



AKIBA YAVNEH ACADEMY

בית ספר עקיבא יבנה

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026–2027 Academic Year

12324 Merit Drive • Dallas, TX 75251 • 214-295-3400
www.AkibaYavneh.org

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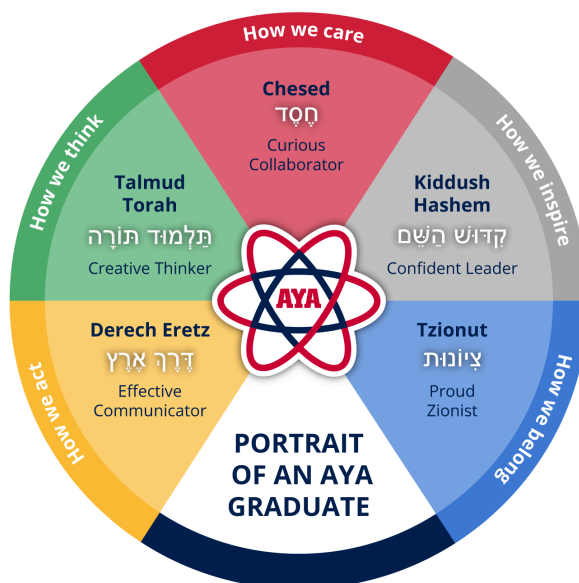
This handbook serves as a school policy and procedure resource to all Akiba Yavneh Academy families across all divisions. Policies that are school-wide apply to all students; policies that differ by division are clearly marked. We ask all members of our community—students, parents, guardians, faculty, and staff—to review this handbook carefully.

Section 1: Welcome & Mission

Akiba Yavneh Academy (AYA) is a Modern Orthodox, co-ed, early childhood through 12th grade college-preparatory school dedicated to providing an academically excellent and values-based General and Judaic education to Jewish students of all backgrounds to inspire a lifelong love of Torah, higher learning, and the State of Israel.

Our Foundational Commitments

- Authentic Jewish identity rooted in Torah values and practice
- Academic rigor across General Studies, Judaic Studies and Hebrew Language
- Respect for every individual — student, faculty, and family
- Partnership between school and home



Portrait of a Graduate

Our work is guided by our Portrait of a Graduate, which describes the qualities we strive to develop in every AYA student as a Committed Jew.

Chesed. Curious Collaborator. How We Care. Curious collaborators ask thoughtful questions and lead with empathy to work effectively with others.

Derech Eretz. Effective Communicator. How We Act. Effective communicators actively listen and engage respectfully to clearly convey their ideas.

Talmud Torah. Creative Thinker. How We Think. Creative thinkers take risks to solve problems with new and innovative solutions.

Kiddush Hashem. Confident Leader. How We Inspire. Confident leaders act with middot tovo and make decisions grounded in integrity.

Tzionut. Zionism. How We Belong. Committed Jews are guided by Torah and Mitzvot, cultivate a meaningful relationship with God, and are devoted to Jewish tradition, Am Yisrael, and the State of Israel.

Section 2: Our Community, Our Values

By enrolling a student—or joining the staff—of a Modern Orthodox Zionist school, all members of our community agree to the following:

1. **Respect for Halachic Standards:** While families may vary in personal observance, all agree to uphold and respect the halakhic norms that define the school's identity and not publicly contradict or undermine them in school settings or events that include the AYA community, such as birthday celebrations, Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations, or other community gatherings.
2. **Respect for Both Limudei Kodesh and General Studies:** We value the integration of Torah and worldly knowledge, and we expect all students, parents, staff and faculty to treat both pillars of our dual curriculum with equal respect, commitment, and seriousness.
3. **Commitment to Israel:** The school affirms a deep connection to the State of Israel as central to Modern Orthodox and Zionist identity, including through curriculum, celebration of Israeli holidays, and respectful discourse about Israel.
4. **Language & Conduct:** We believe that every human is 'btzelem Elokim,' created in the image of G-d. All members of the community are expected to uphold standards of derech erez (respectful behavior)—speaking and acting with kindness, honesty, and civility toward others, both in person and virtually.
5. **Inclusivity & Kavod HaBriyot (Human Dignity):** Every student and family is to be treated with dignity and respect. Discrimination, bullying, or exclusion based on background, level of observance, gender, or identity are not tolerated.
6. **Academic Integrity & Responsibility:** Students, parents, and staff are expected to demonstrate honesty, responsibility, and diligence in their learning, in keeping with Torah values.
7. **Kashrut:** The Schultz Rosenberg Campus is strictly kosher. All food served on campus and at school-related functions off campus must be strictly kosher, according to the framework set forth by the Dallas Va'ad ha Kashrut.
8. **Partnership Between School and Home:** Families commit to working in partnership with the school, communicating respectfully, supporting school policies, and modeling positive engagement with Jewish life.
9. **Shabbat & Chagim:** School events and communications will respect the sanctity of Shabbat and Jewish holidays. No official school activities, assignments, or communications will take place on these days, and families are asked to avoid scheduling class-related events that conflict with them.
10. **Modest Dress & Presentation:** Students, staff, and visitors are expected to dress modestly in accordance with Modern Orthodox values—this standard applies on campus and at school functions.
11. **Kippot & Tefillin:** Boys and male staff wear kippot at all times on campus and at school-related events. We encourage all male visitors to campus to wear a kippah. Male students are expected to wear *Tefillin* once they reach bar mitzvah age during *Tefillah*.

Section 3: Administrative Contacts

School Contact Information

Akiba Yavneh Academy

12324 Merit Drive | Dallas, TX 75251

214-295-3500

info@AkibaYavneh.org

www.AkibaYavneh.org

Administration

Mrs. Raymie Venable Co-Head of School for Academics and Operations | rvenable@akibayavneh.org

Ms. M.C. Ellis Athletic Coordinator | mcellis@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Natalie Solomon Director of Marketing and Communications | nsolomon@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Laura Feinberg Director of Development | lfeinberg@akibayavneh.org

Admissions Office | admissions@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Erica Morenoff Business Office | emorenoff@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Bonnie Atkins Director of Ma'alot (Student Support Services) | batkins@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Graciela Johnson School Counselor | gjohnson@akibayavneh.org

Nurse Doba Rudberg School Nurse | nurse@akibayavneh.org

Early Childhood

Mrs. Chana Ben Abraham Early Childhood Director | cbenabraham@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Naomi Shakhman Early Childhood Program Coordinator | nshakhman@akibayavneh.org

Lower School

Mrs. Whitney Hurwitz Lower School General Studies Principal | whurwitz@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Chaya Kenigsberg Lower School Judaic Studies Principal | ckenigsberg@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Karen Zucker Lower School Office Administrator | kzucker@akibayavneh.org | 214-295-3421

Upper School

Mrs. Sara Block Upper School Judaic Studies Principal | sblock@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Christina Hawkes Strategic Initiatives Coordinator | chawkes@akibayavneh.org

Ms. Donna Hutcheson Upper School Director of Student Experience and Impact | dhutcheson@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Megan Robertson Upper School General Studies Principal | mrobertson@akibayavneh.org

Mrs. Piper Luskey Upper School Office Administrator | pluskey@akibayavneh.org

Campus Rabbis

Rabbi Pdaya Halperin Campus Spiritual Director | phalperin@akibayavneh.org

Rabbi Yoel Gitler Lower School | ygitler@akibayavneh.org

Rabbi Aviran Zohar Lower School | azohar@akibayavneh.org

Rabbi Eli Kenigsberg Lower School | ekenigsberg@akibayavneh.org

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Rabbi Spencer Brasch Upper School | sbrasch@akibayavneh.org

Section 4: School Hours

The instructional day begins at 8:00am for all students, ECP-12th grades.

