

TORAH ACADEMY:  
Not just a school...A KEHILLA!



בס"ד

***SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL  
EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM***

**TORAH ACADEMY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA**

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## ***TORAH ACADEMY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM***

The goal of the Torah Academy Social-Emotional Education Curriculum is to help students develop a stronger social consciousness. “Essential understandings” include:

- Everyone has a right to personal safety (both physical and emotional).
- Expressing gratitude is an essential Jewish characteristic (midda).
- Caring for others is a mitzvah (commandment).
- We can, and should, always work on self improvement.

The curriculum is focused on the following important skills:

- understanding how to prevent bullying behavior
- how to express gratitude and appreciation
- how to care for others in need
- how to repair the world (Tikkun Olum)
- how to develop empathy, self-respect, self-esteem and goals for self-improvement (Derech Eretz).

An essential attribute of this curriculum is that it is integrated into other parts of the Torah Academy curriculum. Therefore, teachers of core academic classes will be involved in teaching many of these lessons. Additional curricular expectations and materials that relate to character development can be found in the Chumash and Jewish Law sections of our Judaic Studies curriculum. *In addition, school rules- particularly as they relate to interpersonal relationships- are to be reviewed at least once per school year by parents and teachers.*

In addition to activities that are part of the academic curricula, each grade will have at least four activities throughout the school year in which the school counselor will play a pivotal role. These will be listed under **Activities**. Beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, activities for boys and girls will be similar, with slight variances made as appropriate.

The school counselor is also available to meet with individuals or groups as needed. The counselor also joins the weekly grade level faculty team meetings. This makes sure that there is a strong focus on meeting the social-emotional needs of our students.

We acknowledge the assistance and work of Dr. Rona Novick of Yeshiva University, who has developed the “Brave Seeds” program which forms a large part of our program. We also wish to acknowledge the assistance of our Education Committee’s Social Emotional Education Subcommittee, under the leadership of Dr. Frani Pollack, who has worked closely with us on these issues.

*Fran Gerstein, LCSW  
School Counselor*

*Rabbi Shmuel Jablon  
Menahel (Principal)*

*Rabbi Naftoli Eisemann  
Sgan Menahel (Assistant Principal-Judaic Studies)*

## **First Grade:**

*Goals* -Using the Yeshiva University Brave Seeds Program:

- Students will be able to define bullying.
- Students will be able to define "bystanders" and their responsibilities.
- Students will have 3 ideas of what to do if they witness bullying.
- Students will have 3 ideas of what to do if they are victims of bullying.

*Activities:* The school counselor (with the teachers' help) will do the following:

- 1) Read Say Something by Peggy Moss and The Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill.
- 2) Do an activity from Brave Seeds in which children will read cut out cartoons and separate them into boxes labeled "bullying" and "brave behavior."
- 3) Using boxes to define behaviors they have observed as "brave" or "bullying"
- 4) Perform Role plays written by Brave Seeds Team
- 5) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.
- 6) Communications with parents, as well as parent education, are part of this program.

## **Second Grade:**

*Goals* –

- Students will develop a respect for their own and each others' personal space – both emotional and physical
- Students will learn to say "no" to a peer, when that peer is giving them ill advice.
- Students will be able to express gratitude in multiple ways.
- Students will indentify how Tikun Olam relates to an elementary school student.
- Students will be able to exhibit cooperation and teamwork.

*Activities:*

- 1) School counselors will help students create role plays on how to respond politely when someone is invading your space.
- 2) Assertive exercises will be done with the help of school counselor with the focus on saying “no” in a multitude of ways.
- 3) A “happiness” art project will be done with the help of the art teacher.
- 4) The General Studies teacher will assign an essay related to Tikkun Olam and these will be read to the school counselor. These essays will explain how they can improve the world around them. Students will be encouraged to put their plans into action.
- 5) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.

**Third Grade:**

*Goals-*

- Students will begin to understand what it means to be a person of character (*Derech Eretz* and *Middot Tovot*).
- Students will be able to identify their obligations to their parents, the sick and the needy.
- Students will be able to identify “empathy” and practice it.
- Students will be able to exhibit teamwork and cooperation.

