



**TORAH ACADEMY**  
of GREATER PHILADELPHIA

5776  
2016-2017

# FAMILY HANDBOOK

**TORAH ACADEMY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA**

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Wynnewood, PA 19096

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<http://taphila.org/>

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**SPECIAL NOTE:**

Though some of this information has remained the same from past years, a great deal is new or has been updated. We respectfully request that you (and older children) read this new Family Handbook in its entirety. Please note that this handbook is not a contract. The administration and/or Board of Directors of Torah Academy reserves the right to change policies and procedures. The most updated copy will be posted at <http://taphila.org/>. Thank you for partnering with us in the education of your children.

## **Introduction**

At Torah Academy, we strive for excellence in both our Judaic and General Studies programs. In order to achieve this goal, our school emphasizes two major elements: academic excellence and personal concern for each child. It is our goal to help our students develop a strong, positive Jewish identity, a love for Torah Learning, and a deep sense of commitment to and involvement with Israel, the Greater Philadelphia Jewish community and our brethren worldwide.

We are proud of our school's achievements and eagerly anticipate the opportunity to build on our reputation and provide an exciting year of quality Torah and secular education to our students, our school and the community.

There have been changes in this year's Parent Handbook. Please read the Handbook carefully and keep it throughout the year for reference to any questions you may have pertaining to activities, policies and procedures.

No pamphlet, however, can take place of direct and personal contact among parents, faculty and administration. We look forward to hearing from you and working closely with each and every parent and in fostering a strong school-home bond.

## **School Mission Statement**

The Torah Academy of Greater Philadelphia educates boys and girls from nursery through grade eight. With a curriculum rooted in Torah and general studies, characterized by academic excellence and providing skill proficiency in all areas, TA provides a dynamic Jewish education that fosters intellectual as well as spiritual understanding and love of Torah through a commitment to its mitzvos and values. An emphasis on middos tovos infuses all aspects of school life.

Torah Academy will make every reasonable effort to provide tuition assistance to those families who demonstrate financial hardship.

By creating a climate of active intellectual inquiry in both Judaic and general studies, Torah Academy:

- Encourages exploration and understanding of the world.
- Emphasizes the responsibility of each Jew toward G-d and all people.
- Instills in its students Ahavas Yisrael--love of Israel and the Jewish people--as embracing the Land and State of Israel, and fellow Jews.
- Inculcates in its students the ideals of the American democratic heritage of freedom, justice and human dignity.
- Views each child as an individual and provides a stimulating education for students with different levels of academic ability and learning styles.
- Partners with parents to nurture each student to develop as an entire person.
- Enables and encourages students, through critical thinking, skill proficiency and substantive knowledge, to discover and excel in fields in which they can lead meaningful lives.
- Prepares its students with the skills to pursue their Judaic and general studies at the next level of learning and throughout life.

In sum, Torah Academy provides the foundation for its students to mature as Torah-observant Jews and role models who are contributing members in Jewish and general society.

### **Contacting the Torah Academy Administration**

Our administrative team is efficiently organized to make sure that as a school we meet the needs of every child. In most cases, concerns should first be addressed with your child's teacher(s). If you need further assistance, the list below can guide you in knowing who to contact. There may be instances when you may not know where to turn. Please feel free to contact any member of the T.A. faculty and staff and we will be happy to point you in the right direction.

#### **Organizational Roles and Responsibilities**

**Rabbi Isaac Entin**, *Head of School- Menahel*  
[ientin@taphila.org](mailto:ientin@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x229

**Rabbi Mordechai Schwersenski**, *Assistant Principal of Jewish Studies*  
[mschwersenski@taphila.org](mailto:mschwersenski@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x247

**Mrs. Rebecca Sasson**, *Assistant Principal of General Studies*  
[rsasson@taphila.org](mailto:rsasson@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x270

**Mrs. Rivka Dear**, *Director of ECP*  
[rdear@taphila.org](mailto:rdear@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x210

**Mrs. Nicole Afriat**, *Director of Student Needs*  
[nafriat@taphila.org](mailto:nafriat@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x272

**Attendance, Dismissal, Transportation Issues, Parties, etc:** Heather Berman, *Office Manager of Education Office*  
[hberman@taphila.org](mailto:hberman@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x222

**Billing, Tuition and Financial Aid Issues:** Ms. Debbie Grad, CPA, *Business Manager*  
[dgrad@taphila.org](mailto:dgrad@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x224

**School Records/Transcripts:** Mrs. Michal Weinstein, *Executive Assistant*  
[mweinstein@taphila.org](mailto:mweinstein@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x260

**Sports Programs:** Coach Kenny Myers, *Athletic Director*  
[kmyers@taphila.org](mailto:kmyers@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x334

**Marketing :** Mrs. Rachel Mazuek  
[rmazuek@taphila.org](mailto:rmazuek@taphila.org) or 610-642-7870 x265

## **IMPORTANT PROCEDURES**

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

#### **CLASSES:**

3Y Pre-Nursery: 8:25 am to 1:00 pm or 3:50 pm

4Y Nursery: 8:25 am to 1:00 pm or 3:50 pm

K – 5: 8:25 am to 3:50 pm

6-8: 8:25 am to 4:40 pm

Friday dismissal is at 3:50PM, or at 1 PM during the winter months. Please see the school calendar for early/late dismissals.

