



# **Parent Handbook**

**2021-2022**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement .....	3
Administrative and Support Staff .....	3
General Information .....	4
General School Policies .....	5
General Parent Concerns .....	10
Academic Policies .....	14
Extra-Curricular Programs .....	17
A Final Word .....	18

## **Mission Statement**

The goal of Shalom Torah Academy is to provide a warm and rigorous educational framework for the next generation of American Jewry by offering an outstanding Judaic and General Studies education complemented by an appreciation for the Jewish heritage and a love for Torah, mitzvos, mankind and a strong connection with the Land of Israel.

Shalom Torah Academy celebrates the uniqueness of each individual and strives to enable all students and staff members to achieve their highest potential.

To help achieve this at all age levels, we aim to:

- Create a happy, secure, well-ordered and caring environment in keeping with the principles of the Torah.
- Foster self-discipline and self-esteem in all students.
- Provide a balanced and challenging General Studies curriculum that includes a broad knowledge base and the development of skills needed for successful and responsible participation in a democratic society.
- Provide opportunities for active and engaging learning while meeting the academic needs of each individual student.
- Offer a strong dual curriculum of both General and Judaic Studies
- Maintain a partnership among teachers, administration and parents.

## **Administrative and Support Staff**

### **Administrative Staff**

Head of School	Rabbi Pinchos Scharf	Ext. 110
Dean	Rabbi Eli Meir Kramer	Ext. 105
Principal	Mrs. Aviva Hoberman	Ext. 106

### **Administrative Support**

Director of Special Services	Mrs. Suri Leiter	Ext. 108
School Nurse		Ext. 113

### **Office Staff**

Secretary	Mrs. Meira Grinman-Clare	Ext. 101
Executive Administrator	Mrs. Gail Rifkin	Ext. 102
Accounts Receivable	Mrs. Sori King	Ext. 104
Accounts Payable	Mrs. Chaya Weiss	Ext. 107

# General Information

## Age Requirements

- Torah Tots 2 years old by December 31
- Nursery 3 years old by December 31, and toilet trained
- Pre-K 4 years old by December 31
- Kindergarten 5 years old by December 31

## School Schedule

Strict adherence to arrival and dismissal times is one sign of a high-performing school. These times will be strictly enforced, as part of our academic environment.

**Arrival:** The school day begins at 8:40 A.M. with students proceeding directly to their assigned classrooms, Monday through Friday.

Children may enter the building beginning at 8:35 A.M. Private vehicles are to pull up in the yellow striped area at the front of the building to discharge students. (For safety's sake, children must never exit or enter a vehicle on the driver's side). If, for some reason, a parent wishes to accompany a child into the school building, the parent must park their car in the marked stalls and walk the student in. An adult will be in the entry foyer to supervise the orderly entrance of all students into the school.

**Dismissal:** Monday through Thursday dismissal is at 4:00 P.M. Friday dismissal is at 1:30 P.M.

Parents who are picking up their children are to remain in their cars and pull to the front of the school. The first car in line must pull all the way to the end of the school at the stop sign. The next car must pull up behind it. When the car in front of you pulls away, you **MUST** move up so that cars are not blocking Amboy Road. Please watch carefully when moving your car to be sure there are no children in the fire lane. Please do not block the driving lane. A staff member will be outside to direct traffic and monitor dismissal.

Parents who are entering the school building to pick up children may do so through the **FRONT ENTRANCE** only.

As per the Fire Marshal, DO NOT park in the Fire lane in front of the building and leave your car unattended at ANY time.

Any student whose carpool has not arrived by 10 minutes after the end of dismissal (4:10 P.M. or 1:40 P.M.) will be sent to aftercare and parents will be billed \$8 per child for the service. The \$8 will be charged as soon as the student is sent to aftercare. Any child who remains in aftercare 1 hour or more beyond dismissal will be charged an additional \$10 per child per hour.

