



ROBERT M. BEREN
ACADEMY

**2018-2019
Upper School
Student/Parent Handbook**

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Introduction

Welcome

Dear RMBA Parents and Students,

We are thrilled that you are joining us for the upcoming school year, as we strive for excellence in general studies, Judaic studies, service learning, and middot (behavior). We are proud of our school and look forward to working as a school-student-parent tripod to help each child reach his or her potential.

True greatness in any area is achieved through discipline. An Olympic athlete, a concert pianist, a neurosurgeon, or a teacher, for example must carefully follow specific protocols to be the best in their field. The same holds true for achieving academic success in school. Hard work, integrity, respect, timeliness, and striving for your best are the characteristics of discipline that are required for success.

We have rewritten many areas of this handbook to help create a focused environment which will enable our students and teachers to achieve excellence through discipline while maintaining high standards for both academics and citizenship.

We ask that you partner with us in maximizing each RMBA student's academic, extracurricular, emotional, social, and spiritual experience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul S. Oberman
Head of School

Raquel B. Cedano
Principal,
General Studies

Ari Kellerman
Principal,
Judaic Studies

Mission Statement

Robert M. Beren Academy is a Modern Orthodox Jewish day school that adheres to standards of academic excellence and exemplary moral conduct as it prepares its students to become self-confident, compassionate, practicing Jews as well as committed citizens and life-long learners.

The Mission of Robert M. Beren Academy is to provide:

- An integrated Orthodox Jewish and college preparatory education in an atmosphere of excellence
- A commitment to Torah and its ethical and moral precepts and to the Jewish people
- The development of a spiritual bond with the Land and State of Israel
- The dedication to our American heritage and achievement in contemporary society

US Judaic Vision Statement

Our vision for an RMBA graduate is someone who is proud of their Jewish Identity, feels a personal connection to Hashem, and is inspired to lead a meaningful Jewish life. He or she will embody positive middot, will have the ability and desire to continue learning Torah on their own, and will be committed to Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.

Administration and Officers

Head of School

Principal of General Studies, Lower School

Principal of General Studies, Upper School

Principal of Upper School Judaic Studies

Principal of Lower School Judaic Studies

Assistant Coordinator of Early Childhood

Director of Admissions & Retention

Director of Development & Marketing

Business Manager

Nurse

College and Gap Year Counselor

US Counselor

LS Counselor

Athletics Director

Director of Academic Support

Librarian

Administrative Assistant

Administrative Assistant

Dr. Paul S. Oberman

Dr. Dawn McKernan

Raquel B. Cedano

Ari Kellerman

Rivka Gottlieb

Heather Squires-Thomas

Loren Chorn

Tania Levenstein

Roxanne Maikoetter

Aliza Stern

Ari Kellerman

Michelle Renfrow

Stacey Laves-Khalifa

Chris Cole

Shalva Berger

Janice Kusin

Matty Malca

Tamar Harosh

RMBA Board President

Barry Diner, M.D.

Respectful Communication Between Parents and School

RMBA endeavors to communicate with students and families in a respectful way, always attempting to achieve the best interests of the students and Robert M. Beren Academy as a whole. When students and families reciprocate this goodwill, with positive attributions and discussions, both in school and in the community, we maximize our potential for a successful working partnership, and we help RMBA continue to strive for excellence.

RMBA values feedback and input from all members of our community and strives to meet every stakeholder's needs. If parents would like to discuss any aspect of our learning community, they should communicate directly with the school (see "Who Should I Contact" in the back of this handbook) so that issues can be dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

Policies and Procedures

I. Attendance

1) Absences From School

Missing school makes it very challenging for students to learn and succeed in their studies. While occasional absences are sometimes unavoidable, they should be minimized as much as possible. RMBA takes attendance in all classes, and these absences appear both on report cards and school transcripts sent to gap year programs and colleges as part of the student's permanent record.

