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# Kindergarten Handbook 2016-17



# 1

## Philosophy

We educate students to be creative, caring and sensitive individuals. We encourage them to experience the joy of their Jewish history, traditions, values and culture. We start them on the road to becoming “mensches.”





At Vancouver Talmud Torah we are fortunate to have one of the finest early education centres in the province. Our well-equipped classrooms provide an exciting, stimulating environment in which our students may learn and live life to the fullest. Our excellent facilities enable us to provide a wide range of activities to meet the needs of all the students, enabling them to achieve the fullest measure of growth. All activities presented are carefully planned to promote the perceptual and conceptual development of the children, essential for later academic success.

Our philosophy is to educate students to be creative, caring and curious individuals. We encourage them to experience the joy of their Jewish history, traditions, values and culture. By teaching the students to treat others as they would treat themselves, we start them on the path to becoming a “*mensch*.” Students should be equipped with the tools and skills to help them meet the challenges of our complex society. Through the learning process at Talmud Torah, we believe they will be better able to make responsible choices as Jews in today’s world.

Play is the avenue by which children learn. Play is indeed the work of childhood and it is through play that children come to know themselves, their peers, and their environment. At Vancouver Talmud Torah, we are committed to providing a dynamic and playful curriculum that encourages children’s innate sense of curiosity and creative potential.

Nurturing loving, trusting relationships at school are necessary so that children feel secure to confidently pursue their interests and to take academic and social risks. The atmosphere we provide is one of freedom within carefully defined limits, with a balance of structured and unstructured activities. We develop students’ abilities to self-regulate and model empathy, integrity, respect and compassion in all of our interactions. Students learn to cooperate with each other to be responsible citizens of our classroom and our school community. We build their feeling of self-esteem by providing tasks at which they can succeed and help them achieve the acceptance and friendship of others. We encourage them to develop their unique talents and abilities so they may take the next step in the educational process with ease and confidence.

# 2

## Our Kindergarten Program

Our Kindergarten program provides an enriched learning environment that promotes students' ability to EXPLORE, DISCOVER, CREATE, and LEARN.



Learning is designed to be engaging, interactive, and personalized in nature. Through this student-centered approach, children become competent thinkers and communicators. Students are given the opportunity to make choices, interact with materials and peers, and participate in imaginative play. They learn to collaborate, inquire and problem-solve, develop physical and motor skills of coordination and manipula-

tion, and develop their oral language, communication and critical thinking skills. Throughout the day they learn to be responsible for themselves and respectful of others.

Our teachers thoughtfully plan and prepare each day so that the needs and strengths of each child are maximized. Although teaching styles, classroom schedules, and personali-

ties vary from classroom to classroom, all faculty work collaboratively and share the commitment to provide the very best educational experience.

### **Building Social Responsibility**

Talmud Torah is committed to developing socially responsible students. Our Yachad program is designed to guide student behavior and foster a greater sense of accountability within the school. By promoting a safe, orderly and predictable environment for learning and teaching, a positive school culture is created. Yachad, meaning unity and togetherness, is an initiative built around a common code of conduct (displayed in the form of a matrix) in which clear expectations for behavior are articulated in all school settings. Please visit the school website to view the school-wide behavior matrix ([talmudtorah.com](http://talmudtorah.com)).

### **Judaic Program**

Our Judaic program incorporates Hebrew language readiness activities. The children are introduced to the Hebrew Alef-Bet and they learn to recognize and print their Hebrew name. They play sequencing, visual and auditory discrimination games and activities. Woven into the curriculum are Hebrew language experiences. The students learn greetings, how to count, names of colours and familiar objects, blessings for food, and songs and prayers. Every Friday the students welcome the Sabbath (*Kabbalat Shabbat*), experiencing all the traditional rituals of Shabbat. All religious holidays are observed and interpreted to the students at their developmental level. Bible stories are recounted and discussed. All this is done in the spirit of joy and spontaneity. Students are encouraged to develop meaningful spiritual connections. Recognizing that the earliest experiences of life are often the most lasting, we strive to foster a warm and positive attitude in the students towards their Jewish heritage.



# 3

## Intellectual Development

We give students an opportunity to engage in rich and meaningful early learning experiences in literacy, numeracy, science and social studies.

### Language Arts

Our language arts program gives students an opportunity to engage in rich and meaningful early literacy experiences. This environment fosters and supports strong literacy skill development and provides the necessary groundwork for success. Students participate in playful language activities, respond to and create text, and develop the ability to think critically, creatively, and reflectively. Through stories based on fiction or fact, poetry, and themed digital content, students enhance their experiential background, enlarge their vocabulary, and foster a love of literature and reading. We are also proud of our reading readiness program through our annual phonological assessment of kindergarten students. Through multi-sensory learning experiences and independent and group work, the students learn the letter names and sounds and record their thoughts, ideas and questions in a myriad of ways. Teachers use a balance of modeling, direct instruction, guided instruction and independent practice to develop student's literacy skills.

