



*Parents' Manual of School Policies*

5780—5781

2020—2021

17950 Military Trail, Boca Raton, FL 33496

Phone: 561-241-6257 Fax: 561-998-4646

Email: [office@halperintorahtots.com](mailto:office@halperintorahtots.com)

[www.halperintorahtots.com](http://www.halperintorahtots.com)

## **Mission Statement**

The Maurice A. Halperin Torah Tots Early Childhood Center is a place where children ages 20 months–5 years receive an exciting, creative and nurturing experience that will provide them with the foundation to grow educationally, socially and spiritually. We offer small classes with excellent teacher/student ratios, a professional staff of early childhood specialists and a modern facility equipped with the most educationally sound early childhood equipment. Most importantly, your child will receive a well rounded, enriching education, filled with Jewish traditions and customs intertwined with a wide array of academic subjects, personal development, values, socialization and learning skills.

## **Philosophy**

*The Maurice A. Halperin Torah Tots Early Childhood* is an intimate school that welcomes each child regardless of background or affiliation. The goals of Torah Tots are to preserve and nurture the innate love of learning in each child, to provide each child with a strong foundation for future learning, to honor the uniqueness of each child, and to ignite a spark in each child to lay claim to his/her Jewish heritage.

Torah Tots prides itself on having a highly professional staff of Early Childhood specialists. The teachers are chosen not only for their teaching skills, but also for their love of children and their nurturing qualities. Classes are kept small to ensure that the teachers have plenty of interaction with each child. Our modern facility holds all of the most educationally and developmentally sound equipment and materials.

The day in the life of a Torah Tot is truly an adventure. Backed by all of the latest research on brain development and learning, the children experience a play-based curriculum. As they move through their environment the children are encouraged to explore, to manipulate, to experiment, to create, to problem solve and to interact socially through group activities and dramatic play. The centers that are arranged by the teachers build a foundation for future academic learning by fostering literacy and providing hands-on opportunities for uncovering math and science concepts. Jewish traditions and customs give the days their flavor with song, dance, ritual and the acting out of Torah tales.

What makes Torah Tots so special is our belief that each child is a special gift. We believe in child-directed, teacher-guided curriculum. Learning styles and individual interests are respected and addressed as teachers plan for the educational experiences that will take place. As this magical time of early childhood is honored and respected, the children feel safe to express themselves, knowing their voices will be heard. This acceptance of each child builds a strong sense of self that the children take with them in life beyond Torah Tots. We believe that, like the children, Torah Tots is an ever changing, ever growing entity. Our teachers and staff, through workshops and in-house training, are constantly discovering new ways to provide the best experiences for their students.

## **Goals:**

Torah Tots seeks to create a stimulating and enriching educational environment for each and every child. The school is devoted to helping children learn socialization skills, building their self-confidence and teaching them the preliminary skills to explore and experience the world independently from their parents. Our goal is to provide children with the early foundation and framework to prepare them for the transition to elementary school. In addition, we seek to ignite a spark in each child to lay claim to his Jewish heritage and commit him or her to a lifetime passion for learning.

## ***Our Curriculum***

Our comprehensive and developmentally appropriate program is designed to promote each child's intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth. All games and activities are skill-based and goal oriented, so that the children are growing with everything that they do.

### **INTELLECTUAL:**

We encourage the children to develop self-motivation, active investigational skills through questioning, exploring and observing, and the thinking and problem solving abilities needed to thrive in a world of challenge and competition. Children are surrounded with books, literacy experiences and exposure to the alphabet to prepare them for pre-reading and the reading that follows.

### **SOCIAL:**

We encourage each child to work and play with others, to develop language communication skills, to respect the rights and privacy of their peers and most of all to develop feelings of kindness, courtesy, helpfulness and acceptance.

### **PHYSICAL:**

Children are provided constant opportunities to develop their small and large muscle skills, to develop finger strength and dexterity, and arm-eye and body coordination. Additionally, we have on staff a P.E. specialist who does a weekly program with our 2-4 year old classes.

### **EMOTIONAL:**

Children are encouraged to develop a positive self-concept, to understand the difference between right and wrong and to develop responsibility. They are encouraged to recognize that people are different and to be accepting of others and we help them learn and practice appropriate ways to respond to others and to express their feelings constructively. **Conscious Discipline is a program that is used at Torah Tots. It focuses on interpersonal skills, emotional regulation and classroom structure to create a school family within each classroom.**

### **INTEGRATING TRADITION AND JEWISH PRIDE:**

Lesson plans at Torah Tots are built around the events influencing the children at the time that they are being taught. Weather changes, special animal habits, national celebrations and holiday seasons all determine what will be brought into the classroom at any particular time of the year. All these are laced into the general curriculum to allow the children to learn from what is going on around them. Torah Tots follows *The Creative Curriculum* by Diane Trister Dodge.