Please be punctual for all arrivals and dismissals. Your child's positive school experience depends on timeliness.

Any students arriving after the carpool gate closes should proceed directly to the security desk with their parent, who must sign them in. Students will not be allowed into class without being signed in by their parent. The student may then proceed to class.

There is Sunday school for boys in Grades 5-8. Boys in fourth grade have the option of attending as well. This is an exciting learning experience that begins at 8:30 with Minyan and is followed by breakfast and creative Torah learning, ending at 11:30. Sunday school is in session between Simchat Torah and Purim.

There is Sunday school for girls in Grades 5-8. Girls in fourth grade have the option of attending as well. This is an exciting learning experience that Teffila, breakfast, and creative Torah learning. Information about dates and times will be determined.

#### **EDUCATION OFFICE:**

The educational office is open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on Monday to Thursday. On Fridays, is open at 8:00 am and close 20 mins. after dismissal time. The office telephone number is 610-642-7870.

**Office: 610-642-7870**

**Office Fax: 610-642-2265**

## **TRANSPORTATION, ARRIVAL, AND DISMISSAL**

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION:**

Many public school districts in which TA students live provide round-trip transportation free of charge. This type of district transportation is currently available for the following:

- Students in grades 1 – 8 who are residents of Philadelphia.
- Students in grades K – 8 who live in portions of Montgomery and Delaware Counties.
- Students in grades K - 8 who live in Cheltenham Township.

Requests for district transportation are included in the registration packet.

Prior to the first day of school, families eligible for district bus service will be notified in writing by the district with bus stop information. Questions and change requests must be directed to the local public school district transportation office. Torah Academy has no control over the designation of school bus stops or routes, *but we will gladly assist as much as possible.*

### **SCHOOL BUS CONDUCT**

The rules in this section apply whether children ride on school district or TA- rented buses.

Children are expected to practice safe and courteous bus behavior. The privilege of riding the bus may be revoked for children who do not behave properly.

#### **Boarding and riding your bus:**

- Board your bus in an orderly manner.
- Remain seated at all times.
- Avoid loud conversations.
- Keep the aisle and emergency exits clear of personal belongings.
- Head and hands are to be inside at all times.
- Nothing may be thrown from the bus.
- Avoid defacing, damaging, or tampering with any of the bus equipment.

**At your bus stop:**

- When you leave home, go directly to your assigned bus stop.
- Arrive at the bus stop five minutes before your bus is scheduled to be there. Drivers do not wait.
- Wait in a safe area away from traffic.
- When crossing the street to board the bus, wait until the bus has stopped and the red lights are flashing. When you are sure that traffic is clear in both directions, cross at least ten feet in front of the bus.
- At the end of the school day, get off the bus at your designated stop. We cannot allow students to get off at other stops other than their home.
- Go directly home – Do not approach strangers.
- If your child needs to take a different bus, please contact the office in advance for bus policies. Please be advised that bus passes are approved by the bus companies and are not under TA control.

Please note that Torah Academy neither owns the bus nor employs the bus drivers (or other transportation employees). However, on both school district and TA-hired busses we are expected to provide support for issues of behavior. Students who receive a written conduct report for engaging in unsafe or inappropriate behavior will be receive a consequence which will range from a warning to loss of bus riding privileges.

**DAILY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES:**

- ★ Dismissal for *Early Childhood* students at 1 pm will take place at the door in the circular driveway facing Wynnewood Road. If you arrive after 1:10, please park your car and come into the building.
- ★ When the entire school dismisses at 1:00 pm such as on early Fridays during the winter, the *Early Childhood* dismissal area will be in the kindergarten room (with the exit door facing the fields). Students in grades ECP – 8 will be called to this dismissal area as their cars arrive to pick them up.

- ★ Dismissal area for carpool at 3:50 pm will be in the Kindergarten room (with the exit door facing the fields). Bus riders will wait in gym until buses are called.
- ★ We are not able to provide supervision on Argyle Road. Therefore, children may not wait in the office nor outside the office on Argyle Road.

**DISMISSALS (3Y-8<sup>th</sup> grade carpool):**

Each family will receive two carpool placards. A placard should be visible in the windshield of the car that is coming to school to retrieve students. For their own safety, children will not be allowed to leave with anyone other than their regular carpool driver unless the teacher and the educational office are notified of the change by the parent in writing.

Our goal is for every child to make it home safely. To assist us in this regard, please do not make unnecessary changes to the dismissal routine. For a safe dismissal, we ask that changes be made according to the following procedures.

