

# Temple Emanuel Torah Center Family Handbook

**5784-85  
(2024 – 2025)**



## **Welcome to Torah Center!**

Temple Emanuel Torah Center engages students in **PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade** and their families in Jewish life and learning. With so many different opportunities to join our community – inspiring learning courses and activities, meaningful family worship and holiday experiences, important social action programs, informal youth gatherings and more – there is something for everyone! The programs we offer help our families to build a lasting foundation for living a Jewish life.

### **Class Times**

PreK - 2nd Grade meet Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM

3rd - 6th Grade meet Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM

AND\*

Wednesday, 4:30 to 6:00 PM in-person; or

Wednesday, 5:30 to 7:00 PM in-person

*\* You do not need to select a time slot when registering.*

7<sup>th</sup> grade meets Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM

AND

B'nai Mitzvah Tutoring (*schedules will be assigned on an individual basis*)

High School (grades 8-12) meets Sundays 12:15 PM to 1:15 PM

### **Midweek Hebrew Program (Grades 3-6)**

#### Midweek Flexibility

We recognize the challenges you face prioritizing Jewish education along with increasingly busy work, life, and extra-curricular activity schedules. Students in Grades 3-6 participating in our midweek Hebrew program can choose from two time slots to accommodate your schedule. You do not need to select a time slot when registering.

If the in-person midweek option absolutely does not meet the needs of your family, we are now offering an individualized option. This learning path combines a virtual midweek individual session with our in-person Sunday morning classes designed to build community and meet the full learning objectives of our program.

## **3X-Weekly Hebrew Touch Points**

Multiple touch points throughout the week aid in acquisition and retention of the Hebrew language. In addition to Sunday mornings and a mid-week session, students in grades 3-6 will be invited to sign up for a 15-minute online check-in each week, working 1-1 with a teacher on their letter/vowel recognition, reading fluency, prayer practice, and more depending on their progress.

## **Tuition**

Torah Center tuition can be paid up front in full or divided into two payments: On August 15th (or at the time of registration if registration occurs after August 15) and on January 15th. Payment can be by ACH, credit card, or check. You will select your payment method during the registration process.

Families must give written notice of school withdrawal. If withdrawal occurs prior to January 15, families are responsible only for the first half of tuition and no refunds will be offered. Families are responsible for the full year's tuition if withdrawal occurs after January 15 and no refunds will be offered.

Temple Emanuel has several scholarships available. If you find that tuition creates a hardship, please reach out to Steph McFerron to discuss options. Please note: scholarships are not available for the Individualized Hebrew option.

## **School Calendar**

The 2024-25 Torah Center Calendar can be found here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/yvccrnw6>

## **Drop off and Pick up**

Drop off and pick up will use our Torah Center entrance in the main parking lot.

### **Sundays**

You may drop off and pick up your child/ren at the Torah Center doors or park and walk your child in/pick up. Please use caution when pulling into the parking lot and keep in mind that it is a one-way road with children often moving about.

## **Wednesdays**

If arriving at 4:30 PM, please head to Hebrew homeroom (ask your child on their first Sunday who their homeroom teacher is; all homerooms are in the upstairs classrooms). If arriving at 5:30 PM, please head straight to the Beit HaT'filah.

## **Early dismissals:**

E-mail [smcferron@templemanuelpgh.org](mailto:smcferron@templemanuelpgh.org) or text at 412-551-0379 all planned early dismissals (both Sundays and Wednesdays) at least 30 minutes prior to the start of school or send in a note with your child that day. Our madrichim will accompany your child to the Torah Center door at the designated time for pick up.

Even if your child has a phone and you text to let them know you have arrived for pick up, it is important we know when the students are coming and going; please help us with this and communicate pick up times if outside of the regular school hours.

## **Eating/Drinking**

We encourage your child to attend with their own water bottle (please label with first and last name). Also, encourage your child to eat a good breakfast prior to attending Sunday mornings.

Students in PreK-2nd grade will have a snack of challah each Sunday morning. Unless medically necessary, we ask that you do not send food in with your child.

Midweek students will receive a snack option as they walk into the building: a quick, portable snack to be consumed by the time they get to class. We encourage parents to offer their child a snack en route to Temple after a long day of secular school.

