

Parent Handbook

2020-2021



Hillel Torah
NORTH SUBURBAN DAY SCHOOL
בית ספר הלל תורה

PARENT HANDBOOK

Rev. August 2020

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year at Hillel Torah!

We are happy to provide you with the updated Hillel Torah Parent Handbook.

The Parent Handbook outlines **important policies** and procedures and indicates which ones are **new** and **updated**. **We strongly encourage all families to take time to read the updated Handbook carefully.**

Due to the many necessary changes in policies and procedures that this unprecedented school year brings, many of the COVID-19 related details can be found in the [Responsible Reopening](#) document rather than in this handbook which covers more general information as it relates to a usual school year.

After reading the Handbook, please share the relevant points with your children in order to best prepare them for a successful year.

As we embark on a new school year, I would like to emphasize the importance of an open and strong home-school partnership. We are committed to being open to feedback, questions, concerns or ideas to continue to best meet your needs and strengthen our school. This partnership is key to helping our children grow in their learning and *middot*.

Best wishes for a safe, healthy, successful and productive school year!



Rabbi Menachem Linzer
Principal

Welcome to Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School!



Mission Statement

We are a dynamic, Modern Orthodox day school preparing the Jewish leaders of tomorrow. Our progressive, child-centered approach promotes academic excellence in Judaic and general studies. Rooted in Torah learning and values, we encourage children to develop a life- long commitment to Medinat Yisrael, the Jewish people and the global community.

Affiliations and Accreditations

Hillel Torah maintains a rigorous and prestigious accreditation from [AdvancEd](#) which supports us in engaging in ongoing reflection and continuous improvement.

We are an affiliate of the Associated Talmud Torahs, Chicago's central agency for Orthodox Jewish education, and a member of Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools.

Our school is recognized and is in complete compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education policies for nonpublic schools.

We also have robust partnerships with the Museum of Science and Industry to support our science and STEM program and with Northwestern University Center for Talent Development to meet the needs of our highest achieving learners.

ATTENDANCE

School Hours—updated

<i>Grade</i>	<i>School Begins</i>	<i>School Ends</i>	<i>Early Dismissal & Early Fridays</i>
PN-N	9:00 am (8:50 am arrival)	1:00 pm	1:00 pm
K-8	8:40 am (8:15 arrival)	3:30 pm	1:30 pm

See [Responsible Reopening](#) plan for details on Arrival Procedures.

Early Drop-Off—updated

There will be no early drop off at the start of the 2020-2021 school year for grades K-8.

Early drop off for Preschool children at the Skokie Valley campus is at 8:00am or 8:30am, prior sign up is required.

The Circular Driveway

Please use only the right lane for drop off **and do not drop children off in the left lane.**

Parking is not permitted in the circular driveway during arrival or dismissal as follows:

- **Monday-Friday** between 8:00-8:45 am and 3:15-4:30 pm
- **Friday** between 1:00-2:00 pm

Attendance, Tardiness and Absence—updated

Daily attendance is an integral component of each student's success. Please make every effort to help your child arrive at school on time to start the day on the right foot. Timely arrival at school sets the tone for the day and allows your child the time to start the day in the right mindset.

If you arrive after 8:45am the student will need to check in at the desk in the vestibule for a symptom screening check and to get his/her temperature taken before entering the school building.

Tardy Policy (K-8)

- All students arriving late to school need to **stop at the office** to get a tardy slip before proceeding to class.
- All tardies will be marked **unexcused**. The office will change it to "excused" with the following proper documentation:
 - Note from doctor or therapist.
 - Advanced notice by email from parents sent to htoffice@hilleltorah.org at least one day in advance explaining the anticipated lateness.
 - Inclement weather (for people in the farther suburbs, outside Skokie, Evanston, Lincolnwood and WRP)
- **K-4 Students:**
 - **After 2 tardies** in a calendar month, parents will receive an automated email each time their child is late that month. The count is reset at the beginning of a calendar month.

- **After 3 tardies** in a calendar month, teachers and/or administration will reach out to parents to discuss the issue and create a plan for the child to arrive on time daily. If the problem persists, parents will be invited for a meeting with administration.
- **Middle School Students:**
 - **After 2 tardies** in a calendar month, parents will receive an automated email each time their child is late that month.
 - **After 3 tardies** in a month, including any subsequent tardies that month, the student will receive an after-school **detention**. Parents will receive an automated notification email. **Middle School after-school detentions** are served on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 4:10 - 4:45. The child will be expected to be present for the next after-school detention date, so please make plans accordingly.
 - The count is reset at the beginning of the next calendar month.