### Mathematics

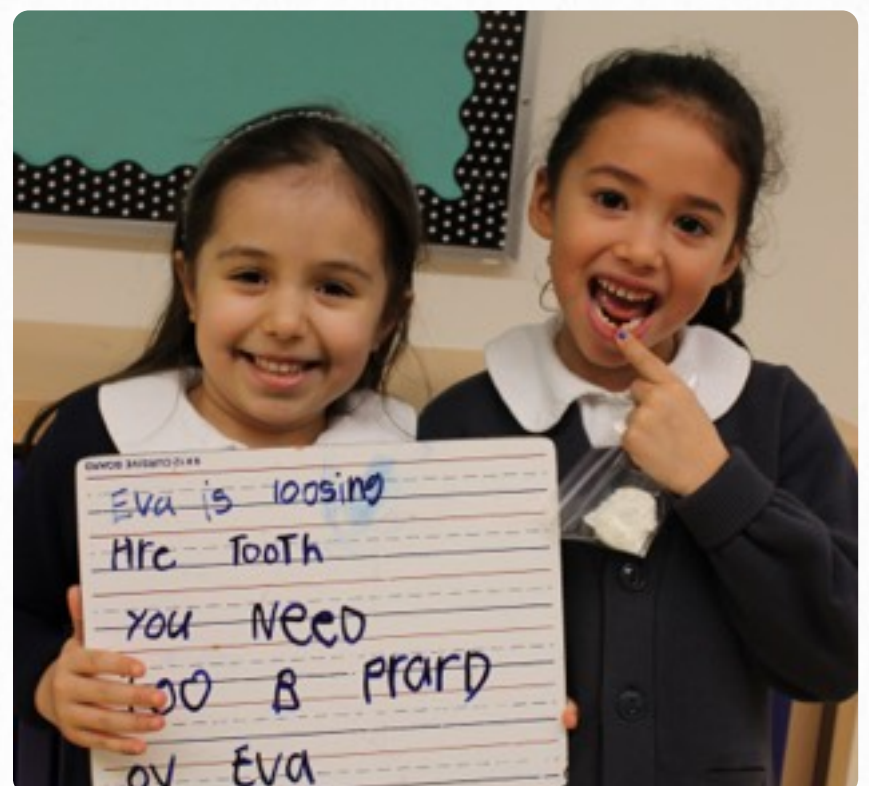
The development of mathematical concepts and understandings are an integral part of our daily instruction. Students are given the opportunity to explore, interpret and describe their mathematical world through meaningful, hands-on learning. Activities are structured to encourage both independent and collaborative thinking, as students develop the following mathematical concepts: change, constancy, number sense, patterns, relationships, uncertainty and spatial sense.

### Science

Science activities are part of each day's program. Through these inquiry-based activities each student will develop an awareness and appreciation of the natural world, develop powers of scientific observation, and a problem-solving attitude. We follow their interests--pursuing their curiosity as far as the students are able to go--and provide as many related first-hand experiences as possible. Field trips supporting educational goals enhance the students' classroom experience.

### Social Studies

Through the study of society, students will learn about the diverse and rich communities around us. They will be encouraged to ask questions, analyze and interpret ideas and communicate their thinking to their peers. A concentration will be placed on making personal connections and becoming global citizens.



# 4

## Physical & Artistic Development



### Physical Development

Kindergarten students play outdoors every day - even in the rain! Large muscle co-ordination is developed through the running, jumping, balancing, climbing, and digging activities available. They learn to perceive spatial relationships and judge distance. Small motor skills are developed through play, crafts and independent work activities. The students also participate in a weekly program with a qualified PE instructor. The program helps develop large motor co-ordination and skills in an atmosphere of fun. While learning and following the rules of the games, the students acquire the important value of good sportsmanship. They also learn the parameters of safe and healthy play.

### Art

A wide range of art activities are available each day to provide the spiritual satisfaction of creating. These activities help the students develop initiative to work independently or in a group and foster confidence in working with creative media that will give them life-long gratification. Manipulating

Fine and gross motor skill development as well as an engagement and exploration of the arts are all part of the Kindergarten experience.

scissors, crayons, paint brushes, and other materials helps develop fine motor skills.

### Music

The Kindergarten students enjoy a rich tradition of music education. Music activities are part of our daily program. Children have the opportunity to explore, create, perceive and communicate thoughts and feelings through music. They experience the joy of making music together, creating songs and rhythms, and responding to music through dance and movement. All Kindergarten students participate in our annual Hanukkah concert.

