



Hillel Torah
בית ספר הלל תורה

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

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Dear Hillel Torah Middle School Students,

Welcome to a new school year!

I am excited to support you as you navigate life as middle schoolers. I will focus on creating a positive learning environment for all middle school students, 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 must 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.

I hope 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 in the Torah, which places a supreme value on *bein adam l'chaveiro* (interpersonal conduct). Our sages teach that *derech erez kadma l'Torah* -for students 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 Conduct Expectations

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 flexibility, frustration tolerance, and problem-solving skills. You are partners in problem-solving challenging situations with your teachers and the student support team.

Performance Standards

It is important that every student grow and learn to the best of his/her ability. Proper attention to arriving to class on time and being responsible about homework are two ways to help yourself succeed.

Homework

It is your responsibility as a student to:

- Keep track of all homework assignments using a *Yoman* and/or Google Classroom and ParentLocker
- Complete homework to the best of your 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 8:00am (7-8 grade) or 8:20am (5-6 grade) will be considered tardy. After the second morning tardy, you and your parents will be emailed. 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 given a lunch detention. Ongoing tardiness may require additional consequences.

Conduct Expectations and Consequences

How we treat teachers, staff, and 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 school environment.

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.
- Cell phone use during school hours

The following represents a list of some, but not all, potential consequences for a student who does not adhere to the expectations mentioned above. Repeated or more serious behaviors will receive higher-level consequences.

- Attend a conference with your teacher and/or an administrator to understand what happened and help you reflect on your behavior and learn for the future.
- Write a reflection letter or individualized learning assignment to help you reflect on your behavior and learn for the future.
- Your teacher or an administrator will partner with your parents to support you in improving your behavior.
- Do a chesed/service project in school as restorative action.
- Receive lunch or recess detention as a time for reflection and as a natural consequence of misbehavior occurring at these times.
- Receive after-school detention - which can be used as a time for reflection, to address tardiness, or as a consequence of misbehavior.
- Technology/device limits or privileges suspended.
- Inappropriate items taken away.
- You will clean and/or replace vandalized property at cost (defacing lockers = \$50 flat fee).
- Lose 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.

Physical Aggression

The school has a no-tolerance policy regarding physical aggression. If you are physically aggressive, your parents may be called to pick you up from school. In extreme cases, law enforcement may be called. To return to school, you must participate in a discussion with your parents, the appropriate staff members, and the administrator to ensure the problem does not reoccur.



Cell Phones

Middle school students may bring a cell phone to school but may not turn it on or use it during the day. If you are found with a cell phone during school hours, it will be confiscated and kept in the office until the end of the day. Upon the third infraction, you will be required to keep your cell phone at school overnight.



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.

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. Please check the ingredients in store-bought products brought to school to ensure 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 you eat a peanut or nut product for breakfast, you should wash your hands with soap and water (rather than hand sanitizer) and wash your mouth before coming to school. Residues left on shared surfaces or equipment can cause an allergic contact reaction.

Food Policy

No food or drinks, other than water, are allowed in classrooms, the gym, or the Middle School Commons. You may only eat snacks in the hallways or outside to keep our space a clean learning environment.

Drinks from outside establishments without a hechsher, such as Starbucks or Dunkin, must contain only simple, reliable kosher ingredients of coffee, water, milk, and/or sugar. Items with more complex ingredients, without clear kosher certification, are not allowed in school. These include refreshers, frappuccinos etc. If a student brings a non-coffee beverage (or food) without hashgacha they will be asked to discard it.



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 (and other latex items) 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 you will be sent home.

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

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.

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 appropriately dressed and well-groomed children 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.
- If you wear a sweater or sweatshirt, you must wear a collared shirt underneath.
- A neat pair of pants.
- No athletic pants of any kind (sweatpants, break-away pants etc.), shorts, oversized or ill-fitting pants.
- No 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 or unruly in length or bulk.
- Boys may not wear earrings.

Girls' Dress Code

- A dress or skirt that covers the knee when standing and sitting, and is designed for modest appearance.
- No tight or form-fitting skirts.
- 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.
- No pants (other than leggings) under a skirt or dress.
- A shirt with sleeves reaching the halfway point between the elbow and the shoulder. Capped sleeves or sleeveless shirts are not allowed.
- No See-through, net, and tight-fitting tops (such as spandex).
- No low-cut necklines below the collarbone.
- No straps may show from under a shirt.
- No make-up, such as eyeshadow or lipstick.

All Students' Dress Code

- Shoes: All shoes must have a strap or a full back; half-back shoes, slippers, and flip-flops are not allowed
 - No Crocs to be worn at school.
- As a general rule, students may not wear inappropriate clothing, such as torn, excessively large, baggy, or tight-fitting clothing, or clothing bearing inappropriate words or symbols.

Dress Code Consequences

Starting with the first dress code violation, the student must change into school-issued clothes, and parents will be notified. In some cases, parents may need to bring a change of clothes to school. School-issued clothes must be washed and returned to the office the following day.

Use of Technology

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

Since much technology use takes place outside of school, we ask you and your parents to partner with us and use technology in positive, constructive ways.

Student Accounts

Hillel Torah requires students to use their accounts appropriately, responsibly, legally, and ethically. These accounts are for school purposes only and will be under the supervision of school staff and administration. School staff have the right to enter and monitor your accounts at will to ensure they are used appropriately.



A responsible user will:

- Always use appropriate language.
- Be polite and respectful in all online interactions.
- Use your 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 your passwords
- Use another's login/password
- Use your 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 a school device, you are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:



A responsible technology user WILL:

- Take good care of the equipment and avoid damaging devices.
- Get your device repaired or replaced if damaged.
- Keep equipment away from food and drinks.
- Use technology only according to teacher instructions.
- Bring your 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 you.
- Cite your sources.
- Sign out of your 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.

More details can be found in our [Acceptable Use Policy \(AUP\)](#).

The use of technology and email is a PRIVILEGE, not a RIGHT. Violating this policy may result in the loss of technology/email privileges and other disciplinary measures. You will be required to sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

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

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 yourself. 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 the driver gives instructions.
- 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. When 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 can be seen in both directions and wait for a signal from the bus driver.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

In Middle School at HT, students take on many leadership roles and have special activity opportunities. You are encouraged to get involved in these activities to expand your learning and growth beyond the classroom.

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

- **Ruach Action Committee** - 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, is “choice time” during which you can choose an activity to participate in. Options include art, gym, stock market club, study hall, STEM, 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, Cross Country, 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 acknowledgment must be signed no later than Sept 30, 2024.

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 the Acknowledgment](#)