Changes made be made by email ([carpool@taphila.org](mailto:carpool@taphila.org)) or a voicemail to our dismissal line (option 4 in our phone system) up to one hour before dismissal time.

Dismissal data is collected until 1 hour prior to dismissal. Dismissal changes that come in after that time cannot be honored. On early dismissal days, changes are accepted until noon for a 1:00 pm dismissal.

Please note that the Security desk is closed a half hour prior to the school dismissal time to manage the carpool line. No security desk dismissals can be done once the security desk is closed.

**ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMICS****ATTENDANCE**

Punctual attendance in school is essential for learning. Children who arrive late disrupt learning that is already in progress and miss key

information. However, we do encourage you to keep your child at home if he/she is sick. Our office should be advised if your child will be absent, so that teachers and classmates can call and also forward missed assignments. Trips, vacations etc. should be arranged so as not to conflict with school attendance. Please e-mail [hberman@taphila.org](mailto:hberman@taphila.org) to report an absence and request missed work by 10 AM. We cannot guarantee homework after this time.

**DAILY ARRIVAL:** Students are due in at 8:25am for their first period class. Teachers will be outside for carpool from 8:15AM. All ECP children will be taken from their car and walked to their classroom. Please see our information sheet “Procedures for Arrival, Dismissal, and safety at TA” for further information.

**LATENESS:** If your children will be tardy to school for a doctor’s appointment, please email [hberman@taphila.org](mailto:hberman@taphila.org). *Students in 3Y and 4Y classes* who arrive at school after 8:45am should be signed in at the security desk by a parent. Our security guard will then call the classroom and a teacher will pick up the student from the security desk and take them to class. All *Students in grades K-8* who arrive in school after 8:45am must stop at the security desk to sign in and get a late pass.

Parents are asked not to walk their children to the classroom as this disrupts the learning process.

### **FAMILY VACATIONS:**

Please coordinate family trips with the school calendar. Students who leave for extended trips risk falling behind and not passing their courses. It is not the teacher’s responsibility to prepare days or weeks of makeup work for vacationing students.

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

Although regular attendance is imperative, it is just as important to keep children home when they display symptoms of communicable disease. A child who becomes ill during the day will be

referred to our office. Parents will be telephoned and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible.

**Please arrange pickup in a timely manner. Sick children who stay in school communicate illness to others and require individual supervision from our office staff.**

### **Guidelines for Keeping Students Home**

Please be considerate of the entire school community by keeping your child home when they are ill. The following guidelines have been developed to assist the school staff when making decisions regarding sending students home from school for health concerns.

Students are to stay home from school if they have:

- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Temperature of 100.0 (per Lower Merion School District policy) or higher. Student must not return to school until they have been fever free for 24hrs.
- Positive throat culture for strep throat. Student may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment and the student is fever free.
- Presence of lice or nits in hair. Students must be rechecked prior to returning to classes and bring in a note from a nurse or doctor confirming they are cleared to return to class.
- Pink-eye symptoms
- Severe headache, severe earache, severe or persistent abdominal pain
- Rash suspected to be contagious
- Wheezing/coughing episode which is not relieved by prescribed medication
- Injuries which require medical attention
- Severe emotional concerns
- Please notify the office immediately if your child contracts a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, or head lice, so that necessary medical advice can be made available to the parent body.

- Please be sure your emergency records are up to date so that we may contact you if there is a problem. In case of emergency and parents cannot be reached, it is our procedure to call 911 and take the child to the nearest hospital. We will contact your personal physician whenever possible, and attempt to reach you as soon as possible.
- If a child is to be excused from physical education activities or recess, or must remain indoors, a note signed by the parent must be presented to the office.
- Each child is required to have on file in the school office a current Emergency and Medical Authorization Form which lists people to contact in case of emergency and allows us to deal with an urgent situation. Please send this form to the office as soon as possible. In the event your child becomes ill at school, and it is deemed necessary that s/he be sent home, the school will contact you or those listed by you on the Emergency Form and request that your child be taken home. **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make arrangements for child care in the event a child develops signs of communicable disease or other illness/injury that prevent the child from functioning in class.**
- Required lice checks will be performed prior to the opening of school and after every major vacation.

#### **Treatment of School Related Injuries**

The office staff takes care of minor injuries (scrapes, insect bites, bruises, bumps etc.) with cold compresses, ice, antibiotic ointment, or band-aids as the need arises. Parents will be notified about minor injuries at the discretion of the Administration. Parents may be called to ask permission for administration of acetaminophen or the like. When confronted with an injury that needs further attention, our staff will make every effort to address the child's needs and make contact with parents. In an emergency, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. It is the

responsibility of parents to update school medical information (allergic reaction to medication, inoculation etc.). A form with this information should be returned to the office for each student.

#### **REPORT CARDS**

Parents of students in grades 3Y-8 will receive report cards on a trimester basis. Ends of trimesters are noted on the school calendar. Please note that report cards/transcripts/diplomas are not released unless all financial obligations to Torah Academy are met.