In order to ensure the safety of all students, a parent needs to inform the School whenever a child is absent. The parent should call or email the Main Office by 9:00 a.m. on the date of the absence. At the end of each school day parents receive an automated email from Renweb listing any classes from which their child was Tardy or Absent.

RMBA does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. It is a parent's responsibility to decide when his/her child should be kept home or taken out of school. We recognize that life happens. However, with trust, comes an implied responsibility - that parents exercise good judgment to determine when their child will be out of school. Illness, time together with parents or grandparents (on vacation or family visiting you), "mental health" days, etc. are examples of reasons you may choose for your child to be absent.

It is expected that personal business, appointments, and routine medical and dental visits whenever possible not be scheduled during school hours. In rare circumstances such as an ongoing medical condition, RMBA may grant a student extra allowances for medical appointments at the school's discretion. Such extenuating medical situations are to be communicated **IN ADVANCE** both verbally and in writing to the School with appropriate documentation provided by the diagnosing physician/clinician.

2) Coming To School On Time

The school day starts at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday. On Fridays, school is out at 3:00 p.m. throughout the year. A student should arrive at school between 7:30 a.m. and 7:40 a.m. each day.

A student is considered late to school if they arrive at 7:50 a.m. or later. If a student arrives at the conclusion of davening then he/she is considered absent from the opening of the school day. The consequences for Tardiness are as follows, which are calculated on a quarterly basis:

4 Absences = Lunch Detention

5 Absences = After School Detention

6 Absences = Sunday Suspension pending required Parent Conference

3 Tardies = 1 Absence

Any student arriving after 11:00 a.m. will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities, (e.g. athletic games, school plays). Additionally, students who do not participate in school field trips will not be allowed to participate in after school activities, e.g. athletic games, school plays, on the day of the trip.

3) Leaving School Early

Occasionally, a student may need to leave school early for an appointment. In this case the school must be notified in advance for safety purposes. At no time may a student leave the campus during the school day without:

1. Advance notification from a parent (via email, telephone, or in person).

AND

2. The student must sign out in the Main Office.

If a student leaves school and then returns (ex. for a Doctor appointment) he/she must sign back into the Main office when he/she return.

4) Class Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for effective learning since the classroom is the place where intellectual interactions among students and teachers occur.

Each student in the Upper School is allocated a maximum of three (3) absences per quarter for each class. *In addition, students are entitled to five (5) absences for college visits during the course of their high school career at RMBA. Students are also entitled to one (1) absence for a Jewish youth group Shabbaton per semester. (Each college visit and Shabbaton absence should*

be preceded by a planned absence form turned in to the Upper School General Studies Principal.) It shall be noted that if a student exceeds the number of allocated absences per quarter in any given class then he/she will have one point deducted from his/her final quarter grade in that respective class for each additional absence.

A student who is late to class not only misses important instruction and classroom discussion, but disrupts the learning of others. A student who is late to a particular class three times in a quarter will be considered absent one time from the class.

If a student leaves class in the middle for more than 10 minutes he/she will be marked Tardy for that period. If a student is absent from class for more than half the class period he/she are marked Absent.

It is a student's responsibility to attend classes. A student who wants to speak to a teacher must either do so during lunch or get permission from the teacher whose class he/she is going to miss.

A student who is sent out of the classroom by the teacher due to behavior and class disruption at any point during the course of instruction will face disciplinary consequences.

Students are expected to be in their seats with required class materials when a class begins, regardless of whether or not the teacher is already present. A student who is not fully prepared for class to begin at the start of the period will be considered late. Students, therefore, may lose academic credit for lateness or lack of preparation. If a teacher is more than five minutes late for a class, one student should notify the Main Office. The class should remain quiet in the room until it receives further instructions from the Main Office.

Skipping: Students who are in school and do not attend a class (either because they left campus without signing out or remained on campus and skipped the class) will receive two detentions the first time it occurs in any class during the school year, four detentions for the second time, and an in school suspension thereafter. Skipping class beyond the third offense results in the possibility of expulsion from school.