# General School Policies

## Lunch and Snacks

We will be starting the following lunch plan for this year:

- Students will be able to order lunch from our in-house caterer either on a yearly, monthly or daily basis. Specific procedures and information regarding this will be forthcoming.
- Students can bring lunch from home as long as it satisfies the following requirements:
  - No meat
  - Fish is allowed- as long as it is tuna or salmon only
  - No sharing of lunches, period
  - No nuts
  - All food must, of course, be kosher

There will be two scheduled snack times during the day when students may eat a healthy snack which they brought from home. The purpose of snack time is to provide the needed energy for students to focus and perform to their utmost.

The following guidelines pertain to all snacks brought from home:

- Snacks should be healthy and nutritious (No gum, candy, soda or drinks in glass containers). Fruits and vegetables are encouraged.
- Snacks must be wrapped and have one of the following Kosher symbols.



- As students in our school have life-threatening allergies, it is imperative that food is determined not to contain Peanuts, Tree-nuts and Sesame.

If your child has special dietary needs, please call the school office.

Chewing gum is not allowed at any time on school premises.

## School Attendance

Regular attendance in school is a prerequisite for academic achievement. Medical or other appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible. In case of an absence, please email [attendance@shalomtorah.org](mailto:attendance@shalomtorah.org) by 10:00am to notify the school and to make arrangements to obtain your child's assignments and books.

Frequent tardiness causes disruption to the class and a loss of instructional time for your child. Please help your child form regular sleep and wakeup times, as well as morning routines that lead to consistent punctuality. Frequent lateness will be noted on your child's cumulative record and will result in disciplinary measures.

Students who are absent from school without a doctor's note or administrative permission during any day of Standardized Testing week or midterms/final exams in middle school will be charged a proctor's fee of \$50 per test to make up the exam. Please check the school calendar to be sure not to schedule appointments during that time.

## School Attire

There is a school uniform policy at Shalom. Its purpose is to achieve an environment promoting self-respect and learning among our students. Students who are not in appropriate attire will not be permitted to remain in class. They will be offered a substitute garment to wear for the duration of the day. Parents will be notified. Please launder loaned garment and return to school on the next school day so that it is wearable if needed by another student.

### All students (Boys and girls) of grades 1-8:

1. Shorts may not be worn in school beginning in the first grade.
2. All shoes must have backs and be closed-toed. (No slippers, sandals, clogs, crocs, etc.)
3. Students may not dye, highlight or bleach their hair any color that does not look completely natural on them. Decisions regarding color will be made at the discretion of the administration. In general, we prefer that hair coloring of any sort be avoided.
4. Body piercing is not permitted with the exception of earrings *for girls only*.
5. Baseball caps or any other hats may be worn on field trips only and not in school.

### Uniforms are available for purchase through Lands' End as per the school guidelines (This includes sweaters, sweatshirts and fleece jackets).

Our uniform policy is as follows:

**Grades K-4 Girls:** Pleated skirt below the knee in navy  
Choice of short or long sleeved button down or collared polo shirt (logo optional) in light blue or white  
School sweater/ fleece zip up/zippered hoodie sweatshirt with STA logo

**Grades 5-8 Girls:** Pleated skirt below the knee in navy  
Long sleeved button down or collared polo shirt (logo optional) in light blue or white  
School sweater/ fleece zip up/zippered hoodie sweatshirt with STA logo

**K-8 Boys:** Navy blue pants  
Choice of short or long sleeved button down or collared polo shirt (logo optional) in light blue or white  
Optional: school sweater/ fleece zip up/ rippled hoodie sweatshirt with STA logo

### Preschool (grades N – K):

Students must wear shoes that have a closed front and back and do not easily slip off (No slippers, sandals, clogs, crocs, etc.). Parents with children in Torah tots who are being toilet trained should send crocs to school.

There is no other formal dress code for preschool/daycare.

There are periodic events/holiday programs for which we request that students dress appropriately for the occasion. (eg. Rosh Chodesh, Yom Haatzmaut). "Formal attire" requests will require students to wear a white top and dark bottom. Students will be advised as to how to dress prior to all events. For your convenience, yarmulkas and tzitzit are available for purchase from the school office. Please label all outerwear, backpacks and supplies. We can only return these items promptly if they are properly labeled.

