



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025 - 2026 | 5786

Westchester Torah Academy
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New Rochelle, N.Y. 10804
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Welcome to Westchester Torah Academy!

The administration, faculty, and staff are delighted that you have chosen to give your children the gift of a Westchester Torah Academy education. Please remember that we are partners in this educational process. As such, communication between home and school plays a critical role in helping your children achieve their maximum potential.

About Us

WTA is a Modern Orthodox co-ed Yeshiva day school that opened in September 2013 in New Rochelle, NY. Committed to academic excellence in both Judaic and secular studies, WTA maintains an affordable and self-sustaining tuition model in a dynamic, engaging, and warm learning environment with an emphasis on Torah values.

Our Mission

Westchester Torah Academy provides a nurturing school community that has adopted an innovative model for high-quality, sustainable, and affordable Jewish Day School education.

Core Values

- **Love of Torah - אהבת תורה** – Our love of Torah informs our actions. We embrace תורה שבעל פה and תורה שבכתב. We view learning as a supreme value; every moment is a teachable moment, and we turn to תורה for guidance, inspiration, and direction.
- **Joyful Mindset - הכל בשמחה** – We help children approach learning with wonder and joy, and happily greet each day as new and full of possibilities.
- **Humility/Modesty - ענוה** – We approach teaching and learning with humility and a deep sense of responsibility. The Torah instructs us to guard the earth, protect it, and conserve its inherited gifts. We view school resources as precious, and use them purposefully.
- **Committed to Best Self - מצוינות עצמית** – By striving to be our best selves and reaching our potential, we make a commitment to create a world worthy of our mission as Jews and as human beings. Excellence is not a destination, it is a mindset.

MEET OUR TEAM

WTA '25-'26 ADMINISTRATIVE

"WHO'S WHO?"



RABBI AVI HOFFMAN
Rav Bet HaSefer &
Director of Jewish Life
-Halacha & Hashgafa Questions
-Judaics Curricular Questions



DEGANIT RONEN
Menahelet/Head of School



RACHEL MENDELSON
Assistant Principal
-Policy & Curricular Questions
-Social Emotional Needs
-Special Programming
-Schedule Questions



ROSE JUST-MICHAEL
Director of Communications &
Development
-Fundraising & Donations
-Shomrei Torah Dinner
-Social Media & Website
-Capital Campaign
-Parnas HaYom
-Nitzachon



JEN VEGH
• Director of Admissions
• Interim Early Childhood
Director



ADI ROSENFELD
-Tuition -Financial Aid
-Lunch -Forms/HR
-Early/After Care -Rentals



DANIT MORAN
Hebrew Language Education
Coordinator
-Hebrew Language
Studies Curricular
Questions



JORDANA SCHNEIER
Director of Teaching &
Learning (1-8)
-General Studies
Curricular Questions



SOPHIE DOBIN
School Social Worker
-Social Emotional Needs
-District Services Liaison
-Mental Health Resource for:
Students, Faculty, Families



MIRIAM RUBIN
Early Childhood
Administrative Support



LUIS MARIN
Facilities Manager
-Facility Questions



SHARONE HALPERIN
School Nurse
-Health & Wellness
Questions



JOSHUA WERTENTEIL
School Operations
-Technology
-Busing
-Dismissal Questions
-General Questions

Vaad Horim

Vaad Horim is WTA's parent organization that engages in many activities and programs throughout the school year for the benefit of the students. Please become an active member. For additional information and to get involved, please visit www.westchesterta.org/vaad-horim

Parent / School Communication

- A weekly newsletter, *Nitzachon*, is published and distributed by email each Friday. Upcoming dates to remember are printed in each week's issue.
- A weekly email of the week's upcoming events will be sent each Sunday morning.
- In our Early Childhood classes, a weekly newsletter is sent from the classroom teacher each Friday.
- In the Lower School, a newsletter and homework letter will be sent each Sunday from the classroom teacher.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to be in frequent contact with each other about matters of individual interest or concern. Questions regarding a child's classroom work and progress should be addressed directly to the teachers. All teachers and administrators have a school email address consisting of their first initial and their last name followed by **@westchesterta.org**. Rabbis' emails begin with 'Rabbi,' followed by the Rabbi's last name **@westchesterta.org**. Contact information can also be found on our [website](#).

Teachers are available to meet with parents, by prior arrangement, through the school office or by emailing a teacher directly. While a teacher is with a class, his or her first responsibility is the children's well-being; therefore, class time is not available for unscheduled meetings or consultations. In addition, it will not be possible for teachers to give their undivided attention to parents with questions or with an important matter to discuss at arrival or dismissal time. If you still have questions after speaking with your child's teachers, please contact the administrator in charge.

