



Temple Beth Torah

Torah School

2019-2020 Family Handbook

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Welcome

Dear Torah School Families,

Thank you for enrolling your child in Temple Beth Torah's Torah School. You have taken an important step in the Jewish upbringing of your child, and we are honored to be a part of it.

We want to partner with your entire family to provide the best possible Jewish learning experiences. We encourage you to actively participate in the TBT community through or Torah School including: family learning, Shabbat programming, services and events.

Within this handbook you will find the policies and procedures that help our school to run smoothly. Please take the time to read them, especially as they pertain to drop-off and pick-up. The safety and security of all of our students is our priority at all times and your cooperation is vital to these efforts.

We wish you a year of health and happiness.

L'shalom,

Temple Beth Torah
Torah School

Temple Beth Torah, Torah School Mission Statement

The goal of the Torah School is to foster and strengthen Jewish identity through a wide variety of positive educational experiences, integrating and encouraging Jewish living in the synagogue, the community and the home.

School Policies

It is our sincere hope that each student will experience a rewarding education in a positive, productive learning environment. We are committed to offering our students this type of quality Jewish education. To this end, the Torah School administration and the Torah School Committee have adopted the following policies, which apply to each student in our program:

Torah School Code of Conduct

Expectations

- Students will be on their best behavior at all times, apply themselves to the best of their abilities, be on time for class, and complete assigned work in a timely manner.
- Students must remain in designated supervised areas on Temple grounds.
- Students will follow the directions of the person in charge at all times.
- Students will care for their books, materials, and school and personal property. Any damage done will be the financial responsibility of the family. Parents must pay this cost before re-enrollment or *bar/bat mitzvah*.
- Fighting, foul language, or violent acts will not be tolerated.
- The school does not tolerate the use or possession of weapons or drugs, other than those drugs prescribed by a physician, which must be held in the Torah School office. If a student is in possession of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and vaping or weapons, the result is an immediate suspension from the school program. Readmission may occur only under conditions outlined by the Director of Education and rabbinic staff. *Bar/bat mitzvah* privileges may also be revoked. This policy is one of strict compliance. No exceptions will be made.

Consequences

Behavioral problems are detrimental to the learning environment. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation in the classroom. Teachers will establish basic classroom behavior standards. If a child continues to have behavioral problems and must be sent out of class, one of the following will occur depending on the severity of the incident:

- The student will be spoken to by the teacher and returned to class at the teacher's discretion.
- The student will be spoken to by the Director of Education and returned to

class at the Director's discretion.

- In ongoing occurrences the Director of Education will discuss the situation with the student's parents, and a written summary will be included in the student's cumulative file.
- The student will be spoken with, and a conference will be scheduled with the parents in an attempt to resolve the situation before the student is allowed to return to class.
- The student will be suspended and will not be allowed to return to class until a second conference takes place. At this point, the Director of Education has the authority to decide when, and if, the student will return to class.
- The student may be expelled for the remainder of the school year by the decision of a committee, consisting of the Director of Education, the Rabbi and the Chair or representative of the Torah School Committee. The student's return to school the following year will be at the discretion of the school. At this point the *bar/bat mitzvah* date may be postponed or cancelled.

Attendance

- We ask that your family makes attendance and full participation in our program a priority. **We understand that many families are balancing a myriad of extra-curricular activities; we hope that you will schedule them around Torah School hours.**
- Students must attend a minimum of 75% of all class sessions in order to advance to the next grade-level or to become *bar/bat mitzvah*, per the policies set by the Temple Beth Torah Board.
- If a student misses more than 25%, the student is expected to complete make-up work or meet with a tutor at a cost to the student's family. Other special arrangements may be made with the Director of Education.
- In accordance with the policy of Temple Beth Torah, students must complete 3 years of classes prior to becoming *bar/bat mitzvah*. **Students must be enrolled in and attend Temple Beth Torah's Torah School through the school year of their b'nai mitzvah.**
- **We encourage all of our students and their families to attend Torah School's 3rd Fridays Family Shabbat and holiday services regularly.**
- We expect all students to continue their Jewish Education beyond *b'nai mitzvah*, leading to Confirmation at the end of 10th grade.