The children experience all the Jewish holidays through art, song, dramatic play, language and literacy. Torah stories are learned and dramatized in weekly parsha plays.

## Getting Ready For School

Some suggestions to help your child get ready for school:

- Make sure they are well rested
- Allow lots of time for personal routines, a good breakfast and a pleasant, safe ride to school
- Talk/sing with your child on the way to school—this is a great way to develop literacy skills!
- Have a cheerful, positive attitude as your child leaves you, either at home or at school
- Inform the teacher if there is something going on at home that may affect your child
- Encourage your child to talk about school by asking specific questions, such as “What color did you paint with today?” or “What was snack today?” rather than “What did you do at school today?”

## Separation and Phase-In

A child’s attachment to his/her parents is natural, therefore separation, especially if it is for the first time, can be a difficult process. It is necessary for a child’s healthy development that he/she learn how to say goodbye to his/her parents. Children must learn that there are other caretakers (their teachers) who love them and will nurture them while their parents are away. In order to ease the difficult process, parents and teachers need to work together to build a foundation for positive experiences at school.

This foundation begins at *School Phase-In*. The **\*\*Phase-In** period is an orientation period, where each class has an abbreviated schedule and parents spend time with their child in the classroom. The time parents spend in the classroom is used to play with their child, to assist them with classroom routines and help the child establish a relationship with the child’s teacher. The amount of time a parent must spend in the classroom is dependent on the age and grade of the child and prior experience separating from parents. Some of the time spent in the classroom is also at the discretion of the teacher, as she might make a judgment call if more or less time is needed for a particular child.

**\*\*** Phase in with parents has been suspended due to COVID-19.

**\*\*All parents must say goodbye to their children and tell them when they will return. Parents may NOT sneak out in order to prevent the child from crying at that moment.** Leaving without saying goodbye may be easier for the parents than leaving while a child is crying, but is **not** easier for the child. Their tears are symbols of their attachment to you and they must be allowed to express their emotions. Children will be comforted by their teachers. Leaving without saying goodbye can also make separations more difficult because a child will fear the unexpected departure and try to keep a close eye on his/her parent. This fear will prevent him/her from engaging in play or interacting with teachers and other children. Children must trust their parents and when they learn the tangible process of separation, this helps them to do so.

**\*\*** Due to COVID-19 the children will be dropped off at a carpool line. And taken to class by a Morah.

## **Books Can Help!**

Picture books about the beginning of school can help to ease your apprehensions and open a channel of communication about school between you and your child—and what a wonderful habit for life! Story characters modeling a successful adjustment to school help children, as well as parents. These books reinforce positive feelings about school and are helpful long after the first day.

*The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

*Will I Have a Friend?* By Miriam Cohen

*Best Friends* by Miriam Cohen

*Every Morning at Play Group*, a Sesame Street Golden Book

*I Have a Friend*, a Sesame Street Golden Book

*I Go To School* by Rikki Benenfield

Our local libraries also have many book suggestion titles.

## **Communication and Parent Participation**

**Communication:** Open communication between the school's director, teachers and parents is an integral component of Torah Tots. We strongly believe that cooperation and communication between the staff and parents is in the best interest of the children and provides the right support for them to flourish. If at any time parents wish to address issues of concern with any staff member at Torah Tots, please do so by communicating with us through email, phone or written note. Our staff will respond within one to two business days. To facilitate this we offer the following:

- **Orientation process**—During this time please give us your impressions of your child: personality, his or her likes, dislikes, pertinent health information, etc.
- **Talk to Us!** – If you wish to contact your child's teacher you may call during school hours and leave a message for her and your call will be returned after class hours that day. Rivkah Denburg, director, is available during the day for meetings or phone calls.
- **Email Us!** – You will be provided with an email address for your child's teacher. You can reach Rivkah Denburg at [director@halperintorahtots.com](mailto:director@halperintorahtots.com) and the office manager at [office@halperintorahtots.com](mailto:office@halperintorahtots.com) to communicate any questions or concerns. Our staff will respond in a timely manner.
- **Tadpoles** is our communication platform at Torah Tots. Please sign up and put app on your phone. Emails, texts and notifications will be sent via this method. Pictures and news of the week will be shared.
- **Parent Information Board** – Make sure to visit our board at the entrance of the school for important information and upcoming events. **Due to COVID-19 this will be suspended.**
- **Torah Tots Website** – All school information including calendar, upcoming events, are posted on our website and updated regularly.
- **Transitioning:** Each year your child is placed in their appropriate age group and will remain with that group through the year. To learn more about separation please see "Separation & Phase In".
- **Social Media:** You can get news and information about the school on Facebook at T.O.D.A.H. of Torah Tots and on Instagram @torahtotsacademy.

