



TALMUDICAL ACADEMY OF BALTIMORE  
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August 2021

Dear Lower School Parents,

It is with great anticipation that we await the return of our talmidim from their summer break. We would like to share with you some information about our objectives for this school year as well as review some general thoughts concerning the opening of school.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Talmudical Academy is to provide a program that will encourage each student to achieve his highest potential as he strives for excellence in Limudei Kodesh and General Studies. Based upon the principles of Torah, halacha, and derech erez, and by emphasizing the “total person,” TA aims to develop the general character of the student on his journey to become a responsible and productive member of the Jewish community.

**PARENTS’ ROLE**

It is important for the talmidim to know and understand that their parents, rebbeim, teachers, and administration are united in fostering their wellbeing and growth. As always, we welcome your input and observations and look forward to collaborating in the interest of your child’s success. We recognize that a calm and measured reaction to a child’s complaint is a crucial step in setting the stage for healthy and productive problem solving. If your child has a concern about school, please bring the matter to our attention so that we may work together with you to address the situation in its proper context. We have the best interest of your child in mind, and it is only with parental cooperation and support that we can be successful in this mission.

In addition, please recognize that when your child enters a new grade and, thereby, a new environment, he will need time to acclimate. Remember *kol haschalos kashos*, all beginnings are difficult. Your child may need your support while he adapts to his new class and grade. Your calm and understanding manner during this time will certainly help to create a smooth and successful transition. Allowing a bit of time to pass, while guided by caring rebbeim, teachers, and parents, is often all it takes. **We ask that unless a matter is urgent, and time is of the essence, please wait until after Yom Tov before contacting us.**

**STAR BEHAVIOR PROGRAM**

TA’s STAR Behavior Program is a school-wide behavior management system that teaches and reinforces positive behavior and character development. It promotes strong behavioral standards, develops self-control, fosters a positive school environment, and encourages students to strive for excellence.

**SUMMER PACKETS**

Summer packets were sent home at the end of June. This material provides a review of the learning your son completed this past school year. Rebbeim and teachers put tremendous thought into designing the packets so that the boys will begin their new school year with success. When the students return to school in September, summer packets will be collected by the rebbeim and teachers, and prizes will be awarded to those students who completed their packets.

**ORIENTATION / FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

Per the Lower School Calendar:

- **Sunday, August 29** - 1<sup>st</sup> grade Parent Orientation (7:30-9:00 pm)
- **Monday, August 30** - Early Childhood Parent/Student Orientation (Morning)
- **Tuesday, August 31** – First Day of School – Early Childhood and Elementary
- **Wednesday, September 1** – 2nd- 5<sup>th</sup> grade Parent Orientation (7:00-9:30 pm)

*For details please see the Orientation Information & First Day of School Procedures document enclosed in this email. Further information to follow closer to orientation.*

**Please see second page>>>**

## **HELPING OUR TALMIDIM ADJUST**

Rabbi Norman Lowenthal, MS Ed., MSW, LCSW-C is our Lower School Guidance Counselor, and he spearheads our efforts to ensure the emotional wellbeing of each and every talmid. If you have a specific concern, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi Lowenthal for guidance. The School Counseling Program supports and enhances the school's educational program by addressing the needs of children comprehensively and systematically. Rabbi Lowenthal consults with parents and teachers and interacts with students through classroom guidance lessons, small group counseling sessions, and individual counseling. Questions regarding parenting concerns are always welcome. During the school year, students can communicate directly with Rabbi Lowenthal through a special mailbox located in the Elementary lobby. Additionally, when possible, Rabbi Lowenthal provides mentoring to school counseling interns who assist in supporting our school counseling program.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

We are fortunate to offer Lamdeinu special education services at our school with the support of SHEMESH, an educational support program for students with learning differences. Mrs. Rivky Danziger, TA's Lamdeinu Learning Center Director, leads a team of special educators who are employed by TA, with partial funding from SHEMESH. Students can be referred for services by teachers and/or parents, and children with identified learning differences are serviced through specialized learning plans. Students also receive support from the services offered by Mrs. Sara Ottensoser, Shemesh Executive Functioning Coach. Additionally, our Early Childhood benefits from the SHEMESH services of Mrs. Debbie Logue, reading specialist, and Mrs. Michal Tessler, behavior specialist. Mrs. Stacie Arfa, our Elementary reading specialist, works with small groups of students with identified lags in reading skills on a daily basis. Mrs. Helen Hexter, our Early Childhood kriaah specialist, and Rabbi Sharone Mahpour, our Elementary kriaah specialist, work with students to ensure their kriaah skills are developing and up to par.