Absences—updated

See [Responsible Reopening](#) plan for details on simultaneous remote options in the case of absence due to illness or quarantine.

In case of absence, please inform the office via phone or email as early as possible. It is also helpful to email your child's teachers regarding homework and assignments.

After an absence or tardy, a child should present a written and dated note signed by the parent explaining the absence or tardy to their teacher.

Extended Absence—updated

This section refers to absences when the student is not physically in the classroom or participating in the simultaneous remote option.

Parents should make every effort to have their child in school every day to maximize their learning and success. Extended absences can negatively impact a students' progress in school including their tests scores and class participation grade, which will, in turn, affect their overall course grade as reflected on their report card.

After 8 absences, parents will receive an automated notification from the school with a reminder of the number of days their child has been absent that year.

After 10 absences, parents will receive a call from the administration to discuss the issue of frequent absences and to make a plan for their child to not miss any more school.

Absences of 15 days or more may jeopardize the child's ability to move on to the next grade. Parents will be required to come in for a meeting with administration to create a plan for moving forward.

In case of extended absence due to illness or chronic medical condition, the school will work with the family to create a customized plan for their child.

Family Vacations—updated

Parents should not plan family vacations for days when school is in session.

Teachers will not provide alternative work/learning activities before or after family vacations, nor reteach material missed during family vacations.

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that their children keep up to date with their assignments and make up any missed work in a timely manner.

See [Responsible Reopening](#) plan for details on COVID-19 quarantine requirements if you are traveling out of town.

Change in Dismissal Plans

If you need to contact your children regarding a change in dismissal plans that arise during the day, please call the office as early as possible, by 3:00 p.m. at the latest.

Bus Transportation—updated

There will be no bussing at the start of the school year.

Carpool/Busing —updated

Carpool and busing procedures for each school year will be communicated in a separate notice to parents prior to the start of school.

See [Responsible Reopening](#) plan for details on multi-family carpool policies.

Sibling Attendance at Daytime Programs

When there is a special program at school during the school day, students who are siblings, relatives or friends of a student performing in a program are not permitted to leave class to attend the performance. In order to maintain the integrity of our educational program and to maximize learning opportunities, it is important that students remain with their class.

COMMUNICATION

School-Parent Partnership

A strong and positive partnership between Hillel Torah staff and parents is critical to the academic, social/emotional and spiritual success of every child.

Who to Contact

Teachers should be a parents' first point of contact for any question or concern related to their child. A positive and collaborative relationship between teachers and parents is one of the keys to a child's success. When parents contact teachers, teachers will make every effort to return parent calls or emails within 1-2 school days during regular work weeks. For time-sensitive matters, parents should call the school office and the office will relay the message to the teacher.

When a concern arises beyond a particular class, parents are encouraged to contact the appropriate administrator to work together towards a solution.

Please refer to the school website for contact information for all teachers, administrators and staff.

Parent Communication with Child and Teacher During School Day

Parents who would like to communicate with their child's teacher should contact them via email or phone to set up a time to talk and should not approach them unannounced during the school day.

Parents who need to either deliver something or communicate with their child during the school day should do so via the main school office. Parents or visitors may not enter the classroom hallways while school is in session so as not to interrupt the students' learning.

Parents should not communicate with their children via cell phone calls or texts during the school day since students are not allowed to use cell phones in school. All mid-day messages to students should be relayed via the school office.

Staying Informed

Hillel Torah has an active web and social media presence and we encourage parents to follow and interact with us online! All the links can be found on the homepage of our website and are listed below as well.

While we encourage open discussion and communications, we remind parents to use social media platforms constructively. Just as we remind our students that anything they post online should be considered a public and permanent reflection on them, we remind our parents as ambassadors of our school to make the same considerations.

In cases when a concern rises, we encourage parents to reach out directly to any member of the administration to share feedback, ask questions or voice any concerns.

- **School Website** - www.hilleltorah.org

All aspects of our school, including information calendars, forms, announcements and contact information are easily accessible from our website.