Throughout the school year, there will be opportunities for face-to-face meetings with your children's teachers. Please refer to the school calendar dates for Parent-Teacher Conferences and Chagigat HaLimudim.

Our website, www.westchesterta.org, is another way to stay informed about what's happening in school. The website hosts an up-to-date calendar, the latest information about our educational program, upcoming events, after-school enrichment, and Vaad Horim volunteer opportunities.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports are a formal written communication of how your child is progressing in school. These are distributed twice a year; winter, and spring for students in Zra'im-8th grade. In addition, Early Childhood students will receive a portfolio of their work at the end of the school year.

School Hours

Attendance

Regular attendance is required. Regular school attendance is vital for a student's academic achievement and social and emotional growth. Please plan family vacations and dental/medical appointments so they coincide with the scheduled school vacation periods or after-school hours.

Drop Off: 7:55-8:15

Dismissal:

Mondays-Thursdays

Zra'im

Monday-Thursday: 2:45 pm - **directly from classroom**

Shorashim-4th grade

Monday-Thursday: 3:00 pm

Middle School (5-8th)

Monday-Thursday: 4:30 pm

Fridays

Zra'im (directly from the classroom)

September 2 - March 27: 1:15 pm

April 17 - June 12: 1:45 pm

Shorashim-8th grade

September 2 - March 27: 1:30 pm

April 17 - June 12: 2:00 pm

Monthly Teacher PD Days

Middle School will follow the Lower School dismissal schedule

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

Students may arrive at school as early as 7:55 am. A faculty member will greet arriving students at the door and lead them to their classrooms. Students arriving **after 8:20 am** must be accompanied to the main entrance and signed in.

Dismissal

Dismissal changes should be called into the office or emailed to dismissalchanges@westchesterta.org by 1:45 pm Monday-Thursdays and by 12:15 pm on Fridays.

Please be sure to have your carpool number sign visible in your windshield when you come for carpool in the afternoons. Even if your child is regularly on a bus, you will still be getting a sign/number for any occasion where you may pick up your child during regular dismissal times. If you do not have your carpool number on you, you will be directed to park and go into the building to pick up your child. For any questions about carpool numbers, please be in touch with Joshua at jwertenteil@westchesterta.org

Please do not leave your car when you are in the pick-up/drop-off area. Stay with your car. Do not pull out of line unless directed by the dismissal staff. Please wait patiently until the cars in front of you move. Please be aware that the buses will be boarded and dismissed before carpools.

If you arrive after 3:15pm (or 4:45pm for the second dismissal) your child will be assigned to a supervising after-school teacher. Please note that the fee for each 15 minute segment of time will be \$15.00 and you will be charged accordingly.

Please upload the names of adults other than yourself who are allowed to pick up your child at school into ParentLocker. Any change in this list of adults must be given, in writing, to the School Office. Whenever a child is to be picked up by an unlisted adult, the School must be notified in writing (email or written notice). The School will not dismiss a child to an unlisted adult until verification is obtained. WTA adheres to state law and the Department of Motor Vehicles in requiring that all children use seat belts or car seats. PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S SAFETY.

Bus Safety

Please discuss the following bus safety with your children at home. We will discuss our safety guidelines with the students in school, as well.

- Children must stay seated.
- Fastened seat belts must be worn at all times.
- Respecting each other's personal space is paramount.
- Aisles must be clear of backpacks and feet.
- To avoid the possibility of choking, there will be no eating on the bus.
- Low voices should be maintained at all times.

Some children benefit from something to occupy themselves during the bus ride; this could be a book or crossword puzzle, a handheld electronic game or a personal listening device. Please note, these may ONLY be taken out on the bus, and **should not** be used in the school building.

Early Dismissal

Students will be called to the School Office for early dismissals. Parents and/or authorized persons should enter the right side of the mansion into our main office and wait there for their children.

Emergency Closings and Snow Days

Emergency closings and Snow Day announcements will be made via the following:

- Families will be notified by email no later than 6:00 am when school is canceled due to snow or an emergency.
- Families will be notified by a text service no later than 6:00 am when school is canceled due to snow or an emergency, as well as, other time-sensitive updates.
- All updates will also be available on our websites and social media sites.
- If it is necessary to transition to a Zoom Day, you will be notified by text and email.

THE SAFETY OF EACH MEMBER OF THE WTA SCHOOL COMMUNITY IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE. PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY WHEN DROPPING OFF OR WHEN PICKING UP CHILDREN.

Early Care, After Care, and Chugim

Early Care and Aftercare

WTA offers early care beginning at 7:30 am daily to our Shorashim-8th grade. Aftercare for our Shorashim-4th grade is also offered, from 3-5pm Monday-Thursday. Please [visit our website](#) for more information regarding early care and aftercare. This is available at a first come first served basis with a limited number of spaces available.

