

Parent Handbook

2026-2027



Hillel Torah
NORTH SUBURBAN DAY SCHOOL
בית ספר הלל תורה

August 2026
Av 5786

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 Hillel Torah school year!

Inside these pages, you will find the updated Hillel Torah Parent Handbook, which outlines important policies and procedures to help set students and families up for a successful school year ahead. Please take time to read the updated Handbook carefully, and share the relevant points with your children. Per state law, we request that all parents sign the acknowledgment on the last page.

If your child is in Middle School, they will also receive a Middle School Handbook with more specific details relevant to the Middle School, which they will review in school with their advisors.

As we embark on a new school year, I want to emphasize the continued importance of a strong and open home-school partnership. Through our Shared Beliefs and Commitments, we will continue to strengthen our school community. We look forward to working together to help every child thrive and succeed in their learning and *middot*.

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

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Linzer'.

Rabbi Menachem Linzer
Principal

PARENT HANDBOOK

Rev. August 2026

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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 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 in complete compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education policies for non-public schools.

We continue to benefit from our robust partnership with the Walder Science Center and from past collaborations with the Museum of Science and Industry and the Northwestern University Center for Talent Development, which helped strengthen our STEM and advanced learning programs.

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

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Arrival Time</i>	<i>School Ends</i>	<i>Early Dismissal & Early Fridays</i>
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

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

Preschool: Early drop-off starts at 8:00 a.m. Prior sign-up is required.

The Main Building Circular Driveway

Up until 8:25 am and starting at 3:30 pm, all cars **must enter eastbound through the HTC/Fasman Yeshiva High School parking lot** off Carpenter Road. Entering the circular driveway from Laramie causes an unsafe environment.

Please **use only the right lane next to the curb for drop-off and pick-up**. Children should not enter or exit the car from 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 help your child arrive on time to set the tone for the day.

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

7th and 8th graders should arrive by **7:55 am** to be in *tefilah* on time by **8:00 am**.

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

All end-of-day pick-up changes must be **submitted by email to dismissal@hilleltorah.org before 3:00 pm**, and before 12:30 pm on early Fridays. The office will inform your children of any changes.

In case of emergency, if you need to communicate a change after 3:00 pm, parents must email AND call the school office at (847) 674-6533 to ensure the request is received.

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 with the office in the morning 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, parents should email the teacher explaining the absence. For middle school students, parents should email your child's advisor, who will inform the teachers.

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, class participation grade, and overall course grade.

After eight absences, parents will receive an automated notification with 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 a 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 the event of an 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 During the School Year

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 these vacations.

It is the parents' 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 a special program is held 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

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 primary point of contact for any questions or concerns related to your child. A positive and collaborative relationship between teachers and parents is one of the key factors in 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 need to deliver something or communicate with their child during the school day should do so via the main school office. Parents and visitors may not enter the classroom hallways during school hours to prevent interruptions to student learning.

Parents may not communicate with their children via cellphone calls or texts during the school day, as **students are not allowed to use cellphones in school**. All midday messages should be relayed through the school office.

Parents should contact their child's teacher via email to arrange a time to discuss their concerns and should not approach a teacher unannounced during the school day.

Staying Informed

Hillel Torah maintains an active online presence through our **newly redesigned website** and social media accounts. We encourage parents to follow and interact with us online.

- **Website** - www.hilleltorah.org
All aspects of our school, including calendars, announcements, and contact information, are easily accessible from our website.
- **Facebook:** [School Page](#) | [Alumni Page](#)
- **Instagram:** [School Page](#) | [Alumni Page](#)
- [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#)
- **Grade-Specific Parent WhatsApp Groups:** Contact the PTA at ptapresidents@hilleltorah.org to be added to the parent WhatsApp group for your child's grade.

While we encourage open discussion and communication, we remind parents to **use social media platforms and WhatsApp groups in a constructive manner**. 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 constructively share feedback, ask questions, or voice concerns. See our [Who To Contact](#) page for the best person to contact for your specific needs.

