



JKHA Middle School Handbook 2023-2024



Dear JKHA Middle School Students and Parents,

At JKHA Middle School, our goal is to ensure that every student appreciates the inherent value of learning. To us, school provides so much more for our students than its function as a conduit for knowledge. For our students and families, JKHA Middle School provides an important social-emotional framework through which our students can gain the confidence and understanding they need to interact meaningfully with others while pursuing academic excellence. We aim to foster in our students a love of Torah and Mitzvot, the foundations of a meaningful connection to Hashem, and an appreciation for the State of Israel.

Our Middle School community thrives on our core values, which we call KushnerCares: community, accountability, respect, empathy, and self-awareness. This philosophy reflects our belief in the adage דרך לתורה ארץ קדמה לתורה, that respectful and kind behavior must underpin a life of Torah and Mitzvot. We are deeply appreciative of your family's commitment to supporting these values, which frame the important academic, social, and emotional growth that happens at school on a daily basis.

The enclosed JKHA Middle School Handbook is meant to articulate the responsibilities and values we expect our entire school family to embrace in order to achieve our mission. When parents, teachers, and students work collaboratively to uphold the expectations outlined in our Handbook, our entire community thrives. Please familiarize yourself with our policies and practices so that we can collectively support one another and our community as we continue to grow our thriving learning community.

We look forward to partnering with you!

Eliezer E. Rubin, Head of School

Ariel Levenson, Middle School Principal

Joey Adler, Dean of Students

OUR MISSION

As a Modern Orthodox institution we believe our students should live lives of Torah and mitzvot; embrace secular knowledge and American democratic values; love and serve the Jewish People; and forge a lifelong bond with the Land and State of Israel.

It's our responsibility to inspire excellence by:

Empowering students to achieve excellence through cultivation of their individual strengths in a way that teaches them how to learn and encourages them to think critically as we challenge them to pursue their unique paths.

Inspiring students to recognize that we must treat everyone with respect and loving-kindness because we were all created in the image of God.

Engaging students to form strong, healthy identities and preparing them to take responsibility for themselves and their communities.

What is “KushnerCares”?

KushnerCares is our Middle School social-emotional framework: it is the bedrock of the purposeful, values-driven teaching that happens inside and outside the classrooms of our school each and every day. Designed by JKHA faculty, KushnerCares-- an acronym that stands for **C**ommunity, **A**ccountability, **R**espect, **E**mpathy, and **S**elf Awareness-- establishes the pillars of character that help each one of us--students and teachers-- become the best versions of ourselves. At JKHA, through conscious, deliberate discussion and support of KushnerCares, we teach our students: to embrace and cultivate community; to hold themselves and each other accountable; to respect each person uniquely; to empathize with other people; to build self-awareness in an ongoing effort to better oneself. With these values in place, our students are prepared to become active and purposeful participants in Middle School and beyond.

**JKHA/RKYHS NON-SESSION DAYS
2023-2024**

Tuesday, September 5	First Day of Classes for all divisions
Friday, September 15	Erev Rosh Hashanah – no sessions
Monday, September 18	Tzom Gedaliah - 1:30pm dismissal for all divisions
Monday, September 25	Yom Kippur - no sessions
Friday, September 29	Erev Sukkot - no sessions
Monday, October 2 - Wednesday, October 4	Chol Hamoed Sukkot - no sessions for RKYHS only
Thursday, October 5	Chol Hamoed Sukkot – all divisions no sessions
Friday, October 6	Erev Shmini Atzeret - no sessions
Tuesday, November 7	Faculty In-service day – no sessions
Wednesday, November 22	Thanksgiving Eve - 1:30pm dismissal for all divisions
Thursday, November 23 – Friday, November 24	Thanksgiving - no sessions
Monday, December 25	Legal holiday - no sessions
Monday, January 1	Legal holiday - no sessions
Thursday, January 18 – Friday, January 26	Winter break - no sessions
Monday, February 19	President’s Day - no sessions
Monday, March 4	NJAIS preparation day - no sessions

Thursday, March 21	Ta'anit Esther - 1:30pm dismissal for all divisions
Monday, April 22 – Wednesday, May 1	Pesach - no sessions
Monday, May 27	Memorial Day - no sessions
Tuesday, June 11	Erev Shavuot - 1:30pm dismissal for all divisions
Wednesday, June 12 - Thursday, June 13	Shavuot - no sessions

Administration and Faculty

Rabbi Joey Adler – *Dean of Students/Judaic Studies Teacher*
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Ms. Leora Babich – *Teacher of Mathematics/Learning Center*
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Ms. Emma Bergstrom - *Teacher of Language Arts/Learning Center*
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Ms. Melanie Bienstock – *Teacher of Mathematics*
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Ms. Sheree Bohbot – *Administrative Assistant, JKHA Middle School Office*
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Ms. Susan Braverman- *Teacher of Art*
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Mr. Ari Levine- *Social Studies Lead Teacher and 5th Grade Head; Teacher of Social Studies/Language Arts*
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Ms. Anat Niv- *Teacher of Ivrit*
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Ms. Staci Zeif –*Language Arts Department Chair/Teacher of Language Arts*
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What Can Students Expect from JKHA?

- To be treated with respect
- To be provided with a program of academic excellence in all subjects
- To be supported by caring and warm teachers and administrators who possess expert content knowledge
- To feel secure both in body and mind at all times
- To find peers who will value and respect one another's intelligence, creativity and individuality

What Does JKHA Expect from Students?

