



Parent Handbook '12-'13

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Alphabetical)

135-Day Attendance Formula	12
Admission	3
Arrival, Dismissal, Absence and School Closure + Daily Schedules	8
Board of Directors and Parent Committees	30
Class Placements and Lists	15
Code of Conduct Policy	17
Communications	27
Development and Fundraising	27
Enrollment Information	4
Grandparents	32
Homework	23
Immunizations and Health Issues	5
Leadership Team	29
Learning Commons Use and Services	24
Miscellaneous (References, Report Cards, Media Release Authorization, Release of Students, School Bus, etc.)	25
Mission Statement	3
Parking and Traffic Regulations	13
Peanut/Nut Aware Policy	21
Rainy Day Policy	7
Religious Policies	19
School Supplies and Money at School	16
School Telephone and Forwarding Items/Messages	15
Student Progress Reports/Parent-Teacher Conferences	21
Technology in the School	24
Uniform Policy and Student Appearance	7
Visitors in the School	15

MISSION STATEMENT

Vancouver Talmud Torah is a traditional community Jewish day school dedicated to excellence in an engaging and a respectful learning environment in which Jewish children can grow to become proud, caring, responsible and dedicated members of the Jewish people and Canadian society.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Providing an excellent education within an integrated Judaic and General Studies program, which focuses on basic skills, independent and cooperative learning, critical thinking and creative thought;
- Providing children with an educational atmosphere conducive to their healthy social, emotional, physical and cognitive development;
- Imbuing children with the knowledge, appreciation and respect for the broad spectrum of Jewish diversity with *Ahavat Yisrael*;
- Teaching children to be confident when thinking and talking about G-d and providing them with a foundation in Jewish values and knowledge in Jewish subject matters, including Jewish History, State of Israel, *Tanakh*, Laws and Customs, Prayer, and Modern Hebrew language and literature;
- Instilling in the children a lifelong love of learning through passionate teaching in an engaging curriculum;
- Encouraging each child to be a *mensch*, to do *mitzvot* and to apply his/her acquired knowledge and values to his/her daily life;
- Promoting the children's and families' active involvement in, and support for, Vancouver Talmud Torah and institutions in both the Jewish and broader community;
- Strengthening the children's and families' Jewish identity by offering a warm Jewish social environment;
- Promoting continuing family and adult education;
- Promoting a standard of excellence in teaching and administration through ongoing professional development and innovation;
- Respecting a family's right to strictly confidential conversations with our administrative team or any other officials.

ADMISSION

All applications to the school are carefully screened and reviewed to ensure fit for your child and fit with the school. In addition to a completed application, we rely on report cards, transcripts, teacher feedback from prior schools (provided we receive a ***Consent for Release of Information form***), and other assessments to make our determination. As much as we would like to accommodate all families, other considerations are factors affecting admission. **Vancouver Talmud Torah cannot guarantee acceptance for any applicant.**

All documentation must be accompanied by a **\$100 per student non-refundable application fee**. Registration packages will be given to the family with the understanding *that acceptance is pending based on the school's receipt of all necessary documentation and the assessed fit of the student.*

Following receipt of the necessary documentation, if there are concerns as to whether or not Vancouver Talmud Torah can meet the student's academic needs, follow-up assessments may be performed by the learning assistance teachers in English and/or in Hebrew. If the concerns are related to social and/or behavioural issues, the Director of Student Services will gather all necessary information from the relevant external professionals involved with the student (i.e., previous school, counsellor, psychologist, etc).

After gathering all pertinent information, the Director of Admission and the admission team will meet to share information and make a decision regarding acceptance.

The Director of Admission will phone to confirm acceptance. An administrator or specialist teacher will meet with the family on the child's first day and will take the child to his/her class. The Director of Student Services will coordinate this. The admission team consists of the Director of Admission, Principal/Director of Student Services, Head of School and one senior office staff member.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

NEW STUDENT APPLICATIONS

For each new student, a completed application form, report cards, birth certificate, and proof of parents' legal status in Canada (if not born in Canada) must be submitted before enrollment can take place. Forms can be picked up in advance or will be mailed out upon request.

ENROLLMENT - ALL STUDENTS

Every student, including continuing students, must be enrolled for each new school year. The procedure involves:

1. Completion of enrollment form and enrollment contract (one per family).
2. Payment of non-refundable enrollment deposit and post-dated Parent Participation Program (PPP) fee.
3. Completion of Student Medical Information & Field Trip Consent and Waiver Form.
4. Submission of post-dated cheques.

Enrollment is not considered complete until all four steps have been finalized.

For each student registering for kindergarten or preschool, a non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is levied at the time of enrollment. This deposit will be applied against the total tuition fees.

NOTE: Enrollments will not be accepted from families with tuition assessments in arrears or other outstanding debts to the school. Also, students will NOT be admitted to class in September unless the above procedures are completed in their entirety.

TUITION FEES / ASSESSMENTS

Tuition assessments for Kindergarten - Grade 7 are determined in reference to a clearly laid out set of guidelines which is sent to all families at the time of registration. This information is readily available through our VTT accounting office. Please contact Mr. Mark Maibauer, Director of Financial Operations, 604.736.7307, ext. 3409, for further details.

1. Completion of registration form (one per family)
2. Payment of deposit(s) and late fees, if applicable
3. Submission of full set of post-dated cheques or Visa

Registration is not considered complete until all three steps have been finalized.

GRADE 7 GRADUATION FEE

A levy of \$100.00 payable at time of enrollment will be made for each student entering Grade 7 to cover the graduation ceremony expenses.

NSF CHEQUES

A fee of \$25.00 to cover costs will be charged for each cheque returned by the bank.

WITHDRAWALS

You expressly acknowledge awareness that to accommodate enrollment requirements, VTT must budget, plan, and make contractually binding commitments months in advance of the commencement of the school year to fulfill its obligations to all students and parents. Thus, a withdrawal of any student from enrollment after acceptance may, depending on the timing, result in VTT being unable to fill the vacancy created by such withdrawal or in VTT having incurred costs and expenses in reliance on the attendance of your student(s) for the school year in question. If you elect for any reason to terminate this agreement by withdrawing your student(s) from enrollment, whether prior to the beginning of classes or after classes have commenced, then all monies paid to VTT up to the effective date of withdrawal (1/10 of tuition x number of months beginning in March) will be unconditionally retained by VTT as a genuine pre-estimate of the financial damages we will incur arising from such termination and not as a penalty.

IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH ISSUES

IMMUNIZATIONS

In accordance with the policy adopted by the Health Department of the City of Vancouver and the public school system, Vancouver Talmud Torah requires that all new students entering Kindergarten and/or higher grades have their immunization status completely up to date. This means that a child must have had the following immunizations:

- Basic series of diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus and polio (DPT and polio).
- A booster of DPT and polio given after the fourth birthday, but before school entrance to Kindergarten and/or higher grades.
- Immunization against measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles) often given as a combination vaccine (MMR).

A record of the completed immunizations on the immunization form must be given to the school office before enrollment can be completed. Immunizations can be updated by a family doctor, or by Vancouver Coastal Health, which has on-going clinics.

The parent of any student who is not immunized due to medical exemption or conscientious objection must provide signed documentation of this, and the student may be excluded from school in the event of a communicable disease outbreak.

STUDENT MEDICAL INFORMATION & FIELD TRIP CONSENT FORM AND WAIVER FORM

This form needs to be completed annually and returned to the school office. It is extremely important for the office to have immediate access to current information. If these forms are not returned to the school office this could prevent the student from attending school trips and activities.

If a student has serious allergies or health concerns, additional forms with specific details related to their needs must be completed and returned to the school office. Arrangements should be made with the office to provide any medication the student may require.

ACCIDENTS, ILLNESSES AND EMERGENCIES

The school has certified first aid personnel on staff in the event of any medical emergency. 911 may also be called in the event of a medical emergency.

It is important that each parent keep the school informed of the **CURRENT** telephone number where he/she can be reached during the day in the event of an emergency, as well as current numbers of emergency contacts authorized to act for the parents in the event that parents cannot be reached.

In the event that a student feels ill in school, parents will be contacted if it seems necessary. In cases of serious injury, paramedics will be called and your child may be taken to Children's Hospital Emergency. The school will make every effort to contact the parents or the emergency contact in the event the parents are unavailable.

Medication cannot be administered to students by school staff.

CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES

If a child has a suspected virus or has been diagnosed with a contagious illness, please notify the office immediately. To maintain the healthiest environment possible for all our students, children should be kept home for 24 hours after all symptoms have passed. If a student displays symptoms while at school, parents will be contacted and asked to take their child home.