## **Conduct and Discipline**

Shalom Torah Academy instills a sense of respect in all students. Respect for oneself, respect for others and respect for learning are all essential for the growth of our children. Teachers, administrators, staff and students are expected to treat each other with respect at all times. We openly recognize positive behaviors on the part of our students. Each child will be made aware of the rules of the school and of his/her class and will be encouraged to follow them. Please stress the importance of adhering to school-wide and classroom rules when speaking to your child. With your encouragement, our students will feel secure and confident with regard to school expectations.

Correction of inappropriate behaviors will be undertaken through discussion, instruction and provision of positive models. Positive reinforcement will be always used first.

Disruptive or inappropriate behaviors are sometimes resistant to initial interventions. In these circumstances our discipline code will be implemented. On the first day of school, a student orientation is held to review all school rules to ensure a positive experience for everyone.

Discipline is handled in one of three ways depending on the nature and the frequency of the problem. The general categories for disciplinary intervention are those to be executed in class, those that require administrative involvement and those that are met with zero-tolerance under any and all circumstances.

### **In-Class Consequences**

The teacher or the adult supervising the student at any given time will deal with less severe or initial infractions of rules.

These may include:

1. Classroom misbehavior (as defined by the rules presented by the teacher)
2. Lack of proper general school decorum in the class, halls, gym or lunchroom.
3. Non-compliance with teacher directives.

Interventions may be:

1. Conference with the student and/or a warning
2. Contact with the parents
3. Loss of classroom related privilege
4. Individualized student contract

### **Administrative Involvement**

Repeated or pattern behavior problems or severe infractions of the rules will be brought to the attention of a principal. "Severe" violations include:

1. Overt disrespect for a teacher or any adult
2. Physical fighting

3. Vandalism/ Causing damage to school property
4. Repeated tardiness to school
5. Repeated problems in classroom or school decorum
6. Cheating/Plagiarism
7. Foul language/Cursing
8. Discussion or displaying of any inappropriate material

Issues brought to the attention of a principal will be handled as follows:

- FIRST OFFENSE: Conference with the students and a possible consequence
- SECOND OFFENSE: Conference with the students, communication with the parents and a consequence
- THIRD OFFENSE: Half hour after school detention and communication with parents
- FOURTH OFFENSE: One hour after school detention and communication with parents
- FIFTH OFFENSE: Suspension *until* parents meet in person with a principal

Anecdotal records of all “severe” infractions will be entered into the student’s file.

Consequences meted out by principals may include:

1. Warning
2. Student contract/ behavior program
3. Assignment of educational value
4. Loss of school privileges (ie: trips, assemblies, special programs)
5. School service requirement

## **Zero-Tolerance**

In order to provide every child with a physically and emotionally safe school environment, certain behaviors will be met with zero-tolerance even at the first incidence. Please discuss these with your child so that they never occur. They are:

1. Behavior that threatens the security or safety of the students (eg: pulling the fire alarm, using dangerous items in school, engaging in behavior that poses a safety risk).
2. Bullying, defined as the purposeful victimization of another student in any physical or verbal manner.
3. Purposeful hiding or avoidance of detection from the supervising adult during any activity during school hours.
4. Misuse of the school computers in any way.

These infractions will be dealt with as follows:

FIRST OFFENSE: Communication with parents and a consequence

SECOND OFFENSE: Suspension from school *until* parents meet in person with a principal and a student behavior contract is agreed upon by all parties

THIRD OFFENSE: Measures to be determined by the administration may include exclusion from extra-curricular activities, extended suspension or expulsion

We ask you to review this code with your children and to join us in partnership for the best development of your children.



## **Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion**

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we will have to expel a student due to their parent's or guardian's actions. Those reasons include:

- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records
- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments

## **Supplies**

All students need to have proper supplies in order to be well prepared for school. Please provide the supplies listed for your child's grade and check supplies at least once during each marking period in order to replenish them as needed. All supplies should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Pre-school children should have a spare set of labeled clothing, including underwear and socks, in school.

## **School Property**

Students are responsible for respecting all school property, including items on loan to them for the duration of the year such as, but not limited to, lockers, desks and textbooks. Students who damage school property either willfully or through inappropriate use will be required to replace or pay for them.