Allergy information will be collected on the medical form and shared with faculty in advance of day 1.

## **School Closings Due to Inclement Weather**

In the event Torah Center would need to cancel due to inclement weather, information will be found on the Temple Emanuel Facebook Page as well as in an e-mail blast. Determination of closures will be made by 8:00 AM Sunday mornings and 3:00 PM Wednesday afternoons.

## **Student Cell Phone Usage**

Cell phones/electronic devices can serve as useful instructional tool and learning resource if used appropriately. We encourage our faculty and our students to use electronics to supplement instruction and learning. However, it has been proven that

students who are on cell phones or other electronic devices when it is not part of the instructional lesson are not fully engaged in learning.

In order to preserve the teaching and learning environment, each teacher will guide best practices within their classroom. Students may be asked to place their devices into a basket or holding area during classroom time. If cell phone usage becomes problematic, teachers or the educational director may reach out to parents individually to ask that the device remains at home.

If you need an immediate way to get a hold of your child, do not hesitate to text or call Steph McFerron at 412-551-0379.

## **Pictures, Videos, and Social Media**

We all want to capture moments in our children's lives. Please be considerate when taking photographs or videos during Torah Center events. If you plan to post photos to social media, please obtain permission from all families included in the photo. Thank you for your help in ensuring the privacy of all our families.

Our teachers often include photos and videos in their e-mails home. These photos are meant for your information and enjoyment and should not be posted to your personal social media pages.

## **Communication**

In order for our school to operate effectively and professionally, lines of communication must remain open at all times: to students, parents, teachers, Rabbi, Cantor, and staff. There is no question too silly to ask and no opinion not worth hearing. Let's make sure that we maintain an environment where information flows often and freely.

Much of the information will be sent via e-mail. Please check your e-mail regularly and notify us of e-mail disruptions or changes in address.

Parental involvement is often the key to success in the classroom. Active, open, and effective communication with families is essential. This is accomplished through a variety of methods at Torah Center including introductory e-mails from teachers and madrichim, phone calls, and e-mail updates.

Please keep us informed as well – of e-mail or address changes, and any other situations that may affect your child's experience.

## **Tzedakah**

Tzedakah will be collected on Sunday mornings and weekday afternoons. To maximize the impact of our families' generosity and to ensure recipient organizations are aligned with Temple values and priorities, 3-4 organizations will be selected for the entire school during the course of the year. Information about each organization will be distributed via e-mail as well as presented to the students in their individual classrooms.

## **Class Shabbatot**

As a piece of grade level curricula, students prepare to participate in Friday evening Shabbat services. Not only does this help students connect content in the classroom to a service experience, it gives us an opportunity to bring families together to participate with their children in a pre-service activity. The evening begins at 6:15 PM and typically concludes by 8:00 PM

Below are the dates by grade level – mark your calendars now!

<u>Kindergarten</u>	Friday, October 25, 2024
<u>1st Grade</u>	Friday, December 6, 2024
<u>2nd Grade</u>	Friday, January 17, 2025
<u>3rd Grade</u>	Friday, January 24, 2025
<u>4th Grade</u>	Friday, February 28, 2025
<u>5th Grade</u>	Friday, March 28, 2025
<u>6th Grade</u>	Friday, March 7, 2025
<u>7th Grade</u>	Friday, February 21, 2025

## **Safety and Security**

We know that this time of heightened anxiety can lead to questioning the safety of our local Jewish spaces. Temple works with the Mt. Lebanon Police, Secure Community Network, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh to ensure a layered safety and security plan. We are a locked facility with significant investments in our security cameras, door locks, and window treatments; a BluePoint rapid emergency response system to connect us immediately with both the local police department and the other Jewish organizations; AED, First Aid, and Stop-the-Bleed kits located throughout the building; and ongoing staff training in emergency preparedness and response.

## **Required Forms**

There are two required forms for participation in Torah Center. Our registration form which can be found here:

<https://templemanuelofsouthhills.shulcloud.com/form/torah-center-2024-25.html>

And our medical form which can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/mtfsdjsv>