

tgga

TORAH GIRLS
ACADEMY

STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024 | 5783-5784

Student & Parent Handbook

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Dear Student,

On behalf of Torah Girls Academy staff, welcome to the 5783-5784/ 2023-2024 school year!

TGA is a place where students are nurtured and respected so that they can develop their middos and their unique qualities and character. It is a place where students can channel their energies meaningfully toward Avodas Hashem. With that in mind, this handbook describes and delineates the school's philosophy, principles, and rules so that each of you can thrive this year.

We invite you to view your high school experience as an opportunity to embark on a journey of personal growth and self-discovery. We hope you will find that the environment at TGA is both rigorous and supportive. Our goal is to help you develop your talents and your character, expand your horizons, and prepare to meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities you will encounter in the future. Above all, we hope your high school years will be a time of inspiration and growth in רוחניות that will prepare you for a life of Torah and Mitzvos.

The policies in this handbook reflect the values that shape TGA's school culture. Please read it carefully and refer back to it when questions arise. Our school is a special place devoted to growth in Torah, to learning about the intricacies of the world around us, developing our minds and our hearts, performing acts of chesed, and building a caring and inclusive community. All of us benefit from this environment, and each of you contributes to it when you:

Conduct yourself in a way that makes a קידוש ה', on our campus and outside

Treat all people with respect and sensitivity

Stand for your teachers when they enter the room

Act with awareness of the needs and feelings of others

Actively listen when others speak

Speak in a refined manner

Show respect for school property and places of learning

We look forward to working with you, and we wish you a happy and productive year. May ה' bless all of our efforts, and may we be זוכה to a year of exciting learning, friendship, שמחה and growth!

Rabbi Michael Cohen
Head of School

Mrs. Chaya Wolbe
Mechaneches

Welcome to Torah Girls Academy of Texas

Please approach your teachers and administrators for guidance and help. We are here for you and look forward to assisting you in your schooling and growth.

Communication Between the School and Parents

Home/School Connections: Communication between parents, students, and the school is crucial. We encourage parents to initiate and maintain contact with their daughter's teachers. In addition to progress reports and report cards, you can also contact faculty members by email.

We ask that you keep us informed about events in your family that may affect your daughter's ability to function in school. Please feel free to contact Rabbi Cohen and Mrs. Wolbe anytime to inquire about or discuss any issue regarding your daughter's education and well-being. Your suggestions and comments are always welcome.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice during the school year, as indicated in the school calendar.

We encourage teachers and parents to communicate with each other in between the progress report dates. This is especially true if a student has shown significant improvement or decline in class. A personal conference between parents and teachers or a student and teacher can be arranged by contacting the teacher at any time.

Academics

As you enter high school, you will discover that the amount of time you need to dedicate to your schoolwork will increase. Yet, you will also feel a greater sense of accomplishment as a result of your increased academic independence. You are encouraged to seek the help and guidance of your teachers and other school staff for any concerns and problems you may be experiencing.

Assessments

Written assignments and research papers: Your academic success depends largely on your ability to do independent study and research and to articulate your ideas cogently and persuasively. To that end, you will be given regular writing and research assignments. The quality of your writing will be evaluated along with the content of these assignments. You will be given continued guidance and assistance in honing these skills.

Examinations: Tests provide you with the opportunity to review and assess what you have learned and to organize the content of a course in a meaningful way. They are one of several measures used to help teachers evaluate your progress and achievement.

1. In order to ensure maximum student performance on major tests, TGA's policy is to limit tests to a maximum of two per day (not including makeup tests). A word on tests vs. quizzes- a test is an assessment for which students must prepare. A quiz is designed to assess whether or not students have completed their homework or reading assignments or have listened well and have taken effective notes. Quizzes do not have to be scheduled.

2. The TGA test calendar is the calendar used by teachers to schedule exams and major papers. It will be displayed prominently in the TGA hallway.

Final Exams

Final exams will be given for high school courses in January and June. Cumulative finals may be worth up to 15% of the final grade.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, a student misses a final test, she will have to make it up on a designated date set by the teacher. If a student misses a final exam for non-extenuating circumstances (For example, a nonessential family trip), she will have to make it up on a designated date set by the teacher and will only be able to achieve a maximum grade of 80% on her exam. Arrangements must be made in a timely manner.

Final exam dates are listed on the school calendar.

Grading

Scholastic grades are never based solely on test scores. Grades will reflect a student's performance in class and on tests, quizzes, homework, and other assignments. Each teacher will inform students how they will calculate their semester grades at the beginning of each semester.