#### **The Marking Guidelines for Grades 1-5 are:**

E: Exceeds Expectations

M: Meets Expectations

I: Inconsistently Meets Expectations

N: Needs Improvement

#### **The Marking Guidelines for Grades 6-8 are:**

97-100: A+    93-96: A    90-92: A-

87-89: B+    83-86: B    80-82: B-

77-79: C+    73-76: C    70-72: C-

60-69: D    0-59: F

Grade averages below 60 will be given an incomplete and students are expected to exert effort by a clear deadline to complete the work, retake a test, etc. to achieve a passing grade. Incompletes change to an "F" following the deadline.

Students who do not pass a particular class may- at the discretion of the administration- be permitted to advance to the next year on academic probation and/or be required to take a summer course or independent study class in order to achieve a passing grade. Promotion to the next grade is based on performance. If a student does not meet TA's academic and behavioral standards, every effort will be made to guide parents to internal and external resources that will help foster improvement.

#### **Graduation Requirements for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students:**

1. Students have passed all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade courses
2. Students have completed a service learning project successfully



3. Students have attendance rate of 90% or better
4. Students demonstrate derech erez.
5. Students have earned the required score or better on a test of *Yediot Klaliyot*.

### **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES:**

There will be two Parent/teacher conferences per a year. Reminder notices will be sent home for you to schedule your appointments. Please make sure to be timely as other parents holding later appointments will be kept waiting. Should you desire a longer conference, please let your child's teacher know and a mutual date/time will be selected.

### **TEFILLAH:**

All students at TA will participate in daily Tefillah (prayer). Their participation will be reflected on report cards. We are committed to developing our students' Tefillah skills along with a deep and personal connection to the art and acts of Jewish prayer, and this is reflected in our curriculum as well as during Tefillah time. Minyan for boys Grades 6-8 takes place daily in the Beit Midrash. Girls in Grades 6-8 join the minyan on Mondays and Fridays.

### **STANDARD TESTS:**

Standard tests are administered annually. In General Studies, we administer the achievement test for grades 3-8. In Judaic Studies, we administer Kriyah (Grade 1-3), Chumash (Grade 2-8), and Ivrit (grade 6-8) tests in order to monitor progress in the curriculum. In primary grades, we use the DIBELS and GMATs to monitor reading and math.

### **MIDOT TOVOT/Character Development:**

Our goal is to create a caring, respectful learning community in cooperation with parents, students and teachers. Our curriculum is infused with the values of character development and Derech Eretz—proper conduct and acquiring midot tovot. These values are emphasized in both the Judaic and General Studies academic programs.

### **CLASSROOM VISITATION:**

Parents are welcome to visit classrooms by making prior arrangements with the classroom teacher. Please do not bring young children with you as they will disrupt the classroom.

### **PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP: TEAM MEETINGS AND MEETING STUDENTS' NEEDS**

Torah Academy values and encourages involvement from our parents as we work to meet the needs of every student. As part of the planning process, parents, teachers and administrators will constantly be involved in assessing student achievement.

Torah Academy has formed a Grade Level Team (GLT) to be pro-active to examine and propose interventions for a student who is experiencing academic, behavioral or emotional difficulties. This team usually consists of the student's teacher, an administrator, the school counselor and support personnel from the school. The student and parent(s) also comprise part of the GLT team.

### **ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT**

Torah Academy's core academic program is intensive and enriched. However, we recognize that there are some students who require even more to be properly challenged. To meet the needs of these students, Torah Academy will – whenever possible – provide a range of services, including accelerated programming and/or accelerated class sections in selected academic areas. This will be above and beyond the normal challenge work provided within the classroom. It will include both teacher directed and independent learning activities (including homework). It will focus on high level critical thinking, reading and/or math comprehension, and research/communication skills in both Judaic and General Studies. This is intended for students working significantly above their grade level in a particular area.

In our Middle School (Grades 6-8) we offer multiple sections in Talmud, math, and Hebrew language classes based on the needs of the students. Thus, many students identified as “gifted and talented” are able to have their needs met by being assigned to the class that best meets their ability.

In grades 1-5, Enrichment clusters are possible for all students.

For more information please contact Mrs. Elena Obstfeld, our school wide Enrichment Coordinator.

### **SCHOOL TRIPS:**

Field trips compliment the school curriculum and will occur periodically throughout the year. Parents will be notified well in advance that the field trip will be taking place. One permission slip, which covers all trips during the academic year, will be on file in the school office so that it will not be necessary for a permission slip to be signed before each trip. All school policies, including dress code, are in effect when on a school trip. The attire of parents who are invited to come on school outings should adhere to the school’s standards.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR TEAMS/ACTIVITIES**

In order to remain eligible for representing Torah Academy on athletic teams students must maintain at least a C- average, good behavioral record, and good attendance in each and every class. Our Athletic Director will check eligibility before each game. Students who fall below this standard will not be permitted to participate. Students who are absent may not play in a game or practice. This includes Sunday school.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM:**

Students are expected to always be honest, including in academic issues. Copying from other children or turning in someone else’s work as their own, talking or sharing materials during quizzes/tests, etc. are all examples of cheating.