- To treat fellow students and all members of the JKHA learning community as they themselves would like to be treated: with respect, courtesy and consideration
- To showcase KushnerCares values, inside and outside of the classroom
- To strive for academic excellence
- To become active members of a community of learners
- To practice the mitzvot and middot that distinguish B'nei and B'not Torah, and to strive to develop their intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social capabilities
- To adhere to the expectations and standards set forth by JKHA

What Should Parents Expect from JKHA?

- Passionate educators committed to providing students with a first-rate education in both Judaic and General Studies
- A personalized, differentiated academic program tailored to meet the individual needs of each student, as well as an educational environment that nurtures students' academic and social growth, enabling students to fulfill their highest personal potential

What Does JKHA Expect from Parents?

JKHA enrolls the students' families, not just the individual students, and we believe that a positive working relationship between our school and your family is essential to success. The school expects that parents:

- Be respectful and courteous in all written and in-person communications with the school
- Become familiar with and support the school's mission and policies
- Read all material emailed home; attend parent-teacher conferences, events sponsored by KPAC (Kushner Parent Activities Committee), Back to School Night, curricular evenings, sports games
- Support the articulated values of the school, cooperate with the school in any matters concerning discipline or academic achievement
- Keep in close communication with the school about your child's physical and emotional health and/or changes in the home environment
- Provide a quiet supportive environment for study at home
- Notify the administration if your child may be absent for an extended period of time to ensure the continuity of your child's academic program

Typical School Day

School begins with davening at 8:00 am; students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades go directly to the Klatt Family Beit Midrash in the front of the school, without stopping by lockers or classrooms first. 5th graders daven in the Middle School, in the Rosenberg Beit Midrash, as a grade, led by Rabbi Greenberg; they will leave their backpacks outside of their first period classrooms, which are on the way to the Rosenberg Beit Midrash.

After davening, Middle School students have a breakfast and locker break before first period. All Middle School students have 8 periods, with their day ending at 3:35 pm; the Lower School dismisses five minutes earlier, at 3:30 pm, to help with busing. (Specific information regarding dismissal appears in a subsequent section of this Handbook.) Students taking 4:20 buses wait in the Epstein-Stein Auditorium with Ms. Bohbot.

In 5th grade, students enroll in a robust schedule that includes both General and Judaic Studies. Students also take physical education, art, Navi, life skills, and technology as specials throughout the week.

6th through 8th graders, who are assigned lockers, have a breakfast/locker break immediately following morning davening; they also have two other locker breaks throughout the day. During locker break, students can go to their lockers to put away their books, socialize, and enjoy (nut and sesame free!) snacks from home.

Students have other breaks throughout the day, during which they can get their materials for their upcoming classes. After lunch, students have the opportunity to get their afternoon books and supplies from their lockers. All 6th through 8th graders daven Mincha in the Rosenberg Beit Midrash Monday-Thursday in the afternoon; 5th graders have an afternoon recess during that time. 6th-8th graders have another locker break after Mincha.

Students will receive their unique schedules before the start of the school year, at the end of August; each schedule lists the subject classes, teacher and room by class period. Copies of the schedule are available in the Middle School office as well. The daily schedule for each 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade student has been created to fulfill the needs of each individual child.

Personal care has been taken to ensure that each student is presented with a challenging and engaging curriculum in accordance with his or her abilities. Student placement differs in each discipline and grade level: in 5th grade, only math is leveled; in 6th-8th grades, math, Ivrit, and Judaic Studies classes are all leveled. Student placements are based upon past academic performance, teacher feedback, organizational skills, and standardized test scores. Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science are intentionally not leveled in 6th, 7th, or 8th grades, in order to enable students to connect with a variety of peer groups.

Over the course of the year, it is possible to switch a student's placement should the need arise. If students have questions or concerns about their individual schedules, they may set up a meeting with Ms. Levenson or Rabbi Adler.



JKHA MIDDLE SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE 2023-2024

MS Schedule	Monday - Thursday	Friday A	Friday B
Davening/ Breakfast	8:00 - 8:55	8:00 - 8:55	8:00 - 8:55
Period 1	9:00 - 9:39	Fundamental Tefillah Class 9:00 – 9:40	Fundamental Tefillah Class 9:00 – 9:40
Period 2	9:41 - 10:20	Period 1 9:42 – 10:22	Period 2 9:42 – 10:22
BREAK	10:20 - 10:30	Locker Break 10:22– 10:37	Locker Break 10:22– 10:37
Period 3	10:30 - 11:09	Period 3 10:37 – 11:17	Period 4 10:37 – 11:17
Period 4	11:11 - 11:50	Period 5 11:19 – 11:59	Period 6 11:19 – 11:59
Period 5	11:52 - 12:31	Lunch 12:00 – 12:43	Lunch 12:00 – 12:43
LUNCH	12:31 - 1:11	Period 7 12:45 – 1:25	Period 8 12:45 – 1:25
Period 6	1:13 - 1:52		
MINCHA	1:52- 2:05		
BREAK	2:05- 2:15		
Period 7	2:15 - 2:54		
Period 8	2:56 - 3:35		

****On days with extended Tefilah, a revised schedule will be utilized****

Tefillah for Grade 5

Middle School marks not only an important transition in the academic life of our students but also an important milestone in our students' religious and spiritual growth. To that end, all students in 5th grade begin to daven together daily in the Rosenberg Beit Midrash, and they transition into the full Middle School minyan at the end of 5th grade.

Tefillah for Grades 6, 7, 8

The Middle School minyan provides our students with a meaningful spiritual experience each day. **Tefillah begins promptly at 8:00 am, which is the start of our school day; students are expected to be at school by this time.** Students should go directly to the Klatt Beit Midrash for tefillah upon their entry to school; they should not go to their lockers first and should bring their bags with them to tefillah. At the minyan, students are provided with a Koren Aviv Siddur to use during davening. Students are expected to sit in their assigned seats, which are assigned on the first day of school.