It is appropriate for a child to return to school following an illness:

- After 24 hours of antibiotic therapy for strep throat, conjunctivitis or other contagious bacterial condition.
- After 24 hours without fever. Many children with a nighttime fever will not have a fever in the morning, only to spike one again later in the day.
- After 24 hours without vomiting, diarrhea or rash.
- Upon doctor's recommendation, documenting that a child is no longer infectious from a severe bacterial or viral illness.

While it is not required to keep a child home if he/she has a cold, parents are asked to please use their best judgment. If he/she is continuously coughing or sneezing, or has a very runny nose it may be wise to keep them home.

Please speak with your child and reinforce the importance of **hand washing**. Every classroom is equipped with hand sanitizer.

Fifth Disease is a viral illness often characterized first by fever and mild cold like symptoms and later by bright red blotches on the face, torso, arms and legs. This virus **can have serious implications for pregnant women and individuals with compromised immunity**. If you suspect Fifth Disease, please do not send your child to school. According to Vancouver Coastal Health, once the rash appears, children are no longer contagious and can return to school.

NOTICE TO PARENTS ABOUT LICE

Head lice are small insects that live in the hair and scalp. They do not carry disease but are very unpleasant because they cause itching. Head lice are a common problem in childhood. They spread quickly because children play closely together.

Parents have responsibility for assisting in the prevention and management of outbreaks of nits (lice eggs) and head lice through regular checks of the child's hair and commencing immediate treatment when head lice or nits are detected.

If a teacher suspects a student is infested with head lice, the parents will be contacted and asked to take their child home.

A child is required to be excluded from school until effective treatment against head lice has begun.

In the event a case of lice is reported in a class, a notice will be emailed to the parents of the students in that class complete with instructions on monitoring and treatment.

UNIFORM POLICY AND STUDENT APPEARANCE

Overview

Vancouver Talmud Torah's Kindergarten to Grade 7 students are required to wear the school uniform during school hours. Parents are responsible to send the student to school in a uniform which is clean, well-maintained and **clearly labelled** with their student's name.

Why Students Wear Uniforms

1. To help build school spirit based on a sense of unity and identification with a special and unique group: Vancouver Talmud Torah.
2. To help avoid competition based on looks and clothing. That is why we particularly request that students do not deviate from the required uniform. We encourage individuality by having the students develop standards of excellence in their spiritual, physical and intellectual lives.
3. We believe that being a grown-up lasts for a long enough time. Elementary schooling should be relatively free of the pressures of being cool and having to conform to the 'ways of the world.'

The uniform policy will be strictly enforced. Please ensure your children are appropriately dressed before arriving to school. Students coming to school in inappropriate attire will be given a written reminder and/or phone call home. **If there is an issue regarding your child's uniform, please contact the teacher or the Director of Student Services as soon as possible.**

The following are the uniform requirements:

Girls	Boys	Gym Strip
Shirt: Regular or fitted white logo golf shirt (short or long sleeved) Vest or Pullover (sweater): Grey (mandatory winter uniform) Pant: Navy elastic or adjustable waist Skort/Scooter: Navy with length just above the knee Tunic: Only for girls in K to Grade 3 Socks: White or navy socks (with pants) Navy knee socks or tights (with skort) Shoes: White or dark (black, navy, or grey shoes or runners)	Shirt: Regular or fitted white logo golf shirt (short or long sleeved) Vest or Pullover (sweater): Grey (mandatory winter uniform) Pant: Navy with elastic or adjustable waist Walking short: Navy with adjustable waist Socks: White or navy Shoes: White or dark (black, navy, or grey shoes or runners) Kippah	Gym Shirt: Grey logo T-shirt Gym Shorts: Navy gym shorts Runners: White, black, navy, or grey Girls may wear a skort The gym strip is for Grades 1-7

Options for Ordering:

Our uniform supplier is **Cambridge & Company**. Fittings are offered at the end of the school year. Items ordered will be delivered to the school. Their contact information is as follows: **Phone: 604-924-9309**

Email: info@cambridgeuniforms.com

Website is: www.cambridgeuniforms.com

Store: #135-1305 Welch Street, North Vancouver

Appearance Standards

Hair

Students may dye their hair any natural color; extreme hair styles and colors are not permitted. All hair bands, scrunchies, ribbons or barrettes should be neutral, navy, black or white.

Makeup

Makeup and nail polish must be subtle and natural in appearance.

Jewelry

Girls may wear modest earrings: studs or small hoops but no large dangling earrings.

RAINY DAY POLICY

During the rainy season, please ensure that your students come to school dressed for inclement weather. Students benefit from fresh air and, consistent with school policies throughout the Lower Mainland, they are required to play outdoors, rain or shine. Vancouver Talmud Torah has the benefit of a large sheltered area; however, it is imperative that all students come to school equipped with the proper rain gear. It may be helpful to keep an extra set of clothing in the student's locker.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, ABSENCE AND SCHOOL CLOSURE**Daily Schedule Grades 1-3**

Students Arrive/Doors Open	8:15am
Warning Bell – Homeroom/Preschool	8:20am
2 nd Warning Bell – Homeroom	8:25am
Period 1 – Class or	8:30am-9:35am
Period 1 – Specialty	8:30am-9:10am
Period 2 – Class or	9:10am-10:15am
Period 2 – Specialty	9:35am-10:15am
Morning Recess	10:15am-10:30am
Period 3 – Class or	10:30am-11:25am
Period 3 – Class and	10:30am-10:45am
Period 3 - Specialty	10:45am-11:25am
Lunch Room	11:25am-11:43am
Lunch Recess	11:43am-12:20pm
Warning Bell	12:20pm
Period 4 – Class	12:25pm-1:30pm
Period 4 – Specialty	12:25pm-1:05pm
Period 5 – Class or	1:30pm-2:10pm
Period 5 – Specialty and	1:05pm-1:45pm
Period 5 – Class	1:45pm-2:10pm
Afternoon Recess	2:10pm-2:25pm
Period 6 – Class or	2:25pm-3:20pm
Period 6 – Class and	2:25pm-2:40pm
Period 6 – Specialty	2:40pm-3:20pm
Final Bell for Dismissal	3:20pm

Daily Schedule Grades 4-7

Students Arrive/Doors Open	8:15am
----------------------------	--------

Warning Bell – Homeroom/Preschool	8:20am
2 nd Warning Bell – Homeroom	8:25am
Period 1	8:30am-9:10am
Period 2	9:10am-9:50am
Morning Recess	9:50am-10:05am
Period 3	10:05am-10:45am
Period 4	10:45am-11:25am
1 st Lunch Recess	11:25am-11:43am
Recess – Grades 4 - 7	
2 nd Lunch Recess	11:43am-12:01pm
Lunch Room – Grades 4 - 5	
Recess – Grades 6 - 7	
3 rd Lunch Recess	12:01pm-12:20pm
Lunch Room – Grades 6 - 7	
Recess – Grades 4 - 5	
Warning Bell	12:20pm
Period 5	12:25pm-1:05pm
Period 6	1:05pm-1:45pm
Afternoon Recess	1:45pm-2:00pm
Period 7	2:00pm-2:40pm
Period 8	2:40pm-3:20pm
Final Bell for Dismissal	3:20pm

Preschool	8:20am-11:20am
Noshniks	11:20am-1:20pm
Kindergarten to Grade 7	8:25am-3:20pm

EARLY FRIDAY DISMISSAL SCHEDULE (Begins Nov 16, 2012; Regular Dismissal Resumes Mar 15, 2013)

Early Friday Dismissal Daily Schedule – Grades 1 to 3

Students Arrive/Doors Open	8:15am
Warning Bell – Homeroom/Preschool	8:20am
2 nd Warning Bell – Homeroom	8:25am
Period 1 – Class or	8:30am-9:29am
Period 1 – Specialty	8:30am-9:04am
Period 2 – Class or	9:29am-10:03am
Period 2 – Specialty	9:04am-10:03am
Morning Recess	10:03am-10:18am
Period 3 – Class or	10:18am-11:00am
Period 3 – Class and	
Period 3 – Specialty	
Lunch Room	11:00am-11:15am
Lunch Recess	11:15am-11:45am
Warning Bell	11:45am

Period 4 – Class	11:50am-12:49pm
Period 4 – Specialty	11:50am-12:24pm
Period 5 – Class or	12:49pm-1:23pm
Period 5 – Specialty and	12:24pm-1:23pm
Period 5 – Class	
Afternoon Recess	1:23pm-1:38pm
Period 6 – Class or	1:38pm-2:20pm
Period 6 – Class and	
Period 6 – Specialty	
Final Bell for Dismissal	2:20pm

Early Friday Dismissal Daily Schedule – Grades 4 to 7

Students Arrive/Doors Open	8:15am
Warning Bell – Homeroom/Preschool	8:20am
2 nd Warning Bell – Homeroom	8:25am
Period 1	8:30am-9:04am
Period 2	9:04am-9:38am
Morning Recess	9:38am-9:53am
Period 3	9:53am-10:27am
Period 4	10:27am-11:00am
1 st Lunch Recess	11:00am-11:15am
Recess – Grades 4 - 7	
2 nd Lunch Recess	11:15am-11:30am
Lunch Room – Grades 4 - 5	
Recess – Grades 6 – 7	
3 rd Lunch Recess	11:30am-11:45am
Lunch Room – Grades 6 - 7	
Recess – Grades 4 - 5	
Warning Bell	11:45pm
Period 5	11:50am-12:24pm
Period 6	12:24pm-12:58pm
Afternoon Recess	12:58pm-1:13pm
Period 7	1:13pm-1:47pm
Period 8	1:47pm-2:20pm
Final Bell for Dismissal	2:20pm

Preschool	8:20am-11:20am
Noshniks	11:20am-1:20pm
Kindergarten to Grade 7	8:25am-2:20pm

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Preschool classes begin at 8:20 a.m. Kindergarten to Grade 7 classes begin at 8:25 a.m. Please ensure that students arrive **five to ten minutes earlier** to prepare for school. Students will be permitted to wait in the halls on the main

floor until 8:15 a.m. when the inside doors will be opened. In the morning, students and parents can enter the school from 26th Avenue (main door) only.

