

HANDBOOK



LOWER SCHOOL
2025/26

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ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

If you have a question about:	You should contact:
School Policy	Raymie Venable Chief Academic Officer rvenable@akibayavneh.org
General Studies (Grades K-6) Judaic Studies (Grades K-6)	Whitney Hurwitz Principal of General Studies, K-6 whurwitz@akibayavneh.org Chaya Kenigsberg Principal of Judaic Studies, K-6 ckenigsberg@akibayavneh.org Karen Zucker Office Coordinator for K-6 kzucker@akibayavneh.org
Student Support Services *Ma'alot Learning Platform	Bonnie Atkins Director of Ma'alot Student Support Services batkins@akibayavneh.org
Admissions	Andi Bonner Director of Admissions abonner@akibayavneh.org
Business Office	Fabiola Garcia Business Office Coordinator fgarcia@akibayavneh.org

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

- Phone: (214) 295-3400
- Fax: (214) 295-3405
- Website: AkibaYavneh.org

PTO

As soon as you enroll your child, you are automatically a member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO plays a vital role in supporting our school in various ways, including:

- Encouraging parent connections through social activities.
- Supporting staff through appreciation events and in times of need.
- Organizing community-wide celebrations for parents and students.
- Maintaining parent engagement on campus, by filling volunteer and leadership opportunities.
1 hour of service each semester is requested per family.

Each grade level has class parents to help you navigate the many activities, social events, and volunteer opportunities throughout the year, and to answer any questions about the Akiba Yavneh experience.

Please complete this [PTO Volunteer Interest Form](#).

Our PTO Leads this year will be:

President: Shlomit Friedman

Vice President: Amber Waks

Immediate Past President: Alyssa Gruen

Treasurer: Jessie Stein

Secretary: Abby Frankel

Communications: Shoshana Ellis

Event planner: Danielle Mendelsberg

Division Leads

ECP Leads:

Marissa Gedalia

Jen Weiss

Lower School K-6 Leads:

Sarah Paillet

Elana Shulkin

Upper School Leads (7th - 8th grade)

Lauren Siskind

Dena Englander

Yaelle Tucker

Upper School (9th - 12th grade)

Julie Drinkwater

They will be happy to assist you or direct you to the right person.

We want to hear from you!! For any questions about PTO, please email PTO President Shlomit Friedman at ayapto@akibayavneh.org

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

At Akiba Yavneh Academy (AYA), we believe that a strong, respectful partnership between home and school is essential for each child's success. When parents and educators work together in harmony, students are better supported in reaching their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

We are committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment for all students, staff, and families. Mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance are the foundation of our community, and we rely on every member, teachers, administrators, students, and parents to help uphold these values.

Early in the school year, events are planned to help parents get to know the staff, learn about educational goals, and become familiar with classroom routines.

If a teacher identifies an academic, social, emotional or behavioral concern, they will reach out to parents via email or phone. Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in both the fall and spring to discuss student progress in greater depth.

Children thrive when their parents show interest in their learning and speak positively about school, teachers, and studies. We encourage parents to maintain open lines of communication with the school. If a question or concern arises, the first point of contact should be the classroom teacher. If further support is needed, the appropriate administrator is available to assist.

UNIFORM POLICY/DRESS CODE

Please refer to the [Uniform Policy here](#)

SCHOOL HOURS

- Lower School starts at 8 a.m with doors opening at 7:40 a.m. and will dismiss from 3:45-4:00 p.m.

Friday & Fast Day(s) Dismissal Schedule

- Lower School 2:10-2:30 p.m. Year Round

SECURITY MEASURES

Every effort is made to maintain a safe and secure environment for our students, parents, staff and visitors to our campus. In order to do so, we have implemented the following:

- For carpool drop off and pick up, all cars entering our campus will require a sticker identifying them as cars of our families. No car will be allowed to enter the carpool gates without a sticker.
- Carpool vehicle stickers may be obtained via [AYA Connect](#) and picked up in the Welcome Center.

- Parents and visitors who enter buildings will be required to sign in at the Welcome Center and to obtain a name tag.
-

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

General Rules

The safety of your children is of utmost importance. All drivers, without exception, must follow the procedures outlined below.

1. All children must be dropped off and picked up in the carpool lane, which is a **no cell phone zone**. We are bound by the guidelines of Texas House Bill #55 regarding cell phone use in a school zone.
2. We cannot assume responsibility for students who are dropped off before school hours. A teacher or an administrator will be on duty at the carpool entrance (Coit Road Delivery) by **7:40 a.m.** each morning to greet students and allow the early-arriving students to enter Pollman Hall.

On Time Arrival

Please use the **Coit Road delivery entrance only**. This entrance is one-way traffic ONLY.

- When dropped off, children must exit cars at the curb
- Do not discharge children in the drive-through lane or leave your car unattended at the curb
- Follow the directions of the person on traffic duty

All access for student pick-up and drop-off must go through the Coit Road entrance only.