Early Childhood

Morning Carpool: 7:40 AM – 8:00 AM

Classrooms Open: 7:50 AM

Afternoon Carpool for children without Lower School Siblings: 3:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Afternoon Carpool for children with Lower School Siblings: 3:45 PM – 4:00 PM

12:30 PM Carpool: Available for select programs during enrollment

Nevatim (5 Days): 8:00 AM – 3:15 PM or 5:30 PM

Aftercare: Until 5:30pm, available during enrollment

Friday dismissal for all Early Childhood programs is 2:00 PM year-round.

Those with Lower School siblings pick up at 2:15pm.

Lower School

Morning Carpool: 7:40 AM – 8:00 AM

Classes: 8:00 AM – 3:45 PM

Afternoon Carpool: 3:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Friday dismissal is 2:15 PM.

Fast Day dismissal is noon.

Upper School

Morning Carpool: 7:40 AM – 8:00 AM

Classes: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Afternoon Carpool: 4:00 PM – 4:10 PM

Friday dismissal is 2:25 PM.

Fast Day dismissal is noon.

Section 5: Campus Safety & Security

Campus Safety Policies

Secure Campus: The Schultz-Rosenberg Campus is a secured, closed campus with controlled gate access and monitored building entry points.

Closed Campus Policy: Students may not leave campus from the time of arrival until the end of the school day.

- To release an ECP student during school hours, a parent or guardian must communicate directly with the student's teacher.
- To release a Lower School student during school hours, a parent or guardian must submit a [Blue Note](#) and follow established checkout procedures.
- To release an Upper School student during school hours, a parent or guardian must speak to a member of the Upper School administrative staff on the phone. Text/Whatsapp messages are not accepted.

Vehicle Access: All parent/guardian vehicles entering campus for carpool or parking must display a current school-issued vehicle sticker.

Visitor Check-In: All visitors and guests must enter through the Welcome Center, sign in with security, and wear a visible visitor badge for the duration of their visit.

Parent/Guardian Identification: Parents and guardians must wear their school-issued identification badge whenever they are on campus. Parents/guardians not wearing their id badge will be asked to check-in with the Welcome Center for a temporary Raptor security sticker.

Student Supervision: Students are under school supervision only during posted school hours or while participating in approved after-school, extracurricular, or extended-day programs.

Student Guests: Students may not bring personal guests to attend school during the school day.

Emergency Preparedness: Regular fire, lockdown, and severe weather drills are conducted throughout the school year. Students are expected to follow all staff instructions promptly and calmly during drills and emergencies.

Safety Searches

To maintain a safe and secure learning environment, school officials may inspect student property, including lockers, backpacks, vehicles, electronic devices, and other belongings when there is reasonable cause to believe a violation of school policy, law, or safety standards has occurred. Students may also voluntarily consent to a search.

Student vehicles parked on campus are subject to the same search standards. If a vehicle is locked, the student may be asked to unlock it. Parents or guardians may be contacted if access is refused.

Student lockers and other school-owned property remain the property of the school and may be inspected by school officials at any time. Students should not expect privacy in lockers or other school-owned storage areas.

Parents or guardians will be notified if a search results in the discovery of prohibited items, illegal substances, evidence of criminal activity, or a significant violation of school policy.

To support a safe, drug-free campus, the Upper School periodically partners with a professional canine detection service. Trained detection dogs may be used to conduct unannounced screenings of classrooms, common areas, lockers, parking lots, and other school property. These screenings are conducted several times each year and are intended as a proactive safety measure.

Carpool Procedures

Morning Carpool (7:40-8:00 a.m.)

All morning drop-off is through the North Service Entrance on Coit. There is no morning carpool entrance on Merit. **Coit Gate closes promptly at 8:00 a.m.**

Zone A (Left Lane). Drop-off location: Pollman Hall

- Lower School (K-6)
- 7th-8th Grade

Zone B (Right Lane). Drop-off location: Upper School Lounge

- Early Childhood (ECP)
- Upper School (9th-12th)

Sibling Families

- Drop off K-8 students first (Zone A), then continue to Zone B for ECP and 9-12.

Upper School Student Drivers

- Enter through the Coit service entrance and park in Lot C.

For late drop-offs

- After 8:00am- Enter through the Merit Gate.
 - Students must check in at the Welcome Center (Lower School) after 8:30am or Piper (Upper School) after 8:00a, before going to class.

ECP Midday Carpool (12:30 p.m.)

- Enter and exit through the Main Entrance on Merit.
-

Afternoon Carpool (Monday-Thursday)

Coit Gate opens at 3:15 p.m. All afternoon pickup is through the North Service Entrance on Coit. There is no afternoon pickup from the Merit entrance. Vehicles may not park in the carpool lane while waiting for students.

Time	Group
3:15-3:30	ECP Only (no Lower School sibling)
3:45-4:00	Lower School (K-6)
4:00-4:10	Upper School (7-12)

Pick-Up Locations

Zone A (Left Lane). Pollman Hall.

- Lower School only

Zone B (Right Lane). Upper School Lounge.

- ECP only
- Families with siblings
- Upper School

Aftercare Pick-Up

- ECP Aftercare: Merit Gate — park and walk in.
 - Lower School Aftercare: Merit Gate — Parking Lot B.
-

Friday Afternoon Carpool

Same lanes and pickup locations; only the times change.

Time	Group
2:00 p.m.	ECP Only
2:15 p.m.	Lower School & ECP/Lower School Siblings
2:25 p.m.	Upper School

Parking

- Parking in the Lower School lot is NOT permitted for Upper School vehicles.
- All vehicles entering campus—whether parked or for pick-up/drop-off—must display a current car sticker affixed to the front windshield.
- Students who drive must park immediately upon arrival, lock their vehicles, and enter the building. Students may NOT sit in cars during school hours, including during study halls or lunch.
- Speed limit on campus: 5 MPH.
- Drivers are expected to refrain from using cell phones while operating a vehicle anywhere on campus. Your full attention helps keep our community safe.
- Parking privileges may be revoked for reckless driving, unsafe or noisy vehicles, continued tardiness, or failure to display a parking permit.

Drills & Emergency Procedures

The safety and well-being of our students and staff is Akiba Yavneh Academy's highest priority. Throughout the school year, students participate in age-appropriate emergency preparedness drills, including fire, lockdown, and severe weather drills. Students are expected to follow all staff instructions promptly, calmly, and respectfully during drills and actual emergencies. For security reasons, specific lockdown procedures are not published in the handbook.

Parent Communication

Parents and guardians will be notified of all school-wide safety drills through the school's emergency alert system. In the event of an actual emergency, the school will communicate updates as information becomes available. Emergency notifications are primarily sent via text message and may be supplemented by email or other communication channels as appropriate.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted regularly throughout the school year in accordance with state requirements and school safety protocols. During a fire drill, students and staff will evacuate to designated locations and remain with their class until the all-clear is given.