As classroom doors open at 8:15 a.m., it is preferred that parents plan to drop off students between 8:15 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. We encourage parents of students in the upper grades to say their goodbyes in the drive-thru or in front of the school as it is desirable to foster independence and self-reliance in our older students.

The school does not provide before school supervision for students and is not responsible for supervision of students outside of school hours. In the case of before and after school programs, the contractor leading the activity is responsible for supervision and it is the parent's responsibility to drop off and pick up their children at the specified time.

LATE ARRIVAL

All students arriving late to school must sign in at the office before proceeding to class. See also Code of Conduct Policy, Appendix 1.

DISMISSAL

Students are dismissed by their teachers and are expected to leave the building immediately at 3:20 p.m. for pick up by parents. The only exception is if students are staying to work with a teachers, are attending a supervised extra curricular activity, or are working in the Learning Commons until closing time.

The school does not provide after school supervision for students and is not responsible for supervision of students outside of school hours. In the case of before and after school programs, the contractor leading the activity is responsible for supervision and it is the parent's responsibility to drop off and pick up their children at the specified time.

Students must not be left to wait for their parents past 3:45 p.m. **Our traffic team manages the drive thru until 3:45 p.m. only.** It is the responsibility of parents to pick students up on time.

EARLY FRIDAY DISMISSAL

In order to enable both students and staff members to arrive home with sufficient time to prepare for Shabbat on the early winter Friday nights, the school will be dismissed at **2:20 p.m.** beginning **November 16, 2012.** Regular dismissal time will resume on **Friday, March 15, 2013.** The school does not provide after school supervision for students, and is not responsible for students outside of school hours.

Students must not be left to wait for their parents past 2:45 p.m. **Our traffic team manages the drive thru until 2:45 p.m. only.** It is the responsibility of parents to pick students up on time.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students may not be excused from school before regular dismissal time unless there are very urgent extenuating circumstances. **Parents are asked to cooperate by arranging medical, dental, and other appointments after school hours. Students are not permitted to leave the school for lunch without prior arrangement and written permission. We urge parents not to take students for lunch prior to the dismissal bell.**

If a student must leave early for an appointment, the student must provide the teacher with a written note from the parent. Teachers are asked to dismiss the student at the appropriate time. If the classroom teacher does not dismiss the student, the office will call into the classroom. The student must be signed out at the office by the parent.

POLICY REGARDING THE BACK GATE ACCESS

The only entry to the school is through the main doors on 26th Avenue. Parents are asked to always access the school through the **main doors**.

ABSENCE, LONG TERM ABSENCE AND MAKE-UPS

Regular attendance in school is a prerequisite for scholastic achievement – especially in our dual program where every precious moment counts.

Review of the lesson taught the previous day, the current day's lesson, and homework assignments for the next lesson are covered daily. In case of absence of more than one day, parents should arrange for assignments and books to be sent home with a friend. Talmud Torah discourages parents from taking their students out of school for extended vacations. In the event that families choose to take such vacations, teachers are not responsible for preparing special lessons and homework in advance. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure completion of assignments and the students' responsibility to complete assignments and catch up.

In the event a student is unable to attend class, please contact the school office by telephone or email (lkatz@talmudtorah.com or nchark@talmudtorah.com) and state the reason for the absence by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. Student who are absence from school for any reason are required to submit a letter of explanation to the school. This is a Ministry requirement and the documentation will be kept in the office.

If there is an issue impacting on attendance, please contact the Director of Student Services as soon as possible.

THE 135-DAY ATTENDANCE FORMULA

Students who are absent from school for any reason are required to submit a letter of explanation to the school. This is a Ministry requirement and the documentation will be kept in the office.

September 30th is the date on which the official enrollment count is taken for both public and independent schools.

All students in independent schools who attend a minimum of 135 days up to May 15th are counted as fully qualifying students. Students attending independent schools fewer than 135 days by May 15th are counted as partially qualifying students in proportion to the number of days they attend school. This count includes all students who have transferred in between September 30th and May 15th of the school year.

Grant payments made in January and March are made on the basis of September 30th enrollment reports. According to the Ministry of Education, inexcusable absence (including trAvenueling) for an extended period of time during the school year is not considered an appropriate reason to miss school. Therefore, the Ministry deducts the money allocated to the school.

SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

A decision of this kind is based on safety and security of students; not on the the number of centimeters/inches of snow. These are the factors that influence our decision:

- The number of students who are carpooled or come on the school bus
- Radio and TV news reports from 6:00 a.m. advise motorists of the danger of driving in weather conditions
- Most independent schools close for the day

Should it be necessary at any time to close the school due to inclement weather, please check our website at www.talmudtorah.com. Information will be posted either late at night or by 6:00 a.m. the following morning. You can call into the school to listen to a pre-recorded message or you may listen from 6:00 a.m. to one of the following: **CKNW AM 980/CBC AM 690/CBC FM 88.1/FM 105.7**

NOSHNIKS (LUNCH CARE) FOR PRESCHOOLERS

These programs will only run on school days. Children will be picked up from their class and brought to the program room.

NOSHNIKS - 11:20 a.m. to 1:20 p.m. **(will not run on half days with 11:25 dismissal)**

PARKING AND TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

Please be responsible and always choose safety over convenience.

As a destination school attracting families from across Greater Vancouver, and with our growing enrollment, getting to and from our school safely and in an orderly manner is of paramount importance. Please read the following instructions carefully to ensure your child--and every other VTT student--benefits from the careful and considerate conduct of each and every parent and adult. **There are specific rules regarding drop-off, pick-up and neighbourhood parking that MUST be followed. These rules apply to every drop-off and pick-up--NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Vancouver Talmud Torah supports carpooling. To ease both the traffic and time burden, contact Jennifer Shecter-Balin at info@talmudtorah.com for help in finding carpooling partners.

VEHICLE ACCESS

To Drop Off Students at Main School Entrance - 998 West 26th Avenue

The 26th Avenue driveway is a **one directional thruway**. **Vehicles must access 26th Avenue via Oak Street (driving northbound) and proceed east to the VTT drive-thru entrance.** Turn right and follow the flow of traffic through the drive-thru. While in the drive-thru, when all vehicles have stopped and it is safe to do so, students may exit their vehicles. Drivers must remain in their vehicles at all times and must keep moving! Upon exiting the driveway onto 26th Avenue, please turn right or left. Do not proceed straight through to the Safeway parking lot.

To ease the access to 26th Avenue, all vehicles should queue along the east side of Oak Street facing north, then turn right onto 26th Avenue. **There is absolutely no left turn into the VTT drive-thru from the east.** Doing this is illegal and interrupts the flow of traffic. A no left turn sign is posted at the drive-thru entrance.

If students require assistance when exiting their vehicles, please do not use the drive-thru. Park your vehicle and walk them into the school.

To Pick Up Children at Main School Entrance- 998 West 26th Avenue

Access 26th Avenue via Oak Street, proceed to the drive-thru entrance, and join the queue of vehicles. Once the VTT drive-thru has reached vehicle capacity, all vehicles must queue on the south side of 26th Avenue facing east, awaiting entry to the drive-thru. **DO NOT STOP ON THE SIDEWALK AS THIS BLOCKS PEDESTRIAN ACCESS.** If 26th Avenue is also at capacity, the line up then extends to the east side of Oak St, between 26th Avenue and 27th Avenue. While queuing on 26th Avenue only, if the line-up has not yet moved forward, students may enter their vehicles. Once the line up begins to move, you must follow suit and stay snug to the vehicle directly in front of you.

