

INTRODUCING 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR MTA ONLINE PLUS



ONLINE



"PLUS"

MORNING CLASSES: ONLINE ONLY

LIVE ONLINE COURSES

Taught by innovative educators utilizing creative techniques.



MINIMAL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Depending on age and ability of child.
No papers to print. Minimal to no homework.

SCHOOLWORK DELIVERED WEEKLY

Printouts and all necessary materials provided.



FOCUSING ON THE CHILDREN

Offering stability in unstable times with minimal impact from Covid-19.



WEEKLY MIDDOS WORKSHOP

Examples include humility, honesty, anger management, jealousy & more.



LEARN FROM OUR GEDOLIM

Weekly profile of great Rabbinic sages and how we can learn from their actions.

INTER-GENERATIONAL PROGRAM

Learning alongside seniors in an enriching virtual environment. Grandparents invited!



COMMUNITY LEADER APPRECIATION

Learn what community leaders do in real life and thank them for their service.

AFTERNOON CLASSES: ONLINE OR ON CAMPUS

ACADEMICS



SMALL "BUBBLE" CLASSES

Allows for social distancing and proper sanitation between "bubbles."

PERSONALIZED ATTENTION

Supports individualized learning.



MASTERY BASED LEARNING

Students learn on their level.

FEWER TESTS = LESS STRESS

ENRICHMENT

WOODWORKING



AGRICULTURE



GYM



ZOOLOGY

MARTIAL ARTS



ART



NUTRITION

SWIMMING



Boys Division:
Kindergarten
to 8th grade

Girls Division:
Kindergarten
to 8th grade

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July 10, 2020

Dear Parents,

We hope this letter finds you well, and that you and your family are enjoying your summer. During this unprecedented time, we are aware of all of the uncertainties and questions that have arisen regarding the upcoming school year. As life as we know it is constantly changing and new and unexpected challenges arise, we strive to develop a stable and enriching environment for our children. While each family has experienced this turbulent time in their own deeply personal and individual way, and none of us are in the "same boat," we can assure you that we are all weathering the very same storm.

At Mizrahi Torah Academy, we take pride in the fact that we educate the whole child. Our small class sizes allow us to focus on the individual needs and talents of each child and nurture both the mind and neshama. With all the many questions regarding our reopening, we have decided to do what we do best – focus on the children. It is our view that for children to truly thrive, they need more than just love and acceptance, they need stability and structure. The current state of the world is providing neither of these essential factors. At Mizrahi Torah Academy, we have been struggling with the following two questions: 1) How do we provide stability and structure in an environment where change is inevitable? and 2) How do we pour all of our energy into developing an enriching program for students when we might instead be forced to spend most of our energy reacting to each crisis? After many days and hours spent deliberating these questions, we have decided to be proactive instead of reactive. We wanted to develop something that would provide stability and structure while also ensuring the safety and growth of our MTA families. To do this, we made the decision to develop a schooling platform that we are calling "MTA Online Plus."

The goal of this program is to offer safety and stability for all skill-based academic subjects (using an online platform) while offering the benefits of an in-school option for enrichment courses with small learning "bubbles" where appropriate (the "Plus" option).

- a. **Online Classes:** The online classes will be taught live. We will not be utilizing pre-recorded lessons, nor will the children be expected to print out worksheets. These Judaic, secular studies, and other skill-based subjects will remain stable and consistent throughout the year, regardless of what is happening in the unstable world around us.
- b. **"Plus" Option:** Based on each family's personal comfort level, parents have the option to utilize the "Plus" part of the day by coming into MTA or by continuing from home in the online platform. For those who come to MTA in-person, learning will take place in a "bubble," which will consist of small groupings of students who will learn in person with their teacher. Each bubble will have the same students each day to avoid unnecessary exposure. This bubble option is intended to provide in-person instruction in limited, socially distant groups. Additionally, for those in school, we will have socially distant enrichment activities, such as gym, swimming, woodworking, etc. For those that choose to remain home, the same individualized sessions will be available online, although those who remain home may not necessarily participate in all the socially distant peer activities.

By teaching this way, we avoid full school or class closures should a case of COVID-19 be discovered. It allows the children to have the most stability and structure we can offer. Attached is a sample schedule of what the day will look like, along with a page of what we are sure will be frequently asked questions. The goal is to provide the best of both worlds – a thorough education with minimal interruptions, and the social interactions between peers based on parental comfort level. By offering half a day of each, we strive to provide a stable structure in an unstable world.