Lockdown Drills

Lockdown drills are conducted periodically to help students and staff prepare for emergency situations. During a lockdown drill or emergency, students are expected to follow the directions of faculty, staff, and emergency personnel. Specific lockdown procedures are communicated directly to students and staff and are not published in this handbook.

Severe Weather Drills

Severe weather drills are conducted throughout the school year. During these drills, students and staff will move to designated shelter locations and remain there until directed to return to normal activities.

Section 6: Health & Wellness

Health Services

Akiba Yavneh Academy maintains health services to support the well-being of students throughout the school day. If a student becomes ill or is injured at school, parents or guardians will be contacted as soon as possible.

School personnel may provide basic first aid and comfort measures for minor injuries and illnesses. If a student requires medical attention beyond basic first aid, parents or guardians will be contacted. In the event of a medical emergency, the school will take appropriate action to secure emergency medical care. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school may contact emergency responders, seek treatment from the student's physician, or transport the student to the nearest appropriate medical facility.

Parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining current emergency contact information in AYA Connect.

Student Health Requirements

- Students must have all required updated health records, updated immunizations, and emergency contact information on file before the start of the school year.
- Parents and guardians are responsible for keeping health and emergency information current throughout the year.
- Students participating in athletics must meet all athletic health and physical examination requirements.
- Parents are required to notify the school nurse of any significant medical condition, contagious illness, allergy, or health concern that may affect a student's participation in school or school related activities.

Allergy Management

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

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 is 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 Divisional leader, 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 principle, 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.

Families who do not have allergies in their families are expected to be supportive of this policy as a reflection of *"Yafa Torah Im Derech Eretz."*

Student Medications

For the safety and well-being of all students, the school must be informed of any medication that may need to be administered or available during the school day.

- All prescription and non-prescription medications must be accompanied by the appropriate authorization forms.
- Medications must be provided to the health office in their original, non-expired and labeled containers.
- Students may not possess or distribute medication on campus unless specifically authorized by the health office.
- Students with chronic health conditions, including but not limited to asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, or severe allergies, may be required to have an individualized health or safety plan on file.
- Students with documented medical needs may be authorized to self-carry and self-administer certain medications, subject to parent/guardian permission, healthcare provider authorization, and school approval.

AYA does not stock over-the-counter medications. Parents who wish for medication to be available during the school day should coordinate with the health office and complete the required authorization forms.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Students should remain home if they:

- Have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- Have vomited or experienced diarrhea within the previous 24 hours.
- Have a contagious illness that may place other students or staff at risk.
- Are unable to participate comfortably in normal school activities.

- Have symptoms that require more care than can reasonably be provided during the school day.

Students who have a fever must remain home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Students diagnosed with any illness requiring antibiotics may return to school after receiving appropriate antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and being fever-free, or as directed by their healthcare provider.

The school reserves the right to require medical clearance before a student returns to school following certain illnesses or health conditions.

Communicable Illnesses

Parents and guardians should notify the school promptly if a student is diagnosed with a communicable disease. The school may implement additional health precautions or return-to-school requirements based on public health guidance, physician recommendations, and the specific circumstances involved.

Head Lice

Akiba Yavneh Academy follows the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). Students identified with nits and/or head lice will be sent home and may return to school after appropriate treatment has begun.

The school does not conduct routine school-wide lice screenings. Parents will be notified when lice are identified, and families are encouraged to follow recommended treatment and monitoring practices to minimize further spread.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco & Weapons

Akiba Yavneh Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, drug-free, tobacco-free, and vape-free learning environment.

Students may not possess, use, distribute, sell, purchase, administer, be under the influence of, or transmit any of the following while on school property, at school-sponsored events, or while participating in school activities:

- Alcohol or alcoholic beverages
- Illegal drugs, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs
- Marijuana, THC products, or similar substances
- Nicotine products, tobacco products, or electronic cigarettes
- Vaping devices, vaping paraphernalia, or vaping solutions containing nicotine or other substances
- Prescription medications not prescribed to the student
- Drug paraphernalia, inhalants, intoxicants, or any substance used to alter mood, behavior, or judgment

The school reserves the right to investigate suspected violations of this policy and may require drug or alcohol testing when deemed appropriate by the administration.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement, as determined by the school.

Weapons

Students may not possess, use, store, display, or threaten to use any weapon on school property, at school-sponsored events, or while participating in school activities.

For purposes of this policy, a weapon includes any firearm, ammunition, explosive device, knife, club, BB gun, pellet gun, chemical dispensing device, fireworks, or any object that is used or intended to threaten, intimidate, or cause bodily harm.

Violations of the weapons policy are considered serious disciplinary offenses and may result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion and referral to law enforcement.

Section 7: Kashrut and Food

Akiba Yavneh Academy is committed to maintaining a campus environment that reflects the values of Torah and mitzvot while welcoming families from a wide range of Jewish backgrounds and observance levels. Our kashrut standards are designed to ensure that all members of the school community can participate comfortably in meals, celebrations, programs, and school events.

These standards apply on campus and at all school-sponsored activities, regardless of location.

Food Brought to School

Students may bring dairy or pareve foods to school. Commercially packaged foods should bear a [recognized kosher certification \(hechsher\)](#) as outlined by the Dallas Va'ad ha Kashrut. Foods purchased from restaurants, caterers, or other food providers must meet the school's kashrut standards, in accordance with the Dallas Va'ad ha Kashrut.

For more information, please visit their website.

<https://www.dallaskosher.org/acceptable-kosher-agencies>

To maintain a consistent campus-wide standard, students may not bring meat products from home. Meat served at school events or through school-sponsored programs will be prepared under approved kosher supervision.

Food deliveries to students through third-party delivery services are not permitted.

Classroom Celebrations and Shared Food

Food shared with students as part of classroom celebrations, special programs, parties, fundraisers, or other school-sponsored activities must comply with school kashrut standards and any division-specific guidelines.

Food prepared in a private home kitchen may be brought by a student for personal consumption but may not be distributed, sold, or shared with other students.

Jewish Practice During Meals

Students are encouraged to approach meals with respect for Jewish tradition. This includes reciting appropriate brachot (blessings), practicing netilat yadayim when required, and helping maintain a clean and respectful dining environment.

Fast Days

On designated communal fast days, school schedules may be adjusted in recognition of the day.

Field Trips and School Events

All food provided or consumed during school-sponsored activities, including field trips and overnight programs, must comply with Akiba Yavneh Academy's kashrut standards.

Community Responsibility

Maintaining the kashrut standards of Akiba Yavneh Academy is a shared responsibility. Students, families, and staff are expected to act honestly and respectfully regarding food brought to school and to follow all school kashrut guidelines. Failure to comply with these standards may result in disciplinary action.

School Hot Lunch

A Taste of the World Catering is the official hot lunch provider. They are certified kosher under the Dallas Va'ad ha Kashrut. Lunch menus are available [HERE](#) and orders are made directly with a Taste of the World [HERE](#).

Campus Cafe

The campus cafe, The Coop, is operated by The Hungry Rooster. It is certified kosher under the Dallas Va'ad ha Kashrut. Faculty, staff, and community members are welcome to purchase items from The Coop at any time during operating hours. Please see below for student usage policies.