Boys and girls must remain in their permanent seats for tefillah unless a member of the faculty asks them to switch. While tefillah is in progress, students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

On non-Torah reading days, davening ends by approximately 8:30 am. On Mondays and Thursdays, when the Torah is read, tefillah usually ends a little later. In the event of a longer davening time, schedules will be modified. Announcements will be made regarding a schedule change, as well as other important announcements regarding special programs or irregular schedules.

During davening, students should expect to develop a personal relationship or connection with Hashem, to acquire an appreciation for *tefillah b'tzibur*, and to understand the meaning of the words they are saying; every Friday, students will have a Tefillah class designed to help students connect. Students who would like the role of the chazzan should speak with Rabbi Sukenik to set up a time to lead davening.

Lockers for Grades 6, 7, 8

Before school begins, students are assigned a lock and locker by the Middle School office. At the end of the school year in 6th and 7th grade, students will lock their lockers on the inside loop. When students advance following the 8th grade, they are expected to return their locks. If students have trouble with their combinations, they can speak with Ms. Bohbot. As stated above, there are times when it is appropriate for students to be at their lockers; students should not need to go to their lockers during class as there are locker breaks.

Many 6th-8th grade Middle School students like having locker drawers, with measurements like [this one](#), to help them organize their materials; these drawers are not necessary and can be purchased privately by families if their children would like them.

Please note that students are responsible for the care of their lockers as school property; lockers should not be written on using marker, dry-erase or any other kind. Students are expected to lock their lockers to keep their contents protected.

Food Allergy Management

As JKHA is a nut-aware and sesame-aware institution, Shimtal Caterer, the school's caterer, will not serve any lunches or snacks containing peanuts or tree nuts. Additionally, any food distributed by the school for special programming will always be peanut, tree nut, and sesame-free.

In addition, our caterer will continue working with parents whose children participate in our school lunch program and who have specific requirements related to other food allergies.

Out of consideration for students who are allergic, we ask all JKHA parents not to send into school any sandwiches or snacks containing peanut butter, peanuts, tree nuts or sesame.

Please review carefully the ingredients list printed on the packaging of every food and snack you send in to school in order to support the safety of all of our students. No snack or lunch is ever worth endangering our students.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Home-cooked and home-baked products (such as birthday cakes) may not be shared among students in order to protect our students with allergies; similarly, students are not allowed to share or trade food.

Kashrut

To ensure the highest standards of *Kashrut*, as well as a safe environment for all students, we urge parents to carefully review and comply with the following policies:

- Kashrut symbols are currently accepted at JKHA based on the CRC directory (<https://consumer.crckosher.org/acceptable-kashrus-agencies/>). It is of paramount importance that all parents comply with this requirement when preparing dairy, parve and meat foods that will be sent into school for lunch or snacks.
- Shimtal Caterer will offer students dairy meals on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On these days only, dairy and parve meals may be sent from home. Shimtal Caterer will offer students meat meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On these days, meat meals may be sent from home.
- Students are not allowed to order food to be delivered to school at any time.
- Special orders for lunch are allowed for Chinese food and Holy Schnitzel days; these must be placed ahead of time and cannot be ordered on the day of.

Breakfast/Lunch Program

Shimtal Caterer provides a daily breakfast and lunch program at a cost per student. Breakfast items will be priced and sold on a daily basis, cafeteria style. Students have the option to purchase lunch on an annual basis, half year basis, specific day participation, or per day. In addition, if students are staying in school late, they can purchase snacks at the after school cafe. Students who ride the bus or get picked up at the regular dismissal time cannot go to the cafe before they leave, as it delays bus routes.

Please go to myschoolaccount.com to sign up or contact the caterer directly at 862-437-8043, 973-477-7956 or shimtalcaterer@jkha.org.

Lunch Time

Lunch for all 5th through 8th graders is from 12:31-1:11 pm Monday through Thursday, and 12:00-12:43 pm on Friday. Students are expected to wash netilat yadayim before eating bread and to spend the first

ten minutes of lunch, with the entire Middle School community, eating in the Jocheved Orbach Dining Hall, to ensure that all students have taken time to eat during their lunch break. Students are reminded to make the proper *bracha achrona* after eating, which will be led and supervised by Rabbi Dovid Sukenik, our *mashgiach ruchani*. After the first ten minutes of lunch, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students may go to the Jocheved Orbach Dining Hall, the gym, or to our beautiful recreational space outdoors (weather permitting), where they may play and/or socialize. 5th graders will be supervised and directed by two specific teachers on lunch duty, who are working exclusively with the 5th graders, who require more guidance and support during lunch than our older students do.

If a student is participating in an activity or club that meets during lunch, he or she may bring lunch to that activity's location. All students are expected to behave appropriately in the Jocheved Orbach Dining Hall, outdoors, and in the gym.

Please note: Middle School students in all grades are NOT permitted to use the RKYHS Cobra Cafe during the school day; they may ONLY purchase snacks after the school day ends, at 3:35. Students who buy items at Cobra Cafe outside that exclusive timeframe will incur appropriate disciplinary responses, as well as confiscation of the item bought in order to foster self-awareness and accountability.

Tests/Quizzes/Homework

There is a master calendar for tests and projects posted on the bulletin board across the hall from Ms. Wasserman's office. Each teacher is responsible for entering tests and/or project due dates on the master wall calendar. Students are to be given one week's notice about upcoming tests.

Additionally, students and their parents can access their child's specific test schedule via [Google Classroom](#); the [grade test calendar](#) is also accessible via the school website.

In 5th grade, students are allowed to have two assessments per week. This will be adjusted to three in January. Assessments will be posted on the hall calendar outside the 5th grade classrooms.