- \*\*Parent Involvement**—Parents are our most treasured resource in the education of our children. We encourage your involvement in our special events throughout the year. Some of the events include our Auction, our Trike-a-Thon, Shabbat and holiday parties. We invite you to come and read a book, supervise an art project, share a special skill (such as playing a musical instrument, assisting with cooking project) whenever possible. Look for the sign up sheets early in the year. If it is not possible for parents to participate in the classroom directly, there are other activities that could be done at home that would be very helpful, such as gathering recycled materials for crafts or props for the housekeeping area, making phone calls, etc. **\*\* Due to COVID-19 all events are suspended until further notice.**
- \*\*Parent Organization:** All parents are welcome to join T.O.D.A.H., our parent organization. Meetings and functions will be held throughout the year. We are sure that the involvement of the parents in the school will prove to be invaluable in enhancing our program. Some of the events involved will include our annual Sukkot party, pajama party, and family fun day to name a few. **\*\* Due to COVID-19 all parent functions are suspended until further notice.**
- Conscious Discipline:** Torah Tots follows the Conscious Discipline method by Dr. Becky Bailey.
- Observation and Assessment:** Torah Tots is a part of the Strong Minds Network of Palm Beach County. As part of this program's ongoing quest for excellence in early childhood education, we use the Gold Teaching Strategies program to observe and assess our student's development in the following domains: social emotional, physical, language, literacy, math and cognitive skills. The 38 research-based objectives are at the heart of everything we do and they define the path teachers take with the children in their classroom. They inform every aspect of teaching, include predictors of school success, and are aligned with state early learning guidelines and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The objective for development and learning span from birth through third grade. They enable teachers to see children's development and learning along a progression across the whole of the early childhood years. Our teachers observe students throughout the week using anecdotal records, pictures and videos to track their development. Progress is shared at Parent Teacher Conferences.
- \*\*Parent-Teacher Conferences:** There are two parent-teacher conferences during the year, one in December and one in May. These conferences, which both mothers and fathers are encouraged to attend, are an opportunity to discuss the uniqueness of your child and to receive an in-depth view of your child's progress. We will be holding these conferences as noted on the calendar. Parents will have the opportunity to sign up for a scheduled time. **\*\* Due to COVID-19, Parent-Teacher Conferences will be virtual and times will be agreed upon with each parent.**
- Student Evaluations:** It is the policy of the school that we may reserve the right to require an evaluation of any child whom we believe is having significant difficulties functioning in the classroom. We also reserve the right to require additional support if we are unable to meet any child's special needs in the classroom. Additional support may include occupational, physical and/or speech therapists, and /or shadows, at the parents' own expense. **\*\*Due to COVID-19 these services will be suspended until further notice.**

- **Open Door Policy:** We have an open door policy as far as visiting school is concerned. We do ask, however, that visitation not take place the first month of school to allow for all adjustments. Although we do encourage visitations, we suggest that the frequency of visits does not interfere with the operation of the classroom and your child's adjustment. Parents are asked to make an appointment with the director to observe your child's classroom. When visiting in the classroom, we ask that you remember to please not engage in conversation with the teacher when she is working with the students. Her job at that point is to be with the children. **\*\*Due to COVID-19 this will be suspended until further notice.**
- **Changes in Child's Home Environment:** It is important that we know of any changes taking place in your child's environment. The birth of a new baby, change of babysitter or family crisis can affect your child's behavior in school. The more informed we are, the more we can do to offer extra support and understanding to your child during unusually stressful times.
- **Changes in Student Information:** Any change in home address or telephone number must be given to the office as soon as the change is made.
- **VPK:** For the EC 4 class, please note that the VPK tuition is subject to your submitting the proper VPK documentation, and abiding by the VPK policies and Procedures regarding attendance. VPK payments are dependent on a child's attendance in school. **If a child has excessive absences, and VPK deducts any monies from our payment, you will be billed accordingly.**

***Arrival and Dismissal—SEE COVID ADDENDUM ATTACHED***

- **Car Seats:** Florida law requires that children under 5 be either in a car seat or a booster seat that is appropriate for their age and weight (**see the last page of Parents' Manual of School Policies**). Please do the right thing for your child and go out and purchase a car seat or booster and make sure that you and your spouse and other relatives have one too.

