



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK

Rev. AUGUST 2025

Table of Contents

HILLEL TORAH MISSION	4
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES	5
School Conduct Expectations	5
Collaborative Problem-Solving	5
Performance Standards	5
Homework	5
Tardiness Policy	5
Conduct Expectations and Consequences	5
Physical Aggression	7
Updated - Cell Phones	7
NEW- Smartwatch	7
No Nut Policy	7
Food Policy	7
No Latex Balloon Policy	8
Items That May Not Be Brought To School	8
Dress Code	8
Value of Tzniut	8
Boys' Dress Code	8
Girls' Dress Code	8
All Students' Dress Code	9
Dress Code Consequences	9
Use of Technology	9
"Tech in Check"	10
Student Accounts	10
School Device Use	10
Bus Behavior Guidelines	11
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	13

August 2025
Elul 5785

Dear Hillel Torah Middle School Students,

Welcome to a new school year!

I'm excited to support you throughout your middle school journey. My goal is to create a respectful, encouraging, and inclusive learning environment, and that begins with your reading this handbook.

Every student deserves a school experience that is safe, welcoming, and rooted in mutual respect. Creating and maintaining this kind of environment is a shared responsibility between students, teachers, parents, and school leaders.

This handbook clarifies HT Middle School rules and expectations in advance, helping everyone begin the year with a clear understanding and a strong sense of direction.

I hope these guidelines support a productive and respectful atmosphere where students and teachers can work together and where every student has the opportunity to grow and thrive.

Best wishes for a healthy and successful school year,

Mrs. Hannah Kowitt
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 key part of our school.

These values are underscored in the Torah, which places a high 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 builds 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 grows and learns to the best of his/her ability. Proper attention to arriving to class on time and being responsible for 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 you don't understand.
- Submit homework by the due date.
- Communicate with ALL teachers to make up any missed assignments due to absences.

Tardiness Policy

You are expected to be in class and ready to learn at the start of each class period. Students arriving after 8:00 am (7-8 grade) or 8:20 am (5-6 grade) will be considered tardy. After multiple tardies, your parents will be contacted..

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 mindful of our actions and how we can contribute to creating 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, and 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 complete an 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 a lunchtime 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 are 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 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 excessive 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.



Updated - Cell Phones

Middle school students may have a cell phone at school, but it must remain turned off and put away (it cannot be kept in pockets) and cannot be used 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. **If it happens a second time, you will be required to keep your cell phone at school overnight.** If it continues to happen, your parents will be asked to a meeting with the Dean and to pick up your phone from school.

NEW- Smartwatch

Smartwatches of any kind are not allowed in school. A smartwatch is considered any digital watch that has the function of messaging, checking email, or connecting to any apps. If you are found with a smartwatch during school hours, it will be confiscated and kept in the office until the end of the day. **If it happens a second time, you will be required to keep your Smartwatch at school overnight.** If it continues to happen, your parents will be asked to a meeting with the Dean and to pick up your watch from school.



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 rinse 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.

Water is the only drink that is allowed to be brought to school.



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 children who are appropriately dressed and well-groomed are more focused learners, which helps create a successful learning environment.

Boys' Dress Code

Boys are expected to wear clothing that is neat and appropriately fitted

- A kippah and tzitzit must be worn throughout the day.
- A collared polo or button-down shirt.
- If you wear a sweater or sweatshirt, you must wear a collared shirt underneath.
- NEW- You may only wear tops that are solid, patterned, or striped, and do not have inappropriate words, symbols, pictures, or large graphics. A small logo, HT swag, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah swag are acceptable.
- A neat, well-fitting pair of pants.
- No athletic pants of any kind (sweatpants, joggers etc.), shorts, oversized, or ill-fitting pants.
- No blue jeans or army fatigue pants, jeans of other colors are permitted.
- A neatly groomed haircut with appropriate sideburns, and kept above the eyebrows, ears, and shirt collar at all times. Student's hair may not be dyed in unnatural colors (blue, green etc).
- Boys may not wear earrings.

Girls' Dress Code

Girls are expected to wear clothing that is neat and appropriately fitted:

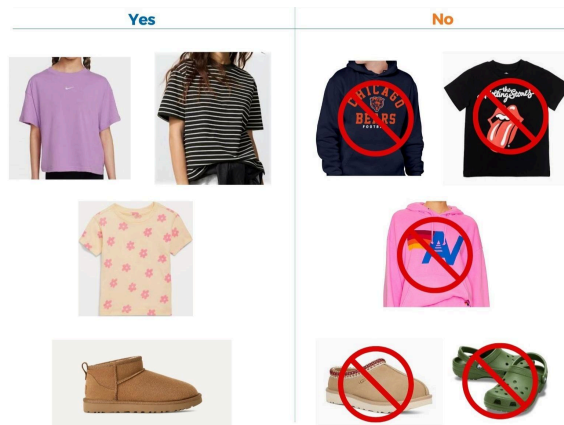
- A dress or skirt that fully covers the knee when standing and sitting, and is designed for modesty.
- Tight or form-fitting skirts are not allowed.



- Slits in a skirt may not be open above the knee.
- Leggings or tights may be worn under skirts, but cannot compromise or substitute for the appropriate length of the skirt. No other pants may be worn under skirts.
- A shirt with sleeves reaching the halfway point between the elbow and the shoulder. and a neckline that is above the collarbone. Capped sleeves or sleeveless shirts are not allowed. No straps may show from under a shirt.
- See-through, net, and tight-fitting tops, such as Lululemon, spandex, or any skin-tight shirts, are not permitted.
- **NEW-** Tops that are solid, patterned, or striped, and do not have inappropriate words, symbols, pictures, or large graphics. A small logo, HT swag, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah swag are acceptable.
- Make-up, such as eye-shadow or lipstick, is not permitted, and students' hair may not be dyed in unnatural colors (blue, green etc).

All Students' Dress Code

- Shoes: All shoes must have a strap or a full back.
 - Half-back shoes (such as mules or slides), slippers, flip-flops, Crocs, or Ugg slip-ons (including Tazz and Tasman styles) are not allowed to be worn at school.
- **NEW Accessories-**Smartwatches of any kind are not allowed in school. A smartwatch is considered any digital watch that has the function of messaging, checking email, or connecting to any apps.



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 by the end of the week.

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 you how to use technology appropriately and constructively.

“Tech in Check”

- **Restricted WiFi Access:** HT issued Chromebooks connect only to school networks; personal hotspots are blocked.
- **Enhanced Internet Filtering:** Strong filters ensure safe, more purposeful use of student accounts, in school and at home.
- **Tech-Free Zones at School:** Designated areas and/or times of day where devices are not allowed.
- **5th Grade:** Chromebooks stay at school each night unless parents request home use by submitting the permission form.
- **6th–8th Grade:** Students take their Chromebooks home each day to charge. As a safety precaution, HT Chromebooks will not be able to access wifi outside of the school building. Parents who would like their child to have home access must submit the permission form. Please note that parents are responsible for monitoring Chromebook home use.

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 Device 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. All students are required to sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

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.

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 weekly 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 Students

Please read the information below. This acknowledgment must be signed no later than Sept 30, 2025.

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](#)