For 6th, 7th and 8th graders, there can be no more than one General Studies and one Judaic Studies test per day. Unannounced "pop" quizzes can be given at any time as they do not require studying and are less than fifteen minutes in duration. Announced quizzes will be scheduled at least three days in advance and are also expected to be less than fifteen minutes in duration.

Homework can be assigned on any school day, excluding holidays (Chol HaMoed Sukkot, Chanukah). The day after a holiday or major class trip, there will be no tests or major assessments due.

Terms and Grades

The Middle School year is divided into three trimesters. Students and their families receive report cards with numerical averages and comments through email at the end of each term, in December, March, and June. In the event that a student fails a class, they will be required to complete summer work in order to make up missed material and earn their place in the following year's grade.

Parent-Teacher conferences for Middle School students are scheduled for December only; parents with questions or concerns may reach out to teachers during the school year to discuss student issues.

Academic Code of Conduct and Intellectual Integrity Policy

This Academic Code of Conduct and Intellectual Integrity policy was designed to ensure a positive, safe, and respectful learning environment for all of our Middle School students. Everyone in our JKHA Middle School community deserves to be treated with respect, and all students will be held accountable for maintaining this standard of civility in all of their classes.

In keeping with our KushnerCares values, we hold our students accountable for their behavior and expect them across all grades to be self-aware of their decorum and academic work. Specifically, we want our JKHA Middle School students to know which academic behaviors are not permitted in order to avoid them:

- Cheating, plagiarism, forgery and computer use in class for a purpose other than the classwork is strictly prohibited.
- Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of books, devices, notes, crib sheets, copying from other students.
- Plagiarism is defined as stealing or using, without acknowledgement, the ideas, words, formulas, textual materials, online services, computer programs, etc. of another person as one's own. This also includes using any generative AI (like ChatGPT and similar platforms) and presenting that work as if it is your own.

For tests and major assignments:

If submitted work contains writing that was not generated by that student, the student will earn a failing grade of 65%. For the first offense only, the student will have the opportunity to revise the plagiarized assignment for a new grade, which will be averaged with the initial 65%. All subsequent offenses on major assignments will earn a zero.

For homework assignments:

For submitting homework assignments that contain plagiarized text, students will earn a zero for the assignment and will not have an opportunity to revise the assignment for a different grade. For submitted homework assignments that are copied from a classmate, all classmates involved will earn a zero for that assignment; they will not have the opportunity to revise the assignment for a different grade.

Device Policy

JKHA Middle School policy is that all cell phones, Apple watches, smart watches, and non-school issued devices may not be used during the school day, beginning at 8:00 AM; students may use their school-issued Chromebooks only.

If phones are brought to school, **they must be locked and unused in a student's locker for the duration of the school day** to support appropriate in-person socialization and educational growth. Phones are not allowed to be used during the school day in any capacity, unless specifically authorized by a teacher.

If a phone is seen during school hours, it will be confiscated by a faculty member. Phones may be picked up after dismissal in the Middle School office. Further offenses will be met with more severe consequences. **This policy is in place for all students in the Middle School, and we expect our parents to honor and support this policy.**

Communication between Parents and Students

Parents are respectfully asked *not* to initiate communication with their children during the school day in order to encourage student independence and in keeping with our no phone/device policy. Should a parent need to communicate with his/her child during the day, please call the Middle School office at 862-437-8015 or email sbohbot@jkha.org. If a student needs to communicate home, s/he can communicate from the Middle School office at the appropriate times, with teacher permission only, using the school's phone.

Communication between Parents and Teachers and Administrators

In Middle School, we encourage our students to self advocate as they forge paths of independence. Realistically, students in Middle School are not always ready for that mantle of independence and need adult support and intervention. Should a parent wish to communicate with a teacher about a particular class, assignment, or question, parents should always approach via email their child's teacher first, directly, with questions.

If the parent requires further support/advice, the parent should feel free to connect with the department chair for the subject; alternatively, the parent may call the Middle School at 862-437-8015 or email sbohbot@jkha.org to set up a call or appointment with Ms. Levenson or Rabbi Adler.

If the parent's concern is about a social-emotional concern, the parent should connect with Ms. Aviva Wasserman (for 7th and 8th grades) or Ms. Gerry Resnick (for 5th and 6th grades), our Middle School Guidance Counselors.

KushnerChromeCare Optional Insurance for Chromebooks

At JKHA Middle School, we provide all students in the Middle School with 1:1 devices. At the start of the school year, each student is assigned a Chromebook with a specific number and serial number. Students/families may choose to purchase their own hard case to protect the device; all Chromebooks are the same size [Dell 3100](#). Ms. Rubin has samples of cases in her office, if students would like to look at them before privately ordering. **It's important that all families click [here](#) to review and opt-in or out of the JKHA Middle School KushnerChromeCare Optional Insurance Policy;** opting in provides coverage for damage to Chromebooks. As a reminder, student Chromebooks should not be decorated with stickers and logos; if the ID stickers are peeled off, there will be a \$5 replacement fee to print a new one.

- Students in 6th-8th grades are responsible for the care and keeping of their Chromebooks, which they should bring to and from school daily, charging nightly at home with the school-provided charger. Bringing the Chromebook home is a nightly expectation to help students take responsibility and hold themselves accountable for their devices.
- As our 5th graders are new to Middle School, 5th graders' Chromebooks will not travel home; they live permanently in school and charge in 5th grade classrooms.