Students must never be picked up or dropped off on Oak Street. While in the line up, you must always stay in your vehicle and keep moving. If, upon approaching the front of the line up your child has not yet exited the school, you must exit the drive-thru, turn right, proceed east on 26th Avenue, and re-enter the drive-thru following the flow of traffic.

Never leave your vehicle unattended in the drive-thru or on the south side of 26th Avenue. **G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Hospital's access road to 28th Avenue is strictly a private driveway and must never be used by VTT parents wanting to gain access to 28th Avenue.**

Preschool Parent Parking

For Preschool pick-up, street parking on Oak Street is available from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

PARKING IN THE SAFEWAY PARKING LOT

Use of the Safeway parking lot is a **privilege**, not a right, and use of the VTT drive-thru is always preferred. In the event of an incident involving a pedestrian and/or a vehicle, Safeway is liable and our parking privileges would be terminated. In order to maintain a good relationship with Safeway, Diamond Parking and the mall tenants, and to continue our very liberal usage of their lot, it is mandatory that we all do our part to follow the rules of their management.

At all times, please:

- Be aware of the posted time limits.
- **Park in the farthest available spots, not those closest to the stores.**
- Never double park.
- Only park in properly marked parking stalls.
- Never park in the Safeway loading bay.
- Do not park alongside the Shell gas station.
- Do not use handicapped zones for parking.

The following rules apply to all drop-off and pick-up times throughout the day:

- Do not drop off or pick up students anywhere in the Safeway parking lot leaving them unattended and responsible for finding their own way through the traffic to the school. This is extremely dangerous and puts the safety of students at risk.
- Diamond Parking, Safeway and the mall tenants have graciously agreed to allow VTT families to **BRIEFLY** park during morning drop-off until 8:45 a.m. only.
- **During afternoon pick-up, a purchase must be made at ANY of the mall businesses prior to leaving the lot. Failure to patronize a business may result in a ticket and/or towing.**
- **The 26th Avenue exit/entrance to Safeway parking lot will be blocked off during our peak times.** If at any time a driver is acting in an unsafe and irresponsible manner, their license plate number will be recorded and given to the Vancouver Police Department for follow up.
- **During early dismissal Fridays**, please do not park along the east side of Oak Street as this severely impedes the flow of traffic.

CROSSING OAK STREET

Students who walk or take the southbound Oak Street bus should NOT cross Oak Street at West 26th Avenue. **They should only cross with the traffic signal at West King Edward Avenue.**

PARKING IN FRONT OF MAIN OFFICE

Please note that parking is not allowed in front of the main office. This space is reserved for VTT staff only. Please do not block this space, even for a short time.

For the "Coles Notes" version, please visit the Traffic & Parking link on the school's website (www.talmudtorah.com).

CLASS PLACEMENTS AND LISTS

CLASS PLACEMENTS

Teachers, with the guidance of the administration, are responsible for placing students in classes. A number of factors are taken into account in compiling our class lists, including:

- academic balance
- balance of boys and girls
- balance of special needs (behaviour, language)
- consideration of friendships

Although work on class placements is done in June, we do not announce the specific placement of children until the end of August by mail. This is due to the fact that often adjustments have to be made to room assignments prior to school opening. Sometimes decisions are made to create additional classes; sometimes it is necessary to change teacher assignments. **This is a very complex process and consequently we cannot entertain requests for class changes.**

We hope that the above information helps you to understand the school's practice regarding placement of students. The paramount consideration is to provide the best situation for all of our students.

CLASS LISTS

Due to federal privacy legislation, class lists are no longer distributed to families. With appropriate consent, parent class representatives will share **class email lists only** for playdate and party invitations. VTT does not distribute home addresses or telephone numbers.

VISITORS IN THE SCHOOL

All visitors to the school must report to the school office and/or security guard and sign in and out. **No parent or other visitor may enter a classroom or interrupt instruction without clearance from the school office.**

The school receives many interested visitors: government, board members and prospective parents. You may see them being led by the administration through the school and observing classes.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE AND FORWARDING MESSAGES/ITEMS

The school telephone is reserved for school business. Students must request prior permission from teachers, administration and staff to use the office phone. Due to the number of families and students, the office is unable to accommodate large volumes of calls. Students are also not to use cell phones during the school day.

Student use of the phone or messages for students should be limited to emergencies only.

In the unavoidable event that a message needs to be left for a student, the office will do its best to contact them, but cannot guarantee the message will be received.

Parents should ensure their children are clear on after school arrangements (bus riding, pick-up details, playdates, etc.) in order to avoid confusion and unnecessary phone calls to and from the office at dismissal time.

The office is unable to accept any non-school related messages/items. The school is unable to assume responsibility for any items and their delivery (gifts, letters etc.). This does not include lunches and/or school items for students.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND MONEY AT SCHOOL

BASIC DAILY SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The following items are basic daily requirements for school:

- Proper uniform and inclement weather attire
- School bag including covered books and all needed school supplies
- Gym uniform on appropriate days
- Name and identification labels on ALL personal clothing and supplies
- Lunch and snacks
- Bus fare (if applicable)

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

All school supply information is distributed at the end of the school year and is available on the VTT website under the “links” tab. School supplies are ordered in bulk for Grades 1-3 and parents are asked to remit payment to the school office in June.

SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

The school issues textbooks to all students. Students are responsible for covering all books, keeping them in good condition and returning them at the end of the school year. Parents will be expected to replace lost or damaged textbooks, as well as reimburse the school for any equipment or property that their children may damage.

MONIES BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Any monies to be turned in to school for payments of trips, plays, etc. should be placed in an envelope and clearly marked with the student’s name, amount, and the function it is supposed to cover. These should always be given to your student’s teacher, unless the instructions specify otherwise.

Note: Students are requested NOT to bring any of the following items to school:

- Unnecessary money
- Expensive toys or games
- Electronic games
- Chewing gum
- Sharp or dangerous objects
- Electronic pets and trading cards
- Permanent markers
- Valuables of any kind
- Cell phones (must be kept in lockers)
- Any other prohibited items outlined in the VTT Code of Conduct Policy

The school is not responsible for any items or objects brought from home.

POLICY REGARDING STUDENT CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES

Students bringing cell phones or other mobile technologies to school are required to **keep these devices in their locker** and switch them to silent or turn them off during school hours. If a cell phone or other device is seen or heard during the school day, the device will be brought to the office. On the first occurrence, the device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. After the first occurrence, parents will be asked to retrieve the cell phone from the office.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

VTT fosters a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Students and their parents are expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, school staff and visitors. The school’s rules of conduct and dis-

cipline are established to achieve and maintain order in the school.

Those who violate the rights of others or who violate school rules will be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary measures. Such measures are designated to: correct, promote, and rehabilitate. All written disciplinary actions will be recorded and filed.

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment at school or school-related activities include:

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time (see VTT Code of Conduct Appendix #1 – Elementary School Lateness).
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being appropriately dressed in school uniform and well groomed.
4. Showing courtesy and respect toward others and behaving in a responsible manner.
5. Avoiding violations of the Code of Conduct and always exercising self-discipline and obeying all school rules, including safety rules.
6. Co-operating with any investigation of Code of Conduct cases and volunteering known information relating to a serious offense.

The school has authority over students during regular school hours, during recess, lunch periods, and while going to and from school on school transportation. This jurisdiction includes any activity during the school day on school grounds, attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any school-related misconduct regardless of time or location. Elementary school students are not allowed to leave the school, during the day, with other parents or students unless permission in writing is received from the parents. (Also see Grades 5, 6 & 7 Behaviour Policy in Appendix #2)

EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT	
• Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures towards other students, teachers or staff, or visitors.	
• Leaving school grounds or school sponsored events without permission.	
• Disobeying directives from school personnel or failing to adhere to school policies, rules, and regulations.	
• Stealing from students, staff, or the school.	
• Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students or employees and/or throwing objects that may cause bodily injury or damage property.	
• Cheating or copying the work of another, disobeying school rules and misconduct on school buses.	
• Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse to students, staff or other individuals.	
• Bullying, harassing, teasing, or blackmail; that is, obtaining money or other objects of value from an unwilling person, or forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.	
• Name-calling, ethnic, racial, or derogatory statements that school officials have reasonable cause to believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.	
• Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual behaviour.	
• Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of: marijuana or a controlled substance; a dangerous drug, glue, aerosol paint, or other volatile chemical; or an alcoholic beverage.	
• Selling, showing, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing pornography in any form.	
• Bringing a firearm to school. Possessing razors, switchblades, box cutters, chains, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person.	
• Smoking or using tobacco products and/or playing with matches or fire.	

• Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process, including, but not limited to, failure to adhere to the school dress code, having a pager or cell phone activated, or discharging a fire extinguisher.
• Making bomb threats, false alarms and threats, hoaxes, or accusations regarding school safety. Hacking into other students' computers, email, instant messages.
• Engaging in any illegal conduct as defined by law.
• Any other substandard conduct that the school deems to be inappropriate.