CLOSINGS AND EARLY DISMISSAL TIMES

Conference Care: Conference Care is available from 8 a.m.- 4:45 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays and 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Fridays on Parent-Teacher Conference Days and Teacher Inservice Days for children whose parents must work or attend classes. Conference Care Fees are on a per-year basis, payable in advance at enrollment. **There is no drop-in care for Conference Care, and students must be enrolled during the enrollment period to participate in this program.**

For further information about After Care and/or Conference Care, please contact Michaela Blair, aftercare coordinator, at mblair@akibayavneh.org.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES

Attendance

Consistent, on-time attendance is essential for student success. We expect all students to be present and on time each day, as regular attendance supports academic progress and classroom engagement.

Parents play a key role in helping students establish strong habits by ensuring they arrive at school on time. Tardies and absences are recorded and will be reflected on report cards.

Absences

- If a student is ill and absent from school, a parent must submit a [BlueNote](#) by 10 a.m. on the website.
- A student who is absent is not eligible to participate in any afterschool activities, including Athletics and Discovery, for that day.
- After nine absences a student will be placed on attendance notice, and a conference may be held with the parents. Parents will be notified once a student has five absences on their attendance record.
- A student who is absent for a sustained amount of time (as per the Principals discretion) for a specific subject, may receive an incomplete grade.

HEALTH

A child who is in good health has a distinct advantage when starting school. Steady progress is dependent on physical well-being. Good health enhances the ability to learn more easily, to adjust to classroom activities, and to get along well with others.

- All students should have a complete check-up before school starts. Special consideration such as near or farsightedness, speech or hearing difficulties, medication, etc. should be called to our attention in writing.

- Students with chronic health issues, such as asthma or juvenile diabetes, etc., must design a written health plan in tandem with the school health office before the start of the school year.
 - All medications must be accompanied by our medication authorization form.
 - If your child has any allergies, you must provide a letter from their physician listing their allergy (ies) and any needed accommodations needed as well as have the Allergy Action Plan (AAP), filled out.
- The information in the school office with vaccination dates and emergency numbers must be updated annually **before** school begins. All immunizations must be current for a student to be admitted to school. The only exception will be the rare, documented medical exemption. It is the school's position that established Halacha dictates that children should be vaccinated for their own protection, as well as for the protection of the community at large.

To prevent an ill child from infecting classmates and teachers, the following will apply in addition to general school policy

- A child who has a temperature of 100.4 or higher must stay home. Children are to stay home for 24 hours after they are free of fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- A child with a green or yellow discharge from the nose, an infectious rash on the skin, and/or an eye discharge will be assessed on an individual basis to determine whether or not they may attend school. At times children will not be allowed to return to school without a doctor's written authorization. In addition, children who are recovering from an infectious rash (hand/foot/mouth, chicken pox, etc.) will need to be cleared by the school nurse before returning to class.
- If a child is diagnosed as having strep throat, he/she must be kept out of school for 24 hours from the time an antibiotic is given, and fever subsides.
- When a child has croup (a cold of the vocal cords which produces a barking cough), the child must be kept at home until cleared by their physician.
- If a child is vomiting or has diarrhea, the child must be kept home until they are free of symptoms for 24 hours.
- Children will also be excluded from school if they have a condition that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, results in a need for care greater than staff members can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, or poses a risk of spread of harmful disease to others.
- Any child known or suspected of having a contagious ailment must be kept at home and will be readmitted to class only with written authorization from their pediatrician and at the discretion of the school nurse.

Please inform the school office if your child has a contagious disease or will not be reporting to school due to illness.

Children who become ill in school will be kept in the nurse's station ONLY until a parent/guardian arrives.

First Aid and Health Care

In case of emergency, parents will be notified immediately. It is the responsibility of each parent to leave his or her current business and personal phone numbers with the school office to enable us to contact you at once if necessary. It is our policy to call 911 and/or take the child to the nearest hospital when indicated. School personnel may treat only superficial wounds.

The State of Texas and the school insurance policy prohibits the faculty or office staff from administering any oral medication to a student, including but not limited to acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin), unless it is supplied by the parent in the original container with a signed and dated note instructing when and the dosage to administer. If your child must take prescription medication during school hours, the medication must be brought to the school office in its original container with a signed note from the physician stating at what time(s) and in what dosage the medication is to be given. Written instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed the recommended medication for that child must be kept on file in the office; alternatively, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by telephone to the program staff.

Students may not store or administer their own medications, prescription or over the counter.

All medications, over the counter or prescription, must be labeled with your child's first and last name. Prescription medications must also include the date that either the prescription was filled or when the recommendation was obtained from your child's licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and the instructions on how to administer and store it.

Medications should be taken to the nurse's clinic, where you will need to complete permission forms. The nurse will store all medications in the clinic and administer them. Some medications may need to be kept in the classroom, such as an Epi-pen for a child with severe allergies or an inhaler for a child with asthma. This will be decided as per the child's Individualized Health Care Plan.

In addition, parents of any children in our care who have special management procedures ordered by a physician should meet with the school nurse to discuss the procedures necessary to meet their needs. The school nurse is trained to handle a variety of special pediatric health issues, including diabetes, asthma, and allergies. In addition, all teachers are trained in the use of an epi-pen and will also be trained to handle certain special management procedures for students in their class when ordered by a physician. This will help us ensure that while students with specific medical needs are present, there is always someone on campus trained to meet their needs. In some circumstances, the school administration will need to determine whether or not we can meet a child's medical needs while at school.