## **COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS / EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**

TA primarily uses **email** and **text message notifications** to update and inform parents of school related announcements regarding inclement or questionable weather, emergency closings, school trips, or other unusual circumstances. Follow the instructions below to sign up for the TA Text Message Notification System. We have several text notification groups - **parents need to sign themselves up** to be added to a group. Please sign up for **each group** that applies to your family:

1. Send a text to phone #: 81010
2. To join any of the following groups, type the bold text below in the body of the text message:
  - **@talmudic**: General TA Updates for All Divisions
  - **@ycctapre**: Early Childhood (Grades Nursery-Kindergarten)
  - **@ycctaelem**: Elementary (Grades 1-5)
  - **@mtaelem**: Lower School MTA Bus

## **ELEMENTARY PROPER HYGIENE AND ATTIRE**

TA Elementary does not have a school uniform. However, we believe that appearance and hygiene influence a student's work habits and general performance. A student whose physical hygiene is poor may draw unwanted attention to himself. Students feel best when they are clean and look well-groomed. Recognizing that appearance can affect one's attitude towards yeshiva and derech erez, we encourage our parents to dress their children in conservative clothing which promotes a sense of kavod toward learning. **Yamulkes** only should be worn in the classroom, not hats or caps. Students are encouraged to wear **white shirts** on Rosh Chodesh.

**In recent years, athletic track pants have become a popular wardrobe item for boys and young men. Please note that track pants of any type or stripe do not meet the yeshiva's dress code standard and should not be worn to school.**

### **Student Dress code:**

- Shirts must have a collar and at least 2 buttons.
- Dark colored pants should be worn.
- We recommend that students in grades 4 and 5 **not** wear shorts.

### **Prohibited clothing/styles:**

- Articles of clothing with logos, graphics, or wording.
- Blue jeans, denim, dungarees, jeggings, jean type material pants, or pants with "ripped out" knees.
- **Track pants** (such as Adidas Tiros or of any type or stripe).
- Jewelry, cologne and styles that are attention-seeking or excessively informal.
- "Wheelie" shoes and crocs.

**Please see third page>>>**

## LUNCH / FOOD / NUT POLICIES

Children should bring lunch and snacks to school daily. The USDA program that offers hot lunch free of charge to all TA students in grades nursery-12th, Monday-Thursday, has been extended to include the 2021-22 school year. Additional information about this program will be forthcoming. Milk is provided by the school. Elementary students are not permitted to use the hot water urn (i.e. for "Tradition" soups, etc.). Students are not permitted to share food with other students, even during recess or lunch. Please note that in general, on days with a "**Half-Day**" schedule, there is **no lunch** for Elementary (Early Childhood *does* have lunch on these days).

The Lower School is **peanut free**, therefore, no peanut products may be brought into the Lower School in any form.

- For example: lunches may not include filled crackers, trail mixes, and any candies with peanuts, such as Reese's, etc. Peanut butter in any form is forbidden.
- Students **are permitted** to bring items that state "may contain *traces* of peanuts" on the package label.

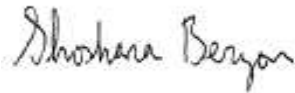
There may be individual classes that have additional food restrictions, such as tree nuts or sesame, depending on the severity of the allergies found in that class. **A notice will be sent home** at the beginning of the school year to inform parents if there are additional foods that may not be sent in.

In closing, we would like to express our appreciation for the joint efforts of our faculty, administration, and parent body in continuing to elevate our Yeshiva to higher levels. We also recognize that for a thriving institution such as ours to exist and function properly it takes more than educational administrators at the forefront. With this in mind, we would like to express our sincerest *hakoras hatov* to our Leadership, Administrative Division, Maintenance and Kitchen Staff, and the P.T.A. who work so closely with us to offer the best possible *chinuch* for our *talmidim*. We are looking forward to another successful year as we continue to strive toward *aliyah in derech eretz, yiras shamayim, limud haTorah*, and excellence in education. It is our *tefilla* to Hashem that He continue to shine His countenance upon us so that we may accomplish our goal of having each and every child reach his greatest potential.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Dovid Sass  
Menahel



Mrs. Shoshana Berzon  
General Studies Principal



Rabbi Hillel Hexter  
Associate Menahel



Mrs. Beily Rosen  
Early Childhood Director