CONSEQUENCES

In the event a student engages in prohibited conduct a member of the administrative team will decide on the appropriate investigation and response. Such response(s) may include, but is not limited to:

RESPONSE
• Verbal reprimand
• Behavioural contract
• Restriction of privileges
• Detention
• Parental contact
• Temporary withdrawal of certain privileges or participation in school activities
• Out of school suspension up to 10 school days
• Probation
• Referral to outside agency
• In-school suspension program
• Out of school suspension over 10 days
• Immediate removal from school premises pending a hearing
• Expulsion

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are responsible for abiding by all policies and procedures while in or representing VTT School. The consequences for not acting in accordance with this Code of Conduct may include revoking privileges, discharge from the school, and non re-enrollment of family for subsequent school years.

APPENDICES

#1. ELEMENTARY LATENESS

Definition of an Unexcused Late:

If a student arrives in the classroom after the second bell has rung (8:30 a.m. and 12:25 p.m.), he or she is considered to be late. An unexcused late is defined as a late for which the student has not provided a written note* (email is acceptable) on his/her return to school, or for which a parent/guardian did not phone the office to notify on the day the late occurred.

* Notes will not be accepted retroactively.

Reasonable Lateness:

There are occasions where lateness is unavoidable such as when doctor's appointments must be set during school hours. Reasonable lateness is determined by administration. No more than 4 lates monthly will be tolerated without approved reason.

Students arriving after 8:30 a.m. and before 9:00 a.m. must sign their name and grade on the clipboard in the foyer by the school office. Students arriving to school after 9:00 a.m. or 12:25 p.m. must obtain a late slip from the office before proceeding to class.

A student who habitually arrives late interferes with their ability to begin the day in an organized manner. Arriving late on a daily basis also interferes with the classroom teacher's ability to begin his/her teaching day.

#2. GRADE 5, 6 & 7 BEHAVIOUR POLICY

"Points" will be assigned by the administration to students in Grade 5, 6 and 7 who do not act in accordance with the VTT Code of Conduct, in or out of class.

These "points" will be recorded on a form by the teacher and forwarded to the administration. The administration will assign:

1 point (i.e., inappropriate dress, eating in the halls);

3 points (i.e., misbehaving in the halls, lunchroom, assemblies, hiding in bathrooms or classrooms at lunch or recess);

5 points (i.e., being disrespectful of staff, improper bus behaviour or improper behaviour on field trips); or

10 points (these are suspendable behaviours and include fighting, dangerous behaviour on the bus or on school grounds).

At 5 points, a phone call will be made to the parents to devise a plan to address the behaviours of concern. If a student reaches 10 points, the student will receive a suspension and will be re-admitted to school on a behaviour contract to be signed by the student, his/her parents, and a member of the administration.

Points will not be erased at the end of the term - they will accumulate throughout the academic year. However, if a student goes two months without accumulating any points, two points will be deducted from the total.

RELIGIOUS POLICIES

Introduction

Vancouver Talmud Torah is a traditional community Jewish day school that respects and embraces variation in observance and religious practice. As such, we serve a community of families that reflects a wide spectrum of beliefs and ritual practices. The leaders and teachers of Vancouver Talmud Torah serve as role models for the value of pluralism and for active engagement in Jewish life and living, which we hope to inspire in our students and families as a result of their being a part of the VTT community. "Pluralism" refers to a community that fosters respect for each individual's background and builds a safe and comfortable environment in which it can be discussed. Therefore, our classrooms and other teaching spaces should be places where teachers and students are able to express personal opinions and engage in conversation. Care must be taken to always bear in mind that all opinions are valid and welcome and that there may not be "one right answer." Our success in helping our community to grow and learn on an on-going basis will be founded on these ideas and practices.

There are some religious policies upon which our community is founded in order to help build a religious and spiritual community that will be comfortable for all and respectful of tradition and traditional observances:

1. Observance of Shabbat and Festivals

Sacred time during the Jewish week and year are differentiated from “secular” or “mundane” time through a variety of observances and abstentions from various activities. In order to allow all of our families to observe Shabbat and Festivals to their own levels of preference, the following policies have been put into place:

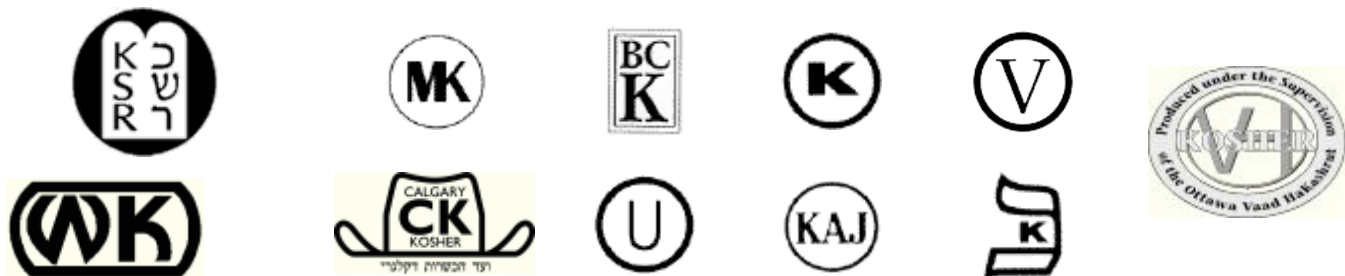
- **Homework assignments of any kind may not be assigned over Shabbat and Festivals.**
- **Tests or other assignments may not be made due on the day immediately following a Festival observance, nor may they be assigned over the course of the *Pesah*/Passover recess.**
- **Students’ birthday parties should not be scheduled on Shabbat or Festivals, and we encourage families to schedule B’nei Mitzvah parties to begin after the conclusion of Shabbat on a Saturday night.**

2. Observance of Kashrut/Jewish Dietary Laws

The Jewish dietary laws are one of the ways that we elevate the mundane act of eating and connect it to G-d and holiness. They also add an aspect of religious discipline to everyday Jewish life. As a community, VTT observes the laws of Kashrut within the school in the following ways:

- Students may only bring dairy or *pareve* foods (items that are neither meat nor dairy, such as fish, and fruits and vegetables) to school for lunches and snacks.
- Food items brought into the school for celebrations or activities must bear a certified kosher label (see some examples below) or must have been prepared in the school’s kitchen. Unfortunately, we do not permit home-baked goods to be brought into the school for such events.

There are a number of internationally recognized *hekhsherim*/kosher certification labels. Please note, however, that a generic stand-alone “K” is not an acceptable kosher certification, unless it has been pre-approved by the Judaic Studies administration. Some of the most common *hekhsherim*/kosher certification labels you will find locally are:



3. Secular Calendar Holidays

As a traditional community Jewish day school serving a diverse population, our students will express varied levels of knowledge about, and interest in, holidays and observances from outside of Judaism. While individual students and their families will make their own choices regarding how to approach such events, VTT encourages active participation in the festivals and celebrations of the Jewish calendar and discourages participation in secular ones, particularly those with their roots in other religious traditions. Observances that are associated with Hallowe’en and Street Valentine’s Day, for example, are not permitted to take place within the school.

4. The Wearing of Kippot

Wearing a *kippah* or traditional head-covering, while not a commandment, has been a traditional observance for the Jewish people for centuries. It is both a sign of respect for and awareness of G-d’s presence and a tangible identifier of one’s Jewish identity. As VTT is a house of Torah study and a setting for the performance of *mitzvot*/commandments on a daily basis, all Jewish males are required to wear a *kippah* while in the building.

While the wearing of a *kippah* has not been practiced by women until more recent generations, there have been several head covering traditions for women throughout Jewish history. As a traditional community Jewish day school, we support our female students and faculty should they choose to wear a *kippah* or traditional Jewish head covering, particularly during Torah study, prayer, and meal times.

Purchasing Kippot from the Office

Any student needing to purchase a *kippah* can do so at the office at a cost of **\$1.00 each**. Students will be given an account where any charges will be recorded. At the end of each school year, parents will be billed for the amount owing. Parents are encouraged to check and pay any amounts owing throughout the school year.

PEANUT/NUT AWARE POLICY

At Vancouver Talmud Torah, we endeavour to provide a safe environment for all our students. To that end, we must respect the fact that some of our students have life-threatening allergies to peanuts, nuts and nut products. For some students, ingestion or exposure to by unknowingly touching traces or residues of this food substance (i.e., on a ball, on a hand, student desk or lunch table) could cause anaphylactic shock and, without immediate emergency medical assistance, loss of consciousness and death.

In response, VTT, *like most other schools throughout the Lower Mainland*, is a "**peanut/nut aware**" school. This means that products containing peanuts, nuts or nut products in students' lunches will not be allowed. Food brought in for common consumption must not contain peanuts, nuts or nut products. We do not use the terminology "peanut/nut free" because we cannot guarantee that there will never be traces of peanuts/nuts in the school.