Upper School

- The Coop is only available to **Upper School students** during the school day. ECP and Lower School students may not make purchases during school hours.
- Upper School students may purchase items before the instructional day begins at 8:00am and during their lunch period. Students may not visit The Coop during class time unless specifically authorized by a faculty member.

ECP & Lower School

Morning Purchases

- Families may arrive before the instructional day begins at 8:00am if they wish to purchase a snack or lunch item for their child.
- Items purchased before school must be saved for **lunch time**.

During the School Day

- ECP and Lower School students may not visit The Coop during the school day.

After School

- Beginning at **4:00 p.m.**, ECP and Lower School students may visit The Coop with permission from the adult supervising them (parent, aftercare staff member, or coach).

Section 8: Dress Code

At Akiba Yavneh Academy, our dress code reflects the values that define us as a Modern Orthodox Jewish community. Rooted in the principles of *kavod habriyot* (human dignity), *derech erez* (respectful conduct), and personal responsibility, our expectations for dress help create an environment where every student can learn, grow, and thrive.

As a school dedicated to both Torah and worldly excellence, we believe that how we present ourselves matters. Appropriate dress demonstrates respect for oneself, for others, and for the learning environment. It fosters a sense of belonging, strengthens community identity, and helps ensure that our focus remains on meaningful learning, character development, and spiritual growth. By adhering to these expectations, students contribute to a culture of mutual respect and reinforce the values that unite us as a school community.

Because students serve as ambassadors of Akiba Yavneh Academy wherever they go, dress code expectations apply not only during the regular school day, but also during field trips, athletic competitions, extracurricular activities, school-sponsored travel, performances, and all other events where students are representing the school.

When dress code concerns arise, our goal is educational rather than punitive. We view compliance as an opportunity for students to develop accountability, sound judgment, and respect for communal norms.

Early Childhood Program

Students should wear comfortable clothing appropriate for active learning, art activities, recess, and outdoor play. Individual classes will have further policies regarding specific clothing needs.

Lower School (Grades K–6)

Lower School students are required to wear the approved AYA school uniform. The uniform consists of approved school shirts, bottoms, outerwear, and footwear as outlined in the current Lower School Uniform Guide, available on our website. Students are expected to wear uniforms neatly and appropriately each day.

Additional requirements include:

- Boys are expected to wear a kippah throughout the school day.
- Athletic shoes must be worn during PE days.
- Students should maintain a neat appearance that supports a positive learning environment.
- Clothing, accessories, hairstyles, or grooming choices that substantially distract from learning may not be permitted.

Specific uniform purchasing information and approved uniform options are provided separately through the Lower School Uniform Guide on the website.

Upper School (Grades 7–12)

As a Modern Orthodox Jewish school, Akiba Yavneh Academy expects students to dress in a manner that reflects self-respect, respect for others, and respect for the values of the school. Students are expected to dress modestly and appropriately at all times.

General Expectations

- Clothing must be clean, neat, and in good repair.
- Clothing may not display inappropriate language, images, or messages.
- Flip-flops and house shoes are not permitted.
- Sunglasses may not be worn during class.
- Tattoos, facial piercings, and male earrings are not permitted.
- No T-shirts except on designated spirit days.
- No sweatpants except on designated days.

Girls

- Shirts must provide appropriate coverage and may not be sleeveless, backless, or excessively low-cut.
- Skirts must be to the knee and remain modest in style and fit.
- Leggings must be worn with skirts if they are not floor-length.

Boys

- Boys are expected to wear a kippah throughout the school day.
- As a Modern Orthodox school, AYA encourages the wearing of tzitzit.
- Shirts should be collared and worn appropriately.
- Long pants are required during the school day.

Physical Education and Special Dress Days

Akiba Yavneh Academy may establish alternative dress requirements for physical education classes, spirit days, Rosh Chodesh programs, special events, athletics, performances, or other approved activities, always in keeping with the dress code.

Dress Code Enforcement

Required Uniform Replacement

If a student arrives in clothing violating dress code, a replacement may be issued by the school office (girls: floor length skirt; boys: collared shirt). The cost of the replacement garment is **\$18**, and a payment link will be sent to the parent/guardian.

Outstanding Uniform Charges

Students with an outstanding uniform replacement balance may be assigned lunch detention until payment is received. Outstanding balances will be reviewed weekly.

Repeated Violations

Continued or repeated dress code violations may result in additional disciplinary consequences,

including parent conferences, detention, loss of extracurricular privileges, conduct probation, or other disciplinary action as determined by the administration.

Off-Campus Expectations

Students representing Akiba Yavneh Academy at field trips, athletic events, performances, competitions, leadership programs, or other school-sponsored activities are expected to comply with applicable dress code standards, even when off campus.

Athletics

Students participating in athletics are expected to follow all team-specific uniform, equipment, and dress expectations outlined in the Athletic Code of Conduct and communicated by coaches.

Section 9: Attendance & Absences

Regular attendance is essential to student success. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend school regularly and arrive on time each day.

Attendance and Make-Up Work

Students are responsible for completing work missed during an absence. Teachers will provide reasonable opportunities to make up missed assignments, assessments, and classwork. Students are expected to communicate with their teachers regarding missed work and meet established deadlines.

For planned absences, families should notify the school in advance and students should coordinate with teachers regarding assignments and academic responsibilities.

Early Childhood Program

ECP absences, late arrivals, and early departures should be reported directly to the students' teacher.

Lower School: Reporting an Absence, Late Arrival, and/or Early Departure

Parents or guardians must notify the school whenever a student will be absent, arrive late, or leave early through a Blue Note submitted via the AYA website or parent portal. Lower School students arriving after 8:30am must report to the Welcome Center before proceeding to class.

Attendance records are maintained by the Registrar. For multi-day absences, supporting documentation will be required.

Upper School Attendance

Attendance Expectations

Regular attendance is essential to academic success. To earn academic credit, students must meet the attendance requirements established by the Upper School administration. Excessive absences may affect grades, course credit, or academic standing, regardless of the reason for the absence.

Attendance records are maintained by the Registrar. For multi-day absences, supporting documentation will be required.

Reporting an Absence, Late Arrival or Early Dismissal

If an Upper School student must leave campus during the school day, a parent or guardian must speak directly with a member of the Upper School office by phone. Text messages, WhatsApp messages, emails, or messages relayed through students will not be accepted for early dismissal. Students arriving after the start of the school day must sign in through the Upper School office before reporting to class.

Attendance Policy

- Students are permitted six (6) absences per class, per semester.
 - Akiba Yavneh Academy does not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences for purposes of attendance limits. Doctor's notes are generally not required, except in cases of extended illness or other circumstances determined by the administration.
 - Beginning with the seventh absence in any class during a semester, one (1) percentage point will be deducted from the student's semester average for each additional absence in that class.
 - Because Upper School operates on a block schedule, a student who arrives more than 20 minutes late to a class will be recorded as absent for that class period.
 - Absences resulting from school-sponsored activities do not count toward the attendance limit.
 - Attendance reports are reviewed weekly. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student reaches the third, fourth, and fifth absence in any class during a semester.
 - The administration may make exceptions for extended illness, family emergencies, or other extraordinary circumstances.
-

Class Attendance, Tardies & Class Skipping

Students are expected to attend every scheduled class, arrive on time, remain for the entire class period, and actively participate in instruction.