- Charging stations will be available in school for students in all grades, should a student need to charge during the day. Should a student forget his or her Chromebook at home, Ms. Rubin can loan out a Chromebook, if available, for the day; students must participate in their classes without a Chromebook if none are available.
- All students are fully responsible for their Chromebooks; when Chromebooks are damaged, the school will not investigate the reasoning behind the damage, nor will the reasoning impact the cost of a repair. As has been true in the past, parents will be responsible for any repairs that need to be made to the Chromebook.

Dress Code

Students must enter and depart from school with respect for our school dress code. As a Modern Orthodox yeshiva, we strive to inculcate in our students an appreciation for the value of *tzniut*; our dress code reflects this value of modesty and appearing presentable.

We respectfully request full parental partnership in supporting our dress code. Students not in dress code will be informed discreetly in school about their dress code infraction. They will then be given clean clothing that complies with our dress code from the Middle School office to change into, and they will be expected to return those laundered clothes the next day of school; parents will be charged \$10 for clothing not returned.

Parents will receive an emailed notice that day alerting them to their child's dress code infraction. For repeated dress code infractions (more than three), the administration will determine more impactful consequences, including give-backs during lunch, exclusion from participation in school sports' programs and teams after school, as well as potential after-school detention.

No dress code is capable of addressing every conceivable situation; it is left to the discretion of the faculty and administration to decide on individual cases as to the appropriateness of how a particular style of fashion is in keeping with the spirit and goals of our dress code.

We believe in our students' and their families' shared ability and commitment to hold themselves accountable to the dress code rules of the school. Dressing in an appropriate manner in accordance with our dress code sets the right tone for learning while fostering accountability and self-awareness among our students. We thank you in advance for your family's support!

Girls

General

- Hair must be kept neat; any hair coloring must remain natural; hair may not be dyed unnatural colors
- Shirts may not bear inappropriate content
- Hats/hoods may not be worn during school hours
- Students must wear closed-toe shoes. **Slippers, heels, slides and sandals are not permitted.**
- Apple watches are not permitted

Middle School Girls' Dress Code Grades 5-6

Girls' tops:

- Solid shirts (collars not required) in any color
- Neckline over collarbone, sleeves reaching mid-bicep or below
- Print t-shirts over dress code shirts are not permitted
- All sweatshirts are permitted
- Solid dresses are permitted
- The following types of necklines may not be worn: low-cut, cut-outs, v-neck, boat neck

Girls' bottoms:

- Navy, khaki, grey, tan or black skirts or jumpers
- In accordance with the value of modesty (*tzniut*), skirts must reach the knee
- Leggings are permitted underneath skirts

Middle School Girls' Dress Code Grades 7-8

Girls' tops:

- Shirts in any color/colors/patterns/design (solid color and collars are not required)
- Neckline over collarbone, sleeves reaching mid-bicep or below
- All sweatshirts are permitted
- Solid dresses are permitted
- The following types of necklines may not be worn: low-cut, cut-outs, v-neck, boat neck

Girls' bottoms:

- Navy, khaki, grey, tan or black skirts or jumpers
- In accordance with the value of modesty (*tzniut*), skirts must reach the knee
- Leggings are permitted underneath skirts

Boys

General

- Hair must be kept neat; any hair coloring must remain natural; hair may not be dyed unnatural colors
- Shirts may not bear inappropriate content
- Hats/hoods may not be worn during school hours
- Students must wear closed-toe shoes. **Slippers, heels, slides and sandals are not permitted.**
- A kippah and tzitzit must be worn
- Apple watches are not permitted

Boys' tops:

- Solid collared shirts (polo or button-down) in any color; any color collared shirt is acceptable as long as it does not bear inappropriate content
- All sweaters and sweatshirts are permitted, but a collared shirts must be visible
- Button down shirts should remain buttoned for the duration of the school day

Boys' bottoms:

- Navy, khaki, grey, tan or black Dockers-style pants
- No sweatpants, jeans, track pants or cargo pants. **Joggers are permitted in non-athletic material only (like [this](#))**

PE Clothes

In order to maximize students' ability to participate in PE and to support self-awareness about personal hygiene in the Middle School, students may choose to change into appropriate PE clothes when they have PE, just as they would and do for team practices after school. For girls, appropriate clothing includes:

- T-shirts
- Sweatpants
- Sneakers
- Leggings and shorts are not permitted
- Spray deodorants are not permitted

For boys, appropriate clothing includes:

- T-shirts
- Sweatpants, track pants, joggers or shorts
- Sneakers
- Spray deodorants are not permitted

If students wear deodorant normally, they should also bring deodorant into school on PE days to reapply.

Students who choose NOT to change for PE must wear sneakers, which are a requirement always in PE. Girls who choose to remain in skirts must be in skater-style skirts (as opposed to pencil skirts), which allow for a freer range of movement.

Students who do not bring in PE clothes will sit on the bleachers for the duration of the class and may not leave the class/do work elsewhere/retrieve their Chromebooks from lockers. If students repeatedly do not bring in their PE clothes, we will adjust our response with further consequences to encourage student accountability.

Middot Matter: Our Approach to Behavior & Discipline

All students have the right to learn, and all teachers have the right to teach in an environment of mutual respect. This is the guiding principle of the JKHA discipline policy, through which we build community and hold one another accountable, while establishing a culture of respect, empathy, and self-awareness. KushnerCares guides our policy at every turn.

At all grade levels in Middle School, students are expected to understand and abide by the expectations and rules created by their classroom teachers. Teachers handle disciplinary issues within their classrooms as they arise.

However, when student behavior hinders the learning of any students or creates a negative learning environment, students may be sent to the Middle School office, where their behavior will be addressed appropriately. For minor disciplinary incidents, we believe that students must somehow "give back" to our school community, which they had negatively impacted with their original offending behavior. During the middle school lunch period, disciplinary heads coordinate opportunities for students to "give back" to the school by working to help the school in some capacity in lieu of the more traditional lunch detention. For more serious disciplinary incidents or repeated minor incidents by a student, the administration will determine an appropriate consequence.

