

Parent Handbook

2024-2025



Hillel Torah
NORTH SUBURBAN DAY SCHOOL
בית ספר הלל תורה



Hillel Torah

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בית ספר הלל תורה

ב"ה

Rita and Howard D. Geller Child Care Center
Alana Beth Stein Pre-School
Gilbert Lanoff M.D. Primary School
George and Barbara Hanus Middle School
Louis Neidich z"l Resource Center

August 2024

Av 5784

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 Hillel Torah school year!

Our goal is to set up our students for a successful school year. Inside these pages, you will find the updated Hillel Torah Parent Handbook, outlining important policies and procedures to help accomplish that goal. 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 to best prepare them for the school year. New this year, per state law, we are asking all parents to sign the acknowledgment on the last page.

If your child is in Middle School, he/she will also receive a Middle School Handbook with more specific details relevant to the Middle School, which will be reviewed in school with their advisors.

As we embark on a new year, I want to emphasize the importance of an open and strong home-school partnership. In this year's Handbook, you will find a new section outlining Shared Beliefs and Commitments, which we hope will help strengthen our school community as a whole. We look forward to deepening our partnership as we work together to help every child thrive and succeed in their learning and *middot*.

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

Rabbi Menachem Linzer
Principal

PARENT HANDBOOK

Rev. August 2024

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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 our ongoing engagement in 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 by and is in complete compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education policies for nonpublic schools.

We also have robust partnerships with the Walder Science Center and have partnered 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 towards 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—updated

Grade	Arrival Time	School Ends	Early Dismissal & Early Fridays
PN-N	8:55 am	2:30 pm	1:00 pm
K-6	8:15 am	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 a.m., and prior sign-up is required.

The Main Building Circular Driveway

All cars arriving in the morning, up until 8:25 am, **must enter eastbound through the HTC/Fasman Yeshiva High School parking lot** off Carpenter Road. Entering the circular driveway from Laramie disrupts the arrival flow and causes an unsafe arrival environment.

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:

- **Monday-Friday** 7:30-8:45 am and 3:15-4:30 pm
- **Friday** 1:00-2:00 pm

Attendance, Tardiness, and Absences

Daily attendance is integral to each student's success. Please make every effort to help your child arrive on time to set the tone for the day and start the day in the right mindset.

Students in grades K-6 should arrive by **8:15 am** to settle in and be on time for class at 8:20.

7th and 8th graders should arrive by **8:00 am** to be on time for *tefilla*.

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) must **stop at the office** to get a tardy slip before going to class.
- All tardies will be marked **unexcused**. The office will change it to "excused" when provided with the following documentation:
 - A note from a doctor or healthcare professional.
 - At least one day of advance notice by email from parents sent to attendance@hilleltorah.org explaining the anticipated lateness.
 - Inclement weather (for people in the farther suburbs, outside Skokie, Evanston, Lincolnwood, and WRP)

Change in Dismissal Plans

If you need to inform your children of a change in dismissal plans that arises during the day, contact the office.

Carpool/Busing

Carpool and busing procedures will be communicated in a separate email before the start of school.

Students will not be permitted to leave the building unaccompanied.

Students will remain in the dismissal location until their bus or carpool is called.

Absences

If your child will be absent, call the office or email attendance@hilleltorah.org as early as possible. Please make arrangements in the morning with the office to have the teachers bring homework to the office for pickup. Emailing your child's teachers regarding homework and assignments is also helpful.

After an absence or tardy, a child should give the teacher a written and dated note, signed by the parent, explaining the absence, or the parent may send an email to the 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 including their test scores and class participation grade, which will, in turn, affect their overall course grade.

After eight absences, parents will receive an automated notification 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 frequent absences and to make a plan to minimize absences.

Absences of 15 days or more may jeopardize the child's ability to move on to the next grade. Parents must attend 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 promptly make up any missed work.

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 are not permitted to leave class to attend. It is important that students remain with their class to maintain the integrity of our educational program and to maximize learning opportunities.

PARENT - SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Shared Beliefs and Commitments—NEW

At Hillel Torah, we believe that educating children to achieve their potential requires a strong mutual home-school partnership. This includes a positive relationship between staff and parents along with a supportive, engaged, and proud school community. By working together we can help each student achieve success and see our school community thrive.

Please join us in embracing the following shared beliefs and commitments to ensure a strong and fruitful partnership.