We recognize that this is a dramatic change from what many parents had hoped would be a regular return to the school this Fall. While change can be difficult, we are confident that this upcoming year will bring new opportunities for growth and development. With our team of passionate and innovative educators, we look forward to working together in building an exceptional educational model for this upcoming 2020-2021 school year. We are certain that this situation will usher in new beginnings and opportunities to join with achdus, and bring stability and academic excellence to our children.

As we are sure you have many questions, we invite you to attend an informational ZOOM meeting to hear more about the upcoming year this Monday night, July 13, at 8:00 PM. This session is for you to hear more details about the program and ask any questions you might have that are relevant to programming. To respect everyone's time, we ask that you contact us privately to discuss any matters of a personal nature or that only relates to your family.

The link for the meeting is: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71232469833?pwd=bCs4YSTjSTg2VlVldGNuRlA1SGEzUT09> and the password is MTA. We look forward to seeing you all on Monday evening.

Wishing you a relaxing remainder of summer,

Rabbi Avrohom Yachnes

Mrs. Samantha Hirsch



SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Please note that this is just a **SAMPLE**. Times may change.

	Kindergarten – 2 nd Grade	3 rd – 8 th Grade
8:30 AM – 12:00 PM (Online Only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live sessions of both Limudei Kodesh and General Studies • Prepared box at beginning of week to include daily projects and supplies for all classes • A social/emotional music and movement class or other enrichment course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live sessions of both Limudei Kodesh and General Studies • Limited class sizes to make online learning more personal • Includes Judaic and secular subjects, interspersed with non-skill-based subjects
Lunch Break/Travel to School Time 12PM – 1PM		
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM (Online or in-person, depending on parental preference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning bubbles with each teacher • Socially distant life skills/enrichment activities (e.g., gym, swimming, art, kung fu, woodworking, gardening, etc.) 	



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will my child have to wear a mask?

We do not plan to require masks for children on campus, unless we are legally mandated to do so. We will strictly adhere to social distancing guidelines when on campus and classrooms and shared space will be wiped down and disinfected between classroom bubbles. Of course, children can wear masks if their parents prefer.

2. What will happen if a child or family is diagnosed with COVID-19?

MTA Online Plus allows for all academic skill-based classes to proceed as normal on our online forum regardless of COVID-19 or anything else that could cause learning disturbances and classroom/school closures throughout the year. The Plus part of the program could potentially be temporarily switched to mandatory online classes for individual "bubbles" should that become necessary. The purpose of limiting the bubbles is to ensure that most children/families will be unaffected by any COVID-19 cases and consistency and stability can be maintained to the fullest extent possible.

3. What is a learning "bubble"?

A learning bubble is a small (5 or less) group of children who are consistently grouped together for in-school learning. This bubble concept allows us to properly exercise social distancing while still allowing for social interactions and peer relationships. It also enables us to contain any potential COVID-19 case to each bubble, thereby foregoing the necessity for a full class or school closure.

4. What is the "Plus" Program?

The Plus Program is the afternoon portion of the day and can either be attended in person or online. Based on parental comfort and preference, it allows for the children to have semi-private, small group ("bubble") classes with their teachers while adhering to social distancing guidelines. It also incorporates our enrichment courses, allowing children to get hands-on experiences while socially interacting with their peers. For parents choosing to attend the "Plus" part of the program online, the children will still have their "bubble" classes online, as well as any enrichment courses that can be participated in through an online forum. Due to the nature of our enrichment courses, there will be some classes (e.g. swimming, gym, etc.) that cannot be completed online.

5. Are all children suitable for this learning environment?

No. We understand that online learning is not ideal, yet in our current position it is the most ideal for offering stability and structure. You know your child best and only you know if your child has the temperament to succeed through online learning. For younger children, supervision at home will be necessary at times, to ensure they are keeping up with projects and offered the hands-on assistance that is often needed in classrooms with younger children. That being said, our small class size offers the personalization factor and inherently provides more teacher-student interaction even in an online setting. Our teachers are innovative and enthusiastic, and are spending the summer working on developing a program that will support academic excellence through our online forum. However, not all children are well suited for virtual learning, and we look to you to determine if this is a program in which your child can thrive.