Students who skip class, leave class without permission, or accumulate excessive tardies may be subject to disciplinary consequences, including detention, loss of privileges, grade penalties, suspension, or other disciplinary action as determined by the administration.

Students who become ill during the school day must report to the Health Office and follow established procedures before leaving class or campus.

Tardy Policy

Punctuality is an important life skill and contributes to a productive learning environment. Students are expected to manage their time responsibly and arrive to every class before the bell.

Students will receive a warning for the first four tardies per semester. After the fourth tardy, the following consequences will be implemented.

- For the 5th through 8th tardy, the student and parent/guardian will be notified that the student has been assigned a mandatory lunch detention for each tardy.
- Failure to attend the assigned lunch detention will result in an all-day In-School Suspension (ISS) on the next school day.
- Beginning with the 9th tardy, each additional tardy will result in an all-day In-School Suspension (ISS).

Repeated patterns of tardiness may result in additional disciplinary consequences at the discretion of the administration.

Section 10: Student Conduct & Discipline

Guiding Principles

Akiba Yavneh Academy seeks to cultivate a community rooted in Torah values, personal responsibility, respect, and *derech erez*. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects respect for themselves, others, and the mission of the school.

Students are expected to demonstrate honesty, integrity, kindness, and good judgment in their interactions with peers, faculty, staff, parents, and visitors.

The school reserves the right to address conduct that occurs on campus, at school-sponsored activities, online, or off campus when such conduct negatively impacts the school community or interferes with the educational environment.

Students are expected to demonstrate courtesy and respect in the classroom. Classroom concerns should first be addressed with the teacher before being elevated through administrative channels.

Harassment and Discrimination

Akiba Yavneh Academy is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students and employees.

Harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or misconduct directed toward any individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, sex, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Students may not engage in unwelcome verbal, physical, visual, electronic, or sexual conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another member of the school community.

Bullying

The definition of bullying below is taken from [stopbullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov) and [adl.org/combatbullying](https://www.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 Co-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.

Respect for Property

Students are expected to respect school property and the property of others. Damage to school facilities, equipment, textbooks, technology, or other property may result in disciplinary action and financial responsibility for repair or replacement costs.

Students are responsible for the proper care and return of all school-issued materials.

Discipline Procedures

Akiba Yavneh Academy believes discipline should be educational, restorative, and developmentally appropriate whenever possible. Consequences may include:

- Verbal correction or redirection
- Parent communication
- Loss of privileges
- Detention
- Behavioral contracts
- Restorative or reflective assignments
- Suspension
- Expulsion

The nature and severity of the consequence will depend on the student's age, disciplinary history, the seriousness of the conduct, and other relevant circumstances.

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.

Division-Specific Approaches

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

The Early Childhood Program utilizes developmentally appropriate discipline practices that emphasize guidance, redirection, relationship-building, and positive reinforcement.

Parents may be contacted when behavioral concerns arise, and outside support services may be recommended when appropriate.

Behavior that creates a safety concern, including repeated biting or aggressive conduct, may require additional intervention.

LOWER SCHOOL

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.

Please see the full Lower School Discipline Guide [HERE](#).

UPPER SCHOOL

Upper School students are expected to demonstrate maturity, responsibility, and respect for school expectations.

Serious misconduct, including but not limited to bullying, fighting, threats, theft, vandalism, harassment, academic dishonesty, possession of prohibited substances, possession of weapons, or repeated defiance of school policies, may result in suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary action.

Please review the Upper School Discipline and Student Support Framework within.



AYA

AKIBA YAVNEH ACADEMY

בית ספר עקיבא יבנה

UPPER SCHOOL

DISCIPLINE & STUDENT SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

TEACH • RESTORE • SUPPORT • GROW

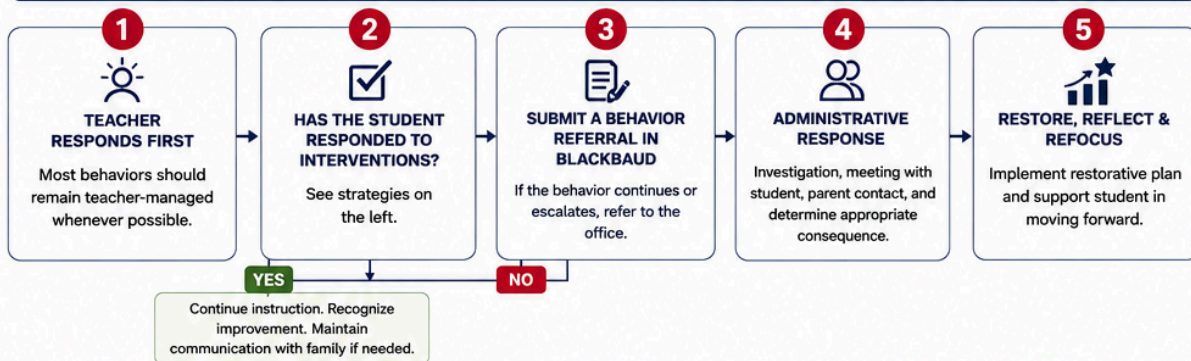


Our Philosophy

At Akiba Yavneh Academy, every behavior concern is a teaching moment — a chance to help students grow in responsibility, integrity, respect, and sound judgment, always with respect for the dignity of the individual.

Our Goal:

- ✓ Teach expected behaviors
- ✓ Restore relationships
- ✓ Maintain a safe learning environment
- ✓ Partner with families
- ✓ Help students grow into responsible young adults



TEACHER STRATEGIES	TEACHER-MANAGED BEHAVIORS	OFFICE-MANAGED BEHAVIORS	POSSIBLE ADMIN RESPONSES
- Non-verbal cue - Private redirection - Reteach expectations - Student conference - Seat change - Offer choices - Reflection sheet - Loss of classroom privilege - Parent communication - Restorative conversation - Documentation in Blackbaud	- Off-task behavior - Talking during instruction - Minor disruption - Work refusal - Cell phone violation - Dress code violation - Unprepared for class - Minor disrespect - Technology misuse - Horseplay - Tardiness - Leaving class briefly without permission	SAFETY - Fighting / Physical aggression - Threats - Bullying / Harassment - Sexual misconduct - Weapons - Drugs / Alcohol / Vaping - Fire alarm misuse SERIOUS MISCONDUCT - Theft - Vandalism - Academic dishonesty (major) - Leaving campus - Repeated defiance - Profanity directed at others - Inappropriate language (not directed at another) - Hate speech / Discriminatory language - Major technology violations - Any behavior significantly disrupting the learning environment	LEVEL 1 - Restorative conference - Reflection assignment - Lunch detention - Parent contact LEVEL 2 - After-school detention - Community service - Restitution - Behavior contract - Loss of privileges LEVEL 3 - In-school suspension - Parent conference - Student support plan - Counselor involvement LEVEL 4 - Out-of-school suspension - Probation - Recommendation for further disciplinary review



RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Whenever appropriate, students should:



Reflect on their choices



Repair harm caused



Apologize sincerely



Restore damaged relationships

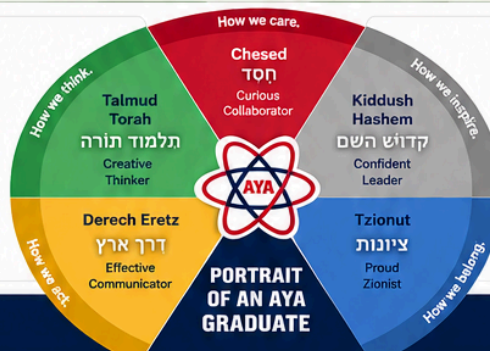


Create a plan for future success

OUR PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Our discipline framework is not only about addressing behavior — it is about teaching and reinforcing the character, skills, and values we want our students to carry with them for life.