### **Textbooks**

Students will be held responsible for the replacement or cost of lost or damaged textbooks. Texts vary in cost from \$65 to \$85. Students who do not return textbooks at the end of the year will not receive report cards until they are replaced or paid for. Middle School students will not be allowed to take final exams without returning their texts.

### **Computers**

The school computers, printers, iPads and Robotics kits are designated for technology instruction and for enhancing classroom learning. Students will be asked to sign a copy of our Acceptable Use Policy and comply with expectations for internet safety. All technology items must be handled carefully and with responsibility.

## **Decorum**

Whether in the hallway, the classroom or any other place in the school, with a group or alone, students are expected to:

- Walk, not run in a structured, respectful and quiet manner.
- Make sure all garbage is disposed of into waste bins.
- Listen quietly to all instructions during recess, emergency drills, trips, assemblies, and line-up.

## **Cell Phones and Electronic Equipment**

**When students arrive in school, they will have a designated location in the office where cell phones and electronic devices must be left during the school day.** These phones and electronics must be registered with the school office and may be picked up at dismissal time. Cell phones are also not to be used on any school trips. If a student is found using a cell phone or electronic device, it will be confiscated.

## **General Parent Concerns**

### **Communication**

It is important for parents to have channels of communication with the school office, administrators and teachers. We employ several methods of communication including emails, texting (Remind) and phone calls. Please make sure to check daily to see if you have received important school announcements or messages.

### **Use of Technology and Social Media Policy for Parents**

#### **Use of Social Networking and/or Other Websites**

Shalom Torah Academy uses the school website and Facebook.

Posting of private or sensitive organization, staff or prior staff, and/or enrolled or previously children/family information is prohibited. Parents must maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Social networking/media regarding parent/staff relationships are limited to Shalom Torah Academy sites and approved devices only. Staff/parent communication is limited to Shalom Torah Academy sites and personal sites, with the Designated Administrator's permission. Vulgar or abusive language, disparaging remarks or references of a disparaging manner, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive terms targeting individuals or groups is prohibited.

#### **Methods to Communicate with Staff**

Shalom Torah Academy uses the following methods of communication:

- School email
- Remind messages

Text messages sent on personal cell phones are prohibited.

#### **Information that Shalom Torah Academy may communicate electronically to parents:**

Shalom Torah Academy will communicate about illnesses, accidents, injuries, behavioral concerns, child's updates, community information, emergency closures, photographs, and unusual incidents. Shalom Torah Academy will always first attempt to contact parents by phone regarding any concerns.

Any identified breaches of Shalom Torah Academy's Policy on the Use of Technology and Social Media must be promptly reported to the Designated Administrator.

## Safety and Security

The school building was designed to meet the strictest standards for safety and security. The building has many exterior doors, but only one entrance. Other doors will be used primarily as emergency exits and cannot be used to enter the building. Parents and other visitors MUST enter through the front door, sign the visitors' log book and receive a visitor's badge which they must wear in a prominent position.

There will be periodic emergency and fire drills throughout the year. These exercises are of utmost importance so that we will all be prepared to safely evacuate our children in the event of an emergency.

There may be family issues relevant only to your family that would affect school access or pick-up for your child. Please inform us of these issues and the action we need to take in order to be able to accede to your wishes or relevant legal agreements. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

In the event of illness or other reasons for children to be picked up at other than regular dismissal time you will have to park in a parking stall and enter the building to sign out your child. If you need to have your child picked up by someone other than a parent, we must have written permission to release your child to that person and that person must present picture ID. This permission should be emailed to [attendance@shalomtorah.org](mailto:attendance@shalomtorah.org) at least 45 minutes before dismissal time, but cannot be verbal.

In the event your child will be absent, if there are any changes to your child's usual arrival or dismissal or for pre-arranged playdates please notify the office by emailing [attendance@shalomtorah.org](mailto:attendance@shalomtorah.org) at least 45 minutes before dismissal time. All playdates must be pre-arranged. Students will not be permitted to make phone calls (either on their personal cells or on the office phones) to make last minute playdate arrangements.

Please understand that these measures are in place for the protection of the children. We appreciate your cooperation in safety matters, and understanding will avoid discomfort on the part of staff members having to refuse a request to bend school policies.