Chugim (Afterschool Programs)

Our school offers a variety of chugim for our students. After-school activities often give children an opportunity to explore new and developing skills: socially, intellectually and physically. These after-school activities take place from 3:10 through 4:30 Monday through Thursday. The classes will run from 3:30-4:30. Please take the time to carefully consider your own child's stamina and interest after a full school day of learning. Based on our experience from the past few years, we have observed that some children, while expressing interest in a chug, find it difficult to participate in yet another organized, directed activity. Therefore, WTA will assess and determine the child's ability to enjoy and benefit from the activity. We will discuss our findings with you. In the case where we determine that the placement is not a good fit for your child and it becomes necessary to make a change, a prorated refund will be given back to the family.

School Health Codes & Procedures

Illness or Injury During School Hours

Students who become ill or who are hurt during school hours will be sent to the School Nurse or office, where basic first aid is available. The school nurse or other supervising staff member will notify parents if medical attention or home care is thought to be necessary. Children with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will be sent home. Students may return to school when their temperature has been consistently below 100 degrees without the use of analgesics, such as Tylenol or Motrin, for a **minimum** of 24 hours.

Prescribed Medication

All prescription medication must be administered in the School Office by the nurse. Prescription medicine must remain in the School Office with the exception of inhalers and Epi-Pens. No medicines except inhalers and Epi-Pens are to be kept in classrooms or backpacks. Parents must bring prescription medication to the nurse in its original prescription container, labeled with the child's name, along with a note of instruction from the parent and doctor. Over-the-counter medication such as Motrin, Tylenol, or similar products will not be given by the nurse without the parent's and health care provider's written permission via the Medication Form in ParentLocker. This is in accordance with New York State law. The school is not allowed to keep stock of over-the-counter medications.

Information regarding allergies or specific health needs must be documented on the school health form and discussed with the school nurse and the child's teachers.

Nut Policy

We consider WTA to be a "Peanut/tree-nut aware" environment. We cannot guarantee a completely peanut/tree-nut-free environment. In addition, the lunches we order are peanut/tree-nut-free, but may be made on shared equipment with nuts. We do not allow products that state, "may contain **trace elements** of nuts," however, we do allow products in which the label states, "was made on shared equipment or a facility containing nuts." We strive to create a safe environment for everyone in the WTA community, therefore, we encourage families with children who have food allergies to educate themselves and their children on management of their food allergies. And, we encourage you to remind your children of the school policy not to share food.

Immunizations and Health Forms

All children attending Westchester Torah Academy must be immunized according to New York State Department of Education requirements. State list of requirements can be found here: <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf>

Health appraisals must be renewed this year (2025-26) for incoming Pre-K, Kindergarten, first, third, fifth, and seventh grades. Please return forms to the school as soon as possible. New York State Law requires that all children attending school must be immunized against Polio,

Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Measles, German measles, Mumps, and Hepatitis B. Proof of this with a physician's signature must be on file in the child's permanent school record. Only students whose complete medical and immunization forms are on file will be admitted to school on the first day, which is in accordance with New York State law. WTA utilizes ParentLocker (wta.parentlocker.com) to collect this documentation. Over the summer, you will receive an email from the school with instructions for how to upload these files. If you would like to submit paper copies, you can mail them to WTA, % School Nurse, 150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle, NY 10804

Recess and Physical Education

The students go outside for P.E. and/or recess daily. Make sure that your children have proper outdoor clothing for all seasons. During inclement weather there will be indoor recess and P.E.

Dress Code

We ask for your partnership in ensuring that our children are appropriately dressed for school in accordance with the following guidelines:

All Students

- Shirts and dresses must have short, three quarter length or full length sleeves.
- Closed shoes should be worn each day.
- Boys are expected to wear kippot and tzitzit at all times.
- Clothing may not have any logos, writing, or characters on it.
- Blue and white clothing should be worn each Rosh Chodesh.

1st-8th Grade

- Boys and girls may only wear any solid colored shirt.
- Boys' shirts should have a collar.
- Any solid colored sweatshirts may be worn.
- Boys and girls should wear navy, black, or khaki bottoms.
- No sweat pants, track pants, shorts, denim jeans, or cargo pants allowed.
- Dresses, jumpers, and skirts must be knee-length.

Kavod Hamakom

As we all know, the best way to teach a child is by example. We encourage our parents to respect these policies when coming to visit our school, or at any school event.

Outdoor Clothing

Children play outdoors whenever possible. Therefore, parents should ensure that their child has proper clothing for sudden changes of weather conditions, including hats, gloves, and boots, when appropriate. All outdoor clothing should be labeled.