- **Facebook**

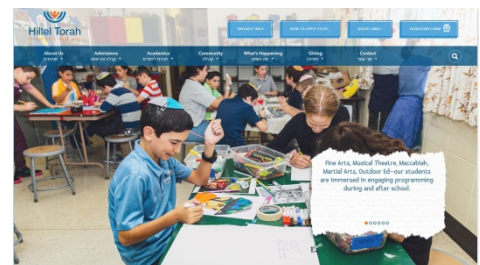
- [Main Page](#) | [Parents/PTA](#) | [Hillel Torah STEM](#) | [Alumni Page](#)
- **Grade Groups:** Search "Hillel Torah Class of ____" [*your child's graduating year*] to stay in touch with parents in your child's grade. These groups are for parents in a grade to communicate about any topic. They are not used for school/teacher communications which are shared in Facebook groups set up by teachers (see Class Updates below).

- **Twitter** - [@HillelTorah](#) | [@menachemlinzer](#)

- [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Class Updates

- **Early Childhood - Kaymbu:** Kaymbu is an iPad based application that our teachers use to capture the essence of classroom activities by recording photos and videos of important classroom activities to share with you. Additionally, parents will receive storyboards and "catch ups" sharing detailed information about the learning taking place.



- **Primary Grades - Facebook Groups:** In grades 1-4 teachers will use closed Facebook groups to share classroom updates with parents. Teachers post updates to these pages multiple times throughout the week. Separate notices will be sent with information on how to sign up and additional details.
- **Middle School - Renweb Parentsweb:** In grades 5-8 parents can check Parentsweb for updates on their children's homework, upcoming assignments and grades.

School Calendar

A year at a glance school calendar, as well as a more detailed Google calendar with all school events, including Middle School test dates, lunch and athletics schedule are available online and can be accessed at <https://hilleltorah.org/whats-happening/calendar/>.

Simcha Calendar

The PTA, in conjunction with the school, maintains a '*simcha* calendar.' To avoid *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* scheduling conflicts, either in the same grade or cross-grade, parents are requested to clear and register dates on this calendar up to three years in advance. Please contact the Bar/Bat Mitzvah calendar coordinator by emailing htpta@hilleltorah.org to inquire about dates or to place a date on the calendar for the upcoming school year.

Communication Opportunities

In addition to direct communication with your child's teacher, there are a number of other avenues for parents to keep up to date with what's going on at school.

- **Open School Night** is an important opportunity early in the year for parents to meet their child's teacher and learn about each class' educational objectives, routines and expectations.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences** are held twice yearly, in the fall and late winter. Before conferences, instructions are sent to parents on how to sign up for appointments using the Virtual Paragon online system.
- The **Hillel Torah Highlights** newsletter is the primary source for information about school activities. School events of the past week are featured and upcoming events are announced. The *Highlights* is emailed to every family at the end of the week and can also be accessed online from the Hillel Torah website.
- Parents of students in Pre-Nursery through K grade receive weekly or bi-weekly **class newsletters** via email, which include updates on curriculum, special activities and upcoming events.
- Parents of students in K-8 receive **Report Cards** twice a year at the end of each semester, and parents of students in PN-N receive a **Progress Report** at the end of the year.
- **ParentsWeb** is the parent portal of **RenWeb**, our student management software. ParentsWeb provides parents up to date information on their children's classes, school events as well as a student and family school directory. Login information is available under the Parents tab on the school website. District Code: HT-IL (case sensitive)

SCHOOL NORMS AND CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

School Norms

Creating a great school environment is a team effort. Teachers, administrators, and parents need to work together to help students remain safe, happy, and successful and students have the responsibility to act in ways that will promote the safety, happiness, and success of themselves as well as their peers.

Our school norms center around three main principles:

Respect yourself



Respect your learning community



Respect your learning environment



More detailed expectations for Middle School students are outlined in the Middle School Student Handbook and norms for Primary students will be shared by their teachers and posted in the primary classrooms.

Conduct Expectations and Consequences

How we treat teachers, staff and our peers, take care of school property, and behave with honor, reflect our character and the values of the Torah. Each day, we need to be thoughtful of our actions and what we can do to create a positive environment at school. Expected behaviors include respectful conduct with all people, inclusiveness with peers, adhering to safety/security rules, remaining honest, and respecting physical boundaries of others. Students who do not adhere to these standards will receive consequences.

The following is a list of some, but not all, of the behaviors which are unacceptable.

- Disrespectful or disruptive behavior
- Vandalism/damage to others' property
- Dishonesty including lying, theft or cheating
- Inappropriate language
- Bullying, excluding, threatening, intimidating
- Unsafe behavior
- Physical aggression including hitting, punching, grabbing, pushing
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact

Consequences

Mistakes happen and it is normal for children to test limits. Our goal in discipline is to help the child learn and grow from their mistakes.

