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TORAH GIRLS
ACADEMY

STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025 | 5784-5785

Student & Parent Handbook

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Dear Student,

On behalf of Torah Girls Academy staff, welcome to the 5783-5784/ 2024-2025 school year!

At TGA, students are nurtured and respected so that they can develop good middos, academic knowledge, and social skills. Above all, TGA is a place where students channel their energies meaningfully toward Avodas Hashem.

Your High school years allow you to embark on a journey of personal growth and self-discovery. We hope you will find that the TGA environment is rigorous and supportive. Our goal is to help you develop your talents and your character, expand your horizons, prepare to meet the challenges, and embrace the opportunities you will encounter in the future. Above all, we hope your high school years will be a time of inspiration and growth in רוחניות that will prepare you for a life of Torah and Mitzvos.

The policies in this handbook reflect the values that shape TGA's school culture. Please read it carefully and refer back to it when questions arise. Our school is a special place devoted to growth in Torah, learning about the intricacies of the world around us, developing our minds and hearts, performing chesed acts, and building a caring and inclusive community. All of us benefit from this environment, and each of you contributes to it when you:

Conduct yourself in a way that makes a קידוש ה', on our campus and outside.

Treat all people with respect and sensitivity.

Stand for your teachers when they enter the classroom.

Act with awareness of the needs and feelings of others.

Actively listen when others speak.

Speak in a refined manner.

Show respect for school property and places of learning.

We look forward to working with you, and we wish you a happy and productive year. May ה' bless all of our efforts, and may we be זוכה to a year of exciting learning, friendship, שמחה and growth!

Rabbi Michael Cohen
Head of School

Mrs. Chaya Wolbe
Mechaneches

Welcome to Torah Girls Academy of Texas

Please seek guidance and help from your teachers and administrators. We are here for you and look forward to assisting you in your schooling and growth.

Communication Between the School and Parents

Home/School Connections: Communication between parents, students, and the school is crucial. We encourage parents to initiate and maintain contact with their daughter's teachers. In addition to progress reports and report cards, you can also contact faculty members by email.

We ask that you keep us informed about events in your family that may affect your daughter's ability to function in school. Please contact Rabbi Cohen and Mrs. Wolbe anytime to inquire about or discuss any issue regarding your daughter's education and well-being. Your suggestions and comments are always welcome.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice during the school year, as indicated in the school calendar.

We encourage teachers and parents to communicate with each other in between the progress report dates. This is especially true if a student has significantly improved or declined in class. A personal conference between parents and teachers or a student and teacher can be arranged by contacting the teacher at any time.

Academics

As you enter high school, you will discover that the amount of time you need to dedicate to your schoolwork will increase. Yet, you will also feel a greater sense of accomplishment due to your increased academic independence. You are encouraged to seek the help and guidance of your teachers and other school staff for any concerns and problems you may be experiencing.

Assessments

Written assignments and research papers: Your academic success depends largely on your ability to do independent study and research and to articulate your ideas cogently and persuasively. To that end, you will be given regular writing and research assignments. The quality of your writing will be evaluated along with the content of these assignments. You will be given continued guidance and assistance in honing these skills.

Examinations: Tests allow students to review and assess what they have learned and to organize the content of a course in a meaningful way. They are one of several measures used to help teachers evaluate your progress and achievement.

1. To ensure maximum student performance on major tests, TGA's policy limits tests to a maximum of two per day (not including makeup tests). A word on tests vs. quizzes—a test is an assessment for which students must prepare. A quiz is designed to assess whether or not students have completed their homework or reading assignments, listened well, and taken effective notes. Quizzes do not have to be scheduled.

2. Teachers use the TGA test calendar to schedule exams and major papers. It will be displayed prominently in the TGA hallway.

Semester Exams

Final exams for high school courses will be given in December and June. Cumulative finals may be worth up to 15% of the final grade.

If a student misses a final test due to extenuating circumstances, she will have to make it up on a designated date set by the teacher. If a student misses a final exam for non-extenuating circumstances (for example, a nonessential family trip), she will have to make it up on a designated date set by the teacher and will only be able to achieve a maximum grade of 80% on her exam. Arrangements must be made promptly.

Final exam dates are listed on the school calendar.

Grading

Academic grades are never based solely on test scores. Grades reflect a student's performance in class and on tests, quizzes, homework, and other assignments. At the beginning of each semester, each teacher informs students how they will calculate their semester grades.