Class Updates

- **Preschool - Kaymbu:** Kaymbu is an app that provides parents with a window into the classroom through photos and videos shared by teachers. Additionally, parents receive weekly storyboards that share detailed information about classroom learning.
- **Grade K-4 - Newsletters** - Teachers share weekly class newsletters to keep parents informed about what's happening in the classroom.
- **Middle School - Parent Locker/Google Classroom:** Middle School teachers use Google Classroom integrated with ParentLocker. Parents are expected to check ParentLocker weekly 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, the Hot Lunch menu, Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates, and the basketball schedule, can be accessed on the HT website.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Calendar

The PTA, in conjunction with the school, maintains a calendar for Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations. 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 request a date.

Communication Opportunities

In addition to direct communication with your child's teacher, parents can stay informed about what's happening at school through the following channels:

- **ParentLocker** is our student information system, providing up-to-date information on attendance, classes, schedules, homework, and the school directory. Contact the school office for login information.
- **Open School Night** offers an important early in the year opportunity for parents to meet their child's teacher and learn about each class's educational objectives, routines, and expectations.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences** are held twice a year, in the fall and spring. Instructions for scheduling appointments are sent in advance.
- The **Hillel Torah Highlights** weekly email newsletter is the primary source of information about what's happening at school. It is emailed to all families at the end of the week and can be accessed from the Hillel Torah website. Additionally, preschool parents receive weekly **class storyboards** via email.
- Our **HT Facebook** and **Instagram** pages provide a daily glimpse into school life, featuring frequent updates and photos that showcase learning, events, and community spirit.
- **Report Cards** are sent to parents of students in grades K-8 twice a year, at the end of each semester. Parents of students in PN-N receive a report card at the end of the year.

STUDENT CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS – Updated

Guiding Philosophy

Maintaining a positive school atmosphere that promotes *menschlichkeit* and 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, they must first exhibit good *middot*, positive behavior, and mutual respect.

Creating a positive environment that fosters good *middot*, where all community members feel safe, requires the collaboration of teachers, students, parents, and administrators around shared values. At home, we encourage parents to partner with us in instilling the importance of positive behavior in their children and working together to navigate challenges that may arise.

In school, we implement various programs and approaches to cultivate student *middot* and a prosocial and positive culture. We use components of the [Responsive Classroom](#) approach to build inclusive classroom communities with clear expectations. Our school-wide SEL curriculum, [RULER](#), promotes self-regulation skills for all students.

School Conduct Expectations

Our school norms center around four main principles:

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

Expected behaviors include:

- Respectful conduct with all people
- Inclusiveness with peers
- Adhering to safety rules
- Remaining honest
- Respecting 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 excessive physical aggression. Parents may be called to pick up their 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 details, see our comprehensive [Anti-Bullying Policy](#).

Restorative Response to Misbehavior

Creating a safe environment for all requires that misbehavior be properly 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 normal for children to make mistakes and test limits. In these situations, it is the responsibility 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 depending on whether 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
- 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

See 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

Child Safety Hiring Practices

Hillel Torah will adhere to all federal, state, and local laws regarding staff hiring.

- Upon hire, all teachers must undergo fingerprinting and background checks, including, as of 2023, a special background check on sexual misconduct from previous employers ([Faith's Law](#)).
- All teachers must sign an acknowledgment of mandated reporter annually.
- All teachers must sign an acknowledgment of [staff conduct policy](#) annually.

Documentation of the above is maintained in personnel files

The building currently contains asbestos, and the asbestos report/plan is available for viewing in the main office.

Prohibited Items That May NOT Be Brought To School - Updated

- Electronic devices
- Trading cards (such as sports and Pokémon cards),
- Laser pointers,
- Slime, including recess, morning line-up, dismissal, or on buses.
- **New** - Fidgets may not be brought into classrooms, but may be used during recess.
- **New** - Chewing gum
- Sugary and Coffee drinks, water is the only drink that is allowed to be brought to school
- **New** - No locks on lockers
- Inappropriate books or magazines

Weapons of any kind (including knives, sharp or dangerous objects, as well as toy weapons) should never be brought to school. If brought, they will be confiscated, and the student may be sent home. Further disciplinary action may be taken as needed.