Parents will be notified of any significant disciplinary infractions as we continue to partner with one another to support students and their role in our school community.

Dismissal/Attendance/Absence from School

Our school manages students' absences, dismissal plans, and general attendance via the app PikMyKid. All parents must download this app and register with the system. If parents need to make any changes to their child's dismissal status, such as delegation to a different pickup individual, a switch from a carpool to bus, or from bus to carpool, or from an after school sports practice to a KushnerCreative, these changes must be made in the PikMyKid app; changes should not be made after 1 pm. (Parents can schedule recurrent pick-up plans by day of the week for repeated family schedules.) For changes outside this timeframe, please contact Sheree Bohbot at sbohbot@jkha.org or 862-437-8015.

The PikMyKid support team is available to help if you have any questions. Please contact them directly at support@pikmykid.com, as they can help parents orient themselves to the platform.

Attendance will be taken each day by all Middle School teachers during the first period. If your child will be arriving late to school, he/she must sign in at the security desk in front and then stop by the MS office to get a late note.

Students are not expected to do work while they are sick at home. However, it *is* the student's responsibility to check in with all teachers after or during an absence and to make up any missed class work or assignments. In the event of a family absence (vacation etc.), students are expected to be in touch with the teacher, and will be expected to complete all missed work within one week upon returning to school. Please note that, due to the evolving nature of teaching in the classroom, teachers cannot always provide work ahead of time.

All Middle School teachers use Google Classroom to help students and parents understand assignments and their due dates. If you have any questions or difficulty with the platform, please email Ms. Rubin, our Educational Technologist, at mrubin@jkha.org, as she can provide assistance and instruction.

Dismissal Procedure

Dismissal for Middle School students is at 3:35 pm, intentionally five minutes after the Lower School dismissal at 3:30, which enables our younger students the time they need to get to their dismissal locations. Students should be mindful to pack up in a timely fashion and go straight to their dismissal locations. The buses aim to pull out by 3:45 pm. In the event that buses are late, students are expected to remain in the Atrium or, weather permitting, outside the main JKHA entrance.

Students who go home via carpool with Lower School students will go to Gate 613 (the hallway area near the Middle School office) in the Middle School to be dismissed. Students who go home via carpool with *only* Middle School students in their carpool (no Lower School or Early Childhood students) will go to the RKYHS entrance to be dismissed.

Learning Center

The Learning Center supports students with modified schedules or specific learning needs. Learning specialists work with small groups of students who need curriculum support and study skill strategies. Every attempt is made to meet the needs of all students to help ensure that each student reaches his/her academic potential.

There are six learning center teachers in the Middle School: Ms. Babich, Morah Hendel, Ms. Litland, Ms. Shanskhailil, Ms. Friedlander, and Ms. Bergstrom. If you have specific questions about Learning Center, please reach out directly to Ms. Debbie Finkelstein, who manages the MS Learning Center, at dfinkelstein@jkha.org.

Guidance and Mental Health

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Middle School guidance and counseling services, headed by Ms. Aviva Wasserman. The Guidance Office is a valuable resource for students who need to discuss a challenge at home, a question about friendships, a struggle with classwork, stress about a test, difficulty sleeping, among other concerns of this nature.

Students may make appointments to meet with Ms. Wasserman (awasserman@jkha.org) or Ms. Resnick (gresnick@jkha.org) through email. Lunchtime is the ideal time for these appointments. Ms. Wasserman and Ms. Resnick are also available at breakfast, locker break, and during the break after mincha. For urgent issues, students and parents may connect with Ms. Wasserman or Ms. Resnick without an appointment, but it's important that all students understand that they may not go directly to Ms. Wasserman or Ms. Resnick without permission from their teacher first, as it's imperative that we know where all students are at all times for their physical and emotional safety. Once a student asks his or her teacher for permission to meet with Ms. Wasserman or Ms. Resnick in an urgent circumstance, the teacher will then confirm with Ms. Wasserman or Ms. Resnick availability during that time. Once confirmed, students may be excused from their class for support.

Parents may reach out to Ms. Wasserman directly about concerns by email at awasserman@jkha.org or by phone at 862-437-8057. Parents may reach out to Ms. Resnick directly about concerns by email at gresnick@jkha.org at 862-437-8154.

Outside of the Classroom: School Programming, Shabbatonim, & Trips

JKHA Middle School revolves around the philosophy that learning occurs both in and out of the classroom. Our programming is constructed to reinforce the traditional academic learning that takes up a majority of our school days. While most of this programming takes place during the school day and in the school building, there are a number of trips and Shabbatonim throughout the year. The 5th and 6th grades each have at least one yearly trip outside of school, and the 7th and 8th grade each attend yearly Shabbatonim. Our 7th Grade also takes a yearly day-long trip to Philadelphia, and our 8th grade takes a three day trip to Washington, DC.

On any school trip, students are expected to model KushnerCARES values, and to set an example (a "kiddush Kushner") as we represent our school community. Before our Shabbatonim and school trips, students are required to sign Derech Eretz expectations contracts (like this, [Shabbaton-specific one](#)), which will be emailed home prior to the trip. Failure to meet these expectations may result in our asking parents to pick students up.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Policy

In our Middle School, we believe in and support a culture of inclusion and kindness; our policy reflects our belief that simchas provide important opportunities for families to model for their children what it means to purposefully include others in building a community.