*Activities:*

- 1) The Judaic Studies teacher will include lessons on the laws of honoring parents, visiting the sick, tzedakah and chesed within their class.
- 2) The Judaic Studies teacher will include lessons on gratitude (both to G-d and people) within their class.
- 3) School counselor will read stories in which someone’s actions spoke louder than their words.

- 4) In conjunction with the school counselor, the art teacher will assign an art project portraying a visit to a hospital or sick bed to see a loved one or friend.
- 5) With help from the school counselor, the General Studies teacher will assign an essay in which the students write about understanding a stranger better when they looked at things from his/her point of view.
- 6) With help from the school counselor, the General Studies teacher will assign the students to write a letter of thanks to their parents for something the parents will be surprised to be thanked for.
- 7) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.

### **Fourth Grade:**

*Goals* – Using the Yeshiva University Brave Seeds Program:

- Students will be able to define the three major types of bullying and label them, even when situations are more subtle and complex.
- Students will develop their own ideas of how to deal with bullies whether they themselves are being bullied or they are bystanders to bullying.
- Students will be able to name and develop appropriate interventions for the three major types of bullying: verbal or physical threats, exclusion and name calling.
- Students will be able to exhibit teamwork and cooperation.

*Activities:*

- 1) The School counselor, with the help of the teacher, will implement the Brave Seeds Detective lesson which allows children to act as “detectives,” noticing bullying in three complex stories.
- 2) The school counselor will help the teacher do Brave Seeds Role plays with their class and
- 3) The school counselor will help the class develop their own role plays after viewing Olweus videotape (Teacher Guide DVD, lessons entitled “Daniel” and “Michael”.)
- 4) The school counselor and teacher will videotape role plays to show to younger students.

- 5) Communications with parents, as well as parent education, are part of this program.
- 6) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.

### **Fifth Grade:**

*Goals* – Students will focus on taking responsibility for their world in the following ways:

- Being positive, showing humility, taking responsibility for their actions, caring about peace, and developing self-respect.
- The students will identify the theme of peace in selected prayers.
- The students will identify practical ways of making the dream of peace a reality.
- Students will be able to exhibit teamwork and cooperation.
- **GIRLS:** Students will learn that there are a variety of body types for girls and women, each of which is acceptable and equally good. They will learn be able to identify signs of, and means of preventing, eating disorders.

*Activities include:*

- 1) The Judaic Studies teacher will explain some prayers that have the theme of peace (e.g. “Sim Shalom/Shalom Rav” in the Amida and “Oseh Shalom” in Kaddish). Students will then identify 5 ways in which they can help achieve peace in the world.
- 2) With the help of the art teacher, students will do a two panel project called “Look on the bright side” in which something is depicted in both positive and negative ways.
- 3) With the help of the General Studies teacher, students will write a letter saying they are sorry to someone who doesn’t expect an apology.
- 4) With the help of the General Studies teacher, students will write a story depicting one aspect of peace.
- 5) The School counselor will work with students to establish a personal boundaries role play, highlighting making boundaries for oneself in a polite, non-hurtful but powerful way.
- 6) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.

7) GIRLS: Students will be lead through a discussion of why differences are good and why everyone looking the same is problematic in both theory and application. Students will list the ways their bodies have served them – for example, in sports, music, art, etc. They will learn signs of eating disorders and how to prevent them.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

### *Goals –*

- Using the Yeshiva University Brave Seeds Program:
  - Students will be able to identify insidious types of bullying behavior that often go unattended.
  - Students will begin to create Torah Academy school rules for addressing such behavior in “brave” ways.
  - Students will use their work to teach other, younger students how to stand up to bullying.
- Students will be able to exhibit teamwork and cooperation.
- GIRLS: Students will learn that there are a variety of body types for girls and women, each of which is acceptable and equally good. They will learn be able to identify signs of, and means of preventing, eating disorders.