Computation of Grade Point Average:

The Judaic and General Studies grades are included in the calculation of the GPA. TGA's grades are calculated on a 4.0 scale. Honors classes and AP classes earn an extra .3 grade points. Students are admitted to an honors class based on the teacher's discretion. The grading scales are as follows:

A+ = 4.0 (97-100)	A = 3.7 (93-96)	A- = 3.3 (90-92)	D = 1.0 (65-69)
B+ = 3.0 (87-89)	B = 2.7 (83-86)	B- = 2.3 (80-82)	F = 0.0 (No Credit)
C+ = 2.0 (77-79)	C = 1.7 (73-76)	C- = 1.3 (70-72)	

Academic Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent out mid-semester for all students. A report card will be sent out at the end of each semester. Progress reports and report cards are sent via email. Students will receive a copy of their grades emailed to their email account.

Homework Policy

The TGA faculty strives to be sensitive to the student's time constraints, recognizing that TGA students carry two full course loads. The homework load and test schedule may require a nightly time commitment.

Graduation Requirements

- 4 Credits of Chumash
 - 4 Credits of Navi
 - 2 Credits of Kesuvim
 - 4 Credits of Halacha
 - 2 Credits of Jewish History
 - 4 Credits of Yedios Kholios/Yauadus
 - 4 Credits of English Language
 - 4 credits in math, including Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2.
 - 4 Credits of Science, including Biology, Chemistry, and Physics
 - 4 Credit of Social Studies including Geography (1), World History (1), U.S. History (1), Government (½), and Economics (½).
 - 2 Credits of Art
- Credit Recovery is available via <https://enroll.edtell.com/enrollment/school/X4BCHQQA/33291>

School Hours

The school day begins at **8:25 a.m.** every day. Monday through Thursday, dismissal is at 4:30 p.m.; on Fridays, it is at **12:50 p.m.**

TGA is not responsible for students on school premises before or after the scheduled school day.

Grade Recovery

If a student does not complete a course with a passing grade, they will be required to do grade recovery with Educere - linked below

<https://enroll.edtell.com/enrollment/school/X4BCHOOA/33291>

Expectations and Responsibilities

Chesed/ Community Service

Being involved in Community Service is a fundamental tenet of Judaism. In this light, students are to fulfill a specified number of hours of Community Service *Chesed* during each school year.

A minimum number of Community Service hours required per month	4 hours
Number of Community Service hours performed within the student's home	Minimum of 1.5
Number of Community Service hours performed outside the student's home, within larger community	Minimum of 1.5

Each month, students are to email the school office, office@tgatexas.org, with the number of hours of Community Service they have completed to earn credit for these hours. They are to include a description of the service they provided. Community Service is included on report cards and high school transcripts in your Decorum Grade. More information will be explained in the Decorum Section of the handbook.

Activities that can be counted include:

- Homework helper
- Mother's helper (aside from family,) including watching the kids, helping with childcare, housework, cooking, laundry, running errands, etc.)
- Volunteering time for a community organization/ Shul
- Visiting people in the hospital/ nursing home

Co-educational activities will not be eligible for *Chesed* hours. Performance of Community Service *Chesed* can be among the most valuable lessons learned in high school.

Tefilla

Our students are required to attend daily tefilla in school. The prospective times allotted for tefilla are treated as a class, and all relevant guidelines and attendance quotas apply. All Students are expected to utilize these times for meaningful davening.

If, having completed their davening, a student would like to read, **she must get permission to do so from her *mechaneches*, and together, they will pick reading material appropriate for the davening time.**

Decorum Grade

One of the grades on the student's report cards and transcripts is 'Decorum.' The Decorum grade is based on each student's general conduct, tefilla decorum and attendance, and the fulfillment of the mandatory community service (chesed) hours. Out of 100 points, a third of the points will be based on general decorum, a third will be based on tefilla decorum and attendance, and a third will be based on the fulfillment of the mandatory community service (chesed) hours.

Programs and Excursions

School extracurricular activities are essential to the TGA experience and are designed to build our school community and explore new friendships and talents. Students are to attend all activities. This includes in-town shabbatonim and some out-of-town trips. In addition, several required events will be outside of the school day during the year. A fee may be charged for special programs.

TGA Parking Lot

TGA parking spots are reserved for TGA staff and are not for student cars.

TGA Property After Hours

Students are allowed on TGA property after school hours only when accompanied by TGA staff or with explicit permission from the TGA administration.

Conduct

TGA students are expected to conduct themselves in school according to the standards and spirit of Torah and halacha, *derech erez*, and interpersonal relationships.

Academic achievement must be accompanied by personal integrity. Mutual respect and honesty are necessary starting points for all learning. This includes respect for ideas, feelings, and the property of others, as well as honesty in personal interactions.

Whether in a classroom, lounge area, or any other part of the school, display proper respect to your teachers and fellow students and treat all individuals courteously. As part of this respect towards fellow students, one should not discuss topics in front of them with which they are uncomfortable.