Head Lice

Lice infestation may occur in any age category and is more frequent among elementary school children. Though not a disease, students identified as having head lice are excluded from school until they are "re-screened" and determined to be "nit-free."

Head Lice Screenings at School

In alignment with best practices recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), and the Texas Department of State Health Services, our school does not conduct routine head lice checks. Research shows that lice are a nuisance but not a health hazard, and that classroom-wide screenings are not effective in preventing the spread. Instead, we encourage families to regularly check their children at home and to notify the school nurse if lice are found. This approach helps reduce unnecessary absences, protects student privacy, and follows evidence-based health guidelines.

AYA Allergy Policy

“Yafa Torah Im Derech Eretz”—Study and learning are enhanced by sensitivity and respect toward others. Within this guideline, families without allergy sensitivities in their families are expected to be supportive of this policy.

To best meet the needs of children with life-threatening allergies, the school and families must work together to help ensure a safe and inclusive educational environment. The school will be responsible for and help ensure that all faculty and staff are trained to understand how to recognize the signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction, as well as how to respond when a child or adult is having a reaction. At times, the school may need to limit the use of certain food items in the classroom when a life-threatening allergy for any child is present. All parents and teachers are expected to comply with any decisions made to help ensure the safety of a child with a life-threatening allergy.

Parents of children with seasonal, food, or other life-threatening allergies, must notify the school nurse, the appropriate director or principal, and the child’s teachers in writing of their children’s allergies before the child begins any on-campus activities. Children with allergies must have a written Allergy Action Plan (AAP), signed by a physician, in place before the start of the school year, or as soon as a new allergy is diagnosed. The AAP must include the details on the child’s allergies, previous signs of a reaction occurring, (knowing that this will not necessarily be present during a future reaction) and action to be taken and must be shared with the school nurse, appropriate director or principal, and all teachers responsible.

Parents will need to provide epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, Adrenaclick, or their generic counterparts) for their children’s classrooms when necessary, and it is the responsibility of the parent to make sure epinephrine auto-injectors are current and not expired. Parents may also need to keep a “safebox” in their child’s classroom. The safebox should contain safe non-perishable snacks for their children to use when necessary. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that the school nurse, appropriate director or principal, and teachers are aware of any changes to the child’s allergy profile, and the AAP must be updated and reviewed at least annually. All children with allergies will have their photo, allergies, and AAP posted in all necessary classrooms.

Parents of children with allergies are encouraged to work with their children’s teachers to help plan for safe activities, which involve food. Parents will be notified of any activity that involves food at least one week before the activity takes place; when possible, the child’s allergen will not be used.

Positive Discipline Policy

“*Yafa Torah Im Derech Eretz*”—Study and learning are enhanced by sensitivity and respect toward others.

We encourage students to develop self-discipline based upon the guidelines of Jewish ethics and a positive self-image. Emphasis is upon “being a Mensch”—by displaying a refined, respectable character.

We use a Conscious Discipline approach, which focuses on teaching students how to manage their emotions, make thoughtful choices, and build strong relationships. Our goal is to help students develop internal self-control and responsibility rather than relying on external rewards or punishments.

Discipline is approached as a learning opportunity. Teachers and staff model calm, respectful behavior and guide students through challenges with clear expectations, consistent boundaries, and meaningful reflection. The emphasis is on safety, respect, and helping each child grow in character and maturity.

We recognize that discipline is a shared responsibility between teachers, students, parents, and the school community. By working together, we can create a nurturing atmosphere that encourages students to make responsible choices and develop essential life skills.

In the classroom, teachers will handle most behavior issues using a proactive and restorative approach. Our goal is to address and resolve conflicts promptly, allowing students to learn from their mistakes and grow as individuals. Teachers will utilize the following strategies to manage behavior in the classroom:

1. **Clear Expectations:** Teachers will establish clear and age-appropriate expectations for behavior, which will be communicated to students at the beginning of the school year and reinforced regularly. These expectations will be posted in the classroom as a visual reminder for students.
2. **Positive Reinforcement:** Teachers will actively recognize and reinforce positive behavior through verbal praise, encouragement, and rewards such as stickers, certificates, or small incentives. This approach aims to motivate students to make good choices and develop a sense of pride in their achievements.
3. **Restorative Practices:** When conflicts or misbehavior occur, teachers will employ restorative practices to help students understand the impact of their actions and make amends. This may involve discussions, reflection activities, or apologies, allowing students to take responsibility for their behavior and learn from their mistakes.
4. **Behavior Contracts:** In some cases, teachers may implement behavior contracts with students who require additional support. These contracts will outline specific goals, expectations, and consequences, providing a structured framework for behavior improvement.
5. **Cool Down & Reflection Spaces:** If a student's behavior becomes disruptive or unsafe, teachers may utilize a designated cool down or reflection space. This space will allow the student to calm down, reflect on their actions, and rejoin the class when ready to participate positively.