We understand this may cause some inconvenience to our families. Below are some nutritious lunch and snack ideas:

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
- 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 (tubes, minigos)
- Fruit cups
- Fresh fruit or dried fruit
- Pudding
- 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

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT/PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Report cards are sent home three times during the school year (see school calendar for dates). The grading scale below is based on curriculum and on Ministry requirements for the General Studies Program and will be used by teachers.

Primary Assessment Scale:

Levels of Performance	K-3
-----------------------	-----

Not Yet Within Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work does not meet grade level expectations; There is little evidence of progress toward the relevant prescribed learning outcomes The situation needs intervention 	1
Minimally Meeting Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work may be inconsistent, but meets grade-level expectations There is evidence of progress toward relevant prescribed learning outcomes The student needs support in identified areas 	2
Meeting Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work meets grade-level expectations There is evidence that relevant prescribed learning outcomes have been accomplished 	3
Fully Meeting Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work consistently meets grade-level expectations There is consistent evidence that relevant prescribed learning outcomes have been accomplished 	3+
Exceeding Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work exceeds grade-level expectations in significant ways The student may benefit from extra challenge 	4

Intermediate Assessment Indicators:

Letter Indicator	Descriptor	Letter Indicator	Descriptor
A	The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.	C	The student demonstrates minimally acceptable performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
B+	The student demonstrates very good performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.	C-	The student is experiencing difficulty in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
B	The student demonstrates good performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.	I	In progress or Incomplete - The student, for specifically identified reasons, is not demonstrating minimally acceptable performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
C+	The student demonstrates satisfactory performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.	F	Failed or Failing - The student has not demonstrated minimally acceptable performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.

Parents are informed of their children's progress by means of three issues of a written report card, optional interim reports, as well as by Parent-Teacher contact.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Conferences may be arranged at any time during the year with teachers, the Director of Student Services and/or administrators. **The teacher must be the first point of reference and contact for all student concerns.** To schedule a meeting, parents should leave a voicemail for a teacher, which will be returned within 24 hours or earlier. Parents may also be contacted to meet with faculty members if there is a need concerning a student's progress (i.e. team meetings, etc.).

HOMEWORK

Homework **cannot** be assigned over Shabbat and/or holidays and will typically be given Monday through Thursday.

Homework in the Primary Grades:

Home reading is essential to literacy development in the primary grades.

Grades 1 and 2:

Homework activities are intended to support learning to read and should be a maximum of 10 to 15 minutes in duration combined from both General and Judaic studies.

Grade 3:

A combination of independent and parent/child literacy-based activities should occur. These activities take approximately 20 minutes (General and Judaic).

Homework in the Intermediate Grades:

As students move into the intermediate program, reading is no longer considered homework, but is expected in order to support their ongoing development of literacy skills.

Grades 4 and 5:

Approximately 30 minutes (General and Judaic) of work is given.

Grades 6 and 7:

At the Grade 6/7 level, homework should not exceed more than 60 minutes per evening. Students in these grades will be assigned longer-term projects over the weekend, but they will be given ample notice and teachers will ensure collaboration in the assignment of these projects.

There may be instances where more work is required at home, following missed classes.

VTT discourages parents from taking students out of school for extended vacations. In the event that families choose to take such vacations, teachers are not responsible for preparing special lessons and homework in advance. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure completion of assignments and the student's responsibility to complete assignments and catch up.

As a parent, you can help stimulate your child's curiosity and delight in learning. You can also help extend and reinforce at home what they learn at school. Take an active interest in your child's homework and encourage him/her to develop healthy attitudes and efficient habits regarding homework and studying. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Provide your child with a fixed place to study and to do his/her homework. It should be quiet, well lit and free of distractions and supplied with paper, pencils, appropriate reference materials, etc.
- Help him/her to set a regular homework time each day and stick to it, free from any other distractions or interruptions. Do provide playtime after school and before homework time.
- Provide a special notebook for recording his/her homework assignments as follows: Homework Given, Date Due, Homework Finished. Yomans (daily planning books) are provided for students in grades 2-7.

- Encourage your child to take an occasional break when studying. Research has shown that short concentrated periods of studying, with breaks for relaxation, help the student towards maximum retention of academic material.
- Help your child to find additional sources of information besides school textbooks. Make family trips to the public learning commons and help your child find books, pamphlets, magazines and even people in the community who might be experts on a topic.
- Help your child organize and budget time, especially to meet deadlines for long-term assignments such as reports and projects. One method is to develop a chart, which lists all the steps necessary to complete the project; this makes a large task look manageable and possible.
- Remember that **homework is assigned to the student, not to you**. The child who has a parent hovering over his shoulder will develop a fear of making mistakes that will hamper his/her creativity and ability to attempt new tasks. Let your child know you expect them to do their best but not perfect work. Remind him/her to check over their work and you can assist by asking questions and reviewing parts that may seem confusing.
- Remember that **praise** and **encouragement** are more productive than criticism. Look for things to praise: a neatly written paper, an improvement in spelling, a completed assignment, etc.
- Contact the teacher by written note, telephone or personal interview if your child has difficulty completing his homework or if you have concerns.
- Show your child that he is loved and valued for his own sake - not because of any achievement.

LEARNING COMMONS USE AND SERVICES

HOURS: Monday to Friday, the Learning Commons is open until 4:30 p.m. for student use. On early dismissal Fridays, the LC closes at 3:00 p.m. On regular Fridays, the LC closes at 4:00 p.m.

Note: During class time the learning commons operates on a flexible schedule. As a result, use may be limited occasionally due to classes, meeting, or other activities in session. Watch for a sign on the door.

LOANS: Parents and students may borrow 3 books at a time for up to 2 weeks.

Note: Borrowing of current Jewish holiday materials may be restricted to ensure teachers' access for classroom use.

OVERDUES: Overdue books must either be returned or renewed before other books can be signed out.

You can visit our learning commons online at <http://library.students.talmudtorah.com/>

TECHNOLOGY USE--RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

TO THE STUDENTS

Vancouver Talmud Torah is able to offer students the privilege of using its Learning Commons which provides computing resources and internet network access. This facility, used properly, can enhance student learning. Students will be able to communicate with other internet users worldwide and to research topics related to school activities. The privilege of using the computers comes with certain rights and obligations.

STUDENT RIGHTS:

- Students have the right to an excellent learning environment. The Learning Commons will provide access to appropriate educational material from the internet to enhance school projects. It will enable communication with other internet users when sharing common school-based interests.
- Students have the right to access information that is consistent with the values and goals of the school.
- Students have the right to teacher and staff guidance. If students are not sure of anything, they are encouraged to ask for help.

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS:

- Act respectfully: be polite and use appropriate language, especially with e-mail.
- Participate responsibly: protect one's password. Look after the equipment and the learning commons. Do not bring any computer viruses to school.
- Be legal: stay away from anything that is offensive, illegal, obscene or threatening. Use only licensed software.
- Behave safely: do not reveal any personal information such as address, phone number, or banking information.

VANCOUVER TALMUD TORAH RESERVES THE RIGHT:

- To ensure the learning commons is being used for academic and school purposes by periodically monitoring computer activities.
- To restrict information stored on the computer and to restrict information transmitted over the network.
- To take away the privilege to use the learning commons if students are found to be abusing the resources and/or accessing inappropriate sites. If appropriate, the school may take other disciplinary actions.

A Computer Facility Form for each student must be completed, signed and returned to the school office. The school will keep this form on file for the duration of the student's enrollment. If you have a new child and/or children coming to the school please complete a new form with all children enrolled to avoid duplicate forms being on file.

Access to the Learning Commons at VTT is a privilege. Use it responsibly and appropriately. Do not abuse it!

Please visit our website and click on the "links" tab to read our Acceptable Use Policy for students. It is every parent's responsibility to discuss this policy with their children in age appropriate language.

MISCELLANEOUS

LETTER OF REFERENCES/REQUESTING COPIES OF REPORT CARDS

Requests for letters of reference for secondary school or other academic programs should be directed, in writing, to the administration. A minimum of two weeks notice must be provided. In consultation with the teachers involved, a letter of reference will be written by an administrator. Please note that letters of reference will be sent directly from VTT to the institution requesting the reference.

Report cards are available online and can be downloaded and printed from the parent portal.

MEDIA RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

A Media Release Authorization Form for each student must be completed, signed and returned to the school office. This form will clearly indicate whether or not you consent to having your child's name and/or photograph published in external media. The school will keep this form on file for the duration of the student's enrollment. If you have a new child and/or children coming to the school, please complete a new form with all children enrolled to avoid duplicate forms being on file.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS

The school can only release students to individuals listed on their emergency contact card and/or in the case the school has **written permission** from the parents. The office is unable to accept verbal confirmation due to legal considerations.