Students may never copy directly from printed material or from the Internet and then submit it to

a teacher as their own work. Depending on the severity of the situation and the age of the child, consequences for academic dishonesty may include (but are not limited to): a “zero” on the assignment, need to re-do an assignment, mandatory parent-teacher-administrator conference, or loss of privileges.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING**

When school must be canceled due to inclement weather, an announcement will be broadcast on email and text services.

When an unanticipated snowstorm or emergency necessitates the mid-day closing of school, parents will be contacted at the daytime phone number listed on the family emergency card.

### **Lower Merion Residents please note:**

The Lower Merion school district closing/delay number is 302. When Lower Merion schools announce a one or two hour delay in opening, buses for students will be delayed accordingly.

### **FOOD AND HEALTH AT T.A.**

#### **KASHRUT**

In order to maintain a uniform standard of Kashrut, we ask that families adhere to the following guidelines.

- Food sent to school should bear one of the following certifications:



- Please inquire from the *Menahel* about other certifications and he will work with the rabbinic advisory committee to clarify the matter.
- So that all students may participate, Cholev Yisrael dairy products are to be served at events that include the class.
- Homemade food may not be distributed at school.

- Utensils may not be brought from home for public use at school.
- Pre-cut fruit, if not under rabbinic supervision, should not be served to the class.
- Please do not bring in for whole class use strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, figs, dates, cauliflower, broccoli or lettuce as they are too difficult to check for bugs in the limited amount of time we have available.

Please see our allergies sections below for important information!

In addition to time for lunch, students have opportunities to eat snacks sent from home. In preparing lunch, please keep in mind that there are no facilities for refrigeration or heating. *Drinks in glass containers should not be brought to school.*

Cholov Yisroel milk is provided to children with dairy or pareve lunches. **Early Childhood** classes also receive a snack in the morning and in the afternoon. **Please notify your child's teachers and the educational office of any food allergies or restrictions in writing.**

Parents will be notified when lunch will be sold by the PTO or other groups.

*For younger children (age 7 and under):*

We recommend that you do not send the following items in your child's lunch. Although your child may handle these foods well at home, they are considered a choking hazard in the larger, classroom setting.

- Grapes
- Caramels
- Raisins
- Gushers
- Popcorn
- Fruit roll ups
- Hard candy
- Nuts or seeds
- Laffy Taffy
- Olives
- Raw carrots

### **ALLERGIES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Torah Academy will make every effort to accommodate children with food allergies. After consultation with our medical consultants and the

Lower Merion School District, the following policy is now in effect.

1) Parents of children with allergies need to provide the school with written documentation from their doctor that details the allergy, the extent of the allergy (whether it's only by ingestion or even by contact, and if the student's life may be in danger) as well as an action plan in case of an allergic reaction.

2) In classrooms with children with life threatening allergies to peanuts, nuts or eggs, the classroom will be a "peanut/tree nut free zone" and/or "egg free zone" (e.g. raw or cooked plain egg, although other products with eggs included as an ingredient- such as baked goods- would not be forbidden). Nobody will be allowed to bring products containing the designated product(s) into the classroom (unless they are closed in their book bag). Other allergies will be handled on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the administration

3) In Grades 3-8, where children eat in the lunchroom, a table or portion of the table will be designated as a relevant allergy table. Please note that with permission of the doctor and parents, children can sit at their class table.

4) We ask parents of children with allergies to sign a waiver acknowledging that Torah Academy, its faculty and staff, are not responsible for any medical problems (including allergic reactions) that result from their child being in a main stream school. Although we will make every effort to accommodate the needs of the children, there is no way that Torah Academy can guarantee that the school, a classroom or any other area is truly free of any allergen of any kind.

We understand that some aspects of this policy may be inconvenient for children who do not have allergies. However, in issues of sakana (danger), we cannot be lenient with the health needs of the children in our school.

### **HEALTHY FOOD AND SNACKS:**

TA strives to educate our students about healthy

eating habits at every grade level. Snack time is provided in the morning and afternoon for all grades. Please make sure to send healthy snacks that do not contain excessive sugar or any caffeine. Sugar filled sweet foods hamper classroom performance. Please choose a variety of fruits, vegetables, or other healthy snacks and drinks.