In addition to working with the student, parents are informed and invited to be part of the process. There is always open communication from the teacher or administrator to parents.

The following represents a list of some but not all of the potential consequences which will result from a student not adhering to the expectations mentioned above.



When following up on student misbehavior, we strive to take into account the uniqueness of the child and the circumstances, and identify the most natural and logical consequences available. Initial mistakes are treated as such; however, repeated behaviors may result in higher level consequences.

- Inappropriate items confiscated
- Clean and/or replace vandalized property as per cost, \$50 flat fine for defacing lockers
- Conference with teacher and/or administrator
- Student reflection letter
- Parent communication
- Lunch, recess, or after-school detention
- Loss of privileges such as participation in basketball teams, student council, class officers, class trips, etc.
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Physical Aggression

The school has a no tolerance policy regarding physical aggression. Parents will be called to pick up the child from school if the student is physically aggressive. In order for the child to return back to school, a discussion with parents and student along with the appropriate staff members and administrator will take place to ensure the problem does not reoccur.

Cell Phone Policy

Students in Grades K-4 may not bring cellphones to school. If a phone is found with a student in these grades it will be taken away and kept in the office till the end of the day.

Middle school students may bring a cell phone to school however, their cell phones are not permitted to be on during school hours and must be powered off (including recess and lunch), unless instructed by a school staff member. Students may use cell phones for academic purposes as directed by teachers and following dismissal. Cell phones found with middle school students being on without permission during school hours will be confiscated. Detailed consequences will be shared with students and parents in separate communication. Parents should support this policy and not communicate with their children via cell phone calls or texts during the school day. All mid-day messages to students should be relayed via the school office.

Items That May Not Be Brought To School

Other electronic devices, trading cards, laser pointers, inappropriate books or magazines may not be brought to school and will be confiscated.

Weapons of any kind (including knives, sharp or dangerous objects or toy weapons), should never be brought to school and if brought will be confiscated and student will be sent home. Further disciplinary action may be taken as needed.

Slime may not be brought to school at all - including recess, morning line-up, dismissal or on buses. Slime may not be bought or sold by students in school.

Safe Use of Technology

Our school recognizes the valuable role of computers, the Internet, and other technology in today's learning environment. Each student in grades K-8 will have their own device, either that is brought from home or rented from school to use at home and in school. We have in place Internet filters, students' log-in access, and strong firewall protection to reduce safety risks.

Students in 3rd grade get google apps accounts and 4th-8th grade students receive Hillel Torah email accounts, and Middle School students receive Renweb logins to keep track of their classes. Appropriate use of these technology tools is discussed with them and they are required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

While technology provides wonderful opportunities, it also creates risks such as making it easier for kids to bully one another. Since the computer is an impersonal tool, people may say and do things on it that they would never do in person, such as writing inappropriate remarks or even sending inappropriate images electronically. These images are indelible and can never truly be deleted.

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that extended unsupervised use of these powerful communication tools by children can lead to risky and potentially dangerous behavior and often correlates with falling grades and a generally decreased academic focus.

Due to the above concerns, we strongly urge every home with a computer to adopt specific guidelines for its use. Use of the Internet must be supervised.

Teaching your children online safety is no different from teaching them offline decision-making skills. Share your values and your concerns with your children and engage them in these important conversations.

The following are some suggested guidelines for computer use at home:

- Set aside a time to sit with your children to discuss their online activity and their accounts.
- The computer should be located only in a common room.
- Time and length of use should be limited and clearly defined (such as "Screen Time" on iPhone).
- The internet should NOT be available after normal bedtimes.
- Set limits on types of games children can play.
- Personalize settings for individual users.
- Install a filter (e.g. Spector Soft, Net Nanny, and/or e-Blaster)
- Discuss with your children that the language used and topics discussed should be compatible with your family's values and standards in other areas of communication.
- Chat room & video chats should be carefully monitored or perhaps even excluded.
- All social media accounts MUST be accessible to parents – and parents should CHECK these accounts regularly.
- Get reports on your child's Internet activity.
- Many families find that Internet safety pledges work well, particularly for younger children. Many sites have premade templates you can print and use. Children need to know that it's not appropriate to hide when interacting online.