SCHOOL BUS -- RICHMOND, JCC & WEST SIDE

Our school bus runs daily. The school bus is also available for field trips and special community events involving VTT participation. Service will include morning and afternoon pick-up and drop-off. Information is available in the school office. The bus will NOT wait for students so they must be on time! On the afternoon runs, the bus departs at 3:35 p.m. sharp! (2:35 p.m. on early Friday dismissal).

For Richmond bus service, there will be one flat charge per month of \$110.00, including HST. This includes morning and afternoon riding. There is NO pro-rating for fewer than five days per week. A registration form must be completed and submitted to the office. Please contact Debbie Broadley (dbroadley@talmudtorah.com) if you have any questions.

The fee for casual riders to Richmond is \$4.00 each way (or \$8.00 per day).

For West Side bus service, there will be one flat charge per month of \$50.00, including HST (\$30 for one-way fares). This includes morning and afternoon riding and an option to choose the JCC as the afternoon stop. There is NO pro-rating for fewer than five days per week. A registration form must be completed and submitted to the office. Please contact Debbie Broadley (dbroadley@talmudtorah.com) if you have any questions.

The fee for casual riders to the JCC is \$2.00 per ride.

Reservations can be made through the office **by 12:30 p.m.** on the day the ride is required.

Please read the bus rules and review them with your child and/or children. Student safety while using the bus is our number one concern. **Students experiencing difficulty behaving on the bus will be denied the privilege of riding.**

If plans change and the student will not ride the bus as scheduled, the school office must be notified.

LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found area is located near the old gym and is used for clothing and other lost objects. Smaller non-clothing items and valuables are brought to the office. This area is emptied every term and the contents are displayed and then donated to the Jewish Family Service Agency if they are unclaimed. The school is not responsible for any items left on the premises.

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Holidays and special event assemblies are held on a regular basis to foster appreciation for the beauty of our festivals and the Jewish values which they transmit to our students. **Please check with the teacher to determine which assemblies are open to parents.**

LOCKS AND LOCKERS

Students will have use of lockers for their coats and other belongings where possible. Some lockers are available for individual use, while others must be shared.

GLASS ON SCHOOL PREMISES

For safety reasons, students should not bring any glass containers to the school under any circumstances.

PETS IN THE SCHOOL

Some of our students have allergies - please do not bring pets into the school.

COMMUNICATIONS

“HADASHOT” (THE WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER) AND NOTICES TO PARENTS

In order to provide an effective system of communication between school and home, memos, newsletters, notices, etc., will most often be sent by electronically as the school uses email whenever possible. These communications are a means of keeping parents informed of field trips, extracurricular activities, and any necessary changes in times and dates already advised. Our e-newsletter, Hadashot, is emailed every Friday and contains important calendar and event information, etc. For any questions regarding communications, contact Jennifer Shecter-Balin, Director of Admission & Communications at info@talmudtorah.com. Our website is updated regularly. Please visit www.talmudtorah.com to apprise yourself of important news and information and to view the most up-to-date calendar.

DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

Delivering an exceptional educational experience for our diverse community of learners and families requires significant resources. VTT doesn't screen potential students on the basis of academic ability or the family's financial capacity. Yet, we remain competitive with the best private schools in Vancouver. Once tuition assistance is factored in, tuition fees account for only 67% of the school's annual operating budget. Remaining revenues come from a variety of sources, including the Ministry of Education, the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver and, of course, philanthropy.

Funds raised from individuals, foundations and companies are used to support all three of the school's strategic pillars – educational excellence, financial stability and sustainability and community. We invest in professional development for our faculty, purchase the latest in technology and supplies, help support families in need, invest in community initiatives in which our students enhance their learning experience and much, much more.

The Development Office plans and executes fundraising activities in collaboration with faculty, staff, the VTT Board, the PPP co-chairs, volunteers and other community leaders. These activities are designed to align with and meet the needs of the school, as determined by the Leadership Team and VTT Board.

Annual Campaign

The annual campaign is the umbrella for VTT's year-round and ongoing fundraising efforts and includes many different appeals. The funds raised from this campaign are applied in many ways and to many different funds, but all support VTT's ability to deliver an exceptional educational experience. We strive to provide opportunities for all of our families to participate in the annual campaign and to make gifts that are meaningful to them. Every dollar we raise builds our school and contributes to our success and we are deeply grateful to and appreciative of every donor.

VTT Campus Campaign

In addition to raising funds to enhance student learning at VTT, we are currently in the midst of a \$20 million capital campaign to expand and revitalize our school.

We are operating beyond capacity, unable to meet current demand and we have had to turn Jewish families away. We are using closets for offices, hallways for classrooms and gyms for lunchrooms, while other Westside schools are investing tens of millions of dollars – each – in new facilities. Despite this, we deliver outstanding programs in art, music, drama and physical education, but lack the space and flexible learning environments we need for those

programs to reach their potential. We have severe traffic and parking issues which the City of Vancouver has told us we simply have to fix. And we need to upgrade our building to replace an antiquated physical plant, as well as to provide access for those with physical disabilities.

The new building will increase capacity by 40 per cent. It will have flexible learning environments, including a university-style “learning commons” that supports educational best practices – otherwise known as 21st century learning.

There will be dedicated spaces for art, drama and music, together with rooms for small group meetings and collaboration. There will be a new double gymnasium, kitchen and dedicated dining hall which can be converted to flex space for other programming throughout the day.

Of the \$20 million needed, we have secured commitments of over \$13 million, and we’re just getting underway. This includes a lead gift of \$5 million from the Gordon and Leslie Diamond Foundation to fund the last \$5 million of the campaign.

To learn more and to view the current renderings, please visit securingthefuture.ca.

Opportunities to Give

VTT accepts donations in the form of cheques, credit cards, stocks, bonds, insurance, property, and cash from individuals, corporations, government and foundations. Most gifts are eligible for a charitable donation receipt. For more information, please contact the Development Office at 604-736-7307 x 3478 or development@talmudtorah.com.

Development Calendar

Each year, the Development Office, working with the Development Evaluation committee of the Board, VTT Campus Campaign leadership, and VTT’s Leadership Team establishes a calendar of initiatives to best balance the needs of the school with funding opportunities available. All development and fundraising initiatives, whether for the entire school, a single class or the community, must be approved by the Development Evaluation committee before donations can be solicited in the school.

To contact the Development Evaluation committee, please email development@talmudtorah.com.

Key Initiatives, 2012 – 2013

Tribute Cards

Tribute cards are a great way to mark special occasions, family milestones or to honour the memory of loved ones. For a minimum donation of \$18, you can send a tribute card and designate the funds to a program of your choice. Donations can be made by contacting the Development Office or by clicking on the “Giving to VTT” link on our website at talmudtorah.com.

Campaign Plus Appeal

Campaign Plus gifts made through the Jewish Federation’s annual appeal (75% of funds that exceed your previous year’s gift to the Federation) can be designated directly to Talmud Torah. These gifts are extremely beneficial to the school. VTT is also a designated United Way organization.

Grants

Foundation grants are a key source of funding for VTT. The Development Office drafts and coordinates grant applications, monitors grant expenditures and reports to funding agencies on the impact of giving. All grant applications must be coordinated through the Development Office.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The VTT Leadership Team, led by Head of School Cathy Lowenstein, is responsible for maintaining and enhancing academic excellence, including innovations to programming and curricula; maintaining and enhancing operational excellence, with a particular emphasis on revenue stability and fiscal prudence and sustainability; executing policies set by the Board; and implementing the mission and mandate of the school. Specifically, Mrs. Lowenstein is responsible for educational management; instructional leadership; Ministry of Education requirements; board, community and stakeholder relations; human resources; financial management; development and fundraising; and public relations.

Mrs. Lowenstein is supported in her role by eight members of the Leadership Team.

ACADEMIC TEAM

Rabbi Matthew Bellas, School Rabbi/Vice Principal of Judaic Studies

In addition to classroom teaching in Kindergarten and Grades 5 to 7 in Judaic Studies, Rabbi Bellas supervises the Judaic Studies Department for all of VTT. His responsibilities include: mentoring and supervising the Judaic Studies faculty; assuring educational excellence in the Judaic Studies curriculum; the oversight, mentorship and leadership of student and family Jewish life programming; as well as leading weekly Kabbalat Shabbat services for students. Rabbi Bellas also oversees the school's integrated Tikkun Olam curriculum in Grades 6 and 7.

Janice St. Helene, Director of Education/Principal of Intermediate Grades

Ms. St. Helene is part of the educational leadership team and as Principal of Intermediate Grades she is responsible for supporting and promoting the core value of educational excellence in the intermediate grades – 4 to 7. She is also responsible for the supervision and evaluation of the intermediate General Studies and Specialists faculties. As Director of Education, Ms. St. Helene oversees the K to 7 General Studies and Specialists faculties and curriculum, including the monitoring of Ministry of Education requirements and student reporting. In addition, Ms. St. Helene supports many of the school's operations, including site management; human resources; school programs; and school level budgets.

