



Student Handbook

5783/2022-23

Getting to and from Pittsburgh

There are various ways to travel to Pittsburgh:

- 1) Fly into Pittsburgh International Airport. The airport is about 30 minutes away.
 - 2) Megabus and Greyhound is an especially affordable way to come to Pittsburgh. The bus station is about 15 minutes away.
 - 3) Driving time from the NY and NJ area is between 6-7 hours.
- Lyft and Uber are good options for students to get from the airport or bus station to their dormitory.

School Contact Information

The Seminary is located at 6404 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Letters and packages for students may be sent to this address. Most Limudei Kodesh and arts classes as well as meals take place in the Seminary building. *Supplies may arrive at seminary within a week of the student arrival date.*

School Office Number (412) 521-1197 (please leave a message for non-urgent matters)

Staff List:

Name	Position	E-mail	Cell Phone
Mrs. Amy Guterson	Founder & Artistic Director	aguterson@gmail.com	(412) 901-0479
Rabbi Dovid Hordiner	Director of Education	dhordiner@tzoharseminary.com	(917) 930-1312
Rabbi Aaron Herman	Director of Chassidus Integration	rabbiaaron@gmail.com	(919) 637-6950
Mrs. Hindy Gurevitz	Business and Programming Manager	admin@tzoharseminary.com	(917) 975-0165
Mrs. Leah Lichy	Admissions and Recruitment	llichy@tzoharseminary.com	(954) 651-3309
Mrs. Ashirah King	Dorm Mother	awking71@gmail.com	(760) 616-0173
Mrs. Amy Schuler	Nighttime On Call	schuler.amy@gmail.com	(571) 338-6493
Moussia Goldman	Madricha	moussiagoldman@gmail.com	(808) 346-7824
Dina Green	Madricha	dinagreen02@gmail.com	(954) 644-3299

Who do I call for...?

Arts-related questions and progress, Coaching for future, and Tzohar vision: *Mrs. Amy Guterson*

Education-related questions, Permission for absence, Scheduling, and Transcripts: *Rabbi Dovid Hordiner*

Integration of Chassidic ideas into arts projects and personal growth: *Rabbi Aaron Herman*

Enrollment, Tuition, Food, Travel, Programming, and Daily Wellness: *Mrs. Hindy Gurevitz*

Dorm Life: *Mrs Ashirah King*

Accommodations and Meals

Before your arrival, we will let you know which residence you will be living in. In order to help us match you with roommates, there is an accompanying roommate questionnaire that we ask you to please complete and return to us by June 30th. You can let us know about any food sensitivities on the questionnaire as well.

Breakfast is provided daily and consists of cold cereal, milk, oatmeal and fruit. Lunch is provided Monday through Friday, and dinner is provided each evening.

We do our best to try to meet special dietary needs; however, there may be times that those with special needs, such as gluten-free, dairy-free or vegetarian diets will need to supplement what seminary offers. There are plenty of choices available for purchase within walking distance at the local grocery and kosher store.

On Shabbos, students eat their meals together at seminary, dorm, or at the homes of local families. Pittsburgh is known to have a warm, inviting community, and many families are looking forward to hosting students for Shabbos. We recommend that students “chip in” to buy flowers or wine for host families (flowers should be delivered before Shabbos). A Melave Malka meal is provided after Shabbos during the fall and winter months, and Shalosh Seudot in the spring months. Students are expected to dress appropriately for all Shabbos meals.

For safety and liability reasons, students may only cook in the dorms with staff supervision, and only when needed. Students have access at seminary to toaster ovens, sandwich-makers, microwave ovens, instant pots, and hot water urns.

Students may only light Shabbos candles in a pan of water. All other forms of fire such as scented candles are not allowed in the dormitories for safety reasons.

Pets are not allowed in the dorms or seminary building.

Please be aware of your host family and neighbors when it comes to maintaining respectful noise levels. Students are expected to keep their personal and communal spaces clean and pleasant for the good of everyone.

All residences have laundry facilities available; the laundry fee allows each student to do two loads per week.

Students may only bring a guest into the dorm with permission from the dorm Madricha.

Private Music Lessons

Students may elect to take weekly, private piano, guitar, and/or voice lessons. One weekly 25 minute lesson on one instrument is included in the cost of tuition. An additional weekly 25 minute lesson may be purchased for the fall and/or spring semesters. Each semester includes 14 lessons including a free trial lesson. The fee per semester is \$325 due in advance of the 2nd lesson. Please contact Rabbi Hordiner (dhordiner@tzoharseminary.com) by June 30th to register for lessons.