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 monitor.
- 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.
- Students may not ask the driver to stop at places other than the regular bus stops. The driver is not permitted to do this without 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 specified period, and further misbehavior may result in permanent removal from the bus.

Technology

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

All students are assigned a school-issued device, which helps create a safer and more secure online environment. Students use them only at designated times and return them to the storage unit when not in use.

Students in 3rd grade receive a Google Workspace account, 5th- 8th grade students receive Hillel Torah email accounts, and middle school students receive a ParentLocker login to track their classwork and grades. Students in the primary grades learn about device care, and appropriate use of these technology tools is discussed with all students. All Students and parents are also required to sign the school's [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.

We strongly urge every home to adopt specific guidelines for device usage. Use of the internet at school and at home must be supervised.

The following are some suggested guidelines for device use at home:

- Set aside time to sit with your children and discuss their online activity and their accounts.
- Ask your children to share their logins with you.
- Devices should be used only in a common room.
- Screen time should be limited and clearly defined.
- Devices should not be available after bedtime.
- Set limits on the types of games and apps children can access.
- Personalize settings for individual users.
- Sign up for access to the Securly Home parent app to filter your student's internet while at home and receive reports on their internet activity.
- 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 should be carefully monitored or excluded.
- Social Media accounts are not legal for children under age 13 and must be closely monitored.
- Many families find that a device safety pledge works well, particularly for younger children. Many sites have premade templates you can print and use.

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 device 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 or 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>

Cell Phone Policy

Students in Grades K-4 are not allowed to 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 not use cell phones during the school day. If a student brings a phone to school, it must be put away for the entire day. Cell phones being used by students during school hours will be confiscated and kept in the office until the end of the day. **Upon the second infraction, students will be required to keep their cell phones 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 midday messages to students should be relayed through the school office.

Smartwatches of any kind are not allowed in school. A smartwatch is any digital watch that can send messages, check email, or connect to any apps, whether those services are enabled during school or not.

Personal Property

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.

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 advance to the next grade. 8th graders will not graduate or receive their diplomas if they have incomplete or failed classes on their report cards.

Updated - Parents are asked to check their children's grades and progress on Parent Locker each week to see if their children have missing assignments, how they are behaving and participating, and their test grades. If a student fails an exam or major assignment, parents can expect a communication from the teacher, as those can be predictors of failing grades in a class. It is the student's responsibility to create a plan with the teacher for making up the incomplete or failing work. Parents should communicate with the school as early as possible for planned absences or other reasons why work may be missing or incomplete. Once the work is complete, the incomplete or failing grade will be changed on the report card. Made-up work may not receive full credit, depending on the circumstances.

In cases of prolonged illness, the administration will develop a plan with the child and family tailored to the child's specific needs and circumstances.

Library

Kindergarten through 4th grade students visit the library weekly to help the children love and appreciate literature. 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 up to two books per week and may keep the books 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.

If a book is lost or damaged, the parent is responsible for the replacement cost. The librarian will contact the parents to inform them of 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 must bring it to the librarian's attention, 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.

COMMUNITY VALUES

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Resources

The [Hillel Torah Bar/Bat Mitzvah booklet](#) is a valuable resource for planning this important milestone. It delineates important guidelines expected of all members of our school community in planning a *simcha*. Before planning a *simcha*, 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 *tefilah* 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, including 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, classrooms, or washrooms will be put in the 'lost and found' for a limited time before being donated to charity at the end of each month.

DRESS CODE – Updated

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 a sensitivity. Our educational program fosters a life guided by *tzniut* and modesty. In addition, we have found that when children come to school appropriately dressed and groomed, it sets the tone for a more respectful, focused, and positive 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, Crocs, or slippers).
- Boys should wear *tzitzit* and a *kippah* (no hats, please).