### *Activities:*

- 1) Along with the Language Arts teacher, school counselor will show students Olweus tapes (on the Olweus Teacher Guide DVD– lessons entitled “Lauren” and “Brenna” ) and facilitate discussion.
- 2) School counselor will help students improvise some pre-written role plays (developed by the *Menahel* and the school counselor)
- 3) The School Counselor will videotape role plays and help students create a videotape presentation for the younger students.
- 4) Communications with parents, as well as parent education, are part of the BRAVE program.
- 5) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.

6) GIRLS: Students will be lead through a discussion of why differences are good and why everyone looking the same is problematic in both theory and application. Students will list the ways their bodies have served them – for example, in sports, music, art, etc. They will learn signs of eating disorders and how to prevent them.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade:

### *Goals –*

- Students will work on self-improvement, which will in turn build self-respect and self-esteem.
- Students will be able to exhibit cooperation and teamwork.
- Students will focus on positive and negative character traits and develop thoughts about how to enhance the good ones and better manage the negative ones.
- Students will be able to identify the impact of bullying- including potential suicide (see, for example, [http://www.jaredstory.com/making\\_a\\_difference.html](http://www.jaredstory.com/making_a_difference.html) )
- Students will be able to identify differences and how we live up to our responsibility to be accepting of others differences.
  
- GIRLS: Students will learn that there are a variety of body types for girls and women, each of which is acceptable and equally good. They will learn be able to identify signs of, and means of preventing, eating disorders.

### *Activities:*

- 1) With the help of the Language Arts teacher, students will write a “One thing I want to improve about my character” essay.
  
- 2) In Language Arts, students will read the Rabbi Pesach Krohn’s story, “Perfection At The Plate.” The story follows this curriculum (and is also available at <http://www.mesorah.com/Chapters/eomh-005.html>) . Students will discuss the message of the story and how they can apply it in their lives.
  
- 2) With the help of the art teacher, students will do a “Commit a random act of kindness” art project

- 3) With the help of the General Studies teachers, students will write an essay on “How stubbornness can hold us back.”
- 4) The School Counselor and Judaic Studies teacher will do a workshop on how to greet people appropriately focusing on eye contact and smiling. This will include a study of Pirkei Avot Mishnah 15. “Shammai used to say: make thy [study of the] Torah [a matter of] established [regularity]; speak little, but do much; and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.”
- 5) The Judaic Studies teacher will teach the concept of *Chesbon haNefesh* (self accounting of the soul) as a tool for self improvement. They will also connect this to the concept of *teshuvah* and the blessings of *Hashivenu* and *Slach Lanu* in the Amida.
- 6) The School Counselor and Judaic Studies teacher will do an activity discussing the impacts of bullying on young adults. This will include discussing suicide as a potential result. Appropriate reading and film clips will be used (see, for example, [http://www.jaredstory.com/making\\_a\\_difference.html](http://www.jaredstory.com/making_a_difference.html) )
- 7) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.
- 8) GIRLS: Students will be lead through a discussion of why differences are good and why everyone looking the same is problematic in both theory and application. Students will list the ways their bodies have served them – for example, in sports, music, art, etc. They will learn signs of eating disorders and how to prevent them.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

### *Goals –*

- Students will be able to identify and practice positive attributes including gratitude and the development of Derech Eretz.
- Students will be able to identify what is good in their lives
- Students will demonstrate appropriate social skills, like greeting others maturely.
- Students will be able to identify the dangers of substance abuse.
- Students will be able to identify the impact of bullying- including potential suicide (see, for example, [http://www.jaredstory.com/making\\_a\\_difference.html](http://www.jaredstory.com/making_a_difference.html) )
- Students will be able to identify positive and negative peer pressure, as well as ways to resist negative peer pressure.
- Students will exhibit cooperation and teamwork.

· GIRLS: Students will be lead through a discussion of why differences are good and why everyone looking the same is problematic in both theory and application. Students will list the ways their bodies have served them – for example, in sports, music, art, etc. They will learn signs of eating disorders and how to prevent them.