## Unscheduled Early Dismissal/School Closing

In the event of an unscheduled early dismissal or for school closings, parents will be notified by a call to their home phone or by a call or text to their cell phones. To ensure that you receive these calls, please make sure that you notify the School Office of any phone number changes.

## Emergency Contact

In case of any health emergency, parents will be notified immediately. It is the responsibility of each parent to leave current business, home and cell phone numbers, as well as updated emergency numbers with the school so that you can be contacted promptly if necessary. If any of this information changes at any time, be sure to notify the school office. Emergency contacts **must** be people who are geographically available to the location of the school during the day. If we are unable to reach a parent or emergency contact person, it is our procedure to call the child's physician or the rescue squad.

## Sick Children

When parents are notified that a child is ill, arrangements must be made to pick up the child quickly. If the parent is unable to pick up the child, emergency contacts will be called. Please do not ask our office staff to make arrangements for your child to be taken home. *Just as you do not want your child to become ill, other parents do not want their children exposed to unnecessary germs or sicknesses.* Please refer to our list of symptoms below.

- Elevated temperature of 101° F or higher
- Diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Severe pain or discomfort
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck
- Discharge from nose that is not clear and thin

Once the child is symptom-free or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to him/herself or others, the child may return to school unless contraindicated by the local health department or the Department of Health.

If a child contracts a **communicable** disease (strep throat, chicken pox, etc.), that child may not return to school without a healthcare provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to him/herself or others. If a child is on antibiotics, the child must remain out of school for 24 hours, as per the New Jersey Department of Health regulations.

There are times when a child exhibits signs of illness at home. While we appreciate that it is difficult to make the decision to keep a child at home, particularly for working parents, we must insist that you *refrain from sending your child to school with even slight signs of illness*. Please adhere to the guidelines above. Please inform the office any time your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease.

**Doctors may email notes to the school at [attendance@shalomtorah.org](mailto:attendance@shalomtorah.org) to expedite a child's return to school. Such notes must be on doctor's stationery and contain the doctor's signature.**

## Medication

The staff is not permitted to dispense any medication without signed parental permission. With the exception of acetaminophen or ibuprofen, additional permission must be obtained from the child's physician. This applies to all prescription and over-the-counter medications. If a child needs medication during the day, it must be sent to the school

office or nurse in its original container with written directions from the physician. Your physician can email instructions to us, provided they arrive on letterhead and with the doctor's signature. Medications with prescription dates older than 30 days will not be administered and will be discarded. Please inform the office of medication issues as soon as possible so that medications are not left in backpacks. A medication dispenser (calibrated spoon, etc.) must be included.

## **Health Forms**

Please make sure to fill out health forms, and include information regarding allergies and sensitivities, as well as the symptoms your child might exhibit if exposed to an allergen and measures that need to be taken should your child have an allergic reaction.

Children with Epi-Pens or inhalers must have 2 in school; one in the classroom and one in the office.

## **Head Lice**

Head lice is not related to personal hygiene and any child can catch it. Any child who is found to have head lice will be sent home and will be permitted to return to school only after proper treatment and removal of all nits and lice, dead or alive as per the guidelines of the school pediatrician. If your child is found to have head lice, you will be given a copy of those guidelines.

## **Communication**

### **Academic/Classroom Concerns**

The most effective way of acquiring information or allaying concerns regarding your child's progress is to contact his/her teacher directly. You can contact your child's teacher via email or by leaving a message at the front office. Our staff email addresses are posted on the school website and will be distributed at Back-to-School Night as well.

### **Administrative Concerns**

Messages for teachers or students can be delivered at the time of the call only in case of emergency. The office phone is only to be used by students with permission from office personnel or administration. Students and parents need to understand that students may make phone calls during the day only in the event of schedule or other changes that have occurred unexpectedly.

### **Visiting Policy**

Parents who wish to enter the school to meet with an administrator or teacher are welcome to do so. In order for the meeting to take place without disrupting other activities, please make an appointment in advance. Other visitors, such as grandparents or other relatives, should restrict their visits to family events and student productions.

