### C. Travel

While traveling to Israel, students must wear masks at all times, wash hands regularly, and socially distance as much as possible. Airlines may have additional or different requirements for travel, so please check with your airline prior to flying. Families flying on the group flight will receive an update from Elinor as to United Airlines' specific requirements.

You should travel with antibacterial wipes, hand sanitizer (3.4 ounces or fewer in compliance with international travel regulations), and extra masks in your carry-on. We also recommend wearing a face shield at the airport (and on the plane if possible). Students should follow the directives of the airlines at all times. Airlines will instruct passengers to only remove masks for quick eating and drinking, and to replace them promptly. Generally, it would be wise for students to bring some food in their carry-on as there may be limited options for purchasing food at the airport.

The CDC lists several [helpful tips for airline travel](#) here.

### D. Flu Vaccine

All students **MUST** be vaccinated with a flu shot prior to joining the program and should email Elinor confirmation that they have received it.

### E. What to Bring

Students are asked to bring 7 reusable cloth masks (that can be washed) with them from home, or to bring with them at least 20 disposable masks to begin the program. Upon arrival, we will provide each student with one reusable cloth mask (with the Ramah Israel logo), and throughout the program, we will supply disposable masks as needed.

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## מילון קורונה

Corona pandemic - מגפת הקורונה

Corona test - בדיקת קורונה

Lockdown - סגר

Mask - מסכה

Pod - קפסולה

Quarantine - בידוד

Vaccine - חיסון

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## Quarantine Upon Arrival

After leaving Ben Gurion airport, students will board our designated tour busses with TRY staff (all masked), and drive directly to our campus on the Goldstein Youth Village (also known as the *Chava*). Students will go straight to their preassigned rooms to unpack and settle in. While madrichim will not be living in the same rooms as the students, they will be staying in the same dormitories during the quarantine period and will be available at all times. The rest of the TRY staff will be in constant contact with the group and will be in touch with students via phone, messages, or video call, including at night and on Shabbat (in case of emergencies). They will also assist in procuring anything the students may need from the "outside world".

The quarantine period is expected to last between 10-14 days, depending on the availability of group-wide testing and the changing policies of the Ministry of Health. Students will likely be roomed in rooms of 3-5 students, but will be able to interact with a *capsula* (pod) of two rooms. It is possible that during the quarantine period, your *capsula* will be slightly expanded based on our access to testing (and those results all being negative) and guidance from the Ministry of Health.

### A. Classes

During the quarantine period, all classes will take place on Zoom.

### B. Special Quarantine Programming

While this period may prove to be challenging, we also see it as an opportunity for students to bond with their roommates and get to know the rest of the group and *tzevet* (staff) through creative programs and activities. Some of these programs will be designed to help our students stay physically active throughout the quarantine period.

### C. Meals

Three meals per day are prepared by the Chava kitchen and will be brought to our dorms where the TRY staff will facilitate distribution to each room. In addition, students will receive snacks prepared by the kitchen, TRY staff will provide additional treats, and students will be able to order food from our TRY *Makolet* (convenience store), which will be operated by our madrichim and stocked with local and familiar yummy snacks.

### D. Leaving the room

There will be opportunities for students to spend time with their *capsula* in the dormitory's common area or outside in a grassy area.

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## Post-Quarantine Policies

### A. On Campus

Having been quarantined together, all students and madrichim will act as one *capsula*, and similarly to a family unit, they will not be required to wear masks when together and in the TRY dorm areas. However, in any setting that includes people outside the TRY *capsula*, all safety measures (masks, distancing, frequent hand washing, etc.) must be adhered to. This includes, for example, the entire classroom area during all school hours, any meetings with teachers or senior TRY staff, during bus travel, and during study trips. In general, only the TRY *capsula* will be allowed in the dormitory space aside from specific and necessary instances - for example, cleaning/maintenance of the dorms or an inspection by Hillary or Jonathan. The Chava is a large and beautiful campus and our students will be able to roam the grounds freely as in past years (while masked and socially distancing from others).

### B. Classes

The entire lower floor of the Ramah Israel building is where the TRY classrooms are located. This whole floor is accessible to the teachers and TRY senior staff, and therefore everyone entering this area must adhere to safety measures. Masks must be worn by teachers AND students during class time. Some classes will be scheduled on zoom, at least to start the semester, and others may move to zoom on occasion. Weather permitting we will try to have classes take place outside as well.

### C. Off Campus

Students will not be allowed to leave campus for any reason to start the program. We hope to be able to relax that rule a bit as the program progresses, including visits to the local grocery store, falafel stand, coffee place, etc., but that will likely depend on external factors. However, COVID-permitting, at least once a week we will leave campus to go on a *tiyul* (study trip) as part of ICC. Some of these study trips will *hopefully* include overnight stays at hotels or hostels around the country. We will also have other excursions for various activities, neighborhood walks, and more. Any time the group is off campus, all safety measures for interacting with "outsiders" must be adhered to in full.

TRY will only visit sites that comply with the Israeli Ministry of Health's "purple badge" guidelines. Purple badge is a term given to places of businesses that adhere to governmental health guidelines regarding COVID-19.

At this time, we are not planning host Shabbat experiences or a Pesach vacation as part of the program. All Shabbatot and holidays will be spent together as a group, either on campus or at a hostel/guesthouse in another part of the country.

### D. Visitation from "outsiders"

As mentioned above, students will also not be allowed to leave campus at any time during the program. This includes visiting with family and friends in Israel. If family/friends wish to visit with a student, they may only do so on campus while masked and under strict distancing measures. Any and all visits **MUST** be coordinated with Elinor and confirmed in advance. Visitors will be required to sign a document stating their temperature is below 38 degree Celsius, they have not been abroad, and did not come into contact with anyone who is COVID-19 positive in the last two weeks.

Visits will only be started up a week or two after we finish the quarantine period.

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### Reminders:

SAVE THE DATE for the [TRY Webinar](#) -  
Get updated info, Q&A with the staff, and more!  
Sunday, January 10th at 2:30pm EST

TRY is offering an SAT course -  
to sign up please [email Aliza](#) by December 28!

Did you arrange phone service already?  
If not, go check out the packages [Talk'nSave](#) is



offering.

**Complete your registration!**

Please make sure all your registration forms are completed and you've submitted all the necessary documents and/or files. For questions please contact [Elinor](#).

As always, we are here to answer all of your questions as they relate to COVID or anything else.

B'vracha,

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[www.try.ramah.org.il](http://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.

**Think Israel. Think Ramah.**

**STAY CONNECTED**