Our school believes in eating in moderation for all types of foods. We are also very conscious of the effects that poor eating habits have on our students. To this end:

**Please do NOT send children to school with caffeinated or heavily sugared beverages such as soda, coffee, or Gatorade. Students will not be allowed to drink any form of soda at school.**

**Chewing gum is never allowed in school.**

#### **HEALTH RELATED PROCEDURES:**

The goals of Health Services are to detect specific health problems at an early stage and to facilitate their resolution. Programs include growth, vision, hearing, scoliosis, dental screenings, and physical examinations of all pupils upon admission and again in sixth grade. The Lower Merion district school nurse visits Torah Academy each week to conduct health screenings and to update students' medical forms. State law mandates that medical forms for each student be updated annually and filed at school (See note on Immunizations.). Annual screening tests for vision and hearing are conducted at school, as well as screening for scoliosis at the appropriate age. *As a representative of the state Health Department, the nurse may require that a child not attend school if their records/immunizations are not up to date as required by law.*

Chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and behavior disorders must be reported to the administration and the nurse. Please notify us and send in doctor's instructions if your child is injured, hospitalized or seen at an Emergency Room. When medically recommended, students with such conditions may receive long-term

medications in school provided their parents comply with the School Health Services policy. Short-term medications are not normally dispensed in school. The parent must fill out the necessary forms if a medication needs to be taken at any time during the year even if this is only in sporadic situations.

Please do not give students medicine to carry around with them. The medicine could be lost, stolen or misused by their peers. If your child takes medicine, parents are required to provide the signed LMSD form (a copy is available in our office) to the educational office, which authorizes medicine to be dispensed at school.

All medication taken by the student will be monitored by a staff member. The staff will ensure that the medication is stored and secured; therefore, all medication must be brought to the office. No medication is to be stored in the classroom.

Please note that Torah Academy offers this service as a convenience to parents. Torah Academy and its staff cannot be held liable for loss of medication, forgetting to administer medication, side effects to medication or accidental improper administering of medication.

#### **SMOKING**

Smoking is forbidden on the campus (indoors and out) of Torah Academy.

### **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

#### **SECURITY AT TA:**

The Torah Academy School staff takes every possible precaution to ensure the safety of every student. Exterior doors are locked during the school day. No one is permitted access to any part of the building without permission from the office and the issuance of a visitor's pass. Any parent or visitor who does not have a pass will be referred to the office. School staff is assigned to supervise students in the yard.

All students are required to be supervised by an adult at all times.

At no time may a student leave campus without a supervising adult. At no time may students be in “restricted” areas of the building (e.g. roof, boiler room, etc.) where their safety- or the safety of others- would be in jeopardy. Violation of these rules may result in a suspension from school.

### **VISITORS**

Torah Academy welcomes parents to visit the school. For safety reasons, parents and visitors must enter the building from the parking lot on Wynnewood Road and will be greeted at the attended security desk. Every person without exception must sign in. A visitor pass will be issued.

Parents may not visit their child’s classroom unannounced. This disrupts the classroom routine. Parents who wish to visit classes in session are welcomed to schedule an appointment with the teacher who will gladly setup a time for your visit.

Lunches, projects, homework, and the like that are delivered to the school should be left at the security desk. Written messages for children may also be left at the security desk.

Children, other than those applying for admission to Torah Academy, may visit T.A. during the school day with prior permission from a member of the administrative team. Parents of visitors will need to provide a signed release and emergency contact information.

### **MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS:**

Please refrain from calling the school to leave messages for individual students, except in the case of an emergency. Delivering messages is disruptive to the classroom.

### **CUSTODY AND OTHER LEGAL PAPERS:**

A copy of relevant, current legal papers should be brought to the office where they will be safely filed. It is assumed that both parents listed on the record card and school application in the office

have custody of the student unless otherwise notified. Legal papers, not verbal information, are required by the school in special situations.

### **FIRE/ LOCK DOWN**

Drills are held regularly at Torah Academy. Each drill is an important practice so that everyone is prepared in the event of an actual emergency. Students are to conduct themselves in a silent and orderly way during a drill and treat each drill as if it were an actual evacuation due to a real fire or other emergency. *Because of the serious nature of these drills, students who are disruptive during drills may be suspended for one day.*

### **VIDEOS/PICTURES OF STUDENTS**

There may be situations at school or on school-related activities that students are part of pictures that are taken. These pictures may be used in school publicity and/or on our web site (without names). If a parent/caregiver objects to their child being in such pictures, they must notify the school office.

### **CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY:**

Students are responsible for the proper care of school property. Students are responsible for the care, maintenance and timely return of all textbooks and for proper care of the T.A. building, furnishings, etc. Students and/or their parents will be assessed for lost or damaged textbooks and/or property.

### **REPORTING OF ABUSE**

In accordance with the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it is the policy of Torah Academy of Greater Philadelphia that- as mandated reporters- staff members who have a reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or endangered are required to report without delay to the proper legal authorities.

### **OUTSIDE RESOURCES**

#### **Intermediate Unit**

Private schools in Montgomery County have access to a range of health – related services under the auspices of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (I.U.). Referrals to the

professionals of the Intermediate Unit for evaluation of a student are at the discretion of the administration, in consultation with parents and teachers. A parent who is interested in obtaining these services for their child, should contact the Director of Student Needs.