Extra Set of Clothing

Parents of children in **Zra'im, Shorashim, Nitzanim, Kindergarten and first grade** are asked to send a complete change of clothes, including underwear and socks, for unexpected situations.

Lost and Found

Parents are asked to label all clothing and other accessories. All labeled or unlabeled items found in school will be placed in a container in the school's main entrance vestibule. Children and parents should look there for missing articles. The remaining contents of the container will be donated to a charitable organization periodically.

Field Trips

Class trips are planned as part of the curriculum in general and Judaic studies, and paid for by the parents. These trips enhance the students' understanding of academic subjects and promote learning through experience. Students may visit local museums, zoos, theaters, synagogues, and other significant sites. Teachers will communicate the number of chaperones needed for the trip to the parents. Parents who chaperone field trips should follow the agenda, schedule, and guidelines established for the group by the teachers. All arrangements will be made by the teachers. Parents may not bring siblings on field trips. All school rules including dress code apply on field trips.

Visitors

The school's priority is, first and foremost, the preservation of a safe and secure learning environment. Adult visitors are welcome in the school **upon prior arrangement**. When you visit the school, please sign in at the school office and obtain a visitor's pass. All visitors must wear a visitor's badge/sticker while on the premises. If you are in the building for one child's event, please refrain from visiting your other children's classrooms without a prior arrangement.

Student Behavior

Derech Eretz is an integral part of our Jewish heritage and of our educational program. All facets of school life – relationships, environment, activities, curriculum, and classroom learning – will reflect this heritage and our commitment to it. We believe that a positive learning environment, with guidelines and expectations for respect and safety, provides the atmosphere most conducive to learning. Clear expectations regarding behavior in school will be established at the beginning of each school year and reviewed in the classrooms regularly.

Interpersonal relationships shape our school atmosphere and are guided by the following principles:

1. Everyone has a right to feel safe in school.

2. Everyone has a responsibility to treat others and their belongings with respect and consideration.
3. Children are encouraged to understand that others learn in their own way and at their own pace. Individual learning styles are encouraged and respected by all.
4. Being part of a learning community obliges one to strive to help others learn, and not to interfere with the learning of others.
5. Misunderstandings and disagreements among children will arise. We help children develop social negotiation skills by talking directly with the other party to resolve outstanding issues. Before speaking, we ask children to pause and consider the questions: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? We remind children to: stop, breathe, think; then act.

The school reserves the right to ask a child to leave the classroom in order to provide that child with a necessary break, and maintain a safe, productive learning environment.

WTA takes a strong stand regarding *Derech Eretz*, respect for others. Bullying, name calling, or physical harm is not allowed at any time and will be addressed immediately.

Food Policy

Lunch

WTA observes the Dietary Laws of *Kashrut* (please see bottom for guidelines). This applies to lunches we order from our vendor and lunches and/or snacks children bring from home. You have the option to order lunch from our vendor or to send lunch to school. Lunches brought from home must correspond to the lunch schedule, in terms of חלב (Dairy) and בשר (Meat - generally served on Tuesdays and Thursdays), to ensure all children can eat together at lunchtime. Pareve lunches can be brought any day. Please consult the Weekly Update email for the menu. There will be no food purchases on school trips except at designated and approved kosher venues.

Snacks

All students have a snack period in the morning (Mondays-Fridays) and afternoon (Mondays-Thursday). Parents are asked to send fruit, vegetables, or other healthy kosher snacks with their child for snack period. **Gum and sugary snacks are not permitted.** Please remind your child that snacks may not be shared with other children.

Birthday Parties

In school, Hebrew birthdays will be celebrated for **Zra'im - Kindergarten students only**. Parents should make prior arrangements with their child's classroom teacher. Parents may send a healthy kosher snack for the entire class such as; fresh fruit, honey sticks, popcorn, pretzels, naturally flavored ices. Tzedakah (charity) projects in celebration of birthdays are most welcome. Invitations to outside birthday parties should be handled outside of school and should include all members of a class, or at least all members of one gender. We ask that families be

sensitive when inviting students to your home or to birthday parties outside of your home regarding the observance of the kashrut and Shabbat policies in accordance with the standards of the school.

Kashrut Policy

In an effort to uphold the *Kashrut* values of our school and exhibit respect and *Derech Eretz* to the personal practices of our community members, we ask that the following guidelines be upheld at school social events:

- Packaged foods
- Catering by an approved caterer
- Only one-time use, plastic utensils & paper goods are used.
- The use of personal ovens and cooktops is not allowed. Thus, only cold foods or room temperature foods may be served. Heating is permitted by one-time use burners with tins.

The following *Hashgachot* are approved. If you have questions regarding additional approved certifications please contact [Rabbi Hoffman](#).