### *Health, Safety and Discipline*

1. All the children are required to have a current health and immunization form filled out by the child's physician, dated no more than 6 months prior to the beginning of school. **NO CHILD WILL BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL WITHOUT THESE HEALTH FORMS.**
2. **For all new students enrolled in Torah Tots:** Our school is required by Florida law to collect and keep on file vaccination records signed by a local doctor. The law does provide exceptions in rare medical conditions. Torah Tots will require students to be fully vaccinated before beginning school. We understand that there are students who are unable to receive vaccinations due to family medical history and/or vaccine injuries or serious complications. Students with medical exemptions will be allowed.



In case of a contagious disease or rash, please notify the school at once. All parents will be notified by the school when a child in the group has a contagious disease so that you may check with your physician. If your child should contract a contagious disease or rash, we must have a note from his/her doctor stating that the child is in good health and no longer contagious before being re-admitted. **As a courtesy to your child's classmates, please do not attend out of school celebrations or weekend parties with any of the above symptoms.**

- If your child is found to have head lice, you will be called to pick him/her up so that the appropriate treatment can be administered. Upon returning to school, an administrator must check your child to ensure that all lice and nits have been removed. In order for your child to return to the classroom, a note from the director must be presented to the teachers. Children will be periodically checked for lice and nits.
- Please be aware that in order to protect our children, our teachers are required by Florida law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.
- No bottles are allowed to be brought into the classroom. Sippy cups are allowed. Pacifiers are allowed for naptime.
- Please be aware that the temporary care of ill children will be kept separate from the other children in the school.

### **Illness or Injury in School**

In accordance with Palm Beach County regulations, Torah Tots is restricted to treating wounds or injuries with ice, soap and water and band-aids only. Should other injuries occur, parents will be notified immediately and/or paramedics will be summoned.

These restrictions will also prevent the school from issuing medications such as Tylenol, etc. Parents may come to school to do so. The school does not administer the initial dosage of a medication. Parents will be summoned to take their child home should the student feel unwell and therefore be sure that the children are healthy before sending them to school.

Each student file must contain a signed and notarized Emergency Form. This form, in addition to providing emergency and medical alert information, also grants Torah Tots the parents' authorization to act as their agent in procuring appropriate medical or surgical services should the need arise.

## **Medication**

Only prescription medicine for allergies or in the event of emergency will be dispensed by Torah Tots staff. The name of the doctor, child and medication directions for administration shall be written on the label. All medication shall be in the original prescription container. All medicines that are brought in by parents are stored in a locked refrigerator, cabinet or container and are inaccessible to the children. A written request signed by the parents and doctor shall accompany the medication stating the time and amount of dosage and the name of the medication to be given to the child. Torah Tots shall record the name of the child, medication, date, time, amount and method of dosage administered. All medication will be checked for the expiration date. This Medication Log shall be initialed by the adult who administered the medication. Please make sure to fill out the medication permission form at the office.

Over the counter medications may only be administered at our school if a dated doctor's note is submitted with detailed instructions of how and when the dosage is needed.

## **Topical Non-Medicated Physical Barriers**

Physical barrier lotions, ointments and creams such as sunscreen, insect repellent and diaper ointments are generally not medications. At Torah Tots we allow these to be applied as long as the non-medication form is completed.

## **Biting**

There are many reasons children may bite. Sometimes the biting is related to teething. Sometimes toddlers use it to express feelings they can't express with words yet. We have seen children bite when they are frustrated, and we have seen them bite in the excitement of a happy moment. No one can predict which children will bite, but we are ready to help children who do bite learn other behavior. We are also ready to give treatment, sympathy and advice to children who are bitten.

### **Biting Procedures:**

1. After a child bites one time, the family of the child who bites will be contacted as well as the family of the child bitten. We ask parents to keep us informed if their child is biting at home. Children who bite in our program do not necessarily bite at home. But if your child is biting in both places, it is important for all of us to be consistent in dealing with it. Communication is very important in order to help your child stop biting.
2. If repeated biting incidents occur, the director will meet with the parents in order to implement a plan that would prevent further incidents from taking place. This plan will include making changes in the classroom environment. At times when all efforts made by the school do not result in a change in the biting pattern, measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of the children in the class. These may include a "shadow" at the parents own expense or temporary removal from the program.

