



Parent Handbook '10-'11

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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 God 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 **\$50 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, Director of Student Services and relevant members of the Special Education 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, Director of Student Services, Principal, 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 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 May 2010) 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

IMMUNIZATION

In accordance with the policy adopted by the Health Department of the City of Vancouver and the public school system, Vancouver Talmud Torah now 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. 9-1-1 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 owing to legal concerns.

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 a good idea to keep them home.

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

Fifth's 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's 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 K-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: cambridge@telus.net

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

BELL & RECESS SCHEDULE 2008/2009

8:15	Students Arrive
8:25	Warning Bell-Homeroom
8:30	Classes Begin
9:50-10:05	Morning Recess All Grades
11:25-11:43	Grade 1-2 Lunch 3-7 Recess
11:43-12:01	Grade 3-5 Lunch 1, 2, 6-7 Recess
12:01-12:20	Grade 6-7 Lunch 1-5 Recess
12:25	Classes Begin
1:45-2:00	Afternoon Recess All Grades
3:20	Dismissal

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Preschool and kindergarten classes begin at 8:20 a.m. Grades 1-7 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 lobby, outside the office, 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 the inside doors to the school 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. Please note **there is no early morning supervision for students.** 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.

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 their teachers.

There is no supervision for students in or around the buildings before or after school hours. Students are not allowed to play outside, or to be in the buildings after 3:45 p.m. unless they are attending a supervised extra-curricular activity. Students should 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 DISMISSAL

Students may not be excused from school before regular dismissal time unless there are very urgent extenuating circumstances. **Parents are urged 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 before lunchtime.**

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.

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 12, 2010**. Regular dismissal time will resume on **Friday, March 18, 2011**. The school does not provide before or after school supervision for students, and cannot be responsible for students outside school hours. **Our traffic team manages the drive thru until 2:45 p.m. only. It is the responsibility of parents to pick up students on time.**

POLICY REGARDING STUDENTS AT THE BETH ISRAEL CAMPUS

To ensure maximum safety and security at all times, policies are identical to those of the general school population.

Arrival

Grade 4 students attending the BI campus are required to be dropped off at the main school on 26th Avenue. At 8:15 a.m., the grade 4 students will be directed to exit through the playground doors, through the gate and into the BI. There will be staff representatives supervising the flow of students at each intersection.

Late Arrival

An arrival after 8:25 a.m. is considered late and the student must sign in and wait until a staff member is available to escort him/her to the BI. **Under no circumstances is any parent/guardian allowed to either independently drop-off a student at the BI.** Should a parent arrive unannounced at the BI, they will be kindly asked to return to the main building and follow school procedures for processing late arrivals.

Dismissal

Students will be escorted to the main building for pick up. **Under no circumstances is any parent/guardian allowed to retrieve a student from the BI.** Richmond and JCC bus riders will be escorted to the bus; everyone else must exit from the school's main doors.

Early Dismissal

As per school policy, please send a note to the classroom teacher indicating the time the student must be excused from school. The teacher will share this information with the aide. At the appointed time, the student will be escorted to the main building where they will need to be signed out at the school office.

POLICY REGARDING THE BACK GATE ACCESS

The only entry to the school is through the main doors on 26th Avenue. Parents choosing to park at the BI 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 does not encourage parents to take their students out of school for extended vacations. In the event that families choose to take such vacations, teachers cannot be responsible for preparing special lessons and homework in advance. It will then be 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. **A written note or email is required to explain all student absences.**

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 traveling) 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 centimetres/inches of snow. These are the factors that influence our decision:

- The vast majority of our students are carpooled to the school or come on the Richmond bus
- Radio and TV news reports from 6:00 a.m. advise motorists of the danger of driving in weather condi-

tions

- Most independent schools close for the day
- The Vancouver school buses are cancelled

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 1:15 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 the 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 Shechter-Balin at info@talmudtorah.com for help in finding carpooling partners.

VEHICLE ACCESS

To Drop Off Students at the Main School Entrance - 998 West 26th Ave.

The 26th Ave. driveway is a **one directional thruway**. **Vehicles must access 26th Ave. via Oak St. (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 Ave., please turn right or left. Do not proceed straight through to the Safeway parking lot.

To ease the access to 26th Ave., all vehicles should queue along the east side of Oak St. facing north, then turn right onto 26th Ave. **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 Ave.