Negative student behavior can result in:

- **Parent Communication:** A staff member will email parents to communicate repetitive, minor classroom infractions or breaking of a school rule. We believe this communication is critical so that the school and family can be aligned with expectations for students.
- **Lunch and/or Recess Detention:** We believe in using restorative and proactive approaches to support positive behavior. While our goal is always to guide students through reflection and learning, lunch or recess detention may be used as a last resort when other interventions have not been effective or a major infraction occurs. This consequence provides students with a structured opportunity to reflect on their choices and make a plan for moving forward. When used, it is implemented thoughtfully and with care, ensuring the student's dignity is preserved and the focus remains on growth and accountability.
- **Suspension (in or out of school depending on circumstance):** A suspension may be given for a major offense or an accumulation of incident reports. Other consequences may include recess detention, lunch detention, and/or the loss of the privilege of participating in school activities such as sports. Consequences will be given at the discretion of the administration.

While teachers handle most behavior issues within the classroom, there may be instances where an office referral is necessary immediately. Office referrals will be reserved for severe or repeated misconduct that significantly disrupts the learning environment or poses a safety risk. Examples of behaviors that may warrant an office referral include physical aggression, bullying, theft, or persistent defiance of classroom rules.

When an office referral is made, the school administration will work collaboratively with the student, parents, and teachers to address the issue. The focus will be on understanding the underlying causes of the behavior, providing appropriate consequences, and implementing targeted interventions to support the student's growth and development.

Discipline is approached as a learning opportunity. Teachers and staff model calm, respectful behavior and guide students through challenges with clear expectations, consistent boundaries, and meaningful reflection. The emphasis is on safety, respect, and helping each child grow in character and maturity.

Upholding School Values Beyond Campus

As representatives of the school, students are expected to uphold the values of respect, kindness, and responsibility both on and off campus. In cases where a student's behavior outside of school—including online activity—directly impacts the well-being of others in the school community or undermines the values we uphold, the school reserves the right to address the behavior and take appropriate disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to, incidents such as cyberbullying, harassment, or conduct that reflects a serious disregard for the character standards of our community.

By implementing this positive discipline policy, we aim to create a school culture that promotes empathy, respect, and responsibility. Together, we can empower our students to become confident, compassionate, and successful individuals both inside and outside the classroom.

EXPULSION

We are committed to supporting every student's academic, social, and emotional growth. When significant behavioral or attitude challenges arise, the school will work closely with the student and family to develop and implement a plan for improvement, including appropriate support and clear expectations.

If, after reasonable time and intervention, there is insufficient progress and it is determined that the school is no longer the appropriate environment for the student, the administration may make the difficult decision to end the student's enrollment. This decision is made thoughtfully, with the student's and school community's best interests in mind.

In cases involving serious misconduct that poses a risk to the safety, well-being, or integrity of the school community, immediate separation from the school may be required. This includes—but is not limited to—behavior that involves violence, threats, illegal substances, or actions that significantly disrupt the learning environment.

All actions taken, as well as the reasons for separation, will be documented as part of the student's school record.

BULLYING

The definition of bullying below is taken from stopbullying.gov and adl.org/combatbullying.

Bullying is a widespread and serious problem that can happen anywhere. It is not a phase children have to endure; it is not "just messing around"; and it is not a developmental stage. Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm.

Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves:

- **Imbalance of Power:** People who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves.
- **Intent to Cause Harm:** Actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm, damage a student's property, or place a student in fear of harm to the student's person or property.
- **Repetition:** Incidents of bullying happen to the same person over and over by the same person or group.

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Verbal or written:** name-calling, teasing
- **Social Aggression:** spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships, creating an intimidating or threatening environment for one or more students
- **Physical:** hitting, punching, shoving
- **Cyberbullying:** using electronic communication to harass, threaten, intimidate or otherwise mistreat others. New to this generation, cyberbullying has become an easy and convenient means for some to bully and harass others, sometimes anonymously. Many students do not recognize that this can be the most far-reaching, long-lasting, insidious and most damaging form of bullying. While most cyberbullying does not take place in school, there is still a

significant impact on the school following such an incident. Thus, there will be consequences at school because of it.

What Bullying is Not

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

Students may demonstrate inappropriate behaviors to others from time to time, but these behaviors may not necessarily be considered bullying. The two critical aspects of the inappropriate behavior that have to be present to be considered bullying involve the imbalance of power and the repetition of the behavior.

No Excuses

When the behavior is determined to be a form of bullying, students may try to downplay their bullying behavior by characterizing the harm inflicted as “it was just a joke” or “I was just kidding” or “we are friends; he knows I was just kidding.” Bullying is harmful and destructive and unacceptable in any form.

We are committed to ensuring the physical and emotional safety of each child. One child being bullied is one too many. Our process for dealing with bullying issues is as follows:

Reporting Bullying

Any parent who is concerned that his/her child is being bullied should contact his/her child’s teacher, one of the counselors, or an administrator. The earlier the school finds out about the situation, the better chance that early intervention will be able to resolve the situation. A child who feels bullied should speak to one of the teachers, to one of the school counselors, or to an administrator. Part of dealing with a bullying issue is teaching our students the skills to take the initiative to report and/or discuss these kinds of issues, rather than be reduced to a victim or a bystander. Whenever a potential bullying incident is reported, the administration will be made aware of it.

