

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What do I have to do to apply for the Affordability discounts?**

When you (re-)enroll for the 2018-19 school year, you will have the option to indicate if you wish to apply for TAC or ADP. You will subsequently receive a notification directing you on how to apply for the program you indicated.

### **What's the difference between TAC and ADP?**

**TAC** is intended to provide financial assistance to families requiring support for more than 30% of total tuition costs, as determined based on a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of a family's financial situation. This assessment is conducted using FAST, a powerful software suite designed for fairness and accountability by a company called Independent Schools Management and used by schools across North America.

**ADP** is intended to respond to the growing needs of a broader set of families who are also struggling with the costs of tuition, particularly in the face of Vancouver's increasingly high cost of living. This program, providing discounts up to 30%, typically requires modest financial disclosure to verify income, with awards capped at prescribed levels.

*[Please note that ADP will only be offered from Senior Kindergarten onwards, as has historically been the case with TAC.]*

### **Is the Board committed to this for more than one year?**

We want to give this program as much time and support to work as possible. In addition to continuing to invest in outstanding academic and extra-curricular programs, that means we intend to do everything we can to restrain the rate of tuition increases - as we are doing for next year - and to make the affordability discounts a long-term feature of our model. But to do that, we need the community's support in terms of enrolment, annual giving, constructive feedback and positive word of mouth.

### **What kind of enrolment increase does VTT need in order to keep these programs in place?**

We had a very strong response to our early years and kindergarten programs for the 2018/19 school year, but there are too many variables in that equation - i.e.

enrolment, retention, non-tuition revenues, fundraising, etc. -- to give a specific number.

### **What makes you think this is going to work?**

There are no guarantees, but this program is the product of literally hundreds of hours of volunteer time by members of VTT's Board to study alternative tuition models used by Jewish day schools in communities like ours across North America, as well as an incredibly deep dive into VTT's enrolment and retention data. This work culminated in a 266-page presentation, and hours of discussion over the course of multiple board meetings. So, short answer: we don't know if it will, but it reflects our best thinking. And even if it doesn't work entirely as we hope, we will have learned a great deal that will help us fine tune future strategies. The alternative was to do nothing in the face of data clearly expressing our community's affordability challenges - and that was not something we were willing to do.

### **Why has tuition gone up so much in recent years? Were those increases necessary?**

The tuition increases of the past several years were necessary to better align VTT's revenue with its cost of operations. Specifically, these tuition increases were necessary to meet the needs of a growing school, enhanced programming, increased demand for tuition assistance, as well as the transition from an aging and difficult-to-maintain building to a new campus at a time of increasing costs and static community funding. We recognize the pace of increases, while necessary, became unsustainable for some families, which is why we are introducing these programs.

### **How much will it cost VTT to offer such big discounts?**

In order to offset the anticipated cost of this program, we have undertaken an in-depth cost analysis of VTT's planned 2018-19 budget to find cost reductions, where appropriate, including a reduction in interest expense as a result of the collection, and in some cases, acceleration of pledge payments made to the VTT Campus Campaign, and by garnering support from the VTT donor community.

### **Will these cost reductions affect programming or quality?**

Our goal is to increase revenues by raising enrolment rather than tuition. Maintaining a strong program is essential to achieving that goal so you can be sure

we have taken great pains to avoid any cost reductions that we felt would negatively affect our educational offering or outcomes.

**What else are you doing to enhance affordability and strengthen VTT's financial sustainability?**

We are working hard to enhance our fundraising capabilities with the introduction of an annual campaign. We are actively soliciting donations to help support our new affordability initiatives. And we are working in partnership with Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver and the Jewish Community Foundation to establish a VTT Endowment that will provide a stable and permanent source of funding for our affordability programs.

**Who can I talk to for more information on TAC, ADP or to make a donation?**

For information about TAC and ADP, please contact Michelle Mah in our finance office at [mmah@talmudtorah.com](mailto:mmah@talmudtorah.com) or by phone at (604) 736-7307. For donations - and first of all, thank you!! -- please contact Nicki Black, Director of Development, at [nblack@talmudtorah.com](mailto:nblack@talmudtorah.com) or by phone at (604) 736-7307.