

Talmud Torah of Minneapolis



PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

2019-2020, 5780

Hazzan Jeremy Lipton, Head of School
Steve Gilfix & Sandy Sondell, Board Co-Presidents

www.talmudtorahmpls.org • 952-381-3300 • Contactus@talmudtorahmpls.org

Barry Family Community Campus, 4330 South Cedar Lake Road, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Hazzan Jeremy Lipton – Head of School

- Phone: 952-381-3306
- Email: jlipton@talmudtorahmpls.org

Barb Yanish – Director of Finance

- Email: byanish@talmudtorahmpls.org

Deborah McCann – Bookkeeping

- Phone: 952-381-3303
- Email: dmccann@talmudtorahmpls.org

K ay Lipton – Administrative Coordinator

- Phone: 952-381-3300
- Email: klipton@talmudtorahmpls.org

Shoshana Mann – Marketing and Communications

- Email: smann@talmudtorahmpls.org

Michelle Parks – Sha’arim Coordinator and Student Services

- Email: mparks@talmudtorahmpls.org

Jeanne Astren – Tutor Coordinator

- Email: jastren@comcast.net

Faculty Contact Information: www.talmudtorahmpls.org/our-staff

Web: www.talmudtorahmpls.org

Please find current office hours on the contact page on our website
www.talmudtorahmpls.org/contact

MISSION & VISION

OUR MISSION:

Talmud Torah of Minneapolis, the school of Adath Jeshurun and Beth El congregations, engages students of all backgrounds in educational experiences that provide a foundation and the lifelong tools for living an intentionally Jewish life.

OUR VISION:

To be a thriving school that offers a curriculum relevant to our students and their families, that inspires a commitment to Torah and Jewish living and that builds a deeper connection with the land of Israel and all Jewish people.

SEVEN OUTCOMES FOR OUR TALMUD TORAH STUDENTS

At Talmud Torah, we provide our students with a solid and well-rounded Jewish education. Our curriculum has been designed with the intent of giving our students the knowledge and experience they need in order to:

1. Take pride in being Jewish and develop a strong Jewish identity
2. Participate in and perform rituals and traditions in a synagogue and at home
3. Feel a connection and sense of responsibility to *Klal Israel* (the Jewish people) and all of Humanity.
4. Live their lives according to Jewish ethics and values
5. Create a deep love for and connection to the land of Israel
6. Become intellectually confident about the core beliefs, philosophy and theology of Judaism and their relevance to their lives
7. Inspire them to pursue life-long Jewish learning, and possess the basic skills necessary to do so.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Talmud Torah of Minneapolis is over 125 years old. We serve students in grades 2 through 8. There are two divisions: Elementary School for grades 2-5 and Middle School for grades 6-8.

Talmud Torah operates with a Board of Directors made up of individual lay-leaders from Adath Jeshurun Congregation and Beth El Synagogue, as well as Clergy and Executive Directors from both synagogues and the Head of School of Talmud Torah. There are also several subcommittees of the board, including a finance committee, a fundraising committee and a family connections committee.

For the upcoming school year 2019-2020, Steve Gilfix and Sandy Sondell are the Co-Presidents of the board.

STRUCTURE OF TALMUD TORAH

Elementary Division - Grades 2-5

Bet (2nd Grade), Gimel (3rd Grade), Dalet (4th Grade), and Hey (5th Grade)

- Sunday 9 am – 12 pm and Wednesday 4 – 6 pm OR
- Tuesday and Thursday, 4 – 6:30 pm

Middle School Division - Grades 6-8

Vav (6th Grade)

Monday and Wednesday, 6 – 8 pm OR

Tuesday and Thursday, 4:30 – 6:30 pm

Zayin (7th Grade)

Monday and Wednesday, 6 – 8 pm OR

Wednesday only, 6 – 8:45 pm

Het (8th Grade)

Wednesday 6 – 8:45 pm

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Talmud Torah is dedicated to student learning. The process of education requires continuity of instruction from trained professionals, classroom contact, and participation with peers. In order for students to get the most out of their Jewish education and to maximize their social integration, regular attendance is critical. We expect Talmud Torah students to attend at least 70% of all class sessions, barring extenuating circumstances.

ABSENCES

- Parents are expected to notify the school in advance when a student will be absent from class. This may be done by calling 952-381-3300, or by sending an email to Klipton@talmudtorahmpls.org. The office will then notify the appropriate teacher(s).
- Attendance is taken by teachers during each class. We share information about individual students' attendance with their Synagogues.
- Students are responsible for obtaining and making up any missed work. The information covered in class on a particular day, as well as any homework assignments, are posted by each teacher on your FACTS ParentsWeb portal. Good communication between students, parents and teachers will help ensure that students keep up to date with the material being learned by their classmates.