T'filah (Prayer)

T'filah (prayer) is a vital part of our Torah School Curriculum. It is imperative that students participate in *T'filah*. During *T'filah*, students have the opportunity to lead the prayers that they have learned in their classes. Each Torah School session we will join together as a congregation in chanting. New songs and melodies are also taught. We invite and encourage parents to join us in *T'filah* Services on Sundays at 11:30am and Wednesdays at 5:30pm. This can be a very spiritual and meaningful experience for your family.

Schedule

Students are expected to **arrive on time**, and parents are expected to arrive promptly to pick up their children.

Sunday Schedule

Trans K -6th Grades 9:30am – 12:00pm

Wednesday Schedule

3rd – 6th Grades 4:00pm – 6:00pm

7th – 9th Grades 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Gate Security

The gate that is in the breezeway leading into the Temple should always be shut completely. Please use the number kiosk to gain entry into the Temple. Prior to classes beginning, a Temple staff member will be stationed at the gate to provide entrance for safety.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Drop-Off Procedures

Our School is open 10 minutes before the start of class. *Please do not drop off your students prior to this time unless a parent or parent-designated adult remains with them.* This ensures the safety, supervision and security of our students and the entire school.

TK through 2nd Grade Sunday Drop-Off

- Please walk your student to their classroom until they are comfortable on their own

3rd through 10th Grade Drop-Off

- If you are dropping off your student, please pull all the way forward to the Torah School breezeway.

Pick-Up Procedures

TK through 2nd Grade Sunday Pick-Up

Please pick up inside the Torah School breezeway or inside the gate on the quad

3rd through 10th Grade Pick-Up

- Please pull all the way forward to the Torah School breezeway. Do not park in the parking spots as we do not want students to have to cross the parking lot unattended.

Picking up early or running late

- If you need to pick up your student early for any reason, you must come to the Schools' Office to sign them out. A staff member will then call your student down from class to meet you in the office. Do not go directly to the classroom. This ensures your child's protection and safety.
- If you are going to be late in picking up your child(ren)/carpool, please call the Schools' Office immediately. Please make a concerted effort to be on time because delays cause the children to worry and be confused.

Safety and Health

Safety is a primary concern to all of us at Temple Beth Torah, Torah School.

- Be sure that your student's registration is completely filled out, signed, and updated whenever necessary. We cannot treat your child in an emergency without this form. No child will be permitted to begin class without a completed online registration form.
- Students must remain with their classes at all times to ensure their safety. They are not allowed out of the classroom without permission from their teacher, and they may not enter a classroom without a teacher's supervision.
- If your student is hurt or sick at school, we will always call you. By law, the Torah School may only apply bandages, soap and water and ice to wounds. In the case of an injury where we have determined it is necessary for the child to receive emergency medical attention, we will immediately summon paramedics to the school.
- If your student becomes ill at school, we will call you to come pick them up. If there is no fever, the office staff will take what measures it can to comfort the student and return them to class.
- Please notify the school if your student contracts any infectious diseases, especially chicken pox or head lice.
- If your student has medication that they must take at Torah School, please call the Schools' Office so that we can make the necessary special arrangements. **No student**

should have an inhaler, Epi-Pen or any other medication without school notification.

- Because vomiting, diarrhea, and fever are all signs of a potentially contagious illness, please keep children home if they have exhibited any of these symptoms within the previous twenty-four hours.

Fire and Emergency Drills

Temple Beth Torah holds regular fire and emergency drills. These drills are held during school hours. When indicated, everyone must clear the buildings or lock down, including adults as well as children. After given the all clear, everyone proceeds in an orderly way to the basketball court. When all students are accounted for and it is determined that the building is safe, supervising adults will let everyone know it is safe to return to class.

In the rare occasion in which we must evacuate Temple Beth Torah property, the designated meeting spot is Juanamaria Park.

