

Parent Handbook

2023-2024



Hillel Torah
NORTH SUBURBAN DAY SCHOOL
בית ספר הלל תורה

PARENT HANDBOOK

Rev. August 2023

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Hillel Torah school year!

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

The Parent Handbook outlines important policies and procedures to set up our students for a successful school year ahead. We encourage all families to take time to read the updated Handbook carefully.

After reading the Handbook, please share the relevant points with your children in order to best prepare them for a successful year. If your child is in Middle School, he/she will receive a Middle School handbook as well with more specific details relevant to the Middle School. This will be reviewed in school with their advisors.

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 open parent/school communication and welcome your feedback, questions, concerns, and ideas to continue to best meet your needs and strengthen our school. Your 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



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 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 [Cognia](#), 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.

Notice of non-discriminatory policy as to students

Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, disability, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

ATTENDANCE

School Hours

<i>Grade</i>	<i>School Begins</i>	<i>School Ends</i>	<i>Early Dismissal & Early Fridays</i>
PN-N	9:00 am (8:55 am arrival)	1:00 pm	1:00 pm
K-6	8:20 am (8:15 arrival)	3:50 pm	1:30 pm
7-8	8:00 am (Minyan)	3:50 pm	1:30 pm

Early Drop-Off

Students in grades K-8 may arrive beginning at 7:30 am.

Early drop off for Preschool children at the Skokie Valley campus is at 8:00 am, 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 7:30-8:45 am and 3:15-4:30 pm
- **Friday** between 1:00-2:00 pm

Attendance, Tardiness, and Absences

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.

Children in grades K-6 should arrive at school no later than **8:15 am** so they can settle in and be on time for class at 8:20. 7th and 8th graders should arrive no later than **8:00 am** to be in tefilla on time.

Tardy Policy (K-8)

- All students arriving late to school (after 8:00 for grades 7-8 and after 8:20 for grades K-6) 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 documentation:
 - A note from a doctor or healthcare professional.
 - Advanced notice by email from parents sent to attendance@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)

Absences

In case of absence, please inform the office via phone or email as early as possible attendance@hilleltorah.org. Please make arrangements in the morning with the office to have the teachers submit the homework to the office for pickup. 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

Parents should make every effort to have their child in school every day to maximize student learning and success. Extended absences can negatively impact a student's progress in school including their test 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 Dean of Student Life to discuss the issue of frequent absences and to make a plan for their child to minimize absences.

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 the Dean of Student Life to create a plan for moving forward.

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

Family Vacations

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 the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children keep up to date with their assignments and make up any missed work in a timely manner.

Change in Dismissal Plans

If you need to contact your children regarding a change in dismissal plans that arise during the day, contact the office.

Carpool/Busing

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

Students will not be permitted to leave the building unaccompanied.

Bus Transportation

Students taking the school buses will remain in the dismissal location until their bus is called.

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

Your child's classroom teacher should be a parent's 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 toward 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.

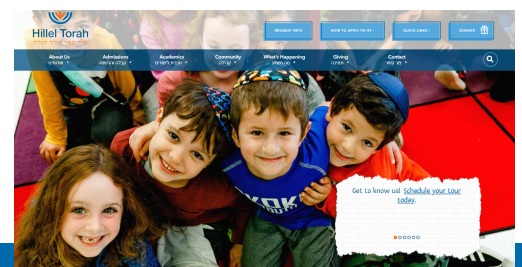
While we encourage open discussion and communication, we remind parents to use social media platforms constructively. Just as we remind our students that anything they post online should be considered a public and permanent reflection on them, we remind our parents as ambassadors of our school to make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

In cases when a concern arises, we encourage parents to reach out directly to the appropriate member of the administration to share feedback, ask questions, or voice concerns. See the [Who To Contact](#) page on our website to determine the best person to contact for your specific need.

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

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

- **Facebook**
 - [Main Page](#) | [Parents/PTA](#) | [Alumni Page](#)



- [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#)
- **Grade-Specific Parent WhatsApp Groups:** Contact the PTA ptapresidents@hilleltorah.org if you would like to be added to the parent WhatsApp group for your child's grade.