All parents and visitors entering the building must report to the office, sign in and receive a Visitor's Pass which they must wear. **Parents and visitors may not go to classrooms or any other location without permission.**

## PTO

The Parent-Teacher Organization is what unites the school and home, cementing the relationship between parents, teachers and students. A parent interested in the enhanced development of his or her child should utilize this vehicle as a way to assist the school in continued growth. We are proud to have an extremely dedicated and active PTO working side by side with us. Parents are urged to become involved and participate in all of the various projects and programs of the PTO. We invite your input in this area.

### Birthday Parties/Class Celebrations

Small, in-class birthday parties are permitted for students UP TO AND INCLUDING GRADE TWO provided that the classroom teacher is consulted at least *five days* in advance. Any food item brought into the school for a party must be certified as kosher by the symbols below. These items must be in their original sealed package. Please do not send in any items marked "Dairy".

Siblings from other classes are not permitted to join the party as it is disruptive and takes away from the sibling's learning. PTO can provide a birthday party package. Please call the school office for details or to make arrangements.

**Invitations to birthday parties held outside of the school must be sent through regular mail and may not be distributed in Shalom Torah Academy.** Please take into consideration the Kashruth and Shabbat convictions of classmates when planning your party as it is very painful for a child to have to be left out. **(Leaving out one or a few individual children from the invitation list is a form of bullying.)** Please keep parties small or include all of your child's classmates. It is strongly suggested that parties not be held on the Sabbath or Jewish holidays.

**All foods brought into the school must be PEANUT, TREE-NUT AND SESAME FREE.**

The only acceptable Kosher symbols are:



## Academic Policies

### Curriculum

Our school provides a dual curriculum of General and Judaic Studies.

On "Back to School Night" (please check school calendar for dates), you will have an opportunity to learn about the skills and content your children will be taught this year.

Outlines of our curriculum goals for all grade levels in our Pre-school, Elementary and Middle schools in both departments are available to our parent body upon request.

## **General Studies**

Operating under a student-centered philosophy of education, our General Studies curriculum is driven by high academic and life-skills goals for all of the subject areas delineated by the N.J. Department of Education and the Common Core Standards. While we place our major emphasis on Math, Reading/Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and Technology we attach equal importance to Health and Physical Education, and Visual and Performing Arts. Our differentiated program allows each student to reach his/her highest potential and to gain an edge in our highly competitive society by encouraging creativity and individual expression.

## **Judaic Studies**

Our Judaic Studies curriculum maintains the high curricular goals of Jewish Day Schools affiliated with the Torah Umesorah National Society of Hebrew Day Schools. It emphasizes Hebrew language, the Land of Israel, morals and values, Torah, Mishna, and Talmud Study, as well as prayer and the Jewish holidays. **Special attention is given to transfer students to enable smooth acclimation and acquisition of Hebrew skills.**

## **Scholastic Assessment/Progress Reporting**

Report cards are distributed three times during the school year, and anecdotal interim reports will be sent home in the middle of the first two each trimesters for each student as well. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled after the first and second trimester. Communicating in person offers both the parents and the teacher insights and a feeling of collaboration that often cannot be obtained on the phone. These conferences are held in the evenings and parental attendance reflects the value of the home-school connection.

Standardized achievement tests are administered annually in grades one through eight in order to better evaluate each child's progress and our fulfillment of overall curricular goals. Our dual curriculum, combined with our dedicated staff and small classes, has enabled our students to consistently perform well on these standardized exams.

## **Academic Honors**

Students who achieve an average of 90% or better for a trimester in Judaic and General Studies, as well as grades that are Satisfactory or Excellent in the Successful Learner Behaviors section of the report card are eligible for a Certificate of Honor.

At the end of the year, an awards assembly will be held at which all students will receive two awards (one from each teacher) in at least one area in which they excel. Additionally, a special award will be presented to students with perfect attendance.

## Homework

Our teachers are dedicated to providing meaningful lessons for their students in class as well as purposeful assignments to be done at home. Some of the most important reasons for assigning homework are:

- Regular homework promotes good work and study habits and self-discipline in children.
- Homework is one efficient way for teachers to evaluate academic progress.
- Homework allows for constant communication between parents and teachers and allows parents to keep abreast of class activities.