In addition, remind your children about general safe and smart internet conduct, such as:

- Never give out your password to anyone, except your parent.
- Always use an avatar, never a real photo of yourself

- Keep your personal information private. Do not write your full name, address, phone number, school, or any other identifying information.
- Respect others. If you wouldn't want it said about you, don't say it about someone else.
- The internet is NOT anonymous. Your computer has an address in the online world, just like your house has an address in the real world.
- Posting online is the same as writing with a permanent marker- it can never be erased.
- Think before you post. Would it be fine if a parent, teacher, camp director, or future employer saw it?

More information for parents to learn more about the risks and benefits of online life can be found at the following websites:

- www.common sense media.org/cellphone-parenting
- www.common sense.org/education/digital-citizenship
- www.todaysparent.com/family/parenting/an-age-by-age-guide-to-kids-and-smartphones/
- www.waituntil8th.org/
- www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2346997,00.asp

Homework

Independent work done at home is a valuable tool for review and reinforcement. It contributes also to personal growth, developing independent study skills, self-discipline, time management, and responsibility.

Homework is designed to be completed by the child. Parents can best assist by establishing set routines for the completion of homework, providing an atmosphere conducive to study, and supervising their children's work routines. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher/s to discuss any questions regarding homework.

While readings may be assigned, no written assignments will be given to be completed over Jewish holidays and no tests will be assigned for the first day back after a Jewish holiday.

Middle School Promotion Requirements

All Middle School students are required to complete and pass all of their classes every semester in order to move on to the next grade. 8th graders will not graduate nor receive their diplomas if there are incomplete or failed classes on their report cards.

If a student has not completed, has failed or is in danger of not completing or of failing a class, parents will be informed. It is the student's responsibility to work out a plan with the teacher for making up the incomplete or failing work. Once the work is complete, the incomplete or failing grade will be changed on the report card.

In cases of extended illness, the administration will work out a plan with the child and family based on the child's needs and circumstances.

Tzedaka

Tzedaka is collected at *tefilla* daily. Students are asked to bring in a coin every day to develop the habit of fulfilling this *mitzva*.

Emuna Shir z"l Chesed Program

The Emuna Shir z"l Chesed program provides opportunities for all students to learn about and participate in chesed activities throughout the school year. Our Chesed Program integrates learning and *tzedaka* drives with activities at local community organizations such as nursing homes, The Ark, Maot Chitim, Park Plaza, and The Friedman Place.

Lost and Found

All clothing and personal belongings should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Items left on the floor in hallways, in classrooms or washrooms will be retained in the 'lost and found' for a limited time before being donated to charity during the next holiday break.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Resources

The [Hillel Torah Bar/Bat Mitzvah booklet](#) is a valuable resource in planning for this important milestone. The booklet delineates important guidelines and parameters that are expected of all members of our school community in planning a *simcha*. Before planning a *simcha*, parents are asked to read the booklet carefully and plan accordingly. The booklet is distributed to all 5th grade parents and is available on our website.



DRESS CODE

Value of Tzniut

The Torah value of *tzniut* is more than a 'modest mode of dress.' It is a way of life, an attitude, and sensitivity. Our educational program fosters a life guided by *tzniut*. Educators have found that children who are appropriately dressed and well-groomed are more focused learners and help create a successful learning environment.

Parent Attire Expectations

Just as we expect our students to conduct themselves and dress in an appropriate manner befitting the sanctity of our school, likewise, we ask **all parents (PN-8)** to dress in a manner consistent with the dress code for older students, when on school grounds of **both** buildings.

Men are asked to wear a *kippah* and women to wear dresses or skirts of knee length and should not enter school grounds in pants, shorts, or sleeveless tops. This includes drop off and pick up for carpool, hot lunch, field trips, sporting events, business office, etc.

We thank you in advance for helping maintain an appropriate atmosphere in school which sends a strong positive message to your children. In addition, we ask that you inform babysitters or other family/friends who might be coming into school of this policy.

What follows is the dress code for grades 1-8 students. Information about Preschool and Kindergarten student attire can be found in the Early Childhood Handbooks sent over the summer and available from the Early Childhood office.

Grades 1-8 Boys' Dress Code

All boys are expected to wear:

- A *kippah* and *tzitzit* throughout the day.
- A shirt with a collar that buttons in the front. Boys who wear a sweater or sweatshirt must wear a collared shirt underneath.
- A neat pair of pants. Boys may not wear athletic pants of any kind (sweatpants, break-away pants etc.), shorts, oversized or ill-fitting pants.
- Boys in grades 5–8 may not wear blue jeans or army fatigue pants. Jeans of other colors are permitted.
- A neat, clean and trimmed haircut with appropriate sideburns, presenting a well-groomed appearance. Boys' hair may not be long and unruly neither in length nor in bulk.
- No earrings may be worn by boys.