No Retaliation

Retaliation towards anyone who reports bullying will not be tolerated.

Interventions for Bullying

The teachers, counselors and administrators, in consultation with the parents of the victim and perpetrator(s), will collaborate to ensure the accuracy of the information regarding the alleged bullying incident. Once it has been established that a bullying incident has taken place, the school will take the following actions:

The administrators and counselors will collaborate to determine appropriate guidance for all parties (both victims **and** perpetrators) in an effort to resolve the issue.

Appropriate guidance *may* include:

- Counseling
- Individual behavior plans

- Removal from extra-curricular activities, including sports
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Long-term removal from the classroom

Subsequent occurrences of the bullying behavior by the same perpetrator(s) will be dealt with on an individual basis and can include more severe consequences, including suspension up to expulsion.

In the case of cyberbullying, consequences may also include

- Loss of computer and/or network access at school.

With bullying, some situations are more complex than others and some situations are not clear-cut. The Head of School, school principals, and school counselor will make decisions of what is in the best interest of the child and of the school at large.

Follow-Up For The Victim And The School Community:

- The school may recommend that the targeted student receive psychotherapy and/or psychiatric or therapeutic intervention.
- It may be necessary to discuss incidents of bullying with the classmates of the students involved and inform parents.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are available as a partnership initiative with Jewish Family Service (JFS) to aid students in developing the attitudes, knowledge, and insight necessary to make judicious decisions. These services include academic, personal guidance, and group counseling.

Our counseling program is based on the principles of care, respect, responsibility, and confidentiality. Within this framework, the counseling staff works together with the teachers, administration and parents in an effort to enable each student to derive full advantage from the school's educational program. Our counselors focus on the whole child and give attention to children who are having challenges at home and in school. All involvement with our professional staff is done with the highest degree of confidentiality.

Permission For Release Of Information

Akiba Yavneh Academy of Dallas (AYA) is proud of our partnership with Jewish Family Service of Dallas. As part of our partnership, our students receive on-site social work support and services through employees of JFS. By signing this handbook, you give permission for our school counseling staff to meet with your student one on one or in a small group setting. Additionally, you give the staff of AYA and the on-site employees from JFS permission to share information regarding your students with each other as deemed necessary to best meet the needs of your child and the other students of AYA.

The following services are provided by our counselors:

- Assessing the behavior of children who have been referred by observing classrooms, recess and lunch, and then making recommendations.

- Assisting teachers, parents and administrators with academic, behavioral, social/emotional or family issues.
- Providing crisis intervention and limited individual counseling to students, 1–2 sessions. If further support is needed, the school will refer the student to outside services.
- Providing group intervention when appropriate on topics such as peer relationships, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.
- Offering consultation to parents.
- Referring students to outside resources and intervention providers, such as community agencies, private mental health professionals, and or Rabbis for additional assistance.

Faculty or parents may refer students, or students may request to see the counselor themselves. All personal information about the students is kept in strictest confidence. Information regarding a student will only be released with written consent from the parent or caregiver.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Purpose: The integrity of academic work is fundamental to the mission of AYA. Cheating undermines this mission and the educational process. This policy outlines the expectations, consequences, and procedures related to academic integrity for students in grades K-6.

Definition of Cheating: Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:

- Copying from another student’s work or allowing one’s work to be copied.
- Using unauthorized aids or materials during assessments or assignments.
- Communicating or attempting to communicate with others during assessments or assignments in a manner that provides an unfair advantage.
- Plagiarizing, which includes using another person’s ideas, words, or work without proper citation or acknowledgment.

Expectations: Students are expected to:

- Complete all work with honesty and integrity.
- Use only authorized aids and resources during assessments or assignments.
- Acknowledge sources appropriately when using information or ideas from others.

Consequences: Consequences for cheating may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal warning or counseling.
- Loss of credit for the assignment or assessment.
- Retaking the assessment under supervision.
- Parent conference.
- Academic probation or suspension.

Procedures:

1. **Reporting:** Teachers who suspect cheating will document the incident and report it to the appropriate administrator.
2. **Investigation:** The administrator will investigate the incident, which may include discussions with the student(s) involved, witnesses, and review of evidence.
3. **Decision:** Based on the investigation, the administrator will determine if cheating occurred and decide on appropriate consequences.

Please see our [AYA Artificial Intelligence “Chatbot” Policy](#), crafted by AYA high school students.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Promotion

It is our desire that our students experience success, accept responsibility for their own work, and make the transition from year to year as easily as possible. Therefore, in order to be promoted from one grade to the next in the absence of mitigating circumstances, a student must have a passing grade in **all** of his/her academic subjects (depending on grade level) on the cumulative year-end grade. If a student does not meet these requirements:

- The school will meet with the parents to discuss steps that need to be taken for the student to pass the course.
- The student may require tutoring, remedial assistance, or counseling.
- It will be the responsibility of the parents to provide tutoring and assistance.
- Failure of a course will require that the work be made up during the summer.
- Tutoring and summer school will be at the parents' expense.
- Upon submission of the required work, students and parents will be notified of promotion.
- In the event that the student does not satisfactorily complete the required work, the student may have to be retained.