Unscheduled School Closures

We will send out an email, Remind.com text and/or call you any time we close unexpectedly. If VUSD closes due to an earthquake, flood, or other emergency, we will also close. We will not close unless we feel it is absolutely necessary, and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Students' Guests

We have a Torah School Class No Guest policy. Minor guests are welcome to Shabbat Services, the Sukkot Sleepover, the Purim Carnival, etc. as long as a Temple Member adult is going to be on campus and will assume responsibility and liability for the guest.

Dress Code

- Students should always dress in an appropriate manner while attending Torah School. This means no midriff/belly tops, short shorts, visible undergarments, shoes with wheels attached or clothing with vulgar words, phrases, or images. Please use your best judgment in choosing attire. Please also use your daytime school's dress code as a guideline if you have any questions.
- If a student comes to school dressed in a manner that is unacceptable, the Director of Education will call a parent to request that the student receives a change of

clothing.

- Temple is the place where one gets to experience and experiment with Jewish rituals. We ask that all students wear Kippot (religious head coverings) during *T'filah* (prayer). If a student feels uncomfortable with this due to his/her religious observance, a parent may call and speak with the Director of Education.

Electronics

- Mobile phones, radios, video games, tablets, mp3 players, skate boards and laser pens are not permitted. Faculty members will collect all handheld digital devices and they will not be available to students unless they are used as a tool to assist in learning. Temple Beth Torah will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to any items.
- Any items brought to class that are distracting or hazardous will be taken away from the student and will only be returned to a parent by the Director of Education.

Communication

- Newsletters and Emails are the primary means of communication between the Torah School and families. It is of vital importance that you read your emails from TBT.
- Regular contact among parents, faculty and the Director of Education plays a key role in the success of our program. If you have a question or concern, please stop by, email or call the Schools' Office. If you have a question for a specific teacher, please email them directly.
- Parents are always welcome to visit the school; however, as a consideration to the teachers and the students, please contact The Director of Education to let her know which day you are coming. When you arrive, please check in with the Torah School Office before entering the classroom.

TBT Professionals and Staff Contact Information

Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller rablhm@templebethtorah.com

Marisa Schrier marisa@templebethtorah.com

Danielle Stoyanoff danielle@templebethtorah.com

Tzedakah (Righteous Acts)

Tzedakah (righteous acts) is strongly emphasized here at Temple Beth Torah. Each week, when your student attends Torah School, we encourage them to bring *tzedakah* money. Throughout the year, Torah School will participate in various *tzedakah* projects, which may include a High Holy Day food drive for our food bank, collecting clothing for a local shelter and more. At the end of the year, Torah School will collaboratively decide where collected money will be sent.

Hafsaka (Recess) and Snack

Each session students are provided with the opportunity to socialize, play and eat. On Sundays we provide challah and apple juice. Wednesdays, we provide a snack such as chips or crackers. It is a great idea to send your child with an additional healthy and filling snack. The afternoon can feel long on an empty stomach. In addition, please pack a snack if your child has food allergies or does not like chips or crackers.

Accommodations

The hallmark of a good educational institution is its flexibility. In order to provide a meaningful and successful educational program that caters to the widest possible spectrum of our young people, Temple Beth Torah's Torah School strives to meet each individual's needs. Instruction is tailored to meet the strength and learning style of each individual student. Please indicate on the Enrollment and Emergency Form or speak with the Director of Education with any accommodations your child may need.

School Programs and Activities

Trans-Kindergarten through 6th Grade Family Education Days

Trans Kindergarten through 6th grade students and their parents are required to join together for a morning of interactive programming and learning. It is of vital importance that a parent or adult relative accompany each child to these special family education days. Dates to be determined.