Computation of Grade Point Average:

Both the Judaic and General Studies grades are included in the calculation of the GPA. TGA's grades are calculated on a 4.0 scale. Honors classes and AP classes earn an extra .3 grade points. Students are admitted to an honors class based on the teacher's discretion. The grading scales are as follows:

A+ = 4.0 (97-100)	A = 3.7 (93-96)	A- = 3.3 (90-92)	B+ = 3.0 (87-89)
B = 2.7 (83-86)	B- = 2.3 (80-82)	C+ = 2.0 (77-79)	C = 1.7 (73-76)
C- = 1.3 (70-72)	D = 1.0 (65-69)	F = 0.0 (No Credit)	

Academic Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent out mid-semester for all students. At the end of each semester, a report card will be sent out. Progress reports and report cards are sent via email. Students will receive a copy of their grades emailed to their email account.

Homework Policy

The TGA faculty strives to be sensitive to the student's time constraints, recognizing that TGA students carry two full course loads. The homework load and test schedule may require a time commitment on a nightly basis.

Graduation Requirements

If a senior has completed all graduation requirements, TGA may still require the student to take additional courses. Accordingly, students may not graduate from TGA unless they spend four years in high school.

School Hours

The school day begins at **8:25 a.m.** every day. Dismissal Monday through Thursday will be at **4:30 p.m.** and on Fridays at **12:50 p.m.** We understand that the girls have a long week; at times when a teacher will be absent, we may dismiss school a bit earlier. TGA is not responsible for students on school premises before or after the scheduled school day.

Expectations and Responsibilities

Chesed/ Volunteering/ Community Involvement

Being involved in *Chesed* opportunities is a fundamental tenet of Judaism. In this light, students are required to fulfill a specified number of hours of *Chesed* during each school year.

A minimum number of <i>Chesed</i> hours required per month	4 hours
Number of <i>Chesed</i> hours performed within the student's home	Minimum of 1.5
Number of <i>Chesed</i> hours performed outside the student's home, within larger community	Minimum of 1.5

Each month, students are required to email the school office, office@tgatexas.org, with how many hours of *Chesed* they completed to earn credit for these hours. They should include a brief description of what kind of *Chesed* was done. *Chesed* will be included on report cards and your high school transcript in your Decorum Grade. More information will be explained in the Decorum Section of the handbook.

Here are activities that can be counted on your log:

- Homework helper
- Mother's helper (aside from family,) including watching the kids, helping with childcare, housework, cooking, laundry, running errands, etc.)
- Volunteering time for a community organization/ Shul
- Visiting people in the hospital/ nursing home

Co-educational activities will not be eligible for *Chesed* hours. We sincerely hope that your dedication to the performance of *Chesed* will be among the most valuable lessons you learned in high school.

Tefilla

As an expression of the importance of tefilla, we have incorporated tefilla as one of the requirements of our school day. The time periods allotted for tefilla will be treated as a class, and all relevant guidelines and attendance quotas will apply. There is an expectation that all Students utilize the davening time for meaningful davening.

If having completed their davening, a student would like to read, she must get permission to do so from her mechaneches, and together, they will pick reading material appropriate for the davening time.

Decorum Grade

One of the grades on the student's report cards and transcripts is 'Decorum.' The Decorum grade is based on each student's general conduct, tefilla decorum and attendance, and the fulfillment of the mandatory Chesed hours. Out of 100 points, a third of the points will be based on general decorum, a third of the points will be based on tefilla decorum and attendance, and a third of the points will be based on the fulfillment of the mandatory Chesed hours.

Programs and Excursions

School trips are a time to build school camaraderie. All students are expected to attend. This includes in-town shabbatonim and some out-of-town trips. In addition, there will be several required events outside of the school day during the course of the year. A fee may be charged for special programs.

TGA Parking Lot

TGA parking spots are reserved for TGA staff and are not for student cars.

TGA Property After Hours

Students are allowed on TGA property after school hours only when accompanied by TGA staff or with explicit permission from the TGA administration.

Conduct

TGA students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in school according to the standards and spirit of Torah and halacha, derech erez, and interpersonal relationships.

Academic achievement must go hand-in-hand with personal integrity. Mutual respect and honesty are necessary starting points for all learning. This includes respect for ideas, feelings, and the property of others, as well as honesty in your personal interactions.

Whether in a classroom, lounge area, or in any other part of the school, display proper respect to your teachers and fellow students, and treat all individuals with courtesy and dignity. As part of this respect towards fellow students, one should not discuss topics in front of them with which they are uncomfortable.

Students are expected to act responsibly toward the property of others and the property of the school. A concern for the conditions and cleanliness of the building is everyone's responsibility. Students are expected to discard all refuse from meals properly. A student may sometimes be asked to help clean an area that has been littered.