Grades 1-8 Dress Code For Boys

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

- A *kippah* and *tzitzit* throughout the day.
- A collared polo or button-down shirt. If wearing a sweater or sweatshirt, a collared shirt must be worn underneath.
- 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. **NEW** - Appropriate Jewish or Israel-related graphics, including IDF shirts/sweatshirts are permitted.
- A neat, well-fitting pair of pants. Boys may not wear athletic pants of any kind (sweatpants, joggers, 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 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.
- **NEW** - Hoods and baseball caps/hats may not be worn in school. Hooded sweatshirts are permitted, but the hood must remain down while inside the building.

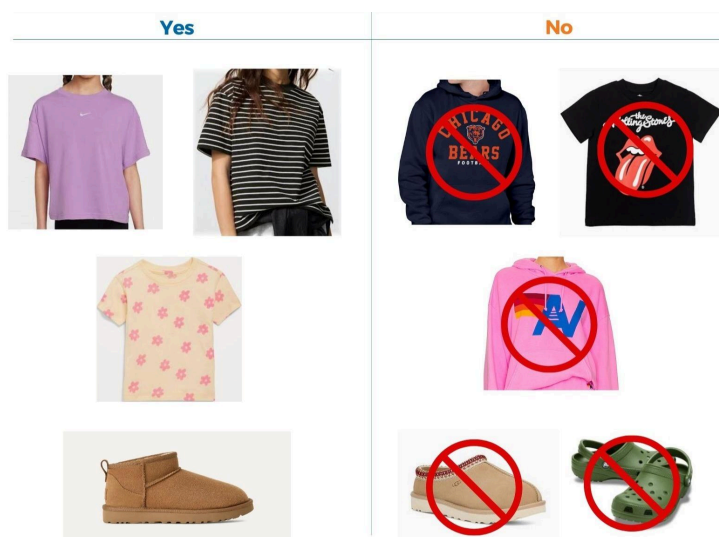
Grades 1-8 Dress Code For Girls

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

- Dresses or skirts that reach the knee when standing and sitting, and are designed for modesty. Tight or form-fitting skirts are not permitted. 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. 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.
- 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. **NEW** - Appropriate Jewish or Israel-related graphics, including IDF shirts/sweatshirts are permitted.
- Make-up, such as eye-shadow or lipstick, is not permitted, and students' hair may not be dyed in unnatural colors (blue, green, etc).
- **NEW** - Hoods and baseball caps/hats may not be worn in school. Hooded sweatshirts are permitted, but the hood must remain down while inside the building.

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.
- **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, whether those services are able to be used in school or not.



Dress Code Consequences

In grades 1-4, if a child comes to school out of dress code, parents will be contacted, and the student must come the next day in appropriate dress code.

NEW - In middle school, students must be in dress code to attend class. If a student is not in dress code, parents will be contacted, and the student will remain in the office until appropriate clothing is brought to school by parents. To minimize missed class time, students are encouraged to keep an extra set of dress code-compliant clothing in their locker, including a kippah and tzitzit for boys, in case they need to change.

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 their children with warm clothing and boots/snow pants for outdoor activities.

Gym Attire

Students should dress in a way that allows for full movement during any physical education activity. Gym shoes are required for all activities. We suggest that your child keep a separate pair of gym shoes in their locker. It is recommended that students in grades K-8 bring a separate T-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 dress in blue and white (such as solid white tops and blue bottoms).



Parent Dress Expectations

Just as we expect our students to conduct themselves and dress appropriately, likewise, we ask **all parents (PN-8)** to dress in a manner consistent with the dress code for older students when on the school grounds of **both buildings**.

Men should wear a *kippah*, and women should wear knee-length dresses or skirts and shirts with sleeves. Women may not wear pants, shorts, or sleeveless tops when entering the school building, including drop-off and pick-up, hot lunch, field trips, sporting events, visits to the business office, and any other school-related activities.

We thank you in advance for helping maintain an appropriate atmosphere in school, which sends a strong positive message to your children. Additionally, we request that you inform babysitters or other family/friends who might be coming into school of this policy.

