



STATEMENT FROM TORAH UMESORAH'S VAAD ROSHEI YESHIVA IN REGARD TO HOW YESHIVOS AND DAY SCHOOLS SHOULD RESPOND TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

We have been asked, in light of the pandemic spread of the terrible coronavirus, whether yeshivos and day schools should close down until the danger of infection has passed.

It is our opinion, at least as of now, and at least in cities or municipalities where public and private schools are not required to close, that yeshivos and day schools should remain open. The *koach haTorah* generated by *tinokos shel bais rabban* is inestimable, and is urgently needed in times like these.

The general consensus among health officials at this time appears to be that schools may remain open, as evidenced by the fact that most local health authorities have not at this point ordered the wholesale closing of schools, neither public schools nor private schools. We do not think that yeshivos and day schools need to hold themselves to a different standard than that determined appropriate for neighboring public or private schools.

Of course, yeshivos and day schools must do all in their power to minimize any risk of students or staff becoming infected by the coronavirus. Large gatherings should be avoided. Good hygienic habits must be observed. Schools should have local doctors with whom to consult as any issue may arise. Most importantly, children or adults who do not feel well or who have compromised immune systems should stay home.

Finally, in light of the extraordinary medical dangers posed by the coronavirus challenge, and the tremendous negative economic impact the spread of the virus is having on individuals and industries, we strongly urge all yeshivos and day schools to add special *tefillos* for *rachamei Shomayim*. The Gemara in Maseches Shevuos, 15b, refers to Tehillim 91 as “Shir shel paga'im” or “Shir shel nega'im” – a special *tefilla* for protection from such plagues. This is a *tefilla* especially fitting for today.

May the *zechus* of maintaining *hevel pihem shel tinokos bais rabban* even in these difficult times be a source of protection for all of Klal Yisroel.

Vaad Roshei Yeshiva of Torah Umesorah

ט"ז אדר, תש"פ – March 12, 2020