Whichever option is selected of those listed below, please keep in mind that children want to be included in social activities: no one likes to be left out, and doing so does not reflect the ethos of our school or

community, where we value kindness and inclusion. Please include any SINAI classmates in your invitations, and remember, it is important for all children to feel that they belong in our school community: being a part of a simcha celebration cements that feeling. If you have already made plans that contradict this policy, please amend them promptly.

A family may reserve a bar/bat mitzvah date for their child by booking the desired date with Ms. Bohbot no more than two years prior to the date. For example, a bar/bat mitzvah to be held on January 6, 2026 can be booked no earlier than January 6, 2024. The guidelines for parties other than a Shabbat Kiddush or lunch follow:

- The school calendar will allow for multiple parties for the same grade on the same day, if necessary, but only one party per grade will be allowed at one given time. Parents can reserve a slot in the morning (9:00-1:00), afternoon (1:00-5:00) or evening. Preference will be given to the family who reserves first on the school calendar. Please call Ms. Bohbot at 862-437-8015 or email her at sbohbot@jkha.org to reserve the date for your son/daughter's bar/bat Mitzvah.
- If there is a conflict and there are a number of celebrations on the same day, families are asked to work together with one another directly on the timing of events.
- You may submit only one date for your celebration.
- All food and drinks served at a bar/bat mitzvah must be glatt kosher.
- Students should dress modestly and act appropriately at another family's simcha.
- We encourage that weekday celebrations end by 9 pm, and weekend parties end at a reasonable hour as well.

As the date of the celebration gets closer, the guest list will need to be finalized. Addresses are accessible through the JKHA school directory through the school website, or by asking Ms. Bohbot. Please keep in mind that the bar/bat mitzvah celebration should be an occasion for inclusion. One of the following options should be chosen:

- Inviting all of the students in the grade;
- Inviting just the boys or just the girls in the grade;
- Inviting a small group of JKHA friends (no more than 8).

Regarding Shabbat invitations, please create your invitation list from the following options:

- Invite all JKHA students in the grade;
- Invite all JKHA boys/all JKHA girls in the grade;
- Invite only JKHA boys or girls in your immediate local community (i.e. only West Orange boys or girls, or East Brunswick boys or girls);
- If you are not inclined to invite all of the boys/girls in the grade, no more than 8 friends should be invited.

Whichever option is selected, please keep in mind that children want to be included in social activities: no one likes to be left out. Please reach out to Ms. Levenson should you wish to include any SINAI classmates; she will then connect with the Head of Sinai, who will help determine which students from the corresponding SINAI grade can attend a simcha independently and successfully. We aim to include our SINAI classmates whenever possible.

Celebrations in school are allowed but should be kept modest. Outside family members and friends are welcome, but please do not bring candy to throw in the shul. JKHA recommends ordering refreshments for the entire minyan or just for the grade through the school caterer, Shimtal Caterer, who can be reached at shimtal@jkha.org.

To maintain the integrity of and commitment to our academic program, however, parents are not permitted to invite the grade during school hours to off-campus Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations.

Fire and Lockdown Drills

Over the course of the year, there will be a number of drills to ensure that all students and faculty are familiar with the protocols and procedures in place in case of an emergency. No matter where a student is during a drill, be it the lunchroom, auditorium, gym, or a classroom, he or she must follow the specific procedures established by the school. Students must remain silent during fire drills, even after attendance is taken. It is for each child's safety that these drills are taken seriously.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, an email will be sent to all parents as soon as possible to inform the school community about any delays or cancellations. There will be a voicemail on the main school number (862-437-8000) with a message regarding any cancellations or delays by 5:45 am. In the event of a delayed opening, students are expected to daven at home.

Regarding busing in particular, parents will receive specific information about their children's bus routes; they must also opt-in then to a text messaging group with bus-specific information and updates; questions about transportation specifically can be directed to Ms. Jennifer Glasser, Transportation Director, at jglasser@jkha.org.

Library

The library is open during regular school hours. Students are encouraged to make use of the extensive collection of Sefarim and fiction and non-fiction books in the library. No materials are to leave the library without first being checked out at the circulation desk with Ms. Roth. Subscriptions to online databases are available for work and research purposes. Students using computers and the internet for inappropriate purposes will lose the privilege of using this facility. Students should work quietly and not disturb fellow students. Students are required to return all library materials before the end of the school year in order to receive their report cards.

Nurse/Health Services

The school nurses are responsible for a variety of services, including providing students with prescribed medication, assisting students who become sick during the day or are involved in an accident, and maintaining medical files. It is very important that parents inform the nurse about all medical needs and keep medical data up to date.

School Health Policies

The following policies are in effect on all grade levels of Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy and the Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School.

1. **Immunizations** - All students must be immunized to meet the NJ department of Health requirements. Medical exceptions must satisfy the criteria established by the NJ department of Health. **Religious exceptions are not accepted.** Covid vaccinations are not required but are encouraged.
2. **New Students/ Emergency Plans and Medications-** Immunization records and any Emergency Action Plan relating to conditions such as seizure, diabetes, food allergies, or asthma plan must be submitted to Magnus (<https://secure.magnushealthportal.com/>) before the first day of school. Students with emergency medications must have their medication brought to the nurse's office the **first day of school**. Please make sure the medication is not expired.
Important note: The Health Office processes information solely through our Magnus portal. Any documentation submitted on paper cannot be accepted.
3. **Food Allergies-** For the protection of students with nut and peanut allergies, no students or staff members are permitted to bring any food or beverages containing peanuts, tree nuts, or sesame. This also includes snacks that are labeled "containing traces of nuts," which are not permitted in school.
4. **Prescription Medications-** If your child needs to take medication during school hours, he or she must have a prescription from the doctor and the medication must come to school in its original container. Please note this includes **over the counter medications as well**. Medications that do not meet this criteria will not be disbursed by the nursing staff.