Grades 1-8 Girls' Dress Code

Skirts

- All girls in grades 1-8 should wear dresses or skirts that cover the knee when standing and sitting, and are designed for modest appearance. Tight or form fitting skirts are not permitted. Slits in a skirt may not be open above the knee.
- Girls are permitted to wear leggings or tights under their skirts but these should not compromise or substitute for the appropriate length of the skirt. In grades 5-8, girls may not wear pants under a skirt or dress.

Shirts

- Girls should wear a shirt with sleeves reaching the halfway point between the elbow and the shoulder. Capped sleeves or sleeveless are not allowed. See-through, net, and tight fitting tops (such as spandex) may not be worn. Girls should not wear low-cut necklines below the collarbone. No straps may show from under a shirt.
- Students are not permitted to wear make-up, such as eye-shadow or lipstick.

All Students' Dress Code—updated

- *Shoes:* All shoes must have a strap or a full back to them; half-back shoes, slippers, and flip-flops are not allowed.
- *Hair:* Student's hair may not be dyed in unnatural colors (blue, green etc).
- As a general rule, inappropriate clothing, such as torn, excessively large, baggy or tight fitting clothing, or clothing bearing inappropriate words or symbols may not be worn by any student.
- Masks are required throughout the school

Dress Code Consequences

In Primary grades, when a child comes to school out of dress code, parents will be contacted to review our dress code policy.

In Middle School, on a student's **1st dress code violation**, students will receive a warning from an administrator and will need to adjust clothing where possible before returning to class. **Starting with their 2nd violation**, students will be required to change and parents will be notified. In such a case, parents may need to bring a change of clothes to school. In addition, extra shirts and skirts that conform to the school dress code, as well as tzitzit, will be kept in the office and available for purchase.

Clothing for Recess

All students participate in outdoor recess except on rainy days or days that are extremely cold. On cold days or when there is snow on the ground, parents are asked to send children with warm clothing and boots/snow pants for outdoor activity.

Gym Attire

Students should dress in a manner that allows for full movement during any physical education activity. Gym shoes are required for all activities. We request that your child keep a separate pair of gym shoes in his/her locker. It is recommended that students in grades K - 8 bring a separate tee-shirt for gym and that girls wear shorts or pants under their skirts or dresses. Students can change in the gym washrooms.

Blue and White on Rosh Chodesh

To mark the festive and special nature of Rosh Chodesh, Yom Ha'Atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim, we ask all students to wear blue and white attire (solid white tops/blue bottoms) on these days.



FOOD

Acceptable Kosher Symbols



Kashrut

Our school maintains strict standards of *kashrut* observance. The Chicago Rabbinical Council (cRc), (773) 465-3900, can provide current *kashrut* information. A list of *kosher* food products and distributors, including bakeries and caterers, is also available from the CRC.

All food brought into school for lunch or snack must be kosher. All refreshments served at parties, both in and out of school, as well as meetings must have a nationally recognized *hashgacha* (Chof K, cRc, OK or OU, etc) and served on disposable paper goods. No home-baked or cooked food items can be shared or distributed in the school at any time.

Lunch

Hot lunch is sold at school by the PTA and 8th grade parents on a pre-order basis. An exact schedule and ordering information is sent out at the beginning of the school year.

Students may not share any food, including lunch and snack, due to allergy concerns and varying *kashrut* practices. Please send your child with any paper goods they will need as the school does not provide these items. No refrigeration or heating is available for student use.

Healthy Snacks

Parents are encouraged to send healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, pretzels etc. for students to eat at snack and recess.

No Nut Policy

Food allergies, especially to peanuts and nuts can be life threatening. Any ingestion of or contact with nut products or residues by a student with these allergies can lead to a rapid anaphylactic reaction.

In order to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students, foods with peanut, peanut butter, tree nut (walnuts, pecans, pine nuts, almonds, cashews etc.) or other nut ingredients may not be brought to school and should be kept out of lunches and snacks. Please check the ingredients in store-bought products that you will be sending to school to make sure they are nut free.

Note: Products that are nut free but say on the label that they were “produced in a facility that produces nuts” or “may contain traces of nuts” may be brought.

If your child has eaten a peanut/nut product at breakfast, we ask that he or she washes his or her hands with soap and water (rather than using a hand sanitizer such as Purell) as well as washing out his/her mouth before coming to school as residues left on shared surfaces, toys or equipment can cause an allergic contact reaction.