Attendance, Timeliness, and Investment

Our year will be focused on spiritual and creative growth. For that to happen in the most effective way possible, everyone accepts responsibility to be present and on time for classes and programming. Besides enabling you to get the most out of your time at Tzohar, your attendance also shows your respect for your classmates and teachers and allows them to benefit from your unique contributions. If you ask a student from a previous year at Tzohar, she's likely to tell you that one of her only regrets was not putting in the effort to be at every class every day. You're here because you want to be here -- you chose to spend a year at Tzohar, so make the most of it!

Time spent in seminary is precious. It is important that all students remain at Tzohar when the seminary is open, including Chanukah and Shavuot. While school is in session, students may only leave seminary by exception, and with special permission from Rabbi Hordiner. In these unique cases, permission will only be given to visit immediate family, e.g. simchas, emergencies CV'S, etc. If you have a Simcha in your immediate family, please approach Rabbi Hordiner for official permission to leave before making travel arrangements. Please do not "notify" and add that you have already booked the ticket. That puts us all in a very uncomfortable position. Once you ask permission, Rabbi Hordiner will do his best to get back to you within 48 hours.

To obtain maximum benefit from their courses, students must participate fully. This implies attending regularly, engaging in course activity, completing assignments on time, and making up work missed due to absence. It is each student's responsibility to let the course instructor know if she will have to miss a class due to an extenuating circumstance (which has already been excused by Rabbi Hordiner).

Students who arrive more than 10 minutes after class begins will be considered "absent". Unexcused absences from more than 20% of the sessions for a particular course will result in a one-letter grade reduction from your final grade in this course. More than 35% unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. There is no opportunity to make up this component of your grade.

Any student that regularly misses classes or programs will be sent home until she is ready to return and re-engage in seminary.

Curfew

Curfew is at 10:30 pm. While students are enrolled in Tzohar Seminary, it is the responsibility of the administration to ensure the safety of each student. Therefore, it is imperative that curfew is kept. If students are out of their dorms past curfew, the administration cannot fulfill the primary obligation that it has, namely, the well-being and safety of each student enrolled in Tzohar Seminary.

Therefore, each student, by her signature on the consent form, agrees to be bound by the following obligations: (1) each student will be in her residence by 10:30 pm each night, unless a prior arrangement has been made with a member of the administration. (2) If a student cannot keep curfew, Tzohar Seminary cannot assure her safety and will ask the student to return home immediately, so that she can return to the responsibility of her parents, until such time as the administration and student feel that the curfew time can be kept.

Cell Phones

To have the type of seminary experience that allows each student to be focused on her personal goals and spiritual growth, it is important that technology be used in a way that gives each student the opportunity to thrive.

We require all students to bring a cell phone for safety purposes. Cell phones should have the ability to send and receive texts, as well as have access to Whatsapp which is often used to communicate with students. For the well-being of all students, it is each parent's responsibility to install appropriate filters.

Students will "park" their cell phones in a designated place during class time. Students may use their cell phones, if needed, when not in class. Phones may not be used during programs such as Farbrengens, Malave Malka, Purim Seudah, etc.

Personal Computers and Music

Students will have access to school computers for school assignments and e-mail. Personal laptops or iPad/tablets may be used in class only for class-related purposes and with permission from the classroom teacher. It is each parent's responsibility to install appropriate filtering software.

Since the seminary year is one of immersion, we highly recommend that students bring and play only Jewish musical content. Out of respect and for the comfort of all students, shared music (played aloud) may only be Jewish music; non-Jewish music may be played on headphones only. Other media like online videos should also only be played on headphones out of respect for the comfort of others.

Side Jobs and Spending Money and

In order to allow students to focus on their studies, we recommend that students do not work while at seminary. If students would like to get a job as a mother's helper or the like on Friday afternoons or Sunday mornings, this is an option to be discussed with Rabbi Hordiner. Students may also lead Shabbos groups at one of the local synagogues.

Students may not work Monday-Thursday.

We suggest that students be provided with \$100 per month to buy Sunday lunch, snacks, toiletries, incidentals, and to use for optional trips.

Driving

Pittsburgh is a walking community – students will be walking to and from school in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings. For liability reasons, students may not drive while at Tzohar (even with a valid license). All transportation that students require will be provided by the seminary or Uber.