You can count on us to deal appropriately with biting so that it will end as quickly as possible. We will support your children whether they bite or are bitten. We want the best for all the children in our school.

## **Fire Drills/Lockdown**

Fire drills are held monthly throughout the school year. The teachers will instruct the children the proper procedure for evacuating the school safely and quickly. **Lockdown drills will be held three times during the year.**

### **FIRE:**

- See Fire Drill plan posted in each room.

## **Hurricanes and Community Emergencies**

Our school generally follows the emergency plans set by Palm Beach County Public Schools. We will at all times try to notify you personally of emergency information or you may call the office directly. In the event the school is closed due to natural disasters such as weather (i.e. hurricanes, etc.) and/or weather related damages to the school, there will be no make-up days.

## **Emergency/Evacuation Plan**

- To evacuate the school building, the children will be taken into the main building (synagogue) into the Caryl Rothman Library (“shelter in place”).
- During a bomb threat that does **not** involve a vehicle, the assembly area for Torah Tots is located at the first median in the parking lot (300 yards from the building).
- During a bomb threat that involves a vehicle, the assembly area for Torah Tots is located at the mail area behind the dry cleaners (1000 yards from the building).
- The secondary assembly area is located at golf course behind the Torah Tots playground. To ensure people are not exposed to danger while evacuating the building, a secondary assembly area is required should a suspect vehicle be parked in the primary assembly area.
- Emergency provisions will be kept in a backpack located in each classroom. This “Emergency Backpack” will include the following items: flashlight, first aid kit, water, snacks and a class list with emergency phone numbers.
- A member of the Board of Directors who lives near the school will serve as an emergency contact. She has copies of all the children and staff emergency information. The Preschool Director will be responsible for calling the Board Member if an evacuation is necessary.

***No one is to re-enter the building until the Fire Department give the all-clear signal.***

In the event that the phones are not operating during an emergency at Torah Tots, we will communicate through walkie-talkies or cell phones.

### ***ANTICIPATED HURRICANE/TORNADO OR NATURAL DISASTER:***

- Parents will be contacted and will be expected to reach the school for pickup within 30 minutes. The office staff will be responsible for making these calls.
- If the parent cannot be reached, the office staff will call the second contact on the emergency form. That person must arrive within 30 minutes.
- If the parent is reached but cannot arrive within 30 minutes, the parent must call the second contact.

### ***LIGHTNING:***

- The children will be brought indoors and teachers will take a head count.
- Electrical appliances will not be used.
- Children will not sit near windows, doors or sinks.
- Dismissal during lightning: For the safety of our children and staff when we are dismissing from the synagogue foyer, we will keep the children in the dismissal area until it is safe. If any parent wishes to pick up their child, please park and come in the front doors of the synagogue to get them.

*For any emergencies, contact Rivkah at 561-526-5738 or Rachel at 754-368-0632.*

### **Discipline/Guidance**

Our philosophy does not consider a child good or bad. There is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. We never use physical or verbal responses which would demean a child. Explanation of acceptable behavior is given and appropriate choices are offered to empower the child. We stress the importance of respecting the person and property of our peers, and can enjoy our class to the fullest when we do not hurt anyone physically, emotionally or by taking away other's property. Our discipline policy is defined as guidance and teaching with an emphasis on mutual respect. This method teaches natural and logical consequences for misbehavior instead of use of punishment. As a result, the child gains self-esteem and cooperation skills. See page 6 for more information our Conscious Discipline method.

### **What To Send With Your Child**

**Clothing:** When choosing your children's school clothes, please keep in mind that easy, comfortable and washable clothing is best. Choose simple and practical clothing that is free from complicated fastenings and easy to handle in the bathroom. Even though Torah Tots uses washable paints, art projects and materials can be messy, even for those children who wear smocks. We do offer smocks but many children do not feel comfortable wearing them. **They will get messy and dirty at school!** Outdoor play can be tough on clothing, so please choose attire that is sturdy. **Please label all your children's clothes with his/her name.** For safety purposes, children should wear sneakers daily. Please do not send your child in flip flops, crocs or slippers.

**Change of Clothes:** Please send to school with your child a full change of clothes, marked with your child's name. The clothes will be kept in your child's cubby for use as needed. If your child has an accident, please wash and return a change of clothing for the following day.