Access 26th Ave via Oak St, 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 Ave facing east, awaiting entry to the drive-thru. **DO NOT STOP ON THE SIDEWALK AS THIS BLOCKS PEDESTRIAN ACCESS.** If 26th Ave is also at capacity, the line up then extends to the east side of Oak St, between 26th Avenue and 27th Ave. While queuing on 26th Ave 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 St. While in the pick-up line 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 Ave, 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 Ave. **G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Hospital's access road to 28th Ave is strictly a private driveway and must never to be used by VTT parents wanting to gain access to 28th Ave or the Beth Israel parking lot.**

Preschool Parent Parking

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

The Beth Israel Synagogue has generously set aside a few preschool parking spaces for our school on their parking lot. Please look for the signs that indicate where to park if you are a preschool parent and want to walk your child into the school. **Please remember that parking is for a short time only as indicated on the sign.**

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. If anything should ever happen involving a pedestrian and 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 Ave 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

Class lists are prepared only to assist parents in communicating in a helpful and meaningful manner. These lists are useful in preparing invitations to birthdays or Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations and in arranging carpools. Lists of students’ names, addresses and phone numbers of parents of students currently enrolled in the school will be available once we have obtained authorization on the **Information Release** form after the school opens.

VISITORS IN THE SCHOOL

All visitors to the school must report to the school office 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.

Students using the phone or messages for students should be for 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

A list of school supplies is distributed before the end of the school year. It is also available in the school office and online in the "links" tab.

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 cannot accept responsibility 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 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 discipline 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 the regular school day, 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 premise 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* 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 at school after 9:00 a.m. or 12:25 p.m. must obtain a late slip from the office before proceeding to class.

Students who arrive late and attend classes in the BI must also obtain a late slip from the main school office before being escorted to class.

Students habitually arriving late interferes with the students' 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 & 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. If however, 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 cannot 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 St. 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 God'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 Levels of Achievement:**4 Exceeds Expectations**

- * Growth and development of skills and understanding are at or beyond program expectations
- * New concepts and skills are mastered, applied and extended

3 Fully Meets Expectations

- * Growth and development of skills and understanding are at the level of program expectations
- * New concepts and skills are understood and applied

2 Minimally Meets Expectations

- * Some students, although meeting expectations, are doing so only at a minimal level
- * Further support and encouragement to ensure success is required

1 Not Yet Meeting Expectations

- * Growth and development of skills and understanding are lower than program expectations
- * New concepts and skills are not yet mastered or sufficiently understood
- * Frequent teacher encouragement and support is needed in most aspects of the program

Intermediate Levels of Achievement:

A The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course and grade.

B The student demonstrates very good performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course and grade

C+ The student demonstrates good performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course and grade

C The student demonstrates satisfactory performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course and grade

C- The student demonstrates marginally acceptable performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course and grade

I (In progress or incomplete) The student, for a variety of reasons, is not demonstrating minimally acceptable performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course and grade

F (Failed or Failing) The student has not demonstrated, or is not demonstrating, the minimally acceptable performance in relation to the expected learning outcomes for the course or subject or 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

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 library 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.

LIBRARY USE AND SERVICES

HOURS:

Monday – Friday 8:15am – 3:35pm

Before school: Everyone welcome!

Morning recess: Grades 1, 2, 3

Lunch recess -

1st Bell: Grades 6, 7

2nd Bell: Grades 1, 2

3rd Bell: Grades 3, 4, 5

Afternoon recess: Grades 1, 2, 3

After school: Everyone welcome until 3:35 pm.

Note: During class time the library 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.

Note: End of term report cards will not be distributed until overdue books are either returned or paid for. If you pay for a lost book that turns up later, the staff will be happy to reimburse you.

MEDIA LAB--RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

TO THE STUDENTS

Vancouver Talmud Torah is able to offer students the privilege of using its Media Lab 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 Media Lab 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 media lab. 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 lab 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 Media Lab 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 Media Lab 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.

Requests for copies of report cards should be directed to the office. A minimum of 24 hours notice must be given for report card requests.

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. This 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 for legal purposes. Parents picking up students during the school day are asked to report to the office so the student can be paged in class. **Parents are not to go directly to classes.**

SCHOOL BUS -- RICHMOND & JCC

Our school bus runs between Richmond and VTT 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 from 27th Avenue at 3:35 p.m. sharp! (2:30 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 will be NO pro-rating for fewer than five days per week (the price includes an assistant on the bus). 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).

Students who wish to ride to the Jewish Community Centre after school must complete a bus registration form. Those students who wish to ride the bus on an occasional basis may do so provided there is space on the bus.

The fee for casual riders to the JCC is \$2.50 per ride.

Passes can be purchased from the office **by 12:30 p.m.**

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 usually be sent by email 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 Communications at jshecter@talmudtorah.com. Our website is updated regularly. Please visit www.talmudtorah.com to apprise yourself of important news and information.

DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

The cost of providing a superior dual curriculum education for students is well in excess of the funds raised by tuition. VTT is fortunate to have the perennial support of the provincial government, Jewish Federation, and the VTT Foundation. In addition, in 2005 VTT established the Atid Endowment to provide tuition assistance that will benefit our students and generations to come. Despite these sources, there still remains a gap between VTT's costs and revenues that must be bridged by fundraising activities.

The school development office organizes fundraising efforts, and raises funds from public, corporate, and private sources beyond the parent body for the benefit of the entire school. However, the definition of “development” in philanthropic terms is beyond that of merely raising funds. It involves the strategic and careful planning of fundraising activities that align with the direction and development of the school, as planned by our board and senior administration.

In the past couple of years we have raised over \$500,000 toward school operations, new programs, and equipment, like the *Tech for TT* initiative which has revolutionized the school's technology platform. Thank you to the army of committed volunteers and generous donors who have made these achievements possible.

Development Calendar

Each year, the development office, working with the Board development committee and the administration, establishes a calendar of events to best balance the needs of the school with the funding opportunities available. **All development and fundraising events, whether for the benefit of the entire school or a single class, must be approved by the administration before donations can be solicited in the school.**

Details on each event will be communicated. Each family is requested to support VTT by volunteering to help organize at least one of these events.

Corporate Sponsorship

The development office leverages the community spirit of events by inviting corporate sponsors to participate without directly recommending goods or services to students or their families. The participating companies enlarge the circle of support for VTT beyond the parent body into the larger Jewish and BC communities. While gratefully acknowledging the generous support of corporate donors, the administration and Board recognize the necessity of limiting corporate influence in an educational setting and set appropriate limits.

Grants

Grants by private and public funding organizations are an important source of revenue for VTT. The development office assists the administration by coordinating all grant applications to ensure that VTT presents its merits in the most professional and consistent manner without overtaxing the generosity of any granting organization. As a tax-exempt, charitable institution, VTT is subject to strict government oversight. Any volunteer, parent, teacher, or staff contemplating a grant application must first submit a Grant Application Request to the

development office.

Opportunities for Giving

VTT accepts donations in the form of cash, credit cards, cheques, stocks, bonds and insurance. VTT also solicits non-cash **gifts-in-kind** of equipment and supplies from individuals and companies. Most forms of donations are eligible for a donation receipt. For further details, please contact the development office at development@talmudtorah.com.

Tribute Program – cards or wishlist items

Tribute cards are a great way to mark special occasions, family milestones, or 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. Acknowledgments are published monthly in the school electronic newsletter, Hadashot, and on our website. Donations can be made by calling our development office or logging onto www.canadahelps.org and entering “VTT” in the search box.

Items on our wishlist are submitted by our faculty to greatly benefit their classes and students. Wishlist items can be purchased separately or via a tribute donation. When a donor wishes to make this type of purchase, a tribute card is first sent to the recipient and once the item has been purchased, a beautiful follow up flyer with pictures of the wishlist item is sent. For more information on purchasing items off our wishlist, please contact Tirzah Abraham, Development Assistant, 604-736-2694.

Campaign Plus gifts from the Jewish Federation’s Annual Appeal (i.e., 75% of your annual donation to the Federation that exceeds your previous year’s commitment) can be assigned directly to VTT, and are extremely beneficial to the school. In the 2009-10 school year, we raised an additional \$10,419 through CJA Plus. VTT is also a designated **United Way** member organization: support VTT by designating Talmud Torah as the recipient whenever you make a United Way contribution and United Way will allocate a portion of your donation to the school.

Designated Funds

Vancouver Talmud Torah has several funds to direct your giving. The development office can assist you in giving to any of these: the **VTT Family Fund**, the **Library Fund**, the **Gita Kron Fund**, the **Alumni Fund**, the **Building, Capital and Operations Funds**, the **Strathcona Fund**, the **Performing Arts Fund**, the **Mitzvah of Valuing Philanthropy Fund**, the **Lorne and Sylvia Cristall Tikun Olam Chair**, and the **Atid Endowment**. Should you wish to give on your own time and at your own convenience, we graciously accept secure on-line donations through www.canadahelps.org.

VTT also graciously accepts **donated air miles** to allow faculty and administration to attend important professional development opportunities throughout North America. Donors to our air miles bank are eligible to receive a tax receipt.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PARENT COMMITTEES

VTT is a community of supporters: students, administration faculty, staff, parents, families, donors and community organizations--all working to create the best possible educational experience for our students. The Board of Directors serves to give voice to all of these interest groups while moving the strategic vision of the school forward.

Six years ago the Board reorganized itself along portfolio lines in order to more effectively deal with the complexities of governing the school, and in order to involve more stakeholders in setting the strategic focus of VTT. Each portfolio chairperson oversees a committee of parents and non-parents that meets regularly and works with the administration and staff to define goals and implement strategies. Each chairperson then re-

ports monthly to the entire Board, and important issues are discussed and voted on at monthly Board meetings.