Students are expected to act responsibly toward others and the school's property. A concern for the conditions and cleanliness of the building is everyone's responsibility. Students are expected to discard all refuse from meals properly. A student may sometimes be asked to help clean a littered area.

We expect that any work a student submits, including homework assignments, written reports, and tests, will be your own. Ideas that students borrow from other people should be identified as such. Plagiarism is unethical, as well as illegal. Plagiarism or using AI on any assignment will result in a grade of zero unless the teacher gives specific permission and guidance regarding the use of AI.

Personal Property

Lockers will be assigned on the first day of school. Belongings should be stored in lockers, and locker doors should be kept closed. The school cannot assume responsibility for losing or damaging items in the lockers. Books and school bags may not be left in hallways or classrooms. In addition, no personal items may be left in the bathroom. We all share the TGA space and must respect our schoolmates and staff members by keeping our space neat.

The outside of lockers must remain completely clean and undecorated, except for a student's birthday. Pictures and items hanging inside lockers must conform to TGA-appropriate standards. Stickers may never be placed inside or outside lockers, as they are sometimes impossible to remove.

Electronic equipment such as smartwatches, laptops, iPods, video games, MP3 players, and Kindles is not permitted in the school building because it is not conducive to a serious academic environment.

Cell Phones & Other Devices

Social media and unfiltered internet access expose our children to ideas that are antithetical to the values and education we provide at TGA. In line with the Vaad HaChinuch, we ask parents to filter their children's internet and social media access.

Safe internet use and strategies for avoiding social media trappings are a focus of TGA's education in the classroom and our programs. We will offer incentives for students to give up or stay away from social media.

Time spent in school is an opportunity to focus on learning, healthy social relationships, and interpersonal communication. We are working to create an atmosphere of friendship, growth, and learning, so we don't allow students to bring their cell phones and other devices to school, including smartphones, smartwatches, and music devices.

If there is a compelling reason why a girl must bring her cell phone to school, parents can request, in writing, that their daughters bring it to school. In this case, we will ask the parents to sign a document confirming they want their daughters to carry a cell phone to school daily. Students whose parents have requested that they bring their phones to school will place their devices in the phone storage box every morning when they arrive at school. Phones will be stored safely and only returned at the end of the school day. Please note: devices will not be available during the day, even at lunchtime.

If a student needs to make a phone call during the day, she may use the phone in the school office with permission. If parents need to contact their daughters, they may call the office, and we will relay the message as quickly as possible.

If a student is seen carrying or using a device on the school campus at any time during the school day or if it is outside the phone storage box, the device will be confiscated.

Confiscated devices will be kept in the school office for a week and only returned after the parents have contacted the office. Handing in a "dummy phone" or surreptitiously using a hidden phone is not simply a violation of the rules; it's a breach of trust with serious disciplinary consequences.

Attendance Policy

It is of extreme importance that all of our students are in attendance, on time, to every class daily. Besides not wanting our students to miss a minute of valuable learning and our commitment to maintaining the most productive learning environment for all students and teachers, timeliness is an important character trait for our students to acquire.

The school day begins at 8:25 AM and ends at 4:30 PM on Mondays through Thursdays and at 12:50 PM on Fridays. Please make every possible effort to attend school on time, remain there until dismissal, schedule non-emergency medical and dental appointments after school hours, and avoid planning family vacations when school is in session.

Please read through the attendance policy clearly to ensure you are aware of the system. Before scheduling trips or appointments, ensure you will not exceed the allotted number of absences for each class period. If there are extenuating circumstances, please speak to Rabbi Cohen BEFORE scheduling any trip or appointment.

Late Arrival & Early Dismissal

If a student arrives late to school, we ask that parents notify the school by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the tardiness, if not before. If the parents have yet to notify the school about a tardiness, the office will contact them to ensure the safety and well-being of that student. Students must sign in with the office when they arrive late to school.

If a student needs to be dismissed early, she may only do so after a parent has given express permission to a school official. Students leaving school before dismissal must sign out with the office.

Class Attendance - Tardy

Teachers take attendance at the beginning of each class. Students arriving after the start of class will be marked as "Tardy." Three "tardies" in a class are the equivalent of one "absence" and will count towards a student's overall absent count per semester.

Truancy

Students are required to attend all their classes during the school day. Students who deliberately miss class will be subject to disciplinary action, including detention and suspension.

Class Attendance - Absence

Each student will be allocated a quota of absences per semester per class, as indicated in the chart below. Missing a class for any reason is included in the allotted amount.