FOOD



Kashrut

Our school maintains strict standards of *kashrut* observance. The [Chicago Rabbinical Council \(cRC\)](#) can provide current *kashrut* information. A list of kosher food products and distributors, including bakeries and caterers, is also available from the CRC.

All food brought into school for lunch or snack must be kosher. All refreshments served at parties, both in and out of school, and meetings must have a nationally recognized *hashgacha* (Chof K, cRC, OK or OU, etc) and be served on disposable paper goods. No home-baked or cooked food items may be shared or distributed in the school at any time.

Drinks

Water is the only drink that is allowed to be brought to school. Sugary and coffee drinks are not allowed.

Lunch

The PTA and 8th-grade parents sell hot lunch at school on a pre-order basis. A schedule and ordering information are sent via email at the beginning of the school year.

Students may not share any food, including lunch and snacks, due to allergy concerns and varying kashrut practices. Please send your child with any paper goods they will need, as the school does not provide these items. No refrigeration or heating is available for student use.

Healthy Snacks

Parents are encouraged to send healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, pretzels, etc. for students to eat during snack and recess.

No Nut Policy

Food allergies, especially to peanuts and nuts, can be life-threatening. Any ingestion of or contact with nut products or residues by a student with these allergies can lead to a rapid anaphylactic reaction.

To provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students, **foods containing peanuts, peanut butter, tree nuts (walnuts, pecans, pine nuts, almonds, cashews, etc.), or other nut ingredients may not be brought to school** and must be kept out of lunches and snacks. Please check the ingredients in store-bought products you send 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 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 they wash their hands with soap and water (rather than hand sanitizer) and wash out their 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 annual safety training, which includes a workshop on allergy awareness and response to allergic reactions, and instructions on administering emergency medication.

We recognize that some of these safety procedures may pose an inconvenience and challenge for you and your child. We appreciate your help in providing 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 valuable learning time and promote healthy 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. Students in grades 1-8 are not allowed to bring snacks for the class on their birthdays. The only exception to this is for Bat/Bat Mitzvah celebrations.

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

Birthday Parties 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 be consistent with Torah values. Parties should not be held in non-kosher food establishments (e.g., Chuck E. Cheese), 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 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 Immunization Requirements

The Illinois Department of Health and Department of Education require a complete health examination for all new students and all students entering Kindergarten and 6th grade. As part of the health exam, 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** must be submitted by mid-August, before the first day of school. Per Illinois state law, **any student for whom we do not have medical forms by September 26 cannot come to school or participate in school activities.** Please communicate with the nurse if appointments are scheduled after September 26.

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](#).

In addition to our standard immunization policy, we recommend that all students get a flu shot.

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 fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Motrin 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.). The school nurse will notify parents of children who have been exposed at school.

Medication

For the safety of our students, it is important that the school is aware of each child's medical history and associated medications and dosages. Please keep all medical forms current and inform the school of any changes during the year.

Should your child need to take medication during the day, we ask that you adhere to the following procedures:

- Parents should arrange to administer medications either before or after school hours, when possible.
- In the event a student needs to take prescription medication during the school day, parents must submit the [Prescription Medication Authorization](#) form, signed by both physician and parent, for the school nurse to administer prescription medications in school.
- All medications, including over-the-counter ones, must be sent to school in their original containers and given to the office with your child's name, time, directions, and dosage indicated clearly.
- General permission to take Tylenol or Ibuprofen can be given on the [Medical Consent Form](#) submitted at the beginning of the school year.
- The school incurs no liability for injuries that occur when administering any medications or applying first aid, including asthma nebulizer treatments 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. All Epi-Pens will be kept in the nurse's office. Students may only self-carry when indicated on the Allergy Action Form.

Head Lice

Although 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 comb or brush.

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.

Naloxone Protocol

Under Public Act 103-0348, which took effect January 1, 2024, public and private schools are 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 of legal and illicit drugs. The school nurse will be trained in identifying emergency situations that may necessitate the use of naloxone and in properly administering emergency medication, as well as 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.