### Dramatic Play

Integrated into the daily routine, students participate in dramatic play activities. Through the medium of dramatic expression, they are encouraged to explore ideas, feelings, and events through imagined roles and situations. They participate in games of concentration, communication and teamwork, thus enabling them to learn how to work cooperatively and creatively. Activities are developed and designed to make make-believe accessible and enjoyable for all participants.



# 5

## School Routines & Procedures



At VTT, we respect all levels of religious observance and Jewish affiliation. Please be sensitive by not scheduling birthday parties and celebrations on Shabbat or Jewish holidays.

children may return to school 24 hours after breaking a fever, diarrhea or vomiting.

### Morning Arrival

In an effort to develop independence, we strongly encourage that parents to say a confident but reassuring good-bye at the classroom door. Students will be warmly welcomed each morning by their teacher and will promptly engage in a “morning starter” activity. For a smooth start to the day, parents are asked to leave the building immediately after drop-off.

### Communicating with your Teacher

The teachers are very happy to talk with every parent about his or her child at any time during the year. Parents and the teacher can arrange a mutually convenient meeting time. Regular parent-teacher conferences occur twice a year.

### Attendance

School is in session from 8:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. Hours on early dismissal Fridays are 8:20 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. (November to March). We urge regular attendance, but students with fevers, coughs and colds should not come to school. It is much better for your child to stay at home for a day or two than to expose the whole group to any illnesses. If your child must leave before dismissal, please inform the teacher and office ([office@talmudtorah.com](mailto:office@talmudtorah.com)) in advance. When your child returns, please send a note to inform the school if s/he has been exposed to any infectious diseases. Please note that

### Birthdays and Party Invitations

In Kindergarten we celebrate birthdays by making birthday t-shirts. Please send a white t-shirt for the class to decorate and give to your child on his/her birthday on the first day of school. We invite you to celebrate your child’s birthday with the class. You may bring along a treat for the class provided it is store bought, kosher and nut-free. Summer birthdays are celebrated at the end of June.

**At Talmud Torah, we respect all levels of religious observance and Jewish affiliation. Please be sensitive by not scheduling birthday parties on Shabbat or Jewish holi-**



**days. If you are not planning on inviting the entire class to a birthday party, please do not distribute party invitations at school.**

### **Clothing**

Please send your child dressed for outdoor play every day - rain or shine. The students should have a pair of boots readily available in their lockers to account for rainy days and inclement weather. **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING AND LUNCH BOXES!**

Please send a full change of uniform in a labeled bag in case of accidents or puddles.

All Kindergarten students are expected to wear a school uniform. Refer to our Parent Handbook for guidelines on school uniforms or visit our school website ([www.talmudtorah.com](http://www.talmudtorah.com)) and search “uniforms.”

### **How Parents Can Help**

Parent helpers are a valuable asset to our teachers and students and to the enrichment of our programs. It is important for the students to know that their parents are interested in what they do. If any parent is willing to share a hobby or talent that may be of interest to the students, please let us know.

Parents are reminded that what they are privy to in the classroom is confidential and only to be discussed with the teachers or administration.

### **Class Hours**

Please see that your child arrives at the proper time. It is important that the students be picked up promptly at the end of each session, as they will be dressed and ready to leave. On those days when there is a change in the regular “going home” arrangements of your child, please email the teacher and copy the office at [office@talmudtorah.com](mailto:office@talmudtorah.com).

### **Kindergarten Snacks and Lunch**

Each day please include ready to eat fruit and/or vegetables for a healthy snack. Please do not send candies or other

“junk” food. Peanuts and nuts are forbidden at school. Please ensure all food allergies are reported so arrangements can be made to ensure all students are safe. Students require lunch and two snacks. The teachers do not have food to supplement growing appetites. Please ensure sufficient amounts are sent. Our full service caterer, Mendelson Kosher Gourmet, can also provide daily hot meals for a fee.

#### **Peanut free lunch ideas:**

- Pita wrap sandwich with humous/refried beans/cheese with lettuce and tomato
- Quesadilla wedges with melted cheese and/or refried beans and side container of salsa
- Boiled cheese tortellini with dip
- Macaroni and cheese and other forms of pasta
- Crackers with hard boiled egg or cheese
- Greek yogurt with carrot, celery and cucumber sticks and a piece of fruit
- Bagel sandwich with cheese/cream cheese/smoked salmon
- Pizza slice with vegetables or fruit
- Soup or stew in a thermos
- A multi-compartment plastic container with your child’s favourite fruits, vegetables, condiments

#### **Peanut free snack ideas:**

- Yogurt (drinks, tubes, mini yogurts)
- Fruit cups
- Fresh fruit or dried fruit
- Puddings
- Crackers and cheese
- Celery stuffed with soft cheese or cream cheese
- Homemade trail mix with cereal, pretzels, and raisins
- Graham or animal crackers
- Vegetables with dip
- String cheese
- Mini pitas or mini bagels