Jessica Neville, Director of Student Services/Principal of Primary Grades

Ms. Neville is part of the educational leadership team and as Principal of Primary Grades she is responsible for ensuring VTT achieves educational excellence in the primary grades – Kindergarten to Grade 3. In this role she also supervises and evaluates the primary grades faculty. As the Director of Student Services, she is responsible for the Special Education department, supervising, mentoring and evaluating that department's faculty. Ms. Neville oversees individualized student programs, counselling services, student and systems management and Health and Career education.

Gaby Lutrin, Preschool Director

As head of the Early Years program, Ms. Lutrin oversees the development, implementation and management of the Early Years curriculum. She supervises, mentors and evaluates the Early Years faculty. Ms. Lutrin is responsible for ensuring the Early Years program meets the licensing requirements as set out by Vancouver Coastal Health and works with other members of the academic leadership team to ensure that health, safety and operations procedures are tailored for the specific needs of VTT's youngest learners. She also works with parents to create and implement individual development plans.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS TEAM

Mark Maibauer, Financial Controller & Director of Operations

As the school's Financial Controller, Mr. Maibauer is the school's key executive with respect to financial, budgeting and operations processes. In this role, Mr. Maibauer leads all day-to-day operations in the Finance Office; establishes and maintains appropriate internal controls; oversees budgeting and the implementation and monitoring of budgets; prepares and presents the monthly and annual financial statements; and oversees the school's entire physical infrastructure.

Jennifer Shecter-Balin, Director of Communications and Admission

Ms. Shecter-Balin is responsible for developing and executing the school's communications strategies, including stakeholder engagement and support to the community. She is the primary liaison for the Parent Participation Program co-chairs and manages all of VTT's communications media and vehicles, including the weekly Hadashot. She also helps to develop a number of educational and programming initiatives. As the Director of Admission, Ms. Shecter-Balin meets with prospective new families to acquaint them with the benefits of a VTT education, and works with members of the academic leadership team to ensure that individualized programs meet the needs of our diverse community of learners.

Andrea Wilkinson, Director of Development

Ms. Wilkinson oversees all of the school's development, fundraising and alumni activities and is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating initiatives that will support the long-term financial stability and sustainability of the school. In this role, Ms. Wilkinson plans, implements, coordinates and stewards all activities related to the VTT Campus Campaign, as well as ongoing annual fundraising efforts, is a primary liaison with many different stakeholder groups and the community at large, leads development and alumni communications and supports public relations initiatives and brand management.

Marko Milisavljevic, Information Technology Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PARENT COMMITTEES

VTT is a close-knit community of many stakeholders and supporters. These include students, parents, grandparents, alumni, faculty, staff, the leadership team, board members, committee members, donors, vendors and other community organizations/leaders. VTT's Board of Directors gives voice to all of these stakeholders, by ensuring that diverse needs, opinions and thoughts are considered with respect to the school's strategic direction; and by providing governance and oversight with respect to many aspects of the school, including finance, operations, community engagement and more. The Board's primary focus is on strategic planning and providing oversight and support to the Leadership Team, as they continue to deliver educational and operational excellence, financial stability and sustainability and meet the needs of the entire community.

The Board is structured along portfolio lines in order to support the leadership team's role in effectively dealing with the complexities of running Western Canada's largest Jewish elementary day school and the requirements of 21st century learning. The portfolio structure also enables more stakeholders to be directly engaged. Each portfolio chair (or co-chair) oversees a committee consisting of both board and non-board members, that meets regularly to define goals and work with the leadership team and faculty and staff to implement strategies. Each committee makes monthly reports to the entire Board and important issues are discussed and voted on.

Updates on the Board's work are primarily communicated through the Stakeholders' Report, which will become a semi-annual publication in 2012-2013 (previously published annually). In addition, the Stakeholders' Report content will be published online to make it accessible to a broader group of stakeholders. Some Board updates are noted in the weekly Hadashot, and a more formal presentation of the financial position of VTT, along with the election of the new Board, takes place at the Annual General Meeting each fall. This year's AGM was held on October 23rd, 2012.

The VTT Board places much emphasis on continuity and succession planning, to ensure seamless transitions with incoming/outgoing board members each year, and most importantly, to retain institutional knowledge. Ideally, new board members are recruited through the committee structure – first by volunteering, then by chairing a committee and then by becoming a director on the Board itself.

Below is a brief description of each committee. If you are interesting in joining any of them, or have questions about the mandate/work undertaken, please contact Debbie Broadley (dbroadley@talmudtorah.com). She will relay your interest to the committee chair, who will in turn respond to you directly. Please note that the current committee chairs/co-chairs are subject to change.

BOARD CO-PRESIDENTS: Bill Schonbrun and Michelle Gerber

COMMUNITY: Belinda Gutman and Megan Laskin, Co-Chairs

The Community committee links VTT parents, the Parent Participation Program (PPP) and the Board. The primary objective of this committee is to maintain the strong sense of community within the VTT family and the community at large, which is one of our key and irreplaceable assets. A representative from the Community committee also sits on the Development Evaluation Committee in order to help balance the development calendar and to evaluate fundraising proposals that are put forward during the year.

FINANCE: Susan Quig, Co-Chair

The Finance committee provides oversight with respect to the school's financials and ensures that our programs, activities and initiatives are within budget. A subgroup of the Finance committee consisting of the Treasurer and another board member monitors results on a monthly basis so any unexpected matters are dealt with and addressed in a timely manner.

GOVERNANCE:

The Governance committee ensures that all activities, behaviours and policies are aligned to our core values and build a solid foundation upon which VTT can thrive and fulfill its mission. All portfolios and the work they undertake touch on governance in some manner.

HUMAN RESOURCES: Paul Pulver, Chair

HEAD OF SCHOOL EVALUATION: Joel Guralnick, Chair

The Human Resources Committee works closely with the Board, the Leadership Team and Head of School, Cathy Lowenstein, to deliver on the school's core values and to ensure that the right tools and resources are in place to recruit, retain and develop our staff. The Head of School Evaluation Committee supports the Head of School and provides a structured method to evaluate the performance of that role.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT: Jonathon Leipsic, Chair

The Strategic Development committee links the Board and Development Office and collaborates closely with the Community portfolio. It helps to set the annual calendar of fundraising activities to best balance the needs of the school with the funding opportunities available. A representative from the Strategic Development committee also sits on the Development Evaluation committee in order to help balance the development calendar and to evaluate fundraising proposals that are put forward during the year.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: Joel Guralnick, Chair

The Strategic Planning committee spearheads the strategic planning process and coordinates broad stakeholder engagement with all other committees to ensure a diversity of views, opinions and expertise is taken into consid-

eration in the school's strategic plan. The 2012-2013 school year marks the fourth year of the current five year plan, and work on the next iteration of the strategic plan will begin in September 2012.

TECHNOLOGY: Joel Greensite, Chair

The Technology committee supports the Leadership Team and faculty to leverage new teaching modalities and ensure that they are able to leverage technology to enhance teaching and to create operational efficiencies, as well as to enhance the student learning experience by providing additional hardware and software resources for faculty, students and staff.

VTT CAMPUS CAMPAIGN: Dan Pekarsky and Alan Shuster, Co-Chairs

The VTT Campus Campaign is a \$20 million project to raise funds to expand and revitalize our school. At the time of writing of this handbook, over \$13 million in commitments has been secured, including a lead gift of the campaign's last \$5 million by the Gordon and Leslie Diamond Foundation. The VTT Board has ultimate responsibility for the VTT Campus Campaign and Alan Shuster, as both Campaign Co-Chair and VTT Board member, makes regular progress and financial reports to the Board. To learn more about our plans for the future, visit

www.securingthefuture.ca

REACHING OUT TO OUR GRANDPARENTS

Vancouver Talmud Torah loves grandparents! By providing grandparents, particularly those who do not live in Vancouver, with updates on school activities, we provide an opportunity for our senior members to *kvell* and feel involved. By providing email and/or home addresses of grandparents, they receive:

- Invitations to school functions such as our annual Hanukkah concert, Shabbat gatherings and other performances;
- Special tours of the school and a chance to see their grandchildren in school, via e-mail links to VTT slideshows, virtual photo albums and videos.

To sign up your grandparents, or any other family member, send an e-mail at info@talmudtorah.com

Thank you for taking the time to read through the Parent Handbook. Please keep your copy on hand for reference. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school at 604.736.7307 or via email to Jennifer Shecter, the Director of Communications at info@talmudtorah.com.



Vancouver Talmud Torah
998 West 26th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2G1
P: 604.736.7307
F: 604.736.9754
www.talmudtorah.com
info@talmudtorah.com