## **SCHOOL CLIMATE**

### **PARTIES:**

Birthdays are exciting events and offer children the opportunity to celebrate with their peers. Parents of *Early Childhood* students are encouraged to celebrate the child's birthday with the class. Parents bring in a special treat (no soda, please). Inexpensive, age appropriate non-food "goodie bags" are permitted (though not required), as long as they conform to the school's Kashrut policies. Please consult with the classroom teacher in advance when planning such a party. A gift to the classroom in honor of the child's birthday such as a book or toy makes the day very special.

Beginning in First Grade, children do not have class parties. However, they may make arrangements with their teacher to bring a special treat to school at lunch time. If you are using the school as a party location, please email [hberman@taphila.org](mailto:hberman@taphila.org) for pricing and availability.

### **CLOSED CAMPUS:**

TA is a closed campus school. Students are not allowed to leave the grounds during the school day.

### **RECESS:**

Recess is a vital part of a child's social and emotional development, as well as a welcome break from long stretches of class study. Students in all grades will have appropriate break times during both Judaic Studies and General Studies classes.

**All recess times are monitored by multiple teachers and supervisors.**

### **DRESS CODE:**

The Torah Academy dress code exists to foster a positive, distraction-free learning environment. In keeping with this, all students are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to the spirit of a Jewish Day School and *Makom Torah*. Torah Academy's technical standards of *tzniut* were determined in collaboration with our Rabbinic Advisory Board to be as considerate as possible to a diverse community.

Students should adhere to the following guidelines during school hours, school events, field trips and any after school activities, unless otherwise instructed by a teacher or administrator.

### ***For students in the Early Childhood Program (3Y through Kindergarten):***

Suitable clothing is essential for your child to feel completely free and happy during the day. Teachers recommend light comfortable clothes, closed shoes so children can run and jump, and clothes that can get messy. Please remove drawstrings from jacket and sweatshirt hoods as they can be hazardous. Boys should wear tzitzit and a kippah. Mondays through Fridays your child should come in "play clothes". They should not be worrying about keeping spotless. On Fridays, however, if your child is the Shabbos Abba or Ema, they may wear special clothes.

As all children must be completely toilet trained, "pull ups" are not acceptable.

### ***For students in Grades 1-8, the dress code is as follows:***

#### **Boys wear:**

In addition to Kippot and Tzitzit, boys wear:

- Collared, button down dress shirts or button down polo shirts. Buttons (other than the top button) are to be closed.
- Sweatshirts or sweaters over dress code approved shirts are permitted.
- T-shirts are not permitted.
- Shirts should be long enough so that the entire stomach and back are covered even when hands are raised.

- Solid colored, straight leg dress or corduroy pants (not sweats or denim) that are free of writing or pictures. Baggy pants are not acceptable.
- Footwear includes socks with shoes or sneakers. Sneakers are required for gym. Please note that sandals or “cros” are not permitted due to safety issues.
- Baseball-style hats are permitted outside only.
- Jewelry and/or shoulder length or unkempt hair are not permitted.

#### **Girls wear:**

- Collared, button down dress shirts, button down polo shirts or turtleneck shirts. Buttons (other than the top) are to be closed. Shirts and blouses should cover the collar bone.
- T-shirts are not permitted.
- Beginning in 4<sup>th</sup> grade sleeves are at least up to the elbows. Shirts may not be tight fitting or see through. Sleeveless are permitted so that sleeves are of sufficient length.
- Shirts should be long enough so that the entire stomach and back are covered even when hands are raised.
- Sweatshirts or sweaters over dress code approved shirts are permitted.
- Skirts are solid colored (not denim), free of writing or pictures.
- Skirts cover the knees when sitting and standing. Skirts may not be tight fitting. They are to be single color. “Slits” may not reach the knee.
- Footwear includes socks with shoes or sneakers (Sneakers are required for gym.). Sandals or “cros” are not permitted due to safety issues.
- Baseball-style hats are permitted outside only.
- Make up is not permitted.

Parents will be notified of dress code violations and the student will not be admitted to class until appropriate clothing is brought to school. We will

also keep a variety of school-appropriate clothing for students to change into for the remainder of the day to relieve parents from having to come to school, if possible. Borrowed school clothes must be laundered at home and returned to the school the next day.

#### **LOCKERS:**

- Lockers are provided for middle school students in grades Six, Seven and Eight.
- Lockers are to be kept neat and orderly and may be checked periodically.
- Teachers and administrators may open lockers to inspect, deliver items, etc.
- Expensive and/or irreplaceable possessions should not be brought to school. The school does not accept responsibility for items which are brought to school.

#### **NON-SCHOOL ITEMS**

We strive to create a distraction free environment in our school.