Shared Core Beliefs:

- **Shared Purpose:** Parents and staff are working towards the same goals - to foster each child's growth and success.
- **Potential:** Each child has unlimited potential
- **Goodness:** All people are fundamentally good
- **Respect:** Every person deserves to be respected always
- **Fallibility:** As humans, we all make mistakes
- **Growth Mindset:** Mistakes present an opportunity for growth

Shared Commitments - We all pledge to:

- **Open Communication:** Communicate openly, honestly, and constructively
- **Positive Intent:** Assume positive intent in all interactions as everyone wants the best for each child.
- **Curiosity and Openness:** Approach situations with curiosity and openness, especially when raising questions or concerns
- **Diverse Perspectives:** Remain receptive to different viewpoints and perspectives.
- **Mutual Respect:** Maintain respect and courtesy in all interactions, including when addressing questions or concerns

Who to Contact

Your child's classroom teacher is your first point of contact for any question or concern related to your child. A positive and collaborative relationship between teachers and parents is one of the keys to a child's success. Teachers will make every effort to return calls or emails within 1-2 school days during regular work weeks. For time-sensitive matters, 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.](#)

Parent Communication with Child and Teacher During School Day

Parents who want 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 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 to prevent student learning from being interrupted.

Parents may not communicate with their children via cellphone calls or texts during the school day. **Students are not allowed to use cellphones in school.** All mid-day messages should be relayed through 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 our website's homepage and are listed below.

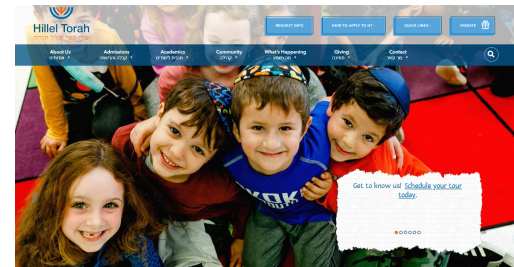
While we encourage open discussion and communication, we remind parents to use social media platforms constructively. Just as we remind our students that anything posted online should be considered a public and permanent reflection on them, we remind our parents as ambassadors of our school to make the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

When a concern arises, we encourage parents to contact the appropriate administrator directly to share feedback, ask questions, or voice concerns. See our [Who To Contact](#) page to determine the best person to contact for your specific needs.

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

All aspects of our school, including calendars, 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 to share with you. Additionally, parents receive weekly storyboards that share detailed information about classroom learning.
- **Grade K-4 - Teacher Updates:** Teachers use a messaging app to share classroom updates with parents. Teachers post updates through the app regularly. An email will be sent at the start of the school year 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 upcoming tests/quizzes or projects. In addition, a daily all-inclusive homework email detailing their child's assignments and important announcements is sent to all middle school parents through ParentLocker.

School Calendar

A year-at-a-glance school calendar and 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. Parents are requested to register dates up to three years in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts. Please email the Bar/Bat Mitzvah calendar coordinator at hptta@hilleltorah.org to inquire about dates or to place a date on the calendar.

Communication Opportunities

In addition to direct communication with their child's teacher, parents can use several other avenues to stay updated with what's happening at school.

- **ParentLocker** is our student information software. It provides up-to-date information on attendance, classes, schedules, homework, and a school directory. Login information is available on our [Parent Resources](#) page.
- **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 on how to sign up for appointments.
- The **Hillel Torah Highlights** weekly email newsletter is the primary source of 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 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 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, and parents of students in PN-N receive a report card at the end of the year.

STUDENT 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.

The Torah underscores these values, placing a supreme value on *ben 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 environment where all community members feel safe requires the collaboration of teachers, students, parents, and administrators around shared values. 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.

In school, we implement various programs and approaches to cultivate a prosocial and positive culture. In Early Childhood and primary grades, we use the [Responsive Classroom](#) approach to build inclusive classroom communities with clear expectations. In middle school, we emphasize *derech erez* and encourage collaborative problem-solving between students and teachers. Across all grades, we educate about healthy relationships, boundaries, and open communication.

School Conduct Expectations—updated

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 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

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 extreme cases, law enforcement may be called. For the student to return 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.

Anti-Bullying

Hillel Torah is dedicated to fostering a safe school environment, where bullying is not tolerated, and students feel supported academically and emotionally. For more details, read our comprehensive [Anti-Bullying Policy](#).

Restorative Response to Misbehavior

Our priority is to maintain the safety of others. Creating a safe environment for all requires that misbehavior be addressed. Our approach to responding to misbehavior is restorative, rooted in our belief that children are inherently good and, given the opportunity, want to do the right thing. It is within 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 account for 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 or 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 a time for reflection and as a natural consequence of misbehavior occurring at these times
- 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 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

Student Safety Policies - NEW

Read our comprehensive [Student Safety Policies](#) which cover all areas of

- Staff-Student Interactions
- Student Behavior and Bullying
- Protocols for Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns

Cell Phone Policy

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, it may not be turned on or used 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 calls or texts during the school day. All mid-day messages to students should be relayed through the school office.