These are the qualities we cultivate every day and the reason behind everything we do.



AYA

AKIBA YAVNEH ACADEMY
בית ספר עקיבא יבנה

Be the Light

Section 11: Cell Phones & Personal Technology

Akiba Yavneh Academy is committed to creating a learning environment that promotes focus, engagement, healthy relationships, and responsible technology use. Personal electronic devices should never interfere with instruction, student well-being, or participation in school life.

Students are expected to follow all school rules regarding cell phones, smartwatches, headphones, tablets, and other personal electronic devices.

Parents and guardians who need to contact a student during the school day should do so through the main line 214-295-3400. Students who need to contact a parent or guardian may do so through their respective divisional offices.

Failure to comply with school technology expectations may result in confiscation of the device, loss of privileges, parent communication, detention, or other disciplinary consequences.

Early Childhood Program

Students may not bring personal electronic devices to school.

Lower School

Cell phones and personal electronic devices are not permitted for student use during the school day.

For our K-4 students, any device brought to school must remain turned off and stored in the student's backpack. Devices that are used, visible, or disruptive during the school day may be confiscated and returned according to school procedures.

For our 5th and 6th grade students, To foster a learning environment where students are fully engaged and present, students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day. Students who bring a cell phone to school will turn it in upon arrival each morning, where it will be securely stored throughout the school day and returned to them at afternoon carpool for after-school communication. Smart watches are not permitted, as they offer many of the same features as cell phones and may interfere with learning and student engagement.

Upper School

To support student learning, attention, and social engagement, Upper School students may not use personal cell phones during the school day.

Students are required to follow all cell phone collection, storage, and retrieval procedures established by the Upper School administration. Emergency communication with students must occur through the Upper School office.

Students with documented medical accommodations may be granted limited exceptions in accordance with school policy.

School-Issued Devices

Akiba Yavneh Academy provides school-issued devices for all students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. In the Lower School, devices are assigned for classroom use. In the Upper School, each student is assigned an individual device for use during the school day.

Upper School students are responsible for picking up their assigned device from its designated cart at the beginning of each school day. Before leaving campus, students must return the device to its assigned slot and ensure it is plugged in for charging.

All school-issued devices remain the property of Akiba Yavneh Academy and are intended for educational use only. Devices may not leave campus unless specifically authorized by the administration. Personal laptops, tablets, and other computing devices from home may not be used during the instructional day unless approved by the administration as an accommodation or for another educational purpose.

All Akiba Yavneh Academy students are only permitted to use school-issued devices during the school day.

Smart Watches

Smart watches and similar wearable communication devices are not permitted unless specifically authorized as part of an approved accommodation plan.

Technology Resources & Acceptable Use

Access to Akiba Yavneh Academy's technology resources—including school-issued devices, networks, software, applications, email, internet access, and other digital services—is a privilege, not a right. These resources are provided to support teaching, learning, communication, collaboration, and the efficient operation of the school. Students are expected to use all technology resources responsibly, ethically, safely, and in a manner consistent with the mission, values, and expectations of Akiba Yavneh Academy.

The following are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. This list is illustrative and is not intended to be exhaustive.

- Accessing, creating, possessing, transmitting, or distributing inappropriate, obscene, sexually explicit, or otherwise offensive content.
- Accessing, participating in, or promoting gambling, sports betting, wagering, online casinos, or other games of chance through school technology resources.
- Violating copyright laws, software licensing agreements, or intellectual property rights.
- Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools or other technologies in a manner that violates teacher expectations, academic integrity standards, or school policies.
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to school networks, systems, accounts, records, or another person's files or information.
- Circumventing security measures, internet filters, monitoring systems, or other technology safeguards implemented by the school.
- Invading the privacy of students, employees, parents, or other members of the school community.
- Recording, photographing, or distributing images, audio, or video of students, employees, or school activities without authorization or in violation of school policy.
- Using school technology resources for commercial, political, illegal, or otherwise disruptive purposes.
- Harassing, intimidating, threatening, bullying, impersonating, or otherwise harming others through electronic communication or digital platforms.
- Engaging in any activity that interferes with the security, integrity, or normal operation of the school's technology resources.

Akiba Yavneh Academy reserves the right to monitor, inspect, review, restrict, or revoke access to any school technology resource at any time. Students should have no expectation of privacy when using school-owned devices, networks, or accounts.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of technology privileges, financial responsibility for damaged or lost equipment where appropriate, and any other consequences deemed appropriate under the Student Code of Conduct.

Section 12: Celebrations & Simchas

Birthdays, Classroom Celebrations, Simchas and Gatherings

- All ECP and Lower School birthday celebrations must include ALL students in the class — no child may be excluded. We do permit single gender celebrations.
- All food brought in for campus celebrations, gatherings and events must be commercially packaged with a valid kosher symbol. No home-baked goods for distribution.
- Birthdays and Gatherings may not take place on Shabbat or Jewish holidays.
- Lower School follows a once-monthly group birthday celebration model in classrooms: all students with birthdays in a given month are recognized together. Parents may not bring birthday treats, snacks, or other food items to school for student birthdays.
- ECP classes have various policies and traditions surrounding in-school birthday celebrations. Your classroom Morah will inform you on the class specific policies.
- All Birthday Parties, Classroom Celebrations, Simchas (including but not limited to Bar/Bat Mitzvahs) and Gatherings in which entire classes of AYA students are invited must be kosher according to the Dallas Va'ad ha Kashrut.

Bar & Bat Mitzvah Celebrations at School

Lower School — 5th & 6th Grade

Contact: Mrs. Karen Zucker | kzucker@akibayavneh.org

Upper School — 7th & 8th Grade

Contact: Mrs. Piper Luskey | pluskey@akibayavneh.org

Checklist

- Confirm date with Administrator
- Child prepares a D'var Torah, Torah reading, or berachot over the Torah
- Confirm food order with Administrator; note all food allergies and dietary restrictions
- Arrive at 7:45 AM on the day of the celebration
- Bring camera/video equipment
- Fee: \$95, payable via link

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah should be celebrated as close as possible to the student's actual Hebrew birthday — never before.

Boys: Monday and Thursday are ideal (student receives aliyah and may read from the Torah portion). Family members are invited.

Girls: Any Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday. The Bat Mitzvah girl delivers a D'var Torah to 7th and 8th grade students. Family members are invited.

Food: Available for purchase from the school for \$95. Parents are requested not to bring their own food.