Please note that our staff undergoes an annual safety training which includes a workshop on allergy awareness and how to respond in the event of an allergic reaction, including how to administer emergency medication.

We recognize that some of these safety procedures may pose an inconvenience and challenge for you and your child and we thank you for helping us provide a safe environment for all children in our school community.

No Food-Sharing Policy

Children are not allowed to bring in food for the class or share food with other children in school. This includes birthdays in grades 1-8, after returning from a trip to Israel, etc. In addition to minimizing exposure to allergens, this policy is also designed to protect precious learning time and to minimize unhealthy eating.

Birthday Celebrations at School—updated

In Early Childhood (grades PN-K), parents are invited to virtually celebrate their child's birthday in school. Details should be coordinated with the teacher and it is customary to bring in a snack and a gift for the class.

In grades 1-8, teachers will integrate birthday celebrations into the classroom. In order to protect precious learning time and to minimize unhealthy eating, we ask that students in grades 1-8 not bring in snacks for the class on their birthdays.

In the event that a class is celebrating an accomplishment such as a *siyum*, the party will be organized by the teacher.

Celebrations at Home—updated

All parties outside of school for HT students must conform to school *kashrut* standards. The venue, tone and music at the parties should also be consistent with Torah values. Parties should not be held in non-kosher food establishments (e.g. Chuck E. Cheese's), even if the children will only be playing games there as the serving of kosher food under such conditions can be confusing to a child.

Parents should always be inclusive and not exclude students when planning home parties. If more than half of the class (or half of one gender of the class) is being invited then the entire class (or gender) must be invited.

We ask that you follow CDC, state, and local guidelines in relation to group gatherings.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Examinations and Immunizations Requirement—updated

The State of Illinois Department of Health and Department of Education require a complete health examination for all new students and all students entering Kindergarten and 6th grade. As part of the health exam, law requires immunization for communicable diseases for all students. State law mandates that no student be allowed entry to school without proof of immunization. Exceptions to this rule are for medical need only and must be substantiated by acceptable, written communication from a recognized medical doctor (to be approved by our school's medical committee). No personal or religious exemptions will be accepted.

Medical Forms and the **Emergency Contact & Consent Form** are to be submitted by mid-August for a child to be admitted to school on the first day of classes.

Kindergarten students as well as all students new to Illinois must submit a **Vision Form**. Kindergarten, 2nd grade and 6th grade students must submit a **Dental Form**. Due dates for all forms are communicated separately each year.

In addition to our standard immunization policy, all students are required to get a flu shot prior to November 1, 2020, unless documented as medically contra-indicated.

In Case of Illness—updated

See [Responsible Reopening](#) plan document for details on what to do if your child is ill or displays any symptoms of illness.

Medication

Should your child need to take medication during the day, we ask that you adhere to the following procedures:

- All medications, including over the counter ones, are to be sent to school in their original container and given to the office with your child's name, time, directions and dosage indicated clearly.
- Parents must give written permission for their child to receive any medication.
- General permission to take Tylenol or Ibuprofen can be given on the Emergency Form submitted at the beginning of the school year.
- In cases where children need daily medication, parents should arrange to administer it either before or after school hours, when possible.

Allergies

All parents of students with allergies must fill out an **Allergy Action Form** and submit it to the office prior to school. In addition to submitting a labeled Epi-Pen to the office, parents may supply an extra one for the classroom and students may carry one with them if they choose.

In younger grades parents should leave a supply of approved snacks with their child's teacher in the event that a special snack is distributed so that their child should be included.

Head Lice —updated

Though not a disease, in order to prevent spreading, students identified as having head lice are excluded from school until they are re-screened and determined to be nit-free by a school-approved lice checker. After being

re-checked, the school-approved checker will need to contact the school to confirm that the student is clear to return.

Students should be careful about exchanging clothing such as *kippot*, hats, scarves and earmuffs. Students should also avoid using other student's combs or brushes.

As a precautionary measure, there will school-wide lice check as needed throughout the year.

No Latex Balloon Policy

Allergies to latex can be harmful to latex-allergic students if it becomes airborne. To maintain a safe and inclusive environment, latex balloons may not be brought to school. Mylar balloons are acceptable.

Emergency Drills

Students practice emergency drills such as fire, law enforcement and severe weather drills in order to become familiar with safety procedures. Fire routes are posted in each room and children and teachers are given explicit directions for such drills.