6. Will my child still be eligible for Step-Up for Students, McKay or Gardiner Scholarship Programs?

Yes, as of right now, the state has approved remote learning for scholarship students for the Fall of 2020. We expect this to be an evolving situation and will monitor accordingly.

7. Will tuition change?

No, tuition will remain the same. As our cost per student has not diminished, we are unable to transfer any savings onto our families. In order to ensure on-campus safety, as well as offer a boutique educational experience with both live online courses in small groups as well as extremely small in-school options including life skills, social/emotional workshops, and opportunities for safe social interactions, we will not be changing the tuition price. Our teachers are working harder than ever and creating innovative methods of education and they deserve to be compensated as such. All previously made tuition agreements will remain the same. If you applied for funding through our donor program, that too, will remain the same. Our tuition is an all-inclusive fee and includes school supplies as well.

8. Do you offer tuition assistance? What if I can't afford the full amount?

We do not offer tuition assistance; however, we do offer a donor scholarship program. If you are interested in receiving more information and hearing about our donor program, please contact the school office.

9. Does a parent/adult need to be present to guide students through the day?

Every child is different and has different capacities for online learning. For younger children, while MTA will provide all necessary projects, adult involvement might be required to assist the children at home. Older children should not need adult assistance during online lessons.

10. Can I pick and choose when I want my child to come to the afternoon program?

We ask that parents choose whether or not their child will be attending the Plus program in-person or online. Teachers need to be prepared with materials and each child is carefully accounted for to allow for proper social distancing. To do this, we ask parents to make a consistent decision. Of course, illnesses or travel could result in an absence, and we understand that. Should you decide to begin online and later feel comfortable making the switch to in-school for the Plus portion of the afternoon, we ask that you contact the office so we can make the proper arrangements.

11. Will the afternoon “bubble” learning consist of in-person and online students at the same time?

It may, however, it will depend on enrollment and parental preferences. Our goal is to keep them totally separate, but that will be based on how many children are online and if they are of comparable academic levels.

12. Will you consider re-opening to a full day of in-school classes if a new vaccine suddenly comes out in the middle of the year?

No. As our focus is on ensuring stability and structure, this is a year-long plan. We do not intend to modify it mid-year, regardless of a vaccine unless mitigating factors require us to do so.

13. Is this the school model going forward from now on?

No. This was developed out of necessity in order to provide answers in a world full of questions. We are not of the belief that virtual learning is the ideal method, however, we believe that it is the most ideal option for this coming school year. We all hope and plan to be on-campus for the 2021-2022 school year.

14. Is this open to students out of the local area (e.g., out of state)?

Yes, this schooling model can be made available to out-of-state students who would obviously opt for a fully online program without taking part in our Plus on-campus programming. We limit class sizes both for online and on-campus options, to ensure that each child can maximize their academic and social/emotional potential.

15. What if I don't have the appropriate computer/bandwidth?

As this program is structured as an online educational forum, it is imperative that families have a device per child as well as the appropriate internet connection to support virtual learning. Please check with your internet provider to ensure that your children can have uninterrupted access to their classes.

16. Will there be a handbook that includes expectations for online learning?

Yes, upon registration parents will receive our handbook that details both on-campus as well as online learning expectations.

17. Will there be a dress code?

Yes, we ask that children arrive to all online and on-campus classes in proper MTA dress code.

18. Will the school require homework in addition to the online work?

MTA Online Plus maintains the same philosophy as always. Home is family time, and school is for school work. While running an online program definitely blurs the lines between school and home, we strive to provide a full array of academic and skill-based courses that will take place wholly within the framework of the online classes and in-person bubble lessons. Of course, we look at each child individually when educating them, and if a child needs more work or extra practice, parents will be contacted so the work can be arranged. Otherwise, MTA Online Plus generally maintains a no-homework policy.

19. Will my children be tested to determine progress?

Yes. Children third grade and on take the standardized IOWA test twice per year. Once at the beginning and once at the end to determine progress. The children are constantly assessed by the teachers, utilizing varied practices (i.e. oral questions, written questions, assessment of written work and project accomplishments). With small class sizes and even smaller bubbles, our teachers recognize and work with each individual child's skills and needs. This enables the children to not only develop a relationship with each teacher but also allows for greater academic and social/emotional growth without the need for the teacher to frequently test the children in formal ways.