



Yeshiva University

Office of the President

My Dear Friends,

We have unfortunately received news this morning that our student has tested positive for COVID-19. Our thoughts are with him and his family and we ask you to please keep them in mind in your prayers.

We are in very close and regular contact with our public health officials as well as the Mayor's and Governor's offices. Their specialists have guided us throughout this situation and we are thankful for their care and expertise.

I apologize in advance for the length of this email. It is very important that we communicate with you extensively and clearly so that there is no confusion. This is an evolving story, and I will be writing to you and updating you regularly to keep you informed.

We have canceled classes for today on the Washington Heights campus. At this time, we are taking the precautionary measures of canceling all classes on the Washington Heights and Midtown Campuses until after Purim, Tuesday, March 10, 2020. This includes all in-person graduate courses on those campuses as well as at the boys' high school. We will also be postponing all social events on those campuses until further notice including the Sarachek basketball tournament and Purim celebrations. The dorms and food services will remain open for those who are staying on campus during this time. We are discouraging people from congregating in common areas including in the Beit Midrash.

These precautionary steps will allow us to work with city agencies and other professionals to best prepare our campuses and ensure the uncompromised safety of our students, faculty and staff.

Current guidance for our students, faculty and staff from senior subject matter experts in NYC Department of Health- Dr. Don Weiss & Dr. Scott Harper:

- If you have had no symptoms and no contact with the student who has tested positively: go about your business, no need to restrict activity; remain vigilant. If you have a fever and cough you should stay home and contact your doctor

- If you have no symptoms but may have had close proximity and extended contact with the student who has tested positively since last Wednesday, February 26th: self-quarantine for 14 days from last contact; minimize contact with other people, and speak to your health care provider to get tested.
- If you have mild symptoms but no close proximity of contact to the student who has tested positive, please stay home and monitor – you do not need to seek health care unless your symptoms get worse
- If you have chronic healthcare issues such as asthma or diabetes and may have had close proximity or extended contact with the student who tested positive – we recommend reaching out to your health care professional
- Pregnant women, who present with symptoms or have been in close proximity to the student who tested positive should contact their physician
- If you have a fever or cough, please contact your health care provider who will arrange with DOHMH for the possibility of testing

Please keep in mind that according to the CDC, the virus mainly goes between people when they cough and sneeze. It is a respiratory virus that is not contagious by just passing someone in the hallway. It is unlikely that you can get it just by touching surfaces such as tabletop, furniture, and mezuzahs but you should still regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds.

Students who have been quarantined or self-quarantined on campus will be receiving food and will be monitored by our health center along with guidance from city agencies. Our Counseling Center is available for students who would like additional support. Daily Minyanim will continue as scheduled for those who do not share the risk factors described above.

For faculty and staff on our Midtown and Washington Heights campuses, please be in touch with your supervisors about the possibility of working remotely.

As a community of faith, we know that medical vigilance alone is insufficient. Especially at this time, we need to focus on our values of kindness and compassion, faith and prayer. While these two campuses will be closed, our mission of education continues and we are setting up optional remote classes for our students to continue learning and growing.

I will continue to be communicating with you as this further unfolds.

With best wishes,

Dr Ari Berman

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