Torah School Committee

The Torah School Committee (TSC) is a group of dedicated and diverse members from our temple community, most of whom have children in our school. The committee generates ideas and suggestions. It also serves as a sounding board for the Torah School staff. TSC meetings are lively exchanges about educational philosophy, curricula, specific programming and activities, and special needs. They also promote school spirit through social and fundraising events. The TSC welcomes all new members and ideas. If you are interested in joining or attending TSC meetings or have questions or concerns, please contact the Torah School Chair: Sloane Burt sloane@templebethtorah.com

Torah School Director's Fund

People often ask how they can express their appreciation for a teacher, thank a staff member for special efforts, or honor or remember someone. There is a way: the Torah School Director's Discretionary Fund. Contributions to this fund support the educational enrichment of all our students and enhance the Torah School program. You can contribute any time through the main office or the Torah School Office. There is no minimum contribution, and the honoree of your choice will receive a personal acknowledgement of your gift.

Madrichim Program Description

A madrich(a) is a teacher's helper who has completed TBT's Torah School's B'nai Mitzvah program and is enrolled in the post B'nai Mitzvah Torah School class. They assist with student supervision, engagement, and class lessons.

Madrichim will :

- Attend a training session with the Director of Education before the school year begins, or have a 30-minute make-up meeting with the Director of Education.
- Be assigned to classroom or specialty area and assist our teaching faculty on Sundays and/or Wednesdays.
- Comply with the *Brit Kehillah*, Code of Conduct.
- Model Jewish learning by continuing in our post B'nai Mitzvah Torah School classes. Madrichim will also have ongoing professional development.

Madrichim B'rit Kehillah

I understand that participation in the Temple Beth Torah Madrichim Program is dependent upon enrollment numbers, availability, and the specific needs of Temple Beth Torah's Torah School.

Madrichim are invaluable Jewish role models in our classrooms.

Therefore:

- I will treat everyone with *kavod* (respect). This includes the entire Torah School team: teachers, specialists, leadership, peers, and, of course, students.
- I will encourage students to learn.
- I will try to find ways to connect with the students.
- I will be a positive Jewish role model.
- My attire will be in compliance with the Temple Beth Torah's Torah School Dress code. This means no midriff/belly tops, short shorts, visible undergarments, shoes with wheels attached, or clothing with vulgar words, phrases or images.
- Whether or not it is my personal practice, I will model wearing a kippah in the Sanctuary for T'filah.

In order to provide a consistent learning environment:

- I agree to be present and active in the classroom and in programs.
- I will actively participate in T'filah, classroom activities, engage with students during hafsakah (break), and assist and/or participate in all specialty areas.
- I agree to be present a minimum of 75% of my assigned Madrichim sessions.
- I agree to attend post- B'nai Mitzvah classes at TBT (if available).
- I agree to inform the Madrichim Coordinator if I am unable to attend a session as soon as possible and absolutely before 8:00am on the date of my absence.

Our Madrichim take on professional responsibilities through the duration of the program.

- I understand that Madrichim-in-Training is ongoing and is required in order to participate in the Madrichim program.
- I commit to staying in communication with the Director of Education. I will regularly check my email and be enrolled in the Remind app for text message updates.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to submit a Work Permit, required by my primary school and the State of California, to the Director of Education.

Our classrooms are to be healthy learning environments.

- I will not allow any electronic devices I own to distract me from the job at hand. I will leave my cell phone in the school office during Torah School hours.
- I understand that when I am at TBT participating in the Madrichim program it is not the appropriate time to socialize with my friends. My primary task is to provide assistance to create a positive Jewish learning environment for the students.
- I will not text, call, or be on social media during my hours.
- I understand that I must sign in when I arrive at TBT and sign out before I leave.

Our Madrichim are learning how to become Jewish Director of Educators.

- I understand that if I do not comply with the Brit Kehillah there will be consequences. These consequences may include: meeting with the Director of the Torah School, receiving a different Madrichim assignment, parents being brought in for a meeting and of being dismissed from the program.
- I understand that any behavior that is emotionally or physically harmful to a student or staff member, or that is considered dangerous, is not permitted at TBT and may result in immediate dismissal from the Madrichim program.
- I understand that I am making a commitment and by signing below I am agreeing to abide by the Brit Kehillah.