Class Updates

- **Preschool- Kaymbu:** Kaymbu is an iPad-based application that our teachers use to capture the essence of classroom activities by taking photos and videos of important classroom activities to share with you. Additionally, parents receive storyboards sharing detailed information about the learning taking place.
- **Kindergarten - Seesaw:** Seesaw is an online platform that our Kindergarten teachers use to communicate with parents. Through Seesaw Kindergarten parents receive regular "catch-ups" on special activities, upcoming events, and curriculum updates.
- **Grade 1-8 - Teacher Updates:** Teachers use a messaging app to share classroom updates with parents. Teachers post updates through the app on a regular basis. Separate notices are sent with information on how to sign up and additional details.
- **Middle School - Parent Locker/Google Classroom:** Middle School teachers use Google Classroom integrated with Parent Locker. Parents can check their ParentLocker account for updates on their child's assignments, grades, and any upcoming tests/quizzes or projects due. In addition, a daily all inclusive homework email will be sent via ParentLocker to all middle school parents, detailing their child's assignments and important announcements.

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, and the Hot Lunch menu are available online and can be accessed at <https://hilleltorah.org/whats-happening/calendar/>.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Calendar

The PTA, in conjunction with the school, maintains a Bar/Bat Mitzvah 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 hptpta@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.

- **ParentLocker** is our student information software. It provides parents with up-to-date information on their children's attendance, classes, schedules, homework, school events as well as a school directory. Login information is available on the [Parent Resources](#) page of the school website.
- **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 spring. Before conferences, instructions are sent to parents on how to sign up for appointments online.
- The **Hillel Torah Highlights** weekly email 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 Preschool will receive weekly **class storyboards** via email, and parents of students in Kindergarten will receive regular communication through **Seesaw**, an online platform, which will include updates on curriculum, special activities, and upcoming events.

- Parents of students in grades K-8 receive **Report Cards** twice a year at the end of each semester, parents of middle school students will receive additional progress reports mid-semester, and parents of students in PN-N receive a report card at the end of the year.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

Guiding Philosophy

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 *ben adam l'chaveiro* (interpersonal conduct). In fact, our sages teach that *derech erez 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.

In school, we implement a number of programs and approaches to intentionally create and maintain a prosocial and positive school culture:

- In Early Childhood and primary grades we utilize the [Responsive Classroom](#) approach to build inclusive classroom communities with clear expectations and behavior norms.
- In middle school, we emphasize the importance of *derech erez* and support our middle school students by promoting positive behaviors. We encourage the students to collaboratively problem-solve with their teachers when needed, in order to be most successful.
- In all grades we provide education around healthy relationships, appropriate boundaries, and friendship, and promote open lines of communication between children and adults.

At home, we ask parents to partner with us in instilling the importance of positive behavior in their children and working together to navigate challenges if they arise.

School Conduct Expectations

Our school norms center around four main principles:

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

Expected behaviors include:

- Respectful conduct with all people
- Inclusiveness with peers
- Adhering to safety rules
- Remaining honest
- Respecting 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.

Restorative Response to Misbehavior

Creating a safe environment for all requires that misbehavior be addressed. Our approach to responding to misbehavior is restorative in nature, rooted in our belief that children are inherently good and, given the opportunity, want to do the right thing. It is part of normal childhood development for children to make mistakes and test limits. In these situations, it is the job of the school and parents to work with the child to help them grow and learn from their mistakes to eliminate or minimize these behaviors in the future.

In each situation, we strive to take into account the uniqueness of the child and the circumstances and identify the most natural and logical consequences available as part of a restorative process. The same behavior may be addressed differently if it is an initial occurrence vs. a repeated behavior.

Restorative responses to misbehavior include but are not limited to:

- Reflective conference with teacher and/or administrator to understand what happened and help the student reflect on their behavior and learn for the future
- Student reflection letter or individualized learning assignment to help the student reflect on their behavior and learn for the future
- Parent communication with teacher / administrator to partner together to address the issue and support the student to improve their behavior
- Chessed/service projects in school as restorative action
- Lunch or recess detention as time for reflection and as a natural consequence of misbehavior occurring at these times
- After-school detention - which can be used as time for reflection, to address tardiness or as a consequence of misbehavior
- Technology/device limits or privileges suspended
- Inappropriate items confiscated
- Clean and/or replace vandalized property at cost (defacing lockers = \$50 flat fee)
- Loss of privileges such as participation in basketball teams, student council, class officers, class trips, field day, clubs, etc.
- Suspension - in more severe cases
- Expulsion - in an extremely severe situation

Cell Phone Policy—updated

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

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. Upon the third infraction, students will be required to keep their cell phone at school overnight.

We ask parents to 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—updated

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. If these items are brought, they will be confiscated and the consequences may result in the student being 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.