Prohibited Items That May Not Be Brought To School

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

An adult bus monitor staffs all buses. You will receive information regarding your bus number and bus monitor at the start of the school year. 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 on the bus until the driver gives instructions.
- May not ask the driver to stop at places other than the regular bus stops. The driver is not permitted to do this, except with 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.

Responses to Bus Misbehavior

An administrator will follow up on bus misbehavior, 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 internet filters, students' log-in access, and strong firewall protection to reduce safety risks.

All students are required to use school-issued devices, which helps create a safer and more secure online environment.

Grades 1-4: All devices will remain in school. Students use them only at designated times and return them to the storage unit when not in use.

Grade 5-8: Given the increased amount of online curricula and homework in middle school, students can take their school-issued device home to use for homework and other school-related activities. If you 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 a Google Apps account, 4th- 8th grade students receive Hillel Torah email accounts, and middle school students receive a ParentLocker login to keep track of their class work 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. Students are also 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. A computer is an impersonal tool; people may say and do things they would never do in person, such as writing inappropriate remarks or sending inappropriate images. These images are indelible and can never truly be deleted.

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that children's extended unsupervised use of these powerful communication tools 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 occurs 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 concerns with your children and engage them in these critical 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 used 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 bedtime.
- Set limits on the types of games children can play.
- Personalize settings for individual users.
- Sign up for access to the Securly Home parent app to filter your student's internet while at home.

- 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.
- Social Media is not recommended for children under 18 years old. However, any 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 hiding when interacting online is inappropriate.

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

- Never give out your password to anyone, except your parents.
- Always use an avatar, never an actual 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 violates school policies, the student will be required to cooperate in the investigation. This may include requiring the student to share content from their accounts. However, as per ISBE guidelines, the school will not require nor request that the student provide their social media 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.common sense media.org/cellphone-parenting
- <https://www.common sense media.org/articles/online-safety>
- www.waituntil8th.org/
- <https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/social-media-parent-tips>

Homework

Independent work at home is a valuable tool for review and reinforcement. It also helps students develop 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, providing an atmosphere conducive to study, and supervising their children's work routines. 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 must complete and pass all of their classes every semester to move on to the next grade. 8th graders will not graduate nor receive their diplomas with incomplete or failed classes on their report cards.

Parents will be informed if a student has not completed, has failed, or is in danger of not completing or failing a class. It is the student's responsibility to create 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.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Resources

The [Hillel Torah Bar/Bat Mitzvah booklet](#) is a valuable resource for planning this important milestone. It delineates important guidelines and parameters 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.

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 put in the 'lost and found' for a limited time before being donated to charity during the next holiday break.

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.

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 should wear *tzitzit* and a *kippah* (no hats, please).

Grades 1-8 Dress Code For Boys

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, or 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 or unruly in length or bulk.
- Boys may not wear earrings.

Grades 1-8 Dress Code For Girls

All girls are expected to 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.
- Girls in grades 5-8 may not wear pants 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. 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
 - Half-back shoes, slippers, and flip-flops are not allowed to be worn at school.
 - Crocs are not allowed to be worn at school.
- *Hair*: Student’s hair may not be dyed in unnatural colors (blue, green etc).
- 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

In grades 1-4, when a child comes to school out of dress code, parents will be contacted to review our dress code policy.

In middle school, **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.

Clothing for Recess

All students participate in outdoor recess except on rainy or extremely cold days. 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 to allow 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).



Parent Attire Expectations

Just as we expect our students to conduct themselves and dress appropriately, 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.

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

If your child has eaten a peanut/nut product for breakfast, we ask that he/she wash his/her hands with soap and water (rather than hand sanitizer) and wash 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 response to an allergic reaction, as well as 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 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 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. To protect precious learning time and to minimize unhealthy eating, we ask that students in grades 1-8 not bring snacks for the class on their birthdays.

If a class is celebrating an accomplishment such as a *siyum*, the teacher will organize the party.

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 are only playing games, as serving 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 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 requires a complete health examination for all new students and all students entering Kindergarten and 6th grade. As part of the health exam, the 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. 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 and 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 our [Parent Resources](#) page.

