



# MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023

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Dear Hillel Torah Middle School Students,

Welcome to a new school year!

I am so excited to be joining the Middle School this year to support you as you navigate life as middle schoolers. I will be focusing on creating a positive learning environment for all students in middle school and that starts with you reading this handbook.

At Hillel Torah, we want every student to enjoy a positive, respectful, and welcoming school environment. Creating this environment is a team effort involving students, teachers, administration, and parents - we all need to do our part.

This Handbook clarifies the HT Middle School rules and expectations *in advance* so that all students can start the year on the right foot.

It is my hope that these guidelines will create a positive and productive atmosphere in middle school with mutually respectful and positive relationships between students and teachers where all students can learn and grow at their best.

Best wishes for a healthy and successful school year,

Mrs. Sarah Lakin

Middle School Dean of Student Life



## HILLEL TORAH MISSION



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 lifelong commitment to **Medinat Yisrael**, the **Jewish people** and the **global community**.



# STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Maintaining a positive school atmosphere that promotes safe and healthy social relationships between all members of our school community is a central pillar of our school.

These values are underscored throughout the Torah which places a supreme value on *bein adam l'chaveiro* (interpersonal conduct). In fact, our sages teach that *derech eretz kadma l'Torah* - in order for students to be able to learn we must first have an atmosphere of positive behavior and mutual respect.

Creating a positive school environment where all members feel safe requires a team effort of teachers, students, parents, and administrators working together around shared values.

## School Norms

Our school norms center around four main principles:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe
- Be Kind

## Collaborative Problem Solving

In Middle School, we strive to create an environment of positive reinforcement to promote appropriate behavior. Collaborative Problem Solving focuses on building skills such as flexibility, frustration tolerance, and problem-solving. Together with their teachers and the student support team, students will be partners in problem-solving challenging situations.

## Performance Standards

It is important that every student grow and learn to the best of his/her ability. Proper attention to arriving in class on time and being responsible about homework are two ways that can help you achieve success in your classes.

### Homework

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Keep track of all homework assignments using a *yoman* and/or Google Classroom and ParentLocker
- Complete homework to the best of his/her ability
- Ask the teacher about any instructions not understood
- Submit homework by the due date
- Initiate communication with ALL teachers to make up any missed assignments due to absences

### Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to be in class and ready to learn at the start of each class period. Students arriving after 8:00 (7-8 grade) or 8:20 (5-6 grade) will be considered tardy. After the second morning tardy, an email will be sent to the student and parent. A third morning tardy within one month will result in an after-school detention. Students who are tardy (unexcused) to a specific class three times in one calendar month will be assigned a lunch detention. On-going tardiness may require additional consequences.

## Conduct Expectations and Consequences

How we treat teachers, staff, and our peers, take care of school property and behave with honor, all 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 the physical boundaries of others. Students who do not adhere to these standards will receive consequences.

Expected behaviors include:

- Respectful conduct with all people
- Inclusiveness with peers
- Adhering to safety rules
- Remaining honest
- Respecting the physical boundaries of others
- Respecting others' belongings and school property

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Disrespectful or disruptive behavior
- Vandalism or damage to others' property
- Dishonesty, including lying, stealing, or cheating
- Inappropriate or hurtful language
- Bullying, excluding, threatening, intimidating
- Unsafe behavior
- Physical aggression, including hitting, punching, grabbing, pushing
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact
- Targeting another based on race, gender, political views, etc.

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. Repeated or more serious behaviors will receive higher-level consequences.

- Inappropriate items confiscated
- Conference with teacher and/or administrator
- Student reflection letter
- Parent communication
- Lunch 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 may be called to pick up the student from school if the student is physically aggressive. In order for the student to return back to school, a discussion with parents and the student along with the appropriate staff members and administrator will take place to ensure the problem does not reoccur.

**Cell Phones- updated**

Middle school students may bring a cell phone to school however, they may not have it turned on or use it during the day. Cell phones found with middle school students without permission during school hours will be confiscated and kept in the office until the end of the day.

**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 are brought 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,” “may contain nuts” or “may contain traces of nuts,” may be brought.

If the student has eaten a peanut/nut product at breakfast, s/he should wash his or her hands with soap and water (rather than using hand sanitizer) as well as washing out his/her mouth before coming to school as residues left on shared surfaces or equipment can cause an allergic contact reaction.

**No Latex Balloon Policy**

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.

**Items That May Not Be Brought To School**

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 the student will be sent home.

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

## 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.



### Boys' Dress Code

- A kippah and tzitzit must be worn throughout the day
- A shirt with a collar that buttons in the front must be worn throughout the day
- Boys who wear a sweater or sweatshirt must wear a collared shirt underneath
- Boys must wear 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 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

### Girls' Dress Code

- All girls in grades 1-8 must wear a dress or skirt that covers the knee when standing and sitting, and is 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
- Girls may not wear pants (other than leggings) under a skirt or dress
- Girls must wear a shirt with sleeves reaching the halfway point between the elbow and the shoulder. Capped sleeves or sleeveless shirts are not allowed
- See-through, net, and tight-fitting tops (such as spandex) may not be worn. Girls may 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 eyeshadow or lipstick

### All Students' Dress Code

- Shoes: All shoes must have a strap or a full back to them; half-back shoes, slippers, and flip-flops are not allowed
- 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



## Dress Code Consequences

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.