Students must not bring:

- 1 Cell Phones and iPods – Please note that cell phones and/or iPods must remain turned off and in a child’s bag during school hours. If the cell phone or ipod is noticed by a teacher it will be held until picked up by a parent. At that point, the phone or iPod will not be allowed on campus at all.
- 2 Dangerous objects of any kind, including even toy weapons.
- 3 CD players, radios, headphones, portable stereos, video games, cameras, flashlights, etc. are not allowed on campus. This includes times before and after school hours.
- 4 Inappropriate books or magazines.
- 5 Cards or electronic games of any kind.
- 6 Smart Watches are not allowed.

If any of these items are brought on campus, the items will be held and returned only to the students’ parents, who must pick them up.

#### **LOST AND FOUND:**

Student possessions found on the premises are

generally turned into the security desk where they are placed in a box labeled “Lost and Found”.

Every trimester, unclaimed items are turned over to charity. Please check the security desk regularly for missing items.

### **COMMUNICATION IS KEY:**

An effective system of communication is the sign of a healthy school system. An effective process allows for questions and concerns to be addressed in the quickest and most efficient manner. When a concern arises, please contact your child’s teacher first by calling the school. All teachers will do their utmost to return your call promptly.

If, after talking to the teacher, a concern still exists please contact the appropriate administrator. Our Communication Guide has all of the contact information you will need.

The official school newsletter will be distributed to all families weekly via email. A hard copy will also be given to each family (via their youngest child’s backpack). In the newsletter you will find up-to-date information on all school happenings.

Remember, we want to hear from you as well! The office is open from 8:00 AM. to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 AM to 3:45 PM on Friday (1 PM on Short Fridays).

Our school website is [taphila.org](http://taphila.org) and carries our newsletter and other important information. Please make sure to visit it regularly!

### **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS:**

#### **Rights and Responsibilities In Our School:**

*In our school:*

- 1) Everyone has the right to be safe (their bodies, their property and their feelings).
- 2) Everyone has the right to be respected.
- 3) Everyone has the right to be treated fairly.
- 4) Everyone has the right to learn.
- 5) Everyone has the right to a clean and neat school.

*The rights that we all enjoy result in all of us having specific responsibilities:*

- 1) Everyone has the responsibility to be in the right place at the right time, and to be with an adult.
- 2) Everyone has the responsibility to do their best to resolve conflicts by talking through appropriate dialogue.
- 3) Everyone has the responsibility to be kind and considerate towards others.
- 4) Everyone has the responsibility to participate respectfully in class, and to follow the instructions of the adults in school.
- 5) Everyone has the responsibility to be honest and to talk respectfully to others (both adults and children).
- 6) Everyone has the responsibility to act in a safe manner at all times.
- 7) Everyone has the responsibility to clean up after themselves and not damage the property of others or our building property – either individual or communal.
- 8) Everyone has the responsibility to learn from their mistakes and plan for a new start.

Please note: Fighting is never tolerated and may result in suspension or expulsion.

Swearing is not accepted in Torah Academy. Students who swear are immediately sent home for the remainder of the day.

As with all school rules, the faculty and administration will enforce these rules in an age appropriate, loving, caring, fair and consistent manner. While Torah Academy’s discipline procedures progress in a logical sequence, some behavioral issues may require skipping some stages, or a modification of standard procedures.

#### **Bullying**

Torah Academy takes bullying and/or harassment allegations seriously. If and when an allegation of bullying occurs, we are careful and thoughtful as to how we proceed. We always do a thorough investigation (including meeting with those involved and potential witnesses) since accusations of bullying have gravity and can be harmful to victims, bystanders and alleged bullies. After such an investigation, students who repeatedly initiate behavior that makes others



physically or emotionally unsafe, will be subject to disciplinary interventions. Sometimes there are one-time incidents which seem like bullying but may instead be fights or peer conflicts. Sometimes younger children's behavior may appear to be bullying when it is, in fact, not since bullying is always purposeful. But interpreting these behaviors is part of the investigative process. Bullying or harassment is defined as a pattern of *words or actions* that occur over time and cause another student to have their emotional or physical safety placed at risk. *Students who display such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including (as noted above) immediate suspension, indefinite suspension or permanent expulsion from school.*

Violating this expectation undermines one's part of the Torah Academy community. Thank you for assisting us in protecting your children's privacy.

Bullying is evidenced when a student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students. This behavior may be in the forms of physical, verbal or nonverbal actions.

**Examples of Direct Bullying:**

Physical - hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting  
 Verbal - taunting, teasing, racial slurs, verbal sexual harassment  
 Non-Verbal - threatening, obscene gestures

**Examples of Indirect Bullying:**

Physical - getting another person to assault someone  
 Verbal - spreading rumors  
 Non-Verbal - deliberate exclusion from a group or activity

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Torah Academy views confidentiality as critically important. Our faculty and staff will not discuss children in public venues with parents, nor will they discuss children with anyone else other than their parents or teachers. It is very important for parents and students to assist us in maintaining everyone's confidentiality. Please do not discuss confidential matters in a public venue. In addition, it is very important that the school, its personnel, board and students are never discussed on internet sites such as Facebook, Instagram, etc.