By signing my name here, I agree to comply with the expectations of the Madrichim

program. Madrich/Madricha Name (Printed)_____

Madrich/Madricha Signature_____Date_____

Parent
Signature_____Date_____

Director of Education’s Signature_____Date_____

Youth Programs

Temple Beth Torah Youth Groups enable our Jewish friends in the community to work together, build character and confidence and develop their individual potential. These exciting youth programs offer age-appropriate opportunities to take part in trips, sports, social action, games, art, drama, music and free discussion. To learn more about our youth programming please contact Tassi Benjamin at tassi@templebethtorah.com

Temple Beth Torah proudly hosts three Youth Groups for our children:

Mini VCTRY

Our youth group for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students is an introduction and sneak peek to our youth group programming. Its goal is to give Youth Group members a chance to socialize outside of the classrooms. Participants will have the chance to engage in social action projects, learn about the Jewish holidays in different ways, and enjoy Judaism through the arts and movement.

Jr. VCTRY

6th, 7th and, 8th graders will have more youth events during the year which will take place at TBT and offsite. Jr. VCTRY members also have the opportunity to participate in NFTY678. NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth) brings the National Youth Group experience to middle school students in grades 6 to 8. Our events are designed especially for this age group, providing participants with activities in a safe, welcoming and caring community of peers.

VCTRY

Our senior youth group is for 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders. VCTRY members develop leadership skills and run their own programs of social and educational activities with the guidance of an adult supervisor. VCTRY participates in temple events, local events, and national events as part of the Reform movement's NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth) organization, including retreat weekends with 200 other Jewish teens.

Mini/Jr VCTRY B'rit Kehillah- Code of Conduct

As a member of VCTRY I will abide by these rules in order to create a safe welcoming religious youth community during all TBT (and NFTY) sponsored events.

- I will come to events with a positive attitude, and participate fully in the activities
- I will show respect to all participants and advisors during events and any other place I may encounter them
- I will stay the whole event unless otherwise agreed upon with the Youth Group Advisor
- I will not participate in any activities that could be deemed as hazing, harassment, demeaning or hurtful and will refrain from all inappropriate behavior

- I will not commit any illegal acts such as vandalism, disturbing the peace, or other inappropriate behavior deemed by the advisors. I understand that I will have to pay for any damage that I cause.
- I will not possess, consume or distribute any alcohol, drugs or tobacco products
- I will not possess, consume or distribute any vaping paraphernalia

I understand that these rules are non-negotiable and if I break the code of conduct there will be consequences.

VCTRY Member Name _____

VCTRY Member Signature _____

Date _____

I have read and discussed these rules for VCTRY with my child. We understand the importance of VCTRY's code of conduct. We will abide by the rules and will accept the consequences given if these rules have been broken.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Sr VCTRY B'rit Kehillah- Code of Conduct

As a member of VCTRY I will abide by these rules in order to create a safe welcoming religious youth community during all TBT (and NFTY) sponsored events.

- I will come to events with a positive attitude, and participate fully in the activities
- I will show respect to all participants and advisors during events and any other place I may encounter them
- I will stay the whole event unless otherwise agreed upon with the Youth Group Director
- I will not possess, consume or distribute any alcohol, drugs or tobacco products
- I will not possess, consume or distribute any vaping paraphernalia
- I will not bring or use any firearms, or anything that may be construed as a weapon
- I will not participate in any activities that could be deemed as hazing, harassment, demeaning or hurtful and will refrain from all inappropriate behavior
- I will not commit any illegal acts such as vandalism, disturbing the peace, or other inappropriate behavior deemed by the advisors. I understand that I will have to pay for any damage that I cause.
- Youth Group Members must follow all CA laws regarding transporting other Members

I understand that these rules are non-negotiable and if I break the code of conduct there will be consequences.

VCTRY Member Name _____

VCTRY Member Signature _____

Date _____

I have read and discussed these rules for VCTRY with my child. We understand the importance of VCTRY's code of conduct. We will abide by the rules and will accept the consequences given if these rules have been broken.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____