Dress

We recognize that dress codes are challenging for certain individuals, and we are here to provide you with healthy avenues of self-expression.

That being said, all Tzohar students are expected to dress *at all times* according to the following guidelines. Please sign after each guidelines to acknowledge your acceptance and commitment:

- ❖ Skirts cover the knees even when seated.
- ❖ Knee socks, tights, leggings, or stockings cover the legs.
- ❖ Pants are not allowed even under skirts – this includes jeans, sweatpants, and pajama pants.
- ❖ Elbows are fully covered even when arms are lifted.
- ❖ Collarbone is covered.
- ❖ Clothing should not fit too tightly.

Only piercings worn in the ear are allowed. Students may only get additional ear piercings at home (not while in seminary).

Students may not dye hair an unnatural color.

Any and all fashion and dress accessories need to be “aidel” in style and design and Tzohar reserves the right to decide what is considered appropriate.

Tzohar students may exercise and work out at the JCC according to the above clothing guidelines. Co-ed swimming is not allowed.

When students are volunteering in the Yeshiva Schools environment, the dress code of Yeshiva Schools must be followed, in particular, wearing earrings only in the lower lobe. When students are working or volunteering in a community organization, any additional dress code specifications must be followed. In addition, on days when you are teaching or involved in a community project, we ask students to dress in a more formal manner.

Tzohar students are role models for each other and especially for the girls of the Yeshiva Girls School who study across the street and will look up to you. Whether you're in class, walking on the street, or in shul please remember that you are a dugma chaya!

Laws of the Land

Though it may be obvious -- anything illegal in the state of Pennsylvania is not allowed at Tzohar! This includes but is not limited to the possession or consumption of alcohol, nicotine (including e-cigarettes and vaping products), and marijuana. In the state of Pennsylvania, it is illegal to purchase or consume alcohol and nicotine under the age of 21. Taking a sip of Kiddush wine on Shabbos is allowed.

Possession or use of any illegal substance, or even possession of a fake ID, is grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal from the seminary. Any resulting expenses will be the responsibility of the student's family.

Therefore, it is important that any student who is addicted to any illegal substance should not attend seminary unless and until she is completely free of that addiction.

Other Rules

Visitors are only allowed in dorms with permission from the Madricha of that dorm.

Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and is grounds for suspension or dismissal from seminary.

Social contact with boys is not allowed, and boyfriends of any kind are not allowed to visit Pittsburgh under any circumstances. Violation of these rules is grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal.

Romantic relationships or inappropriate touching of any kind, including excessive cuddling or inappropriate touch or closeness with other girls or staff members, including sleeping in the same bed as another student, is not allowed in our program. Violation of these rules is grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal.

Students may not attend movie theaters, comedy clubs, bars, etc.

Although Squirrel Hill is known as a safe place, students must walk with someone after dark.

If parents or family members are planning a visit to Pittsburgh, please consult with Rabbi Hordiner so we can confirm that the visit will not disrupt learning commitments, projects, and performances in which the students are involved.

Our annual Mother-Daughter Shabbaton, which runs from Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon, is a highlight of the Tzohar Seminary experience. Mothers attend classes and workshops with their daughters as well as enjoy performances and presentations throughout the weekend. The weekend culminates in a graduation. This has been the best way for mothers to experience their daughters' year of growth at Tzohar.

If you live outside of the United States, or you are absolutely unable to attend due to extreme circumstances, we ask that you send a grandmother, sister, aunt or very close friend in your stead.

Health and Medical Insurance

Each student must have a valid medical insurance plan prior to arriving in Pittsburgh and keep a copy of this medical insurance card in her wallet. You should check with your medical insurer concerning coverage for local physicians, mental health professionals, or hospitals in Pittsburgh in case you require care. All students who attend must be immunized unless they have a signed medical exemption from a physician.

There are urgent care facilities nearby. Dorm Counselors are available when needed to help students make appointments, or to accompany students to appointments. Students may also take an Uber. Please tell us if you're not feeling well, including in the middle of the night if necessary, so we can help!

Any information communicated with a Tzohar staff member which involves the well-being of oneself or others may be communicated with other appropriate Tzohar staff so we can help you. This is an important exception to the general rule of confidentiality.

Tzohar reserves the right, under specific circumstances, to consult with community professionals as needed for the safety and well-being of the students, and we may require a student to attend therapy and/or counseling in order to remain in seminary.