We expect that any work a student submits, including homework assignments, written reports, and tests, will be your own. Ideas that students borrow from other people should be clearly identified as such. Plagiarism is unethical, as well as illegal. Plagiarism on any assignment will result in a grade of zero.

Personal Property

Lockers will be assigned on the first day of school. Belongings should be stored in lockers, and locker doors should be kept closed. The school cannot assume responsibility for losing or damaging items stored in the lockers. Books and school bags may not be left in hallways or classrooms. In addition, no personal items may be left in the bathroom. We all share the TGA space together, and it is important that we respect our schoolmates and staff members by keeping our space neat.

The outside of lockers must remain completely clean and undecorated, except in the case of a student's birthday. Pictures and items hanging inside of lockers must conform to TGA-appropriate standards. Stickers may never be placed on the inside or outside of lockers, as they are sometimes impossible to remove.

Electronic equipment such as smartwatches, laptops, iPods, video games, MP3 players, kindles, etc., are not permitted in the school building because they are not conducive to a serious academic environment.

Cell Phones & Other Devices

Social media and unfiltered internet access expose our children to ideas antithetical to the values and education we provide at TGA. In line with the Vaad HaChinuch, we encourage parents to filter their children's access to the internet and social media.

Safe internet use and strategies for avoiding the trappings of social media are a focus of the education in TGA in the classroom and our programs. We will offer incentives for students to give up or stay away from social media.

Time spent in school is an opportunity to focus on learning, healthy social relationships, and interpersonal communication. We are working to create an atmosphere of friendship, growth, and learning, so we don't allow students to bring their cell phones and other devices, including smartphones and smartwatches, and music devices, to school.

If there is a compelling reason why a girl must bring her cell phone to school, parents can request that their daughters bring it to school. In this case, we will ask the parents to sign a document confirming they want their daughters to carry a cell phone to school daily. Students whose parents have requested that they bring their phones to school will place their devices in their designated slot in the phone storage box every morning when they arrive at school. Phones will be stored safely and only returned at the end of the school day. Please note: devices will not be available during the day, even at lunchtime.

If a student needs to make a phone call during the day, she may use the phone in the school office with permission. If parents need to be in contact with their daughters, they may call the office, and we will relay the message as quickly as possible.

If a student is seen carrying or using a device on the school campus at any time during the school day or if it is outside the phone storage box, the device will be confiscated.

Confiscated devices will be kept in the school office for a week and only returned after the parents have contacted the office. Handing in a "dummy phone" or surreptitiously using a hidden phone is not simply a violation of the rules; it's a breach of trust with serious disciplinary consequences.

Attendance Policy

It is of extreme importance that all of our students are in attendance, on time, to every class daily. Besides not wanting our students to miss a minute of valuable learning and our commitment to maintaining the most productive learning environment for all students and teachers, timeliness is an important character trait for our students to acquire.

The school day begins at 8:25 AM and ends at 4:30 PM on Mondays through Thursdays and at 12:50 PM on Fridays. Please make every possible effort to come to school on time, remain in school until dismissal, schedule non-emergency medical and dental appointments after school hours, and avoid planning family vacations when school is in session.

Please read through the attendance policy clearly to make sure you are aware of the system. Before scheduling trips or appointments, make sure you will not exceed the allotted amount of absences for each class period. If there are extenuating circumstances, please speak to Rabbi Cohen BEFORE scheduling any trip or appointment.

Late Arrival & Early Dismissal

If a student is arriving late to school, we ask that parents notify the school by 8:30 am on the day of the tardiness, if not before. If the parents have not notified the school about a tardiness, the office will reach out to parents to ensure the safety and well-being of that student. When students arrive late to school, they must sign in with the office.

If a student needs to be dismissed early, she may only do so after a parent has given express permission to a school official. Students leaving school before dismissal must sign out with the office.

Class Attendance - Tardy

At the beginning of each class period, teachers will take attendance. Students arriving after the start of class will be marked as "Tardy". Three "tardies" in a class is the equivalent of one "absence" and will count towards a student's overall absent count per semester.

Class Attendance - Absence

Each student will be allocated a quota of absences per semester per class, as indicated in the chart below. Missing a class for any reason is included in the allotted amount.

# Class Periods Per Week	# of Approved Absences Per Semester
5	6
4	5
3	4
2	3
1	2

Attendance is 10% of the total grade in every class. Each absence that exceeds the allotted amount for the class will result in a 10% deduction from the attendance grade, which is 1% of the total grade. For example, if a student misses one class period above the allotted amount and her class grade is 100%, the final grade she will receive is 99%.