There are times in which the school may determine that it is in the best interest of the student developmentally or academically to remain in their current grade level for the following school year. This would only occur following ongoing conversations about student progress and challenges during the current school year.

Athletic Eligibility

- Part of participating in school athletics is committing to being responsible as a student. This includes completing all homework assignments on time and preparing for assessments.
- If a student is ineligible to perform, the teacher will notify an administrator.

Disciplinary Eligibility

If a student is not at school for at least half the day (on a game day), they will not be able to participate in that day's game.

If a student is not at the practice before the game, that student will not be eligible to start the game.

If a student receives a lunch/recess detention, they will have to miss playing time during the game following the detention. For example, Volleyball they will sit out the first set, Soccer they will sit out the first 15 minutes, Flag Football and Basketball they will sit out the first quarter.

If a student receives an in or out of school suspension, they will not be able to play in the following game.

Report Cards

Grade reports will be issued at the end of each semester. Progress reports will go out at the end of Q1 & Q3. This report will reflect the student's academic performance, effort, and behavior. A teacher will also provide additional comments twice a year.

Conferences

Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice a year in the fall and spring. At this time, the parent and teachers have the opportunity to review the student's progress and explore any areas of concern. The school strongly encourages both parents to attend conferences, as these meetings are very important to the student's success at the school.

Homework Policy

What is the purpose of homework?

- To apply what was learned in school to a real-life situation or other new circumstances outside of school.
- To reinforce skills, concepts and ideas learned in class.
- To teach students levels of responsibility.
- To provide students the opportunity to acquire background knowledge about an upcoming lesson, activate each student's metacognition about a topic, to stimulate curiosity within the student about the upcoming lesson/topic, and to allow students more class time for classroom collaboration.

Homework Assignments

Starting in 2nd grade, students will have weekly homework in General Studies, Judaic Studies, and Hebrew. Our teaching team will work together to ensure that total homework does not exceed the following:

Second Gr:	3 hours a week
Third Gr.	3 hours a week
Fourth Gr.	5 hours a week
Fifth Gr.	5 hours a week
Sixth Gr.	5-6 hours a week

In kinder and first grade, we encourage students to read or be read to by a family member at least 20 minutes a night. Teachers may assign additional homework if needed.

Students are not expected to do writing assignments on Shabbat or Holidays.

Expectations for students

- Responsibility: Students are expected to complete homework on time and to the best of their ability.
- Communication: If a student is struggling with an assignment, they should communicate with the teacher.
- Quality Over Quantity: Focus should be on understanding and mastery rather than merely completing assignments.

- Student Planners: It is the responsibility of the students to record all homework assignments in the planners distributed by our teachers. Teachers help instill that responsibility in each student.

Parental Involvement

- Support: Parents are encouraged to provide a quiet space for homework and to engage in discussions about assignments.
- Monitoring: Parents should monitor homework completion and help children develop time management skills.
- Communication: Parents should inform teachers of any extenuating circumstances affecting homework completion.

Review and Adjustments

- This policy will be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary to meet the needs of students, families, and the educational goals of the school.

Textbooks

Textbooks are issued at the beginning of the school year. Additional books may be issued during the year.

- Students are to write their name in the appropriate space or label.
 - Students are responsible for the proper care of their texts.
 - In the event that a textbook is lost or damaged, the teacher needs to be notified. A new book will be issued as soon as possible following receipt of payment from the family for a new textbook.
-

Student Support Services & Accommodations

AYA is committed to teaching and supporting all students on our campus. Sometimes, students need more support than what is offered as standard policy in the classroom and on campus. Whether a student needs accommodations based on physical challenges and short-term illness, or learning differences, Akiba Yavneh's administration works with the parents, students, and teachers to provide additional support on the campus. All students are encouraged to advocate for themselves, to work with their teachers regarding any individual needs or special circumstances, and all teachers are expected to use best teaching practices when working with a student facing any challenge.

Education plans and Specialized Intervention

For more details on policies and procedures for students with learning differences and other health impairments, please see the Ma'alot Department separate handbook.

Supplies

Akiba Yavneh Academy provides all school supplies to students at the start of the school year. All technology is provided by the school.

Lockers

Each 5th & 6th grade student is assigned a locker at the beginning of the year.

- Students are responsible for keeping their lockers neat, content-appropriate and well organized.
 - Students may “decorate” the insides of their lockers (not the outside) but limit their photos to those of family and close friends.
 - Students may only use magnets to affix pictures or notes on the inside of their lockers. Tape is not permitted.
 - Lockers may be searched and/or inspected at any time, and a student may be asked to clean out a locker.
 - Students cannot bring a lock to secure their locker.
 - At no time should a student be going into another student’s locker.
-

GENERAL RULES

Personal Possessions

Personal items from home, such as sharp or dangerous objects (including penknives, Swiss Army knives, etc.), cameras, and sports trading cards are not allowed in school. If brought, they will be confiscated and released only to a parent. Additionally, students who bring knives or other toy weapons to school may be suspended. We also ask that students leave all toys at home. We recommend leaving any valuable objects at home.