## Safe Use of Technology

The following is the [Acceptable Use Policy \(AUP\) for Student Technology](#):

Technology is a wonderful tool that can be used for many constructive purposes. As with any tool, technology could also be used for destructive and negative purposes. At Hillel Torah, we embrace the use of technology for higher educational purposes and we are committed to teaching our students how to use technology appropriately and constructively.

Since much technology use takes place outside of school, we ask our students' parents to partner with us in this approach and take an active role in supervising and guiding their children to use technology in positive, constructive ways.

### Student Email

Hillel Torah requires that student accounts be used in an appropriate, responsible, legal and ethical manner. Students are responsible for the appropriate use of their Hillel Torah accounts. The use of these accounts is for school purposes only and will be under the supervision of school staff and administration. School staff has the right to enter and monitor students' accounts at will to ensure that they are being used appropriately.



A responsible user will:

- Always use appropriate language.
- Be polite and respectful in all online interactions.
- Use their account for school purposes only, such as to communicate with teachers, staff, and students for academic purposes.
- Always follow teacher directions.

A responsible user will not:

- Share their passwords
- Use another's login/password
- Use their account for non-academic purposes.
- Send offensive content (including but not limited to text, photos, and videos). harass, insult, or attack others.

## School Computer Use

When using devices at school, students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

A responsible technology user WILL:

- Take good care of the equipment and avoid damaging devices.
- Get their device repaired or replaced if damaged.
- Keep equipment away from food and drinks.
- Use technology only according to teacher instructions.
- Bring their device to school fully charged each morning.
- Use and return devices only under teacher supervision.
- Use only those areas of the network/cloud permitted to them.
- Cite their sources.
- Sign out of their account when finished using it.
- Only use the devices with a school-provided account.

A responsible technology user WILL NOT:

- Damage devices including but not limited to, Chromebooks, tablets, desktops, carts, mice, headphones, projectors, software, or networks.
- Use the charging stations or carts without direct instructions.
- Violate state or federal laws including copyright laws.
- Use technology or search engines for inappropriate content.
- Attempt to access other people's accounts or restricted areas of the network/cloud.

Use of technology and email is a PRIVILEGE, not a RIGHT. Violation of this policy may result in the loss of technology/email privileges as well as other disciplinary measures.

## Bus Behavior Guidelines



**When on the bus, all students must:**

- Listen to and follow the instructions of the bus driver and the bus monitors.
- Be courteous to fellow students and the bus driver. Help look after the safety and comfort of younger children.
- Remain seated. Keep hands and feet to oneself. Do not throw anything out of the bus windows.
- Use appropriate language and speak at a proper level.
- Assist in keeping the bus safe and clean at all times. Keep books, coats, school bags, and all other objects out of the aisles.
- In the event of a road emergency, remain on the bus until instructions are given by the driver.
- May not ask the driver to stop at places other than the regular bus stops. The driver is not permitted to do this, except by proper authorization from a school official.
- Be careful when exiting the bus. Where it is necessary to cross the street, proceed to a point at least 10 feet in front of the bus on the right shoulder of the street where traffic may be observed in both directions and wait for a signal from the bus driver.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

In Middle School at HT, students are given many leadership and special activity opportunities. Students are encouraged to get involved in these activities to expand their learning and growth beyond the classroom.

Below are some of the activities available to students throughout the year.

- **Student Council** - a team of students elected by the student body to represent their needs and lead various activities for the benefit of the school.
- **Choice Time** - twice a week. After lunch, students have “choice time” during which they can choose an activity to participate in. Options include art, gym, stock market club, garden crew, etc.
- **Chesed Programs** - students participate in activities to help the local community.
- **Lunch and Learn** - Torah enrichment study that meets during lunchtime
- **Basketball** - at the beginning of the school year, grade 6-8 boys and grade 7-8 girls may try out for a spot on the basketball team. There is weekly practice and games throughout the season.
- **Afterschool Programs** - extracurricular activities including Musical Theater, Chess, Botball, Ceramics, and much more are available to students after the school day.
- **Yearbook** - 8th graders meet on a weekly basis to design the school yearbook (October through March).
- **Names, Not Numbers** - 8th graders gain first-hand knowledge of the Holocaust through interviewing survivors and documenting their stories and lives by creating a powerful documentary.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## **Parents and Student**

Please read the information below. This page must be completed and returned to your student's advisor no later than Sept 30, 2022.

### **Student Acknowledgement**

I have read the Student Handbook with my parent(s) and reviewed it with my advisor and teachers at Hillel Torah. I agree to follow the norms and rules outlined in this Handbook. I understand that I will be held accountable for my choices and behavior as described in this Handbook.

### **Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement**

I have read the Student Handbook with my child. I understand that my child is held accountable to the rules and expectations as described in this handbook. I agree to do my best to reinforce these expectations at home and to support the school's efforts to help my child succeed at Hillel Torah.

[Click here to sign Acknowledgment](#)



## NOTES