Sick Students- If your child is sick with any of the below symptoms, please keep him or her home:

- i. Fever
- ii. Coughing
- iii. Diarrhea
- iv. Vomiting
- v. Cannot perform daily school activities

Students struggle to learn successfully when feeling unwell; we do not want other students getting sick, either, from students who remain in school while feeling ill.

- Please wait 24 hours from when the symptoms subside without the use of fever reducing medications to return to school.
- If your child becomes ill with a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea in school, the nursing staff will call you to pick him/her up within a reasonable amount of time. Children with any of the above symptoms will not be dismissed on the bus. This is important for the student's welfare and to minimize the spread of illnesses at school. Please ensure you have a plan should your child become ill during school hours.

We thank you in advance for your partnership in keeping our school safe. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to the nurses at 862-437-8018 or nurses@jkha.org.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

In the Middle School, following the first trimester only, parents are invited to meet with teachers for parent-teacher conferences in December. Short private meetings in each subject area may be scheduled by parents with each of their child's teachers. An email will be sent out with instructions on how to sign up for parent-teacher conferences. Parents should be aware of the deadlines and are encouraged to sign up early, as slots fill up quickly.

Of course, parents are always welcome to contact the administration and teachers directly with any concerns that arise during the year.

Student Council

In Middle School, students may choose to run for positions in our Student Council. Fifth and sixth graders may hold positions as their class representatives; seventh graders may run for Secretary and Treasurer, and eighth graders may run for President and Vice President. There are two Student Council members in each grade.

Students who would like to run for Student Council must be school leaders, even before they earn an elected title and role. Students should illustrate KushnerCares values at all times, with a clear commitment to building our community, holding themselves accountable for their behavior, respecting classmates and teachers, empathizing with experiences that differ from their own, and showing self-awareness about their own behavior and attitudes. Students running for Student Council must follow all school rules at all times to be eligible to run.

To run for Student Council, which is headed by Rabbi Breslin, students will complete an application illustrating their readiness for a leadership role in the Middle School. They must attend the leadership workshops taking place in advance of the elections.

At our Middle School, we are eager for students to play an active role in building our community, and we ask that when elected, those leaders act responsibly with their leadership in order to maintain their elected roles.

KushnerCreatives

KushnerCreatives are cost-free, after-school, opt-in enrichment classes designed to help our Middle School students engage academically with content outside the curriculum. These classes change on a trimester basis; in the past, we've offered art, music, coding, STEM enrichment, and Science Lab; the offerings differ from trimester to trimester. Students receive a grade for these classes to emphasize accountability, though there are no tests or homework associated with participation in them. Students' participation is only limited by their behavior; students abiding by KushnerCares values in KushnerCreatives are allowed to enroll in as many KushnerCreatives as they would like (space permitting), while students whose behavior does not adhere to our standards will not be admitted into KushnerCreatives.

For the full menu of KushnerCreatives offered per term, families will receive an email from the Middle School about the trimester's choices and corresponding days of the week offered. At that point, families will need to fill in a GoogleForm for registration; their child's registration will be confirmed when the registration period ends. **For each KushnerCreative that a student attends, parents are reminded that they must update their PikMyKid app dismissal plan so as to avoid delaying departing buses; failure to do so will limit students' ability to participate in the program.**

Sports Program

There are a number of teams for Middle School students to join; announcements will be shared when tryouts are occurring and for which sports.

Fall sports tryouts will be announced via email at the beginning of the school year; spring sports tryouts will be emailed after January break.

In order to try out, students will need the proper equipment for that sport, and a completed athletic/health form. In order to stay on a sports team, students must maintain a "75" average. Class conduct may also impact a student's permission to participate in athletics. More information about requirements for participation in our sports program can be found [here](#), in the JKHA Athletic Handbook.

Students in grades 6-8 may try out for teams. A student making a team does not guarantee the student playing time during games. Coaches make every effort to play as many players as possible, but the leagues are competitive, and middle school athletes should know that our teams play to win, so players are not guaranteed equal playing time. Playing time is at the discretion of coaches, and can also be limited based on in-game/practice behavior. Proper middot on and off the court are required to play on any JKHA team.

There are uniform fees for each team as well. Depending on the team, costs range from \$50-\$125. Uniforms may be used for multiple seasons per team.

For communication about practices and games, all participating athletes and parents will communicate only via TeamSnap (phone app); Whatsapp/texting and/or group chats with coaches are not allowed.

Please note that, unless communicated otherwise, there are no practices on Chol HaMoed Sukkot, nor on days with early dismissal.

The Athletic Department will also attempt to run clinics in various sports throughout the year. Clinics are open to students in 5-8 grades and will be announced via email. There is a fee to participate.

All correspondence within teams/clinics/coaches/families will take place through the app TeamSnap.

Rabbi Richard Kirsch is the Director of the Athletics Department, coordinating game and practice schedules, coach assignments, and transportation. He can be reached at rkirsch@rkyhs.org. Ms. Elie Salomon is the Coordinator of the Athletics Department, handling TeamSnap and communication with parents. She can be reached at esalomon@jkha.org.

Sports' Participation Forms

If your child plans to participate in any organized sports this coming school year, he or she **must** provide all necessary health paperwork in order to be cleared to play. All necessary paperwork can be found on the Magnus Health portal. Please make sure you have all the paperwork signed by your physician.

The following forms must be complete and a student is only considered "in good standing" one year from when paperwork was signed.

- i. **Sports participation form** (all the pages must be filled out),
- ii. **Concussion worksheet**
- iii. **Cardiac worksheet**
- iv. **Health history Fall** (if it has been more than 3 months since their sport's physical was complete).