**Supply List:** A list of items that your child will need for the first day of school will be posted online at [www.halperintorah tots.com](http://www.halperintorah tots.com) and can be found under the heading of Parents. The lists are specific to each class, so please be sure to check the list for your child's grade.

**Toys From Home:** We ask that you leave your child's toys at home. Children are often very possessive of personal toys and will not share them easily or they become very upset when lost or broken at school. We welcome stuffed or soft animals, soft dolls and blanket for naptime. We have found that television or movie super hero toys based on aggressive and violent stories can lead to the same kind of behavior in the classroom and often do not promote the Jewish ideals that we teach. If you have a book or a music CD that may be of interest to all the children please feel free to bring them to class.

**Tzedakah:** Teaching our children values and learning that it is their responsibility to help those less fortunate is part of our morning routine. Please send in a bag with an assortment of coins that will be used to give Tzedakah daily. When it is empty we will ask for a refill.

### [Snack and Lunch](#)

**Special Diets & Food Allergies:** If your child has any special dietary needs, please consult with the director. She will be happy to work with you to make sure your child is served appropriate foods.

**Lunch and Snack:** Please provide your child with a nutritious kosher dairy or Pareve morning snack, lunch and drink daily. Kosher products bear the symbols: "OU", "OK", "Star K", "Kof K", or "ORB". We'll be glad to help with any kashrut questions. Please label lunch box, thermos, utensils and containers. We do not permit children to exchange or share food items. We are striving to ensure that the children at Torah Tots have nutritious food items at all times. Please include a protein (fish, eggs, cheese, yogurt etc.), fruit or vegetable and carbohydrate (bread, cereal, pasta and crackers). Please do not send in any candy or sweets, or any food that contains artificial food coloring with your child. Grapes should be cut in half when sent with your child for either lunch or snack (whole grapes are a choking hazard). Children in the full day program should bring an afternoon snack from home.

## *Birthdays in School*

**We love to celebrate birthdays!** At Torah Tots we learn about our Hebrew birthdays, as well. Our celebrations are small scale and will take place after lunch. Please inform your teacher of your birthday plans ahead of time so that she can plan accordingly. We look forward to having our parents participate in the fun!

### **Guidelines for birthday treats:**

- 1. Sweet Treat:** The school will have muffins available to purchase for your child's birthday celebration. Please contact the office two weeks prior to arrange the party. Cakes or cupcakes from a bakery and pizza are no longer permitted.
- 2. Decorations:** You may supply special cups and napkins.
- 3. Favors and Gifts:** Please do not distribute birthday favors or treat bags. Instead of these, we suggest that you present the class with a gift for the classroom in honor of your child's birthday from the class wish list.
- 4. Parties outside of the school:** Invitations to a party outside of the school may be distributed in school only if all of the children in the class are invited, and if the party is not held on Shabbat or on Jewish holidays. Also, please be aware that some children follow strict kosher dietary guidelines outside of the school. This is a great opportunity to teach your child about consideration and thoughtfulness. \*\* Due to COVID-19 all parties outside of school should be suspended.

## *Holidays, Family Vacations, Schedule Changes & Early Withdrawal*

**Credit for Illness and/or Family Vacation:** Every child is enrolled for the entire school year. Since most of the school's costs are fixed and do not vary according to daily attendance, the school cannot issue refunds or credits for illness, holidays or family vacations.

**Make-Up Days:** Make-up days are not available.

**Early Withdrawal:** In the event of early withdrawal, you are responsible for a pro-rated amount of tuition, plus 30% of the annual tuition. The enrollment fee is non-refundable.

**Schedule Changes:** If you make a change in your child's schedule after the first day of school, there will be a \$ 75 administrative fee.

**Holidays:** Check the school calendar for any school closings and events. Notices will be sent out in the event of any changes to the calendar.

## *Updates*

This handbook may be updated at any point during the school year. Parents will receive any update by email through Tadpoles.

## Torah Tots Policies and Procedures 2020/21

Torah Tots will monitor the latest health guidelines, state mandated policies, CDC and PBC Health Department recommendations to adjust our programming policies and procedures. Safety will always be our number one priority for our children, staff, and families.

These procedural guidelines will be provided for, and agreed to, by all families and staff prior to the start of school. We will continue to review safety protocols and procedures on a regular basis and make changes based on advice from the Department of Health and the Department of Children and Families.

Our class sizes will remain as they always have been since there are no restrictions on class sizes at this time. Classes will always remain separate from each other and will not use common areas together.

### Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

All children will be required to utilize carpool for arrival and pickup.

No parents will be permitted to enter the building until further notice.

Our Turning Twos and EC2 classes will be having small group phase in and orientation times to ensure a smooth separation at the start of the year. EC3 and EC4 classes will have an orientation day as well. These days will be for children only.

- ▣ Adults dropping off and picking up children must wear masks and will be required to unbuckle and remove the child from the car in the morning and buckle the child in at pick up. Ideally that person should remain consistent. Signs noting family's name will be provided and must be displayed in your passenger side window.
- ▣ If you will be late for drop off or you have to pick up your child early, you must call the office and we will have someone meet you at your car.

Staff, wearing masks, will greet students at their cars and temperatures will be taken daily using a touchless thermometer, prior to their removal from the parent's vehicle. If a child has a temperature of **100.4** or higher, they will not be able to attend school that day. Health check questionnaire will be sent via Tadpoles or WhatsApp and needs to be answered prior to drop off each morning. If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you must stay home from school. Any child or staff member who displays visible symptoms of illness will not be accepted to school that day.

1. Have you, your child or anyone in your home been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 contact (defined by the CDC as being within 6 feet of someone for 10 minutes or more) or have you or your child been in contact with someone who has a respiratory infection?
2. Do you, your child (or anyone in your home who hasn't been in quarantine) have a fever, respiratory infection, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, loss of smell or taste, chills, muscle pain, headache, a rash, diarrhea, vomiting or lethargy?
3. Have you administered medication for fever to your child (or yourself) in the past 24 hours?

Your child's teacher will escort children to and from the parent's vehicle during dropoff/pick-up times. The drop off and pick up area will be at the outer doors of our classrooms facing the parking lot.

Classes will not interact with other classes for group activities.

The administration team will restrict visits to rooms and observe by standing at the doorway unless necessary to go in, so they are not working with multiple groups of children.

Playground times will be staggered so as not to mix classes and allow for proper cleaning to occur.

Specialists like PE and music will be held outdoors or in our social hall with a set distance of over 8 feet from the students.

We cannot accommodate therapy visits at this time. Shadows that work one on one with only one student exclusive to our program will be permitted.

## **Wearing Masks at School**

Palm Beach county has put in place a mandate to wear face coverings. If this mandate is still in effect by the start of school, Torah Tots staff will wear masks at all times inside classrooms and the synagogue building. When outside and social distancing is possible from other staff members, staff will not be required to wear any face covering. Children will not be required to wear masks.

## **Illness at School and Updated Sick Policy**

Any sick children and staff are required to stay home; this includes children and staff who have a temperature of **100.4 F** or higher, or who are displaying symptoms including coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, loss of smell or taste, chills, muscle pain, headache, a rash, diarrhea, vomiting or lethargy. Children or staff with immediate family presenting with the above listed symptoms who have not quarantined are required to stay home.

If a child or staff shows signs of illness at school

If a child or staff displays symptoms of illness while at school including, but not limited to fever, coughing, sore throat, runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy, and rash, s/he will be isolated in our supervised, designated area.

Parents will be notified and required to pick up their child immediately. Emergency contacts will be called if your child is not picked up within 30 minutes. Parents should call the school (561- 241-6257) when they arrive, and the child will be brought to your car.



## Returning to School after Illness

Any child or staff showing signs of respiratory issues (including coughing, tugging in the chest, wheezing or shortness of breath) or other COVID-19 symptoms including fever, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, or lethargy may return to school based upon the following criteria:

48 hours after being symptom free, without fever reducing medication AND with lab/physician documentation of negative COVID-19 test results

OR

They may return to school if a physician establishes an alternative diagnosis and they present a doctor's note that states: "I examined in my office on and evaluated for S/He does not have COVID-19 and is able to return to school without placing others at risk.

### If a staff member or child is suspected of/or diagnosed with COVID-19

Parents/staff must contact the school within 24 hours of finding out a medical diagnosis of COVID-19 for themselves and/or children.

If any staff, child or anyone they have been in direct contact with has a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, Torah Tots Early Childhood Center must be notified immediately. We will notify the PBC Department of Health and follow their guidance on action and closures. If this should occur, we will notify families immediately.

We will make decisions on closures and quarantining on a case by case basis with guidance from medical professionals and the Florida Department of Health. Those actions may include:

If we are notified that a staff member or a child in our school is suspected of and being tested for COVID-19 with symptoms, anyone considered in close contact (all other children and staff who have been in contact with that class) must quarantine for 48 hours or until test results come back. The classroom may reopen after 48 hours or when permission is granted by regulatory agencies.