We reserve the right to search a student's bag or locker if we have reason to suspect that there is something dangerous or inappropriate.

Bus Behavior Guidelines

All buses will be staffed by an adult bus monitor. You will receive information at the start of the school year regarding what bus you are on and who your bus monitor is. Please review the following general bus safety information with your children:

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 in 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.

Responses to Bus Misbehavior

Bus misbehavior will be followed up in school by the administration and students will receive consequences. Students who continue to misbehave on the bus will be suspended from riding the bus for a period of time and further misbehavior may result in permanent removal from the bus.

Technology—updated

Our school recognizes the valuable role of computers, the Internet, and other technology in today's learning environment. We have in place internet filters, students' log-in access, and strong firewall protection to reduce safety risks.

All students in grades K-5 are required to use school-issued devices, which helps create a safer and more secure online environment. Students in grades 6-8 may use their own device brought from home, however, we strongly encourage these students to take advantage of renting a school-issued device.

Grades 1-4: All devices will remain in school and will not be brought home with the students. Students use these devices only at designated times and return them to the storage unit when not using them.

Grade 5-8: Given the increased amount of online curricula and homework in middle school, students will be able to take their school-issued device home each day to use for homework and other school-related activities. If you would prefer your 5th grader leave their device in school they may do so as long as they have access to a device at home on which they can do their homework.



The School is not responsible for damage to any personal property in the school building or on the bus - such as Chromebooks, laptops, cell phones, other devices, etc.

Students in 3rd grade receive Google Apps accounts, 4th- 8th grade students receive Hillel Torah email accounts, and middle school students receive ParentLocker logins to keep track of their classes and grades. Students in the primary grades participate in a Digital Literacy class and appropriate use of these technology tools is discussed with all students 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 students to mistreat 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.

Since much of this activity takes place at home, we strongly urge every home to adopt specific guidelines for device usage. 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”).
- 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 on your home internet such as Net Nanny, Bark, or Circle.
- 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.
- Group chats and 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 an internet safety pledge works 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?

If there is evidence that a student’s social media account is in violation of school policies, the student will be required to cooperate in the investigation. This may include requiring the student to share content from their social networking accounts. However, as per ISBE guidelines, the school will not require nor request that the student provides their social networking passwords or other account information.

Here are some suggested resources parents can use to learn more about the risks and benefits of online safety:

- www.commonsemmedia.org/cellphone-parenting
- www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship
- 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. Independent work also helps students develop independent study skills, self-discipline, time management skills, and responsibility, and leads to personal growth.

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 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 *mitzvah*.

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, and Park Plaza

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 in 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.

PN, N, K Dress Code

- Clothing should be simple, not too tight, safe, and easy to manage.
- Shoes must have backs and be appropriate for outdoor play (no sandals).
- Boys are to wear tzitzit and a kippah (no hats, please).

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 shirts 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

- *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.

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 activities.

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 (such as solid white tops and blue bottoms) on these days.



FOOD



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 be 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 snacks, 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 send 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 to school.

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) 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 minimize unhealthy eating.

Birthday Celebrations at School

In Early Childhood (grades PN-K), parents may send in a snack for the class. Details can be coordinated directly with the classroom teacher.

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

All parties outside of school for Hillel Torah 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Examinations and Immunizations Requirement

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 and can be found on the [Parent Resources](#) page of the website.

In addition to our standard immunization policy, all students are recommended to get a flu shot and all students are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccination.

In Case of Illness

When in doubt about your child's health, the precaution of keeping your child at home should be taken. The nurse should be notified at nurse@hilleltorah.org regarding the child's symptoms so that she can give guidance to parents on how to proceed.

When called to pick up a child who becomes ill during the school day, please do so as soon as possible. Children who do not feel well cannot learn in class and may infect other students.

Children with fever must be "fever free" without medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

The school nurse should be notified immediately if your child contracts a contagious disease (e.g., chicken pox, measles, mumps, whooping cough, fifth disease, flu, covid, strep, head lice, etc.). In turn, the school nurse will notify parents of children who have been exposed at school.

Medication

It is important for the safety of our students that the school knows about each child's medications and dosages. Please be sure to keep all medical forms current. If there is a change during the year, please inform the school.

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 have submitted the [Medication Authorization](#) form, signed by both physician and parent, in order for the school nurse to administer medications in school. 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.
- The school incurs no liability for injuries occurring when administering asthma medication or an epinephrine auto-injector.