Emergency Drills

Students practice emergency drills, including 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.

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 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 differentiated instruction and interventions to support a diverse range of learners. Our team is committed to collaborating with families and classroom teachers to meet students' needs. Classroom teachers and the Student Services Team reach out to families when there is a concern about a student's academic progress. Additionally, if you 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 they will determine the best next steps to support your child.

If additional supports outside the classroom are needed, the Student Services team will develop an intervention plan for your child. If the Student Services team believes additional information is needed, an outside evaluation may be recommended, and we help families navigate that process.

After receiving an evaluation, the Student Services Team will draft an Individualized Support Plan (ISP). Together with the teacher and parents, we will review and finalize the plan during a collaborative meeting.

You, the parent/guardian, will always be part of the process when it comes to your child's needs being 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 Kindergarten, contact Jenny Wasserman at jennifer.wasserman@hilleltorah.org

For questions about services available to students in grades 1-8, contact Rivka Varnai at rivka.varnai@hilleltorah.org

Tutoring

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

To avoid conflicts of interest, teachers are not permitted to tutor students in their classes during the school year or during the summer before. Student Services staff are not permitted to tutor students in the grades they service during the school year. Tutoring during the summer after the teacher has taught the student is permitted.

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 and sponsor programs and services that enhance the education and Jewish life of our students, teachers, and community. Some of the many programs and services of the HTPTA 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 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

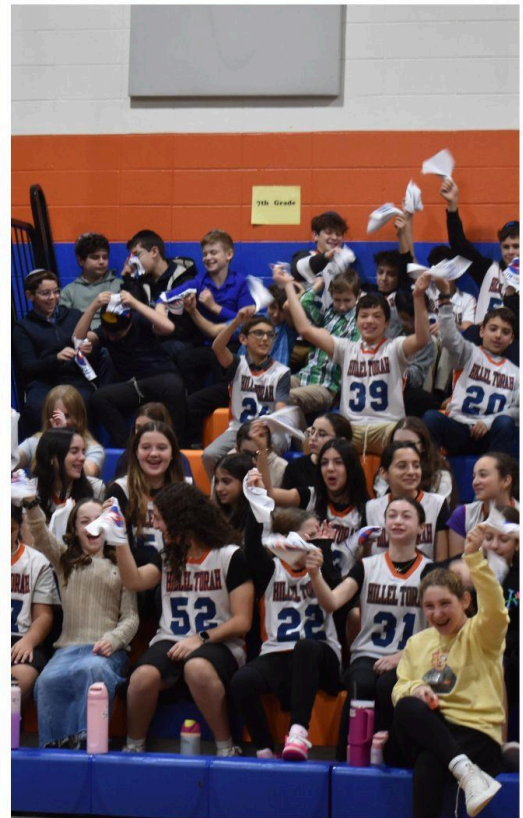
Further information regarding any of these may be obtained through the Business Administrator, Mr. Dov Shandalov.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As per Illinois state law, we are requiring parents to sign an acknowledgement 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 18, 2026.

[Click here to sign the Acknowledgment](#)



Educational Leadership

Rabbi Menachem Linzer, Principal

Rabbi Dov Pianko, Director of Judaic Studies

Miriam Kopelow, Director of General Studies

Jennifer Wasserman, Director of Early Childhood

Rivka Varnai, Director of Student Services

Stephanie Horberg, Dean of Student Life, Primary School

Hannah Kowitt, Dean of Student Life, Middle School

Board of Directors

Tanya Lubin

Lev Katz

Mazel Levin

Ari Daniels

Yehudit Gavant

Ariel Redlich

Ari Berkowicz

Deena Goldman

Daniel Salvadori

Flora Ashman

Tali Gevaryahu

Julie Thomas

Yitzi Matanky

Miriam Friedman

Tzvika Pollack

Business Administration

Dov Shandalov, Business Administrator

Karin Felix, Director of Admissions

Chaya Gordon Burstyn, Director of Communications

Morrine Sweer, Director of Development



Hillel Torah
בית ספר הלל תורה