Areas used by the child or staff member will be closed off from the rest of the building and disinfected.

Families will be notified that a positive case has been in the school via email and parents from the affected class will be called. Confidentiality will be maintained while communicating with parents and staff about the situation.

If an immediate family member of either a staff member or student has a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, the staff or student exposed may not return to school for 14 days AND with lab/physician documentation of negative COVID-19 test results.

Siblings of students who are quarantining due to a positive case of COVID-19 in their class may continue to attend school as long as they remain asymptomatic. (Contacts of contacts are not considered in the quarantining process)

If a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID, the health department will be notified. The student or staff member will need to quarantine and remain home until the health department advises it is ok to return. Siblings of the student or children of the teacher will also need to quarantine. Both those diagnosed with COVID, plus the siblings and children, will need a negative COVID test to return.

## **In the Event of a Closure**

If a class or the entire school needs to be closed due to a recommendation by the Health Department or medical school advisors, the following is our procedure. If we are closed for up to 15 consecutive school days, we will move to virtual learning and take-home learning packets for that time. Parents will be obligated to pay regular tuition for this time and teachers will be employed. After the 15 consecutive day closure, parents will have their tuition payments suspended or credited to their account. At that time, virtual learning will no longer take place. Upon parent's requests and need, we would have virtual learning options available for a fee. We understand that this might happen more than once during the year. Each time, the protocol of up to 15 consecutive days will remain the same as above.

## **Cleaning and Disinfection**

Classroom materials will be sanitized before each use.

Staff and children will wash their hands upon arrival and after each activity or transition in addition to meal and bathroom time.

Chairs, tables, doors and common areas will be wiped down frequently throughout the day.

During nap time, children's naptime mats will be placed apart.

Discontinued use of soft toys, dramatic play costumes indefinitely.

Regular deep cleaning of the entire building at night and regular cleaning throughout the day.

## **FAQS:**

### **Will you be offering after school enrichments?**

We will suspend all after school enrichment at this time until we are sure that it is safe to mix different classes together.

### **Will you be having specials during the week?**

We will have limited specials which will be held outdoors weather permitting or in our social hall socially distant from the teacher leading the special.

### **Will early care and after care have drop in options?**

No, that will not be available at all. Arrangements must be made to ensure on time drop off and pick up.

### **Will you still be offering lunch for purchase?**

Until further notice, we will not be offering a hot lunch option at Torah Tots for the start of the school year. We continue to evaluate our hot lunch option with our campus caterer, CEK, and will have more information soon about the possibility of resuming in January.

### **Will you be serving morning or afternoon snacks?**

Upon recommendation of the Department of Health, we will not be preparing and serving any snacks to the children. We will reevaluate this as time passes and will resume our morning snack when safe to do so.

### **Parents will provide a nutritious morning and afternoon snack like fruit, vegetables etc. Will there be a Parent Orientation, Virtual Meet & Greet and Student Orientation?**

Yes, we are planning to have a Virtual Parent Orientation on August 24th. Details to follow.

Our Virtual Teacher Meet & Greet Visits will be individually scheduled times during August 17- 21<sup>th</sup> to meet your teacher for the new school year.

Our student orientation day will be held with children only on August 25<sup>th</sup>. There will be a phase in period for our Turning Twos and EC 2 classes for students only that week. The children will attend in small groups for short periods of time on August 26<sup>th</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup>. There will be a shorter school day scheduled for August 28<sup>th</sup>. Schedule will be sent out by email. EC3 and EC4 classes will begin regular school hours on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **What are the changes to payment plans for the 2020-21 school year?**

There are no changes to the payment plans.

### **If someone at school contracts COVID-19, how will we handle?**

If we learn about a positive case in our school community, we will evaluate via contact tracing how wide the exposure is and make cleaning and closure decisions based on those findings, in consultation with the Department of Health.

### **Are we aware of and or concerned about the new “Kawasaki-like disease” (MPIS) affecting children? We are.**

The negative outcomes per research indicate complications are due to children having the symptoms go untreated for a week to ten days. Our staff will look for these signs and symptoms on a daily basis. It is believed to be a reaction to a virus (not always COVID-19) that causes an over-reaction in children’s immune systems. It is highly detectable with signs being: rash on hands and or feet, fever, gastrointestinal issues, among others. Finally, and very reassuring, it is not communicable. Children do not give it to other children.