At the pre-school levels, there is little or no written homework, unless the teacher informs the parents of a special assignment or policy. We strongly encourage your involvement with show and tell, group projects, Mitzvah notes, etc.

In the kindergarten and elementary grades, homework will be given regularly.

Please help your child to succeed by:

1. Providing him/her with a quiet place for doing homework.
2. Setting a time early each evening when the child is expected to be doing his/her homework.
3. Arranging to have that homework done after the child has had some time to relax.
4. Please check that homework has been completed before your child goes to bed and before affixing your signature to it.
5. Please be sure completed homework is placed in the appropriate folder or backpack.
6. With regard to long-term assignments, projects or exams in the upper grades, please encourage your child to plan ahead so that s/he may avoid the pitfalls of high-pressure, last minute work.

Unless the teacher specifically notifies you, your child should not need parental assistance in doing homework. If your child consistently has difficulty doing his/her homework, the teacher should be notified.



## Guidance

Our guidance department affords all parents and students an opportunity to address any social or emotional issues. Our counselors are also actively involved in assessing the life-skills and social aspects of our curriculum.

## N.J. Board of Education Services

Upon referral, a speech therapist, a compensatory/supplementary education teacher, an E.S.L. (English as second language) teacher and many other support services are available through the County Educational Services Commission (ESCNJ) during the school year. If either a parent or a teacher feels the need for a child to be evaluated or tested, the Director of Special Services will arrange for the ESCNJ to provide this service.

## Special Education Department

Shalom Torah Academy has a remediation program consisting of a staff of certified special educators. Our Director of Special Services is involved in the placement, curriculum modifications and inclusion process of all students identified with special needs, with or without county classifications. The director and resource room teachers work closely with the classroom teachers to maximize each child's success according to his/her fullest potential.

## W.I.N.G.S.

Shalom Torah Academy has a gifted and talented program called W.I.N.G.S. which provides supplemental instruction in math and reading to high-achieving and capable students. Students are eligible to join W.I.N.G.S. based on several measures including standardized test scores, reading levels, mathematical ability, and teacher recommendation. Students are required to maintain a high level of academic performance in both reading and math, and to continue with excellent work habits in order to maintain membership in W.I.N.G.S.

## Extra-Curricular Programs

### Field Trips

Shalom Torah Academy arranges numerous educational field trips throughout the year. The purpose of these trips is to promote learning through experience and to enhance the child's understanding of academic subjects. **Permission slips must be signed before each trip and returned to school at least 1 day before the scheduled trip.** Students without parental permission will not be permitted to attend the trip. School trips have always been a source of pride and pleasure for our school. We are frequently complimented on the fine manners and behavior of our students as they venture out on field trips.

### Student Council

Shalom Torah Academy's Student Council fosters leadership, community and real-life skills in its participants. The Student Council under the guidance of a faculty advisor runs both academic and creative programs.

## **School Newsletter**

A fundamental means of communication with our families is the weekly newsletter, the *Ma Chadash*. *Ma Chadash* provides a regular opportunity to share information with our parent body. The newsletter is sent Fridays or on the last day of the school week. It includes a message from an administrator, contributions from the faculty and PTO, announcements, extra-curricular activities updates and calendar reminders. We rely on your staying informed by reading it. Please be sure that the school office has your current email address at all times. In addition, please make sure that the school office has updated email addresses for Grandparents, so we can share the newsletter with them as well.

## **Special Events**

Throughout the school year Shalom parents have several opportunities to share in their children's development at our special events. Please check the calendar for the dates of special events for families.

Students are required to dress in conformity with school dress code regulations at all school events and field trips, even after regular school hours.

## **Programs**

To supplement classroom learning, we have several organized programs each year. These may include Thanksgiving celebrations, Holocaust Remembrance Day Observance, Yom Ha'atzmaut festivities, recognition of all legal holidays and special speakers and feature presentations.

## **A Final Word**

We are very proud of Shalom's history and we eagerly continue to build its future. The staff, parents and children are the components of a warm and loving family. Together we can assure that every member of the family reaches his/her potential- intellectually, socially and emotionally.

# NOTES