ARRIVING LATE/LEAVING EARLY

- If a student needs to leave early, please notify the office in advance. This may be done by calling the school office at 952-381-3300, or by sending a note with the student, or sending an email to klipton@talmudtorahmpls.org. The office will then notify the appropriate teacher(s).
- Parents must come into the Talmud Torah/HMJDS Main Office to pick up a student early. Students will NOT be sent to any exit door on their own. Students may not leave the building unsupervised under any circumstance. For more information about picking up your student early, please see the section on Drop Off and Pick Up Policies.

DISCIPLINE

The school's discipline policy is intended to help prevent and control student behavior problems by coordinating the schools' disciplinary procedures and by informing students about the types of behavior that are expected of them and about the types that are forbidden. We strive to create an

environment in which positive behaviors are encouraged and reinforced. At the point when a child's behavior becomes disruptive, asocial and/or destructive enough to impede their learning or the learning of other children, teachers and administration will follow the Progressive Disciplinary Policy (PDP). Below is our Student Code of Conduct including the minimal behavioral expectations of our students followed by the PDP.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT: PROPER RESPECT PRECEDES THE STUDY OF TORAH

As a school community, we strive to create an atmosphere that promotes the Jewish values we teach and cherish. In order to do so in a positive and growth-oriented manner, we have developed a set of guidelines for behavioral expectations for students at Talmud Torah. They clearly state what our values are, and clarify what the consequences will be if our school community is disrupted. Below are the guiding principles on which students are to conduct themselves.

TREAT OTHERS WITH RESPECT

- Students should speak to their classmates, faculty, and staff courteously and with appropriate language and behavior.
- Harassment of any kind—verbal, physical, or sexual—will not be tolerated.
- Interpersonal conflicts must be resolved in a non-aggressive manner.

THE MITZVAH OF STUDYING TORAH: TREAT LEARNING WITH RESPECT

- Students should arrive to class on time and ready to work.
- Students may not create situations (verbally or behaviorally) that disrupt or prevent teachers from teaching, or their classmates from learning.

TREAT PROPERTY (PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL) WITH RESPECT

- Students must be aware of their surroundings and not cause any purposeful damage to the Talmud Torah facility, books, displays, furniture, etc.
- Damaging the personal property of fellow students and/or faculty is prohibited.
- Stealing of property or ideas (cheating and plagiarism) is forbidden.

TREAT PEOPLE'S SAFETY WITH RESPECT

- No potentially dangerous objects or weapons are allowed anywhere on campus.
- The use or possession of drugs or alcohol is forbidden, as is smoking tobacco or the use of e-cigarettes.
- Harassment or physical altercations will not be tolerated.
- Once on campus, students may not leave until dismissal time without parental consent.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY POLICY

For a first offense, the student is given a verbal reminder by the teacher, making the student aware that what they are doing is against policy. If there is a second occurrence, the student is given a verbal warning by the teacher, and the parents are notified. A third incident will result being sent to the Head of School and/or Michelle Parks, Sha'arim Coordinator, who will work with the teacher, student and parent(s) as necessary to determine an appropriate course of action.

Based on the seriousness of the offense, Talmud Torah reserves the right to determine what steps to take, including the right to suspend or expel the student. Should this occur, tuition will not be refunded. Students and parents will be held financially responsible for any property damage that a student may cause.

Students who feel they are being treated unfairly or with disrespect are encouraged to speak with their teacher(s) (or have their parents do so) so that the issues can be appropriately resolved. The Head of School is always available to speak with any student and/or parent. Everyone deserves the right to be heard and be taken seriously.