In order for a student to receive a grade in any TGA course, she must be present for a minimum of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the classes of that course during that semester. Attendance that falls short of that number will result in an 'Incomplete' on that student's report card and transcript. Three tardies equal one absence for this calculation.

All absences will be recorded on Gradelink so that you can easily track how many times you have been absent from any class.

We appreciate your understanding and adherence to this attendance policy. Regular attendance fosters a positive and effective learning environment, and we are committed to supporting each student's educational journey.

Seniors Dual Enrollment College Classes - Computer Room Attendance

Dual Enrollment periods have an attendance quota of 6 absences. This applies to all periods before the 9th period on Monday-Thursday and the 5th period on Friday. Seniors may leave once the final period of the day has begun on Monday-Thursday and the regular TGA classes are well underway so as not to disrupt the learning environment.

Dress Code

Students are required to be in uniform at all times during the school day and at school events unless otherwise communicated. Uniforms can be purchased from Land's End, Fraylich Uniforms, or from Toes to Bows by appointment.

Click [here](#) for Fraylich Uniforms TGA store

Click here for Land's End TGA store

Toes to Bows: 718-613-9910

Skirt: Black pleated uniform skirt must be long enough that it reaches the top of the socks.

Shirt: Button-down or polo uniform shirts must be purchased from Fraylich Uniforms or Land's End and have TGA embroidered on the collar. Shirts can be white, light blue, or royal blue. The collar must be visible, and only one button can be opened.

Sweaters: All sweater options can be seen on the Fraylich or Land's End websites. It must have TGA embroidery. No other outerwear may be worn.

Shoes/ Socks: Shoes and socks must be worn at all times, and shoes must be closed-toed and must have a full back.

Accessories: No hats or caps. Dying hair to an unnatural color or to a natural color that is noticeably unnatural for that student is not within the dress code.

Lunch Time

The girls will be expected to remain in school during lunchtime.

11th & 12th graders will be allowed to go home for lunch on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, provided they return punctually to their fifth-period classes.

General Information

Textbooks: Most textbooks will be distributed to you without charge. You may be asked to purchase some seforim and books that should become part of your personal library. The school will hold you responsible for any loss, theft, damage or defacement of books that are lent to you. Students are required to pay for or turn in textbooks in the condition they received them prior to taking the final exam for a class.

Printing: In order to enable and assist students with printing what they need for school, documents should be sent to print@tgatexas.org, and they will be printed at approximately 8:30 am and 2:00 pm. Printing will not be done at other times.

Lunch & Food in TGA:

There are many appliances for warming and making food in the TGA kitchen. Only packaged products bearing an HKA-accepted kosher symbol or raw fruits and vegetables may be warmed or cooked in the TGA appliances.

Visitors: No one will be allowed to visit classes without prior permission from the office. If you wish to invite a relative or a friend to attend your classes, you must have permission from an administrator in advance of that day.

Health Records: According to state law, all school-age students must have documented proof of adequate immunization. We are not permitted to allow any student who does not meet these requirements into school. Please submit your immunization records to the office before school begins.

Hearing and Vision Screening Records:

The state of Texas requires all schools to keep current records of Hearing and Vision screenings. These screenings can be done at your annual check-up at the doctor's office. Please send in these records to office@tgatexas.org.

Medications:

In order for you to receive any medication, including over-the-counter products, a parental consent form must be on file in the office.

Only the medication that is necessary for a student to remain in school will be given during school hours. No student is permitted to carry any over-the-counter and/or prescribed medication with her at school. Only medication prescribed by a physician, dentist, and/or registered pharmacist will be administered during school. Each student's medication must be in a labeled container from the pharmacy with the following information:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| -student's name | -dosage |
| -physician/dentist name/ phone | -directions for administration |
| -date | -duration medication is to be given |
| -name of medication | |

Only properly labeled medications will be administered when a signed permission form accompanies the medication from the parent/legal guardian. All medication is kept in a cabinet in the office. It is the student's responsibility to come to the office and request her medication from an administrator.

Emergency Contact Forms: To ensure each student's safety we must have updated emergency contact forms on file. Please submit them to the office. In the event of a change of address or an extended travel period, parents must notify the school to update emergency numbers and/or change of address.

Students' Reporting Requirements – Legal Drugs: A student who has been informed by her physician that the student's use of a legal drug may present a safety risk or adversely affect school performance is required to report such drug use to the Administration. If TGA determines that a student's use of a legal drug adversely affects the student's performance or poses risks to the safety of others, TGA may require the student to leave school with other appropriate action determined by the Administration.