Telephone Use

- If a parent needs to get a message to a student, the school will cooperate fully and transmit urgent messages to and from the child without disrupting the class.
- Parents who need to get an urgent message to a teacher may phone the school’s main line, and we will contact the teacher as soon as possible. Parents will not be allowed to phone directly into a teacher’s classroom or a teacher’s cell phone or leave a text message. For non-urgent communication, parents are requested to email the teacher. The teachers will answer their emails within 24 hours.
- Students are not allowed to use their personal cell phones at all during the school day to either phone or text parents (see below). Students are asked to refrain from using the school telephones for non-emergencies. They will be allowed by their teachers to use the classroom phone in cases of emergency. Emergencies are considered to be situations that involve safety, such as the cancellation of an after-school event that impacts student pick-up, etc.

Cell Phones and Smart Watch Policy

To support an environment focused on learning, responsibility, and respectful interaction, children in grades K–6 are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day. Personal devices can be a significant distraction and may interfere with classroom focus, social development, and school culture. Additionally, unsupervised use of technology during the day presents challenges related to safety and digital citizenship.

If a child needs a cell phone for after-school communication, the device must remain off and stored in their backpack from arrival through dismissal, including during carpool. Smart watches are not permitted, as they often serve the same function as phones and can also disrupt learning.

If a student is seen using their cell phone or smart watch during the school day (including carpool)

- A first- offense will be met with a lunch/recess detention and parent communication.
- Upon a second offense, an additional \$20 fine will be incurred and a parent must pick up the device from the office.
- After a third offense the parents will be asked to ensure that the student does not bring a cell phone to school.

Electronic Devices

AYA provides students with all technology needed in the classroom. Students may not bring the following devices to school unless explicitly directed to do so by a teacher.

- iPods, iPads, CD players, MP3s and similar devices
- Electronic Gaming devices of any kind
- Personal laptops

If any of these devices are brought to school, they will be confiscated, requiring parents to pick them up from an administrator.

Lost and Found

All clothing and personal belongings should be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. Apparel left in classrooms, lunchroom, gym or washrooms will be retained in the 'lost and found' for a limited time before being donated to charity. Items lost, can be found in the 'lost and found,' located in the hallway between the Welcome Desk and Pollman Hall.

Class Trips

During the course of the year, we plan and arrange a number of field trips. Upon enrollment, parents give blanket permission for their child(ren) to participate on such trips.

Lunch

Lunchtime Rules for Students:

- wash their hands for *hamotzei* and/or recite the appropriate *brachot*
- use appropriate table manners and polite behavior
- remain seated except when throwing out the trash or leaving the lunchroom
- keep their own table and floor area clean

- do not bring glass containers to school
- show respect for and get along with peers and supervising staff
- avoid drinking from the same container as another student, using the same utensils, or other unhealthy practices
- do not share food

Forgotten Lunches

If a child forgets his/her lunch, A Taste of the World can provide an “emergency” lunch for your child for which you may pay [online](#).

KASHRUT POLICY

Lunches and Snacks

- All snacks and lunches brought to school must be kosher. No meat or poultry lunches may be sent with your child. The only meat that is allowed on campus is served by the caterer or served at special school-related events.
- No prepackaged food without a kosher symbol. Please refer to [Dallas Kosher](#) for a list of recommended symbols.
- Please do not send along a lunch that will need to be heated in a microwave.
- When going on a school trip and given express permission by a faculty member, children can only purchase items that meet the school’s kashrut standards.

Please refer to [Dallas Kosher](#) for a list of recommended symbols:

Yiddishe Kup Cafe

Lower School students are not allowed to purchase items from the campus cafe during the school day. When our students spend time in line at the campus cafe, they are missing time in the cafeteria and shortening their time at recess. If parents accompany their students to the campus cafe either before or after school hours, students are welcome to buy items. No food or drink may be brought into the Lower School after 8 a.m.

Recess

Students participate in outdoor recess except on rainy days or days that are extremely hot or cold. Proper clothing for outdoor activity, such as boots, mittens, scarves and hats, will protect your child’s health. For safety reasons, students are not allowed to bring hardballs or bats to school.

Tzedakah

Tzedakah is collected at *tefillah* (prayer) daily. Students are encouraged to develop the habit of fulfilling this *mitzvah* as often as possible.

PARTIES / BNEI MITZVAH

We pride ourselves on cultivating an all-inclusive-family setting. We are sensitive to the needs of the children from all backgrounds. Hosting a party where ALL children are invited and can attend and partake in all the culinary delights makes all families feel welcome in our school. Please only serve kosher food and follow the tips below to ensure inclusiveness for all. Please schedule parties on Sundays or weekdays but not on Shabbat and Jewish holidays.

We ask that when hosting a party, families include ALL children within the class and/or grade (or gender.) Thank you for helping ensure all families feel welcome.

All foods given out to a class must be packaged and unopened. No home-baked goods allowed. If you are giving out drinks, orange juice and apple juice that are 100% pure or from concentrate without additives, are acceptable in the school without a kosher symbol. All other juices must have a kosher symbol that is on the Dallas Kosher (DK) list of acceptable symbols. (See below.)