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

In Case of Illness

When in doubt about your child's health, keep your child at home. The nurse should be notified at nurse@hilleltorah.org regarding the child's symptoms so that she can give guidance 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, pink eye 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, 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 submit a completed [Allergy Action Form](#) along with any medicine (Epi-Pens, Benadryl, etc.) to the school nurse before school starts. 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 grades 1-4, parents should leave a supply of approved snacks with the school nurse so their child can be included when a special snack is distributed.

Head Lice

Though not a disease, 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 must 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.

The school will conduct school-wide lice checks as needed throughout the year.

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.

Emergency Drills

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

Naloxone Protocol - NEW

Under Public Act 103-0348, which took effect January 1, 2024, public and private schools are now required to keep a supply of an opioid antagonist on hand to be used in the event of an overdose.

Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that will temporarily reverse the potentially deadly respiratory depressive effects for legal and illicit drugs. The school nurse will be trained in how to identify emergency situations that may necessitate the use of naloxone and how to properly administer emergency medication in addition to CPR/AED training.

At Hillel Torah, naloxone will be kept:

- In the nurse's office
- In the gym with the AED (unlocked)
- In the front office (unlocked)

Upon administration of an opioid antagonist, EMS will be called, and the student's parent, guardian, or emergency contact will be notified.

The school will accept a written request from a parent that their student should not receive naloxone under any circumstances.

STUDENT SERVICES

Areas of Support

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

In grades K-8, teachers and student services staff identify and provide remediation support to those who qualify through both formal and informal assessments. 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 frequently communicate with the Student Services Team and together will determine the best next steps to support your child.

If additional supports outside the classroom are needed, the Student Services Team will draft an intervention plan for your child. Parental consent is required before the intervention is implemented. If the Student Services Team feels that more information is needed to best support your child, an outside evaluation may be recommended, and we 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 questions about services available to students in grades K-4, please contact Rivka Varnai, rivka.varnai@hilleltorah.org.

For questions about services available to students in grades 5-8, please contact Samara Kipnis, samara.kipnis@hilleltorah.org.

Tutoring

When tutoring is recommended, the teacher will contact the parents to discuss the situation, offer recommendations, and create a plan to monitor the situation carefully. Similarly, parents considering tutoring are encouraged to check in with their child's teacher first to get their input and ensure proper coordination.

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 is permitted when necessary.

Enrichment

In grades 1-8, teachers identify and provide enrichment to those who qualify through both formal and informal assessments.

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:

- Grade Parents
- Back-to-School Bash
- 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
- Author Visits
- Cultural Field Trips
- Holiday Programming
- Student Treats
- Spirit-Wear
- Book Fair



All of this is only possible with 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 actively supports all aspects of Hillel Torah's Mission. To volunteer for a board committee or learn 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

Hillel Torah's Library comprises over 12,000 volumes supporting the school's curriculum and the reading needs of our students.

Kindergarten through 4th grade students visit the library weekly 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. 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 students may check out one book per week and may keep the book for one week.
- 1st grade students may check out one or two books per week and may keep the book for one week
- Second through fourth graders 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 librarian's discretion.
- Fifth through eighth graders may check out books at any time they are allowed in the library. They may have up to four books out at a time. The books may be kept for three weeks and may be renewed. Exceptions are made at the librarian's discretion.

Students who have any books due on the day of their library class day may still check out books.

Kindergarten - may have a total of two out at any given time

First grade - may have a total of three books out at any given time

Second through eighth - may have a total of four books out at any given time

If a book is lost or damaged, the parent is responsible for the replacement cost. The librarian will reach out to the parents to let them know the cost. Please do not purchase a book that your child has lost on your own.

The books need to go through a company that also catalogs them. The librarian will inform the business office, and the parent's account will be charged. Once the fee is paid, the child can resume borrowing books. If the lost book is found within a month of payment, the parent needs to bring it to the attention of the librarian, and 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. The minimum donation is \$18 per book. 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](#).



ACKNOWLEDGMENT - New

New this year, as per Illinois state law, we are requiring parents to sign an acknowledgment that you have read the handbook and will do your best to support the school's efforts to help your child succeed.

The acknowledgment must be signed no later than September 30, 2024.

[Click here to sign the Acknowledgment](#)

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
Rivka Varnai, Director of Student Services
Samara Kipnis, Student Services Coordinator, Middle School
Sari Kravitt, Dean of Student Life, Primary School
Sarah Lakin, Dean of Student Life, Middle School

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dov Shandalov, Business Administrator
Karin Felix, Director of Admissions
Chaya Gordon Burstyn, Director of Communications
Morraine Sweer, Associate Director of Development



Hillel Torah
בית ספר הלל תורה