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TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Torah values and the safety and well-being of all our students is the primary focus of Torah Academy. As we raise the next generation of B'nai Torah, it is necessary to address the computer practices of our talmidim, both in and out of school.

Gedolim and Torah leaders in the *chinuch* world have been unanimous in their message: *The computer and internet pose huge dangers to the ruchniyos of Klal Yisroel and is perhaps the nisayon of our generation. The challenge is not just from inappropriate images and content but also from the time spent doing “appropriate” things on a device instead of spending that time interacting with our family and friends. The best approach is to limit our use of computers, phones and the internet as much as possible. Where it is necessary, it should be used wisely and minimally. Unfiltered internet is particularly problematic for children and adults and must be avoided.*

At Torah Academy we have seen, first-hand, the challenges technology has placed on our families. It is imperative that as a community we fortify the walls between the Torah world and the outside world that, more than ever before, presents as a bastion of inappropriate language and behavior. With these principles in mind, we have developed the following policy:

In School

- As has always been the case, in-school devices with internet capability are only able to access whitelisted sites. This means that if the school has not actively cleared a site, then students cannot access that site. Furthermore, there are no search capabilities on student devices.
- Chromebooks are used for typing documents and creating presentations. Beyond that, they are only used for benchmark assessments three times each year, for regular academic, individualized programs in Math and English, and for occasional entertainment activities in the academic realm (Kahoot!, etc.).

At Home

- **There may be times when students are assigned homework that requires the internet. When this occurs, students should be working on a properly filtered device with appropriate supervision. If the home does not have a properly filtered device available for the student, then the school is willing to provide (with parent deposit) a device that is set up with the same restrictions as the devices in the school. Students should never be left on computers unsupervised – even filtered computers.**
- **Students may not own their own an unfiltered internet-enabled device (Smart phones, internet watches, iPods, etc.).** In some cases, it may be necessary for students to have a phone for safety reasons (eg. they travel by public transportation to and from school). In such cases, students may own a basic phone that is TAGed through one of the TAG centers. **If your child has a need to bring his or her approved phone to school, please contact the principal to discuss it. If a student is permitted to bring it, it must be brought to the office at the beginning of the day and may be picked up at dismissal.**
- Students should never be on a computer without parental supervision (unless it's a school device), at home or anywhere else (library, Target, Apple Store, etc.)

- Families should consult with [TAG](#) (617-344-9650) annually to make sure they are up-to-date on the best ways to meet their specific needs while protecting the *ruchniyus* of the home.
- Parents should limit their own time on devices, as much as possible (*especially during family time*) in order to model healthy habits. We know that children learn from parents through observation, and we want to reinforce proper behavior through this method.

Video Games/ Youtube

- **Torah Academy students may not play video games that are part of social networks, such as Minecraft and Fortnite. The damage caused by this pastime is well-documented. If it comes to the school's attention that a student is playing these games, spending time on Youtube, or otherwise using the internet in a way that is not befitting a ben/bas Torah, the school will work with the student and family to remove the negative influence from the school environment.**

As it says in the Navi Yishaya, אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יַעֲזֹר וְלְאַחֵיו יֵאמָר תְּזַקַּק, [Each one helps the other, saying to each other, “Take Courage!"]. Challenges that seem difficult are easier to overcome when we work on it together as a group.