KASHRUT/FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- Many students have food allergies. Some of these allergies may be truly life-threatening. In addition, many parents have concerns about their children eating a healthy and balanced diet. Talmud Torah is a Kosher facility, which ensures that families of all levels of religious observance can be comfortable eating here. For all these reasons, we strongly discourage bringing food into Talmud Torah. For students who are hungry and thirsty, Talmud Torah sells limited snacks and beverages, all of which are certified Kosher.
- Any snacks or beverages brought into Talmud Torah must bear a Kosher certification on the label. Remember, there are many ways to recognize and celebrate a student's birthday or other special occasions without involving food. If you wish to send food for a class, you must first get permission from the teacher, who will inform you about allergy limitations and suggest acceptable options for the class.
- **Students are not allowed to use the vending machines in the building during school hours.**

KIPPOT/HEAD COVERING

The wearing of a head covering reminds us that God is always with us. Our tradition also requires us to cover our heads while praying or studying sacred texts. The wearing of a kippah also shows respect for one's studies, and for the sacredness of space. Boys are required to wear kippot while at Talmud Torah, and girls are strongly encouraged to do so as well. Teachers may, at their discretion, allow alternative forms of head covering during certain studies, but only kippot may be worn during prayer, sacred studies, assemblies and in the Bet Knesset.

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Talmud Torah will supply all necessary textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets for each student. **If a book is lost, the family will be responsible for the cost of replacement.** For the 2019-2020 school year, Talmud Torah will provide new and gently used school supplies to all Talmud Torah classes. It is a good idea for students to keep a kippah at school, marked with their name, in a plastic bag, placed in the container with the rest of their school supplies. Parents are asked to make certain that students bring the necessary books, materials and kippah each day their student(s) come to school. On occasion, students may be asked to bring additional items to class for special projects. In such instances, parents and students will be notified in advance.

TECHNOLOGY/HAND-HELD ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Talmud Torah is at the forefront of many exciting ways to integrate technology into Jewish education. We are proud to have smart-boards, a computer lab, Wi-fi access, tablets and more. Yet, technology has its time and place, and in an educational setting if it is not part of the teacher's lesson plan, it becomes disruptive and distracting. **The use of cell phones and other hand-held electronic devices in any form (texting, calling, photographing, etc.) is forbidden during school time.** If parents need to communicate with their children, we ask that they please contact the school office and someone will deliver the message. Cell phones used during school will be confiscated until the end of the day and then returned to students. No roller blades, bats, balls, electronic games, iPads, tablets, toys or other similar items are permitted at school. Any item extraneous to our purpose may be confiscated by the teacher or administration for the duration of school day.

VISITORS

Parents are invited to visit any class at any time; however, **we require that they inform either the teacher or the Head of School in advance of their visit and that they check-in with the school office upon arrival at school.** The office will then inform a teacher once a parent has made the request. If an unannounced parent comes to class, they will be asked to go to the office to "check-in" before going to class. Any non-parent wishing to visit class must obtain advance permission from the administration. Unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave.

STUDENT SAFETY

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND SERVICES

If a student becomes ill or is injured, staff will use reasonable judgment in determining what first aid measures can be administered. Every effort will be made to contact parents. The school cannot dispense even over-the-counter medication (e.g., Tylenol, Aspirin, etc.) without the express consent of a parent (usually by phone). If your child needs us to give prescription medicine during Talmud Torah sessions, we need both the signature of the parent and of the physician. If your child has a medical condition that may require attention or special consideration, please make note of this on the student's online application form.

SAFETY RELATED TO THE BUILDING

The school building is equipped with fire detection and alarm systems. Each classroom has a map that shows the appropriate evacuation route to use in the event of fire or other emergency situations. Fire drills, tornado drills, and lock down drills will be held each year to make certain that everyone knows and follow the proper evacuation procedures.

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP STUDENTS

The safety of our students is of great importance to us. **It is the Campus policy that the main drop-off and pick-up occur at the lower level, north side door (# 10).** The main drop-off takes place from 3:45pm until 4:15pm on weekdays and from 8:45am until 9:15am on Sundays. After 4:15pm or 9:15am, parents will need to park in the front and walk their students in and to class. There will not be a staff member at the north door after 4:15pm during the week and after 9:15am on Sundays. On Tuesday/Thursday a staff member will return downstairs at 4:25pm until 4:35pm for 6th grade students. In order to be certain that students do not cross lanes of traffic to get to or from cars, especially during busy times and in the dark, we ask that you follow each of these steps.