*Activities:*

- 1) With help from the school counselor, the Language Arts teacher will assign the students to write a letter of thanks to their parents for something the parents will be surprised to be thanked about.
- 2) With the help of the art teacher, students will do a “One thing we want to improve in our character” art project – with before and after panels.
- 3) With the help of the Language Arts teacher, students will write a poem or essay about what makes them happy.
- 4) The school counselor will do a workshop on how to greet people appropriately focusing on eye contact and smiling.
- 5) Jewish studies teachers will do at least one lesson on the Jewish concept of gratitude (to both G-d and human beings). This will include explanations of prayers of gratitude.
- 6) The School Counselor and Judaic Studies teacher will do an activity discussing the impacts of bullying on young adults. This will include discussing suicide as a potential result. Appropriate reading and film clips will be used (see, for example, [http://www.jaredstory.com/making\\_a\\_difference.html](http://www.jaredstory.com/making_a_difference.html) ).
- 7) Students will learn of the impact of substance abuse. They will view the movie *Lechaim?* (Yehuda Mond Foundation and Torah UMesorah) see <http://yehudamondfoundation.org/lechaim.asp>)
- 8) The Judaic Studies teacher will do a lesson on only being of afraid of Hashem, and not people. S/he will connect it to understanding about positive and negative peer pressure as well as being willing to stand up for others. Students will learn about Righteous Gentiles during the Shoah (such as Sugihara and Schindler) who stood up for others at risk to themselves. The school counselor will be part of a discussion about how they can resist negative peer pressure and stand up for what is right.
- 9) Students will play cooperative and teamwork oriented games in physical education.

10) GIRLS: Students will be lead through a discussion of why differences are good and why everyone looking the same is problematic in both theory and application. Students will list the ways their bodies have served them – for example, in sports, music, art, etc. They will learn signs of eating disorders and how to prevent them.

## Perfection At The Plate

*Rabbi Pesach Krohn*

In Brooklyn, New York, Chush is a school that caters to learning disabled children. Some children remain in Chush for their entire school career, while others can be mainstreamed into conventional schools.

At a Chush fund-raising dinner, the father of a Chush child delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended.

After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he cried out, "Where is the perfection in my son Shaya? Everything G-d does is done with perfection. But my child cannot understand things as other children do. My child cannot remember facts and figures as other children do. Where is G-d's perfection?"

The audience was shocked by the question, pained by the father's anguish, stilled by the piercing query.

"I believe," the father answered, "that when G-d brings a child like this into the world, the perfection that he seeks is in the way people react to this child."

He then told the following story about his son Shaya:

One afternoon Shaya and his father walked past a park where some boys Shaya knew were playing baseball.

Shaya asked, "Do you think they will let me play?"

Shaya's father knew that his son was not at all athletic and that most boys would not want him on their team. But Shaya's father understood that if his son was chosen to play it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging.

Shaya's father approached one of the boys in the field and asked if Shaya could play. The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said "We are losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning."

Shaya's father was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. Shaya was told to put on a glove and go out to play short center field.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya's team scored again and now with two outs and the bases loaded with the potential winning run on base, Shaya was scheduled to be up. Would the team actually let Shaya bat at this juncture and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shaya was given the bat.

Everyone knew that it was all but impossible because Shaya didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit with it. However as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact.

The first pitch came in and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya's teammates came up to Shaya and together they held the bat and faced the pitcher waiting for the next pitch. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly toward Shaya. As the pitch came in, Shaya and his teammate swung at the bat and together they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far beyond reach of the first baseman.

Everyone started yelling, "Shaya, run to first. Run to first." Never in his life had Shaya run to first. He scampered down the baseline wide-eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman who would tag out Shaya, who was still running. But the right fielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head. Everyone yelled, "Run to second, run to second." Shaya ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases towards home. As Shaya reached second base, the opposing short stop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base and shouted, "Run to third." As Shaya rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, "Shaya run home."

Shaya ran home, stepped on home plate and all 18 boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him the hero, as he had just hit a "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, "those 18 boys reached their level of G-d's perfection."