Allergies

All parents of students with allergies must fill out an [Allergy Action Form](#) and submit it to the school nurse prior to school. In addition to submitting a labeled Epi-Pen to the nurse, 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

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 another student's combs or brushes.

As a precautionary measure, the school will conduct school-wide lice checks 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 (and other latex items) 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 who need academic support receive focused instruction through varying levels of assistance, ranging from modifications and accommodations in the regular classroom to assistance from our resource professionals in the classroom, to small group instruction outside the classroom.

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

Accessing Support

Hillel Torah provides children with differentiated instruction and interventions to support a wide range of learners. Our team is committed to meeting students' needs collaboratively with families and classroom teachers. Classroom teachers and the Student Services Team reach out to families when there is a concern about a student. Additionally, if you, as the parent or guardian, have concerns about your child, we encourage you to communicate with your child's classroom teacher who will work to address your child's needs. The classroom teachers are in frequent communication with the Student Services Team and together will determine the best next steps in supporting your child.

If additional supports outside of the classroom are needed, the Student Services Team will draft an intervention plan for your child. Parental consent is required before implementation of the intervention. If the Student Services Team feels that more information is needed to best support your child, an outside evaluation may be recommended, and we will help families navigate that process.

After the Student Services Team receives an evaluation, we will draft an Individualized Support Plan, which includes: student strengths, diagnostic information, accommodations and modifications, and proposed Special Education services. Together with the classroom teacher and parents/guardians, the Student Services Team will lead an Individualized Support Plan (ISP) meeting, where the child's team will collaboratively agree upon or alter the student's Individualized Support Plan for the remainder of the school year.

You, the parent/guardian, will always be part of the process when it comes to your child getting his/her needs met at school. Your child's progress will be monitored regularly, and we are committed to maintaining ongoing communication with you.

For more detailed information about services available for primary school students, please contact Sydney Robinson, sydney.robinson@hilleltorah.org, Primary School Student Services Coordinator, and for middle school students, contact Samara Kipnis, samara.kipnis@hilleltorah.org, Middle School Student Services Coordinator.

Tutoring

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 Bash
- Hot Lunch
- Teacher Appreciation Lunches
- Teachers' Holiday Gifts
- Teachers' In-Service Programs and Lectures
- Winter Social
- Family Chessed Day
- Box Tops for Education
- Parenting Programs
- Author Visits
- Cultural Field Trips
- Holiday Programming
- Student Treats
- Spirit-Wear
- 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

Tuition, Give/Get obligation, and Fund for the Future 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

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

Library/Media Learning Center

Hillel Torah's Library, including the Philip A. Newberger Memorial Library of Judaica and the John Hanus Library of General Studies, comprises over 18,000 volumes supporting the school's curriculum and the reading needs of our students.

Students in Kindergarten through 4th grade visit the library weekly with the goal to help the children love and appreciate literature. They discover the attributes of different genres and explore the styles of age-appropriate authors and themes at every grade level. The library program provides opportunities for the children to learn library skills and of course, to choose books to borrow and enjoy at home. Middle school students may visit the library during Choice Time or recess.

To help our students develop responsible habits, our circulation policies are as follows:

- Kindergarten and 1st grade students may check out one book per week and may keep the book for one week.
- Second through 8th grade students may check out up to two books per day, and may have four books out at a time. The books may be kept for two weeks and may be renewed. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the librarian.

Students who have any books due on the day of their library class day may check out one book. If they have any overdue books, they will not be allowed to check books out until all overdues are returned.

If a book is lost or damaged, the replacement cost should be paid (a minimum of \$10.00 for paperbacks or \$20.00 for hardcover books). If the lost book is found within a month of payment, the fee will be credited to give/get.

The Birthday Book Club invites parents to [make a donation](#) in honor of their child's birthday. A bookplate is affixed to the book in their child's honor, and they will be the first to check out the new book.

Library book donations can be excellent centerpieces at Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations. We also offer Library Fund donation cards, which are sent to your designated recipient for a \$5 minimum donation. All donations receive 70% give/get credit. Get more information on our [website](#).

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Rabbi Menachem Linzer, Principal

Rav Natan Brownstein, Director of Judaic Studies

Miriam Kopelow, Director of General Studies

Jennifer Wasserman, Director of Early Childhood

Sari Kravitt (Primary School) & Sarah Lakin (Middle School), Deans of Student Life

Sydney Robinson (Primary School) & Samara Kipnis (Middle School), Student Services Coordinators

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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