Minutes are taken at each Board meeting, and a year-end summation of the Board's work is presented in the Stakeholders' Report. Periodic updates also appear in the weekly *Hadashot*, and a more formal presentation of the school's financials, as well as the election of the new Board, takes place each fall at the Annual General Meeting.

Ideally Board members come up through the committee structure. A parent or community member would first join a committee that interests them, and then would eventually become the Chair of the committee, and therefore an ideal candidate for a Board portfolio chair. Once someone becomes Chair of a committee, they then recruit a second in command who will eventually replace them as Chair. In this way continuity is assured, and the knowledge, experience, and progress of the committee is not lost every time the membership turns over.

Broad-based committees allow many more stakeholders to participate in setting the direction of the school. They are also a means of facilitating two-way communication between the Board and stakeholders. We are very fortunate to have many parents participating in committees, and their input is invaluable in setting the direction of the school.

Below is a brief description of each committee. If you are interested in joining any of them, please contact Tammy Kalvari in the office (tkalvari@talmudtorah.com). She will relay your interest to the appropriate committee chair, who will then respond to you directly.

Development Committee: The role of the development committee is to cultivate grants and major donor support for the school and enlarge the circle of support beyond the parent body. Funds raised by development go toward general operations, capital projects, new initiatives, tuition assistance, and the Atid Endowment.

Finance Committee: The role of the finance committee is to oversee all aspects of the financial operations and needs of the school. While not directly involved in the day-to-day financial operations of the school, it does require the need for oversight (audit), budgeting (planning) and review. In addition, the treasurer, through the finance committee, will recommend and draft motions for the Board's acceptance that will establish the financial policies of the School.

Administrative Support & Evaluation: The role of the administrative support and evaluation committee is to serve as a liaison between the administration and the Board, to spearhead the evaluation of the Heads of School, and to report to the Board on the evaluation process and results.

Strategic Planning Committee: Sets the 3-5 year goals and directions for the school, board and administration through consultation with stakeholders.

Human Resources Committee: The Human Resources Committee's role is to guide and support the administration with regards to the administration of the collective agreement and other human resource issues.

Parent Committee: The purpose of the PPP is to provide all the "extras" to the students, in particular with regard to Jewish holidays. PPP is responsible for administering the 12 PPP hours required by each VTT family. While the PPP is made up of many volunteers, all grade and class representatives are also part of the PPP and are paramount in recruiting volunteers and organizing many of the events. Some of the many events offered by the PPP include: classroom *Shabbat* challahs, *Sukkot* juice and cookies, *Hanukkah* gifts/*sufganiot*, *Tu B'shevat* treats, *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, Passover seders, *Shavuot* ice cream, *Purim* entertainment, treats, and *mishloach manot*, *Lag B'Omer* sandwiches, fruit and popsicles, Sports Day water and chips, Grade 6 *Shabbaton* help, Strathcona fundraising assistance, annual student school supply group purchase, and year-end celebration.

Alumni Committee: Major objectives are to identify, locate and communicate with the alumni, those who attended and/or graduated from Vancouver Talmud Torah since 1948, and to strengthen the bonds between

alumni and the school. The Alumni Committee puts out *Zichronot*, the VTT Alumni newsletter, helps organize grade reunions, and archives and displays photos of VTT's past.

Governance Committee: This committee covers Board leadership and development, succession planning and recruitment of new board members; provides background information to the board on school structure and policy; reviews effectiveness of board; reviews and implements policies & by-laws; and advises on legal issues.

Negotiations Committee: The Board's Negotiation Committee meets with the Teachers' Negotiation Committee and negotiates each new collective agreement, which sets out the guidelines under which the staff at the school works. This committee is struck only during periods of collective bargaining with the VTTTA (VTT Teachers' Association).

Three new committees include **Admission**, **Technology** and **Building** (in anticipation of our Capital Campaign).

GRANDPARENTS' CLUB

The Grandparents' Club exists to connect grandparents with their grandchildren's education and school. By providing grandparents, particularly those who do not live in Vancouver, with updates on school activities, we provide an opportunity for grandparents to *kve//* and feel involved. Grandparents receive:

- *Nakhes* News, the annual VTT grandparents' newsletter;
- Invitations to school functions such as our annual Hanukkah concert and other performances;
- Special tours of the school and a chance to see their grandchildren in school, via e-mail links to VTT slide-shows, virtual photo albums and videos.

To sign up your grandparents, or any other family member, contact Jennifer Shecter-Balin, Director of Communications, at the school or via e-mail at jshecter@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 the Director of Communications at jshecter@talmudtorah.com.



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