Section 13: Student Support & Counseling

Counseling

AYA is committed to the social-emotional well-being of every student. Counseling support is available to all students through our campus counselor, Graciela Johnson.
gjohnson@akibayavneh.org

Ma'alot Support Services

The Hebrew word *ma'alot* (מַעֲלוֹת) means "to elevate." AYA's Ma'alot program reflects this by ensuring that every student — regardless of diagnosis or background — has access to the support they need to thrive. Whether a child is navigating a learning difference, an emotional challenge, a short-term medical situation, or simply needs extra guidance, the Ma'alot team partners with families and teachers to meet each learner where they are.

Services Available to All Students

Ma'alot's baseline services are available to every AYA student at no additional cost. These include:

- **Academic support** (Upper School): Flex time 3–4 times per week for drop-in help with teachers; co-taught classroom support for students who need it.
- **Cognitive Skills Profile** (grades 5–12): All students complete a Mindprint assessment that identifies their learning strengths and areas for growth. Teachers use this data to tailor instruction.
- **Counselor access:** Students at all grade levels have access to the school counselor for social-emotional support, ranging from whole-class wellness lessons to individualized check-ins or short-term sessions.
- **Hebrew intervention:** In-classroom small-group support for students with gaps in Hebrew language understanding.
- **ELL support:** Structured language instruction, differentiated pacing, and technology tools for English Language Learners.
- **Early reading and executive functioning support:** Learning specialists provide targeted, time-limited intervention plans for students who need additional support in foundational skills.

- **Small group testing:** Available for qualifying students in classes of more than 10.
- **Behavior support:** Pre-diagnosis behavioral coaching and intervention coordinated between teachers, specialists, and the school counselor.
- **LEAP Learning Enrichment Academic Program** (Lower School, grades 2–4): Students identified through the CogAT assessment receive enrichment opportunities aligned with their abilities.
- **Annual speech and OT screeners** (ECP): Free screenings for early detection of speech or occupational therapy needs.

Services for Students with Diagnosed Learning Differences

Students with a formal psychoeducational evaluation and a diagnosed learning difference may be eligible for longer-term, individualized support. These services are provided under a Formal Education Plan (FEP) and come with additional fees. Options include:

- **Case management:** A dedicated learning specialist serves as the primary point of contact, attending team meetings, monitoring progress, and communicating regularly with families.
- **Dyslexia intervention** (grades K–4): Structured, multisensory reading programs (MTA and Take Flight) based on Orton-Gillingham principles.
- **Speech therapy:** Pull-out sessions addressing articulation, language comprehension, or communication skills.
- **Occupational therapy:** Support for fine motor skills, sensory processing, and self-regulation.
- **Behavior/emotional counseling:** Individualized therapeutic support, behavior plans, and collaboration with families and outside specialists.
- **Academic Support Period** (grades 5–12): A structured, skill-building class that develops academic, executive functioning, and self-advocacy skills.

How to Connect with Ma'alot

Families can initiate support at any time by reaching out to their child's teacher or contacting the Ma'alot team directly. The Ma'alot team is here for every family — *you do not need a diagnosis to ask for help.*

Director of Ma'alot: Bonnie Atkins | batkins@akibayavneh.org

Section 14: Academic Policies

Academic policies apply primarily to Lower School and Upper School students. The Early Childhood Program follows a developmentally appropriate educational model and does not utilize formal grading or academic integrity procedures.

Academic Integrity

Akiba Yavneh Academy holds students to a high moral standard grounded in Torah values. Students are expected to be truthful, forthcoming, and honest in all academic work.

Academic dishonesty includes any attempt to gain an unfair academic advantage or to misrepresent another person's work, ideas, or efforts as one's own.

Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- Copying homework or assignments from another student.
- Using unauthorized assistance during quizzes, tests, or other assessments.
- Allowing another person, including a tutor, parent, sibling, friend, or classmate, to complete academic work on a student's behalf.
- Sharing, obtaining, or using assessment information without authorization.
- Intentionally missing a class, assessment, or academic obligation to gain an unfair advantage.
- Providing false or misleading information regarding academic work or grades.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and includes:

- Copying language, ideas, images, data, or other content without proper attribution.
- Using another person's work without quotation, citation, or acknowledgment.
- Paraphrasing another source without giving credit.
- Submitting another student's work as one's own.
- Fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting sources or citations.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Upper School

This policy was developed in collaboration with students of the Class of 2027. We thank them for their leadership.

Akiba Yavneh Academy recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming an increasingly important part of education and professional life. To ensure safety, data privacy, and equitable access students are expected to use school-vetted and approved AI tools responsibly, ethically, and in a manner consistent with academic integrity.

We view these tools primarily as a **thought partner** to support learning—not a universal solution or a substitute for personal intellect, critical thinking, and original effort.

Permitted AI Uses

Unless otherwise directed by a teacher, students may use school-vetted AI tools as learning assistants to:

- Study or review course material.
- Receive tutoring or explanations of academic concepts.
- Improve grammar, organization, clarity, or formatting in their own work.
- Generate practice questions, study guides, or review materials.
- Assist with research and understanding source materials.

Prohibited AI Uses

To uphold our standards of academic integrity students may not use AI tools to:

- Complete assignments on their behalf.
- Generate original work that is intended to be submitted as the student's own.
- Write essays, responses, projects, or other academic work assigned to the student.
- Circumvent a teacher's instructions regarding AI use.
- Misrepresent AI-generated content as original student work.

Teachers may establish additional expectations, limitations, or permissions regarding AI use for specific assignments, courses, or projects. Students are responsible for understanding and following those expectations. When in doubt about whether AI use is permitted, students should ask their teacher before using it.

Lower School

At our school, technology serves to foster curiosity, critical thinking, and collaborative learning within a safe environment. AI integration in grades K–6 focuses on age-appropriate exploration, foundational digital literacy, and upholding our commitment to student safety and privacy.

- Account & Independent Use Boundaries: Students in grades K–6 may not create accounts on, log into, or independently interact with commercial AI platforms. All student exposure to AI is strictly guided by teachers using district-approved, vetted tools. Generative AI tools are utilized solely through whole-class, teacher-directed activities.
- Privacy & Safety First: To protect our students and respect online safety standards, no personal student information—such as full names, photos, or work samples—is ever entered into AI platforms.
- Academic Integrity & Personal Effort: We value each student's unique voice and intellect. All submitted assignments must reflect a student's own original thoughts, writing, and creative effort. Using AI tools to generate schoolwork is not permitted.
- Building Digital Literacy: Classroom discussions teach students how AI technology works, encourage critical evaluation of information (recognizing that AI can make mistakes or generate false data), and emphasize responsible digital citizenship.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may result in academic and disciplinary consequences, including:

- A reduced grade or no credit for the assignment, assessment, or project.
- Parent or guardian notification.
- Meetings with teachers, counselors, administrators, or an Academic Integrity Review Team.

- Restorative or educational interventions.
- Detention, suspension, loss of privileges, or other disciplinary action.

Consequences will be determined based on the nature of the violation, the student's age, prior history, and other relevant circumstances.

Upper School Academic Policies

Grading Scale

AYA Upper School uses the following grading scale:

Grade	Numerical Range	GPA Value
A+	97–100+	4.3
A	94–96	4.0
A-	90–93	3.7
B+	87–89	3.3
B	84–86	3.0
B-	80–83	2.7
C+	77–79	2.3
C	74–76	2.0
C-	70–73	1.7
D+	67–69	1.3
D	64–66	1.0
D-	60–63	0.7
F	0–59	0.0

Advanced Placement (AP) courses and designated advanced Judaic Studies courses receive an additional five-point weighting for GPA calculation purposes.