STUDENT SERVICES

Areas of Support

Hillel Torah is committed to identifying the needs of our students and providing them with the instruction and support they need, be it academic, organizational, social or emotional.

In grades K-8, through regular assessment, both formal and informal, teachers and student services staff identify and provide remediation and enrichment support to those who qualify.

In addition, students with academic support needs receive the focused instruction they need through varying levels of assistance, ranging from modifications and accommodations in the regular classroom, to assistance from our resource professionals.

Students with social or emotional needs can participate in organized social groups, as well as receive individual support from our School Social Worker.

Accessing Support

If you have any questions or concerns, start by communicating with your child's teacher who will work with you to address the issue. If necessary, the teacher will consult with the resource professionals for guidance.

If concerns persist, the teacher will refer your child to the Administrative Child Team (ACT), a team comprised of the school academic administrators and the School Social Worker, which meets weekly to review students who are having difficulties and to develop a plan for addressing the concerns.

No matter what level of service your child may require, you, the parent, will always be part of the process. We are committed to maintaining ongoing communication with you, and your child's progress will be monitored regularly.

For more detailed information about services available please see our student services brochure, available on our website or in the school office, or contact one of the student services staff.

Tutoring

Hillel Torah provides children with differentiated instruction and interventions to support a wide range of learners and therefore, in most cases, children should not require additional, out of school tutoring to keep up with school work. If there is a concern regarding a child's progress, parents should contact the teacher to discuss and make a plan.

In the rare case where tutoring is recommended, the teacher will contact the parents to discuss the situation, offer recommendations and work out a plan to carefully monitor the situation. Similarly, parents considering tutoring are encouraged to check in with their child's teacher first to get their input and to make sure there is proper coordination going forward.

To avoid conflict of interest, teachers are not permitted to tutor students in their classes during the school year and during the summer before. Student Services staff is not permitted to tutor students in the grades they service during the school year. Tutoring during the summer after is permitted when necessary.

GETTING INVOLVED

Hillel Torah PTA

The mission of the **Hillel Torah Parent Teachers Association (HTPTA)** is to provide or sponsor programs and services that enhance the education and Jewish life of our students, our teachers, and our community. Some of the many programs and services the HTPTA provides or sponsors include:

- Class Parents
- Back-to-School Picnic
- Hot Lunch
- Teacher Appreciation Lunches
- Teachers' Holiday Gifts
- Teachers' In-Service Programs and Lectures
- Winter Social
- Family Chesed Day
- Box Tops for Education
- Parenting Programs
- Authors Visits
- Cultural Field Trips
- Holiday Programming
- Student Treats
- Holiday Greetings
- Spirit-Wear
- Tribute Cards
- Book Fair



All of this would not be possible without parent membership and participation. Your involvement helps to build a stronger, cohesive community and shows our students and teachers that parents are dedicated to their success.

Emails are sent throughout the year informing parents of volunteer opportunities and events including the HTPTA Opening Meeting which will take place just after the High Holidays.

Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is very active in supporting all aspects of Hillel Torah's Mission. To volunteer for a board committee or to find out more about the board, contact the Board President or First Vice President. A list of Board members is available on our website.

Give/Get —updated

Tuition, Give/Get obligation, and Building Fund are set by the Board of Directors and coordinated through the School Business Administrator. A variety of opportunities exist to meet your Give/Get obligation.

These include:

- Library Fund Donation – 70%
- Direct Donation – 100%

- Fine Arts Center Donation – 70%
- General Work Credit - \$15 per hour
- Various PTA Opportunities –please contact ptapresidents@hilleltorah.org

Parent volunteers and give/get opportunities in the school building will be very limited this year.

Further information regarding any of these may be obtained through the Business Administrator, Mr. Dov Shandalov.

Library/Media Learning Center

Our computerized Library/Media Learning Center, including the Philip A. Newberger Memorial Library of Judaica and the John Hanus Library of General Studies, housing over 18,000 volumes, is funded primarily by donations. A personalized card of appreciation acknowledges donations (minimum of \$5). Permanent donor plates are affixed to books or DVDs for donations of \$18 or more. Give/Get credit applies to library donations.

The Hillel Torah Birthday Club invites parents to make a donation in honor of their child's birthday. A book plate is affixed to the book and the birthday child is the first one allowed to check out the book. For more information, contact our school librarian.

Library book donations can be excellent centerpieces at *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* celebrations. Give/Get credit also applies to these donations. These can be arranged by calling Mrs. Robbin Katzin at the school.