# Class Periods Per Week	# of Approved Absences Per Semester
5	6
4	5
3	4
2	3
1	2

Attendance is 10% of the total grade in every class. Each absence that exceeds the allotted amount for the class will result in a 10% deduction from the attendance grade, which is 1% of the total grade. For example, if a student misses one class period above the allotted amount and her class grade is 100%, the final grade she will receive is 99%.

For a student to receive a grade in any TGA course, she must be present for a minimum of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the classes of that course during that semester. Attendance that falls short of that number will result in an 'Incomplete' on that student's report card and transcript. Three tardies equal one absence for this calculation.

All absences will be recorded on Gradelink so that you can easily track how many times you have been absent from any class.

We appreciate your understanding and adherence to this attendance policy. Regular attendance fosters a positive and effective learning environment, and we are committed to supporting each student's educational journey.

Seniors Dual Enrollment College Classes - Computer Room Attendance

Dual Enrollment periods have an attendance quota of 6 absences. This applies to all periods before the 9th period on Monday-Thursday and the 5th period on Friday. Seniors may leave once the day's final period has begun on Monday-Thursday and the regular TGA classes are well underway so as not to disrupt the learning environment.

Dress Code

Students must be in uniform at all times during the school day and at school events unless otherwise communicated. Uniforms can be purchased from Land's End, Fraylich Uniforms, or Toes to Bows by appointment.

Click [here](#) for Fraylich Uniforms TGA store

Click here for Land's End TGA store

Toes to Bows: 718-613-9910

Skirt: A black pleated uniform skirt must be long enough to reach the top of the socks.

Shirt: Button-down or polo uniform shirts must be purchased from Fraylich Uniforms or Land's End and have TGA embroidered on the collar. Shirts can be white, light blue, or royal blue. The collar must be visible, and only one button can be opened.

Sweaters: All sweater options can be seen on the Fraylich or Land's End websites. It must have TGA embroidery. No other outerwear may be worn. Sweatshirts from previous years are not part of the uniform and may not be worn at school.

Shoes/ Socks: Shoes and socks must be worn at all times. Shoes must be closed-toed and have a full back. For example, Uggs Tasmin slippers are not allowed.

Accessories: No hats or caps. Dying hair to an unnatural color or a natural color that is noticeably unnatural for that student is not within the dress code.

Lunch Time

The girls will be expected to remain in school during lunchtime.

12th graders will be allowed to go home for lunch on Tuesdays and Wednesdays unless there is a school program that day, provided they return punctually to their fifth-period class.

Any food delivered to school must be delivered before or during lunchtime from 11:58 to 12:32.

General Information

Textbooks: Most textbooks will be distributed to you without charge. You may be asked to purchase some seforim and books that should become part of your personal library. The school will hold you responsible for any loss, theft, damage, or defacement of books that are lent to you. Students are required to pay for or turn in textbooks in the condition they received them before taking the final exam for a class.

Printing: To enable and assist students with printing what they need for school, documents should be sent to print@tgatexas.org. They will be printed at approximately 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Printing will not be done at other times.

Lunch & Food in TGA:

The TGA kitchen has many appliances for warming and cooking food. However, only packaged products bearing an HKA-accepted kosher symbol or raw fruits and vegetables may be warmed or cooked in the TGA appliances.

Visitors: No one will be allowed to attend classes without prior office permission. If you wish to invite a relative or a friend to attend your classes, you must have permission from an administrator before that day.

Health Records: According to state law, all school-age students must have documented proof of adequate immunization. We are not permitted to admit any student who does not meet these requirements. Please submit your immunization records to the office before school begins.

Hearing and Vision Screening Records:

The state of Texas requires all schools to keep current records of Hearing and Vision screenings. These screenings can be done at your annual check-up at the doctor's office. Please send in these records to office@tgatexas.org.

Medications:

A parental consent form must be on file in the office for you to receive any medication, including over-the-counter products.

Only the medication necessary for a student to remain in school will be given during school hours. No student can carry any over-the-counter and/or prescribed medication with her at

school. Only medication prescribed by a physician, dentist, and/or registered pharmacist will be administered during school.

Each student's medication must be in a labeled container from the pharmacy with the following information:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| -student's name | -dosage |
| -physician/dentist name/ phone | -directions for administration |
| -date | -duration medication is to be given |
| -name of medication | |

Only properly labeled medications will be administered when a signed permission form from the parent or legal guardian accompanies them. All medication is kept in a cabinet in the office. It is the student's responsibility to come to the office and request her medication from an administrator.

Emergency Contact Forms: To ensure each student's safety we must have updated emergency contact forms on file. Please submit them to the office. In the event of a change of address or an extended travel period, parents must notify the school to update emergency numbers and/or change of address.