Semester Grading

AYA Upper School operates on a semester system. Each semester grade is calculated as follows:

- Semester Coursework: 80%
- Semester Examination: 20%

AYA Upper School does not issue incomplete grades. Missing assignments receive a grade of zero and may be corrected in accordance with individual teacher policies.

Testing and Examinations

Students are expected to complete all scheduled tests and examinations. Absences from tests or examinations may require parent verification and, when appropriate, medical documentation. Tests and examinations generally may not be taken early to accommodate vacations or personal travel.

The administration will establish procedures for make-up examinations, semester exams, and other assessments.

Upper School Examination Exemptions

Upper School students may be eligible to exempt certain semester examinations based on academic performance, attendance, conduct, and tefillah participation. Specific exemption requirements are established annually by the administration and communicated to students and families before examination periods.

Tefillah Expectations

Communal prayer is an essential component of the Akiba Yavneh Academy educational experience. Participation, attendance, and conduct during *Tefillah* will be reflected in academic evaluations, course grades and disciplinary measures.

Students are expected to:

- Arrive on time for Shacharit and Mincha.
- Participate respectfully and appropriately.
- Follow established Beit Midrash expectations and procedures.
- Demonstrate proper decorum during *Tefillah*.
- Boys post-Bar Mitzvah will wear *Tefillin*

Athletics and Extracurricular Eligibility

Students participating in athletics and extracurricular activities must maintain satisfactory academic and behavioral standing. Students who are failing one or more courses, demonstrate significant attendance concerns, or fail to meet behavioral expectations may be placed on academic probation, restricted from participation, or declared ineligible until satisfactory progress is demonstrated.

Academic Support and Tutorials

Teachers may offer tutorials, office hours, or other academic support opportunities throughout the school year. Students are encouraged to seek assistance proactively when academic concerns arise.

Course Changes

Schedule changes, including course additions and withdrawals, are permitted only during designated add/drop periods established by the Upper School administration.

Academic Honors and Transcripts

AYA maintains a cumulative grade point average that incorporates both General Studies and Judaic Studies coursework. Academic honors, transcript calculations, class rankings (if applicable), and recognition programs are determined according to policies established by the administration.

Outside Coursework

Students may not receive credit for outside, online, dual-credit, summer, or non-AYA coursework without prior administrative approval. To maintain the integrity of all records, only credits earned at AYA will be reflected on our transcript. When students apply for colleges or scholarships requiring transcripts, it will be their responsibility to obtain transcripts for any outside coursework according to the process for those institutions. Additionally, grades earned via outside coursework will not be factored into our GPA.

Academic Platforms

AYA utilizes designated online platforms for assignments, grading, communication, schedules, forms, and school information. Students are responsible for monitoring and using these platforms as directed by faculty and administration.

Section 15: Off-Campus Conduct

As members of the Jewish people and the Akiba Yavneh Academy community, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects Torah values, *derech eretz*, and personal integrity.

Whether on campus, off campus, online, or participating in school-sponsored activities, students should strive to act with honesty, respect, kindness, responsibility, and consideration for others. Students should be mindful that their behavior reflects not only on themselves, but also on their families, their school, and the broader Jewish community.

School policies may apply to student conduct that occurs off campus when such conduct:

- Occurs during a school-sponsored activity or event.
- Involves other members of the AYA community.
- Impacts the safety, well-being, or educational environment of the school.
- Interferes with the school's mission, operations, or community standards.

School-Sponsored Activities

Students participating in field trips, athletic events, performances, competitions, retreats, service projects, or other school-sponsored activities remain subject to school rules and expectations.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Behavioral expectations and standards of conduct.
- Dress code requirements.
- Kashrut policies.
- Technology and social media expectations.
- Academic eligibility requirements when applicable.

Off-Campus and Online Behavior

Students are expected to demonstrate respect, responsibility, honesty, and good judgment in their interactions with others, both in person and online.

Off-campus or online conduct that materially disrupts the educational environment, harms members of the school community, violates school policies, or undermines the mission and values of the school may result in school disciplinary action.

Section 16: Communication

Akiba Yavneh Academy values clear, timely, and respectful communication among students, families, faculty, and staff. Parents and guardians are responsible for reviewing school communications regularly and maintaining current contact information with the school.

School Communication Platforms

AYA Connect (Blackbaud)

AYA Connect serves as the primary platform for school information, forms, schedules, emergency contacts, and family records. Parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining accurate contact information and reviewing important school communications.

Weekly Newsletter

The school's weekly newsletter is distributed via email every Friday and serves as the primary source for community announcements, upcoming events, deadlines, and school news.

Schoology

Lower School and Upper School students and families may use Schoology to access assignments, grades, teacher feedback, and other academic information.

School Email

Upper School students are issued school email accounts and are expected to monitor them regularly for academic and school-related communication.

Emergency Communications

In the event of an emergency, weather-related closure, safety concern, or other urgent situation, the school will communicate with families using its designated emergency notification systems. It is essential that parents and guardians keep all contact information current.

Campus Resources

The AYA website includes a dedicated Campus Resources page containing frequently used links, forms, calendars, handbooks, lunch information, key contacts, and other important resources for students and families.

Families are encouraged to bookmark this page and refer to it throughout the school year as a central hub for school information and services.

[Campus Resources: <https://www.akibayavneh.org/campus-life/campus-resources>](https://www.akibayavneh.org/campus-life/campus-resources)

Parent and Student Communication Expectations

Akiba Yavneh Academy believes that strong partnerships among parents, students, faculty, and staff are essential to student success. Open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to problem-solving help foster a positive educational environment and strengthen our school community.

All members of the AYA community are expected to communicate in a manner consistent with Torah values, including *derech eretz* (respectful conduct), *kavod* (honor and dignity), kindness, honesty, and civility. These expectations apply to all forms of communication, including in-person conversations, telephone calls, emails, text messages, social media interactions, and other electronic communications.

Parents, students, faculty, and staff are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully and professionally, even when addressing concerns or disagreements.
- Assume positive intent and seek clarification before drawing conclusions.
- Refrain from disrespectful, threatening, harassing, profane, or demeaning language.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of students, families, faculty, and staff.
- Work collaboratively to resolve concerns in a constructive manner.

Questions regarding classroom matters should generally be addressed first with the classroom teacher. Concerns that cannot be resolved at that level may be elevated through the appropriate administrative channels.

Teachers and staff should be contacted through official school communication channels. The school reserves the right to address communication that is disruptive, abusive, harassing, or inconsistent with the values and standards of the Akiba Yavneh Academy community.

Section 17: Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

As soon as you enroll your child, you are automatically a member of the PTO. The PTO supports the community through parent social connections, staff appreciation, community-wide celebrations, and campus volunteer opportunities. One hour of service per family per semester is requested.

President: Shlomit Friedman | ayapto@akibayavneh.org

Vice President. Amber Waks

Treasurer. Jessica Mathias

Secretary. Abi Frankel

Event planner. Danielle Mendelsberg

Communications. Shoshana Ellis

Devora Berkowitz - Social Media

Yasmin Feinberg - Volunteer Lead