DROPPING OFF PROCEDURES

- Enter the school driveway that circles around the Campus at no faster than 5 MPH.
- Follow the driveway around to the back (north) door of the Sabes JCC using the RIGHT LANE.
- Wait behind the last car and ONLY drop off your student(s) well after the crosswalk, as far eastward as you can go next to the curb, and follow the directions of the traffic assistants.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES (FOR REGULAR ENDING TIME)

- Enter the school driveway no faster than 5 MPH and pull up behind the car in line in front of you in the RIGHT LANE.
- Follow the car ahead of you until you reach the curb in front of the school, and then **move up as far as possible until the curb ends**. Please follow the directions of the traffic assistants.
- Students may be picked up only at the curb in front of the school so that students avoid crossing lanes of traffic.
- Only parents who are both dropping off and picking up students at the same time can use the left lane to come to the crosswalk and drop-off and pick-up at the same time.
- YOU MUST STAY IN YOUR CAR while waiting because this driveway is a fire lane. In this way all cars can move up quickly to load students.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WHO LEAVE BEFORE THE END OF SCHOOL

Parents who plan to pick up their student(s) early should notify the office in advance. Parents MUST come into the Talmud Torah/HMJDS office (M20) to pick up their student. **Parents who have notified the office may have their student wait for their ride in the school office. Students may not leave the building unsupervised under any circumstances.**

SCHOOL CLOSINGS DUE TO WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES

If Talmud Torah classes are canceled because of a weather-related event or other emergency, we will post relevant information on our website. Additionally, we will communicate updates and closures via email.

SCHOOL-PARENT PARTNERSHIP

It is our sincere belief that parents are our partners in the education of their children. A successful partnership requires excellent communication, as only through an open exchange of information, thoughts and ideas can we achieve our mutual goals. We are fortunate that we have a very sophisticated school management system, FACTS, to help us achieve optimal and consistent communication via the ParentsWeb portal.

COMMUNICATING WITH TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF

You may email teachers through your ParentsWeb portal account by clicking on your student's classroom tab or through the portal's school directory. Email is the quickest and surest way to initiate communication with our teachers regarding your student, assignments, issues or concerns. In addition, all administrators and other staff have email addresses that are also listed on the school directory on our website. We encourage you to contact them with any questions, concerns, compliments or ideas. Our non-teaching staff are also available to speak on the phone, so please feel free to call them at our main number, 952-381-3300.

INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

Parents will receive periodic school updates via email. Curriculum updates, information about special events, pictures and volunteer opportunities will be provided in these emails. You can also check your child's class page through the FACTS ParentsWeb portal, as well as your student's page. If you have not yet created a login for the ParentsWeb portal, you may do so [here](#) through our website. ParentsWeb will enable you to see what is happening in individual classes, as well as what was taught each day, homework assignments, attendance and behavior notices. When there is a special event at Talmud Torah, detailed information will be sent in advance of the event via email, where you will use the link to RSVP.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Teachers formally evaluate a student's progress—in writing—twice a year at the conclusion of each semester. These progress reports, which are based on performance, attendance, behavior, level of effort and other factors, are sent to the parents so that they stay well-informed about their student's academic and social/emotional growth.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

In the late fall we hold Parent-Teacher Conferences. Parents meet for approximately 15 minutes with their student's teacher(s) to have face-to-face discussions about the student's progress. These conferences are the best way for parents to learn about their student's progress and to discuss any concerns. We strongly encourage parents to take advantage of this opportunity.

HOMEWORK

You have entrusted Talmud Torah to teach your child how to read Hebrew, an essential skill if we are to achieve our joint objectives. In order for an elementary school student to become a fluent reader, he/she MUST practice. Please make sure your student does all of the reading assignments, and that you and your child allot at least 15 minutes several times a week for reading practice.

In addition, we have a very full curriculum to teach within a very limited timeframe. Therefore, teachers may periodically assign other homework projects, e.g., a few pages of reading, a vocabulary list to memorize, a short research or opinion paper, etc. You can check your ParentsWeb portal (on your student's page) at any time to learn what was covered in class on a specific day, as well as homework assignments.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

As part of our curriculum, a student's class may be involved in a field trip. Parents will be notified in advance and will be requested to complete and return a permission slip for each field trip. They may also be asked to serve as chaperones or drivers, and we would greatly appreciate a positive response. Talmud Torah also holds many assemblies, special events and family education programs throughout the year. When parents and others are invited to participate in field trips and special events, information about them will be posted on our website and sent out via email. When a program is designed to include parent-child interaction, it is important for parents to make every effort to participate. Often, our special programs need the assistance of adult volunteers, so we hope we can count on Talmud Torah parents!

RESOURCES

For additional information, please visit the following pages on our website:

Calendar & Events: www.talmudtorahmpls.org/calendar

Academics: www.talmudtorahmpls.org/academics

Board of Directors: www.talmudtorahmpls.org/board-of-directors

Get Involved: <https://www.talmudtorahmpls.org/volunteer>

Blog/News: <https://www.talmudtorahmpls.org/blog>