By enrolling my child at a modern Orthodox school, I agree to abide by the following party policies:

- * All food served at parties or bnei mitzvah will have a kosher symbol that meets the Dallas Kosher standards.
- * Any cooked or baked goods will come from a kosher certified establishment.
- * All parties will occur on Sundays or weekdays but not on Shabbat or Jewish holidays. Any Saturday night parties will begin at least 20 minutes after Shabbat ends.
- * If students are invited to Bnei Mitzvah services, there will be reasonable accommodations made to allow students who wish to stay within walking distance of the Synagogue.

Where to Purchase Food

Please visit [Dallas Kosher](#) for a helpful list.

Please verify with the school or with the parents in your child's grade/class if there are any food allergies or dietary restrictions to be aware of.

In School Celebrations

Bar/Bat Mitzvah In School Celebration

Bar and Bat Mitzvahs are celebrated at school. Below is an overview of how we define the event, along with a checklist to help families plan for the celebration at school.

Ideally, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah should be celebrated as close as possible to the actual Hebrew birthday, but never before.

BOYS: Monday and Thursday are ideal days to choose since the student is called up to the Torah for an Aliyah—the honor of reciting the blessing on the Torah. The bar mitzvah boy may choose to read from the Torah portion. Family members are invited and encouraged to attend. If parents would like, they will be able to purchase food from the school to celebrate the event at the cost of \$95. Parents are requested not to bring in their own food

GIRLS: Girls are invited to select any Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday. The bat mitzvah girl is invited to prepare a *D'var Torah* to deliver in front of the Middle School students. Family members are invited and encouraged to attend. If parents would like, they will be able to purchase food from the school to celebrate the event at the cost of \$95. Parents are requested not to bring in their own food.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Checklist

- Confirm your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date with Karen Zucker at kzucker@akibayavneh.org for 5th/6th grade and Piper Luskey at pluskey@akibayaveh.org for 7th/8th grade.
- Have your child prepare a *D'var Torah*/Torah reading or *berachot* over the Torah. Our faculty can help with this step.
- Confirm food order with Karen Zucker (5th/6th) or Piper Luskey (7th/8th). Inform Karen/Piper of any noted food allergy/dietary restrictions.
- On Bar/Bat Mitzvah day, arrive at 7:45 a.m.
- Bring camera/video equipment.
- There is a fee of \$95 payable via Ultracamp found on our [website](#)

We look forward to celebrating your simcha together with you. Feel free to contact [Rabbi Kenigsberg](#) and [Karen Zucker](#) (5th & 6th) with any questions you may have.

- Birthdays in Lower School will only be celebrated in classrooms once a month.
- School celebrations are for students only.
- **All snacks provided will take into account any dietary restrictions and/or allergies in the class.** Any food brought to campus to share must bear a sticker or label certifying kosher/pareve.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Inclement Weather Policy

If the school administration determines that a school day should be canceled or have a delayed start, a message will be sent using the school's Alert system by 6:30 a.m. Please use your discretion regarding safety if driving in potentially hazardous conditions.

Note: If weather impacts a school day already in progress, the same method will be used to notify parents.

INTERNET AND NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

Our network was established for the educational and professional use of our students, faculty and staff. When accessing the network from any device, personal or school owned, students should be respectful and responsible digital citizens. Online actions by our students should be consistent with the rules and values presented in this Handbook. Students will be held accountable for their use of the network—this access is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked at any time if abused.

Students may be given access to accounts created by the school. Use of these accounts is subject to the guidelines set forth in this policy, as well.

To allow for network health, all activities on the network are monitored and logged. This information can be retrieved, as necessary, if a violation of the AUP is suspected. Devices may only be used in class at the discretion of the teacher. Violations of the AUP may result in loss of computer privileges or other appropriate disciplinary actions (such as suspension or expulsion). Depending on the nature of the offense, law enforcement may be contacted. Access to our network is contingent upon students and their parents/guardians reading and signing the AUP.

Network Terms & Conditions

Acceptable Use & Personal Responsibility: Internet use must be consistent with the educational objectives of our school. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and be consistent with the educational goals of Akiba Yavneh.

- Transmission of material in violation of any law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material restricted by school policy.
- Information stored or communication transmitted over our network should not be considered private. Network supervision and maintenance may require review and inspection of directories. In addition, we reserve the right to access stored records in cases where there is reasonable cause to expect wrongdoing or misuse of the system.
- Users must not use another individual's account. Attempts to log into the system as any other user will result in cancellation of user privileges.
- Use of Internet games, multi user domains, and IRCs (Internet Relay Chat Rooms) is strictly prohibited, unless instructed otherwise by a faculty member.
- Internet use for commercial purposes, financial gain, personal business, product advertisement, or political lobbying is not permitted.
- Offensive messages that originate outside of school but disrupt the school's educational process or deface the reputation of Akiba Yavneh, its teachers and/or students, are subject to disciplinary action.

Internet and Network Acceptable Use Policy Acceptance

By signing this handbook, you abide by all internet and network policies of AYA.