5) Making Up Missed Work

Any time a student is absent from class he/she should email his/her teacher to find out what was missed and arrange to make up the material. He/She may also check Renweb for class assignments. The teacher will offer a student an opportunity to make up any assessment that was missed during an absence (with the exception of a skipped class). It is the student's obligation to arrange for the makeup of any assessment. A missed assessment must be completed within the time frame determined by the teacher; however, the teacher has the sole discretion to withhold credit for missing work if the time frame for completion has surpassed a two week period unless there is an extenuating long-term medical absence.

6) Tefilla Attendance

The day of a Jew begins with his/her recognizing the centrality of G-d in his/her life. *Davening* first thing in the morning sets the tone for the day by inspiring and uplifting each student. This enables each student to feel the presence of G-d throughout the day, both in the Judaic and General Studies classes. Prayer is not a course that is graded - it is a prerequisite to any learning or activity that goes on during the school day. Several Tefilla options are offered, and students are encouraged to select a Minyan that is meaningful to them. Students must also be present at afternoon Mincha.

It is expected that students will remain in Tefilla like any other class in school. For students who are out of Tefilla for 10 minutes or longer, he/she will be considered tardy for the school day and it will be marked accordingly on his/her attendance records.

7) Student Parking

Student parking is in the back of the school in the student/faculty parking lot on Greenwillow Avenue. However, students who drive carpools with 3rd graders or younger need to park in the Cliffwood parking lot. Students will need to provide a copy of their driver's licenses and proof of insurance to park in the faculty parking lot. Students who drive carelessly in the parking lot or neighborhood will lose their parking and Open Campus privileges.

8) Visitor Sign In

All visitors to the school (including parents, grandparents, etc.) must sign-in at the guard station located by the Cliffwood Avenue door and then proceed to the Main Office. A badge will be given at the guard station and must be worn in a visible manner at all times. Visitors will remain in the Office until the staff member they are meeting is made aware that they are in the building. If the parent or visitor is unfamiliar with the campus it may be necessary to escort him or her through the building or request that the host come to the Office to escort him/her. Otherwise, visitors should refrain from walking through the school building. Parents may observe their children's classes but only by prior arrangement (at least one day in advance of the visit) with the appropriate principal and for no longer than 30 minutes per class/teacher.

Any student who wishes to have a friend or relative visit with him/her for the day must receive prior permission of at least 48 hours from the school administration. Guest students must abide by all school rules and must remain with the RMBA student for whom they are a guest. RMBA does not, as a general rule, encourage these visits.

II. Dress Code

The dress code at Robert M. Beren Academy is governed by neatness, cleanliness, modesty and religious considerations. Appropriate dress is educationally and psychologically critical to the

learning process as it sets a tone of striving for excellence. The dress code encourages social recognition based on character, personality, and special talents, rather than on the superficial basis of physical appearances.

All students must be dressed in accordance with dress code not only during school hours, but also anytime that they are on school grounds or attending off-campus school related events/outings.

Students who do not comply with any aspect of the dress code at any point during the school day will be asked to change into the appropriate attire or be sent home. Students who repeatedly do not follow the dress code will earn a detention.

We have identified an affordable and accessible uniform provider (Land's End) with whom we will be working this year:

<http://www.landsend.com/pp/SchoolSearch.html?action=landing&selectedSchoolNum=900171018>

Approved school uniforms from previous school years that were purchased through other vendors may still be worn.

1) Shirts

- Both boys and girls must buy the unisex (men's or boys') solid color polo shirt as these sleeves are of appropriate length.
- Three solid colors are acceptable: white, hunter green or navy blue for all students. *Seniors will be given the privilege of one additional color that will be the color for the entire class.*
- Both short-sleeve and long-sleeve shirts are also acceptable.
- Button down shirts: short-sleeve and long-sleeve button-down oxford shirts (white or light blue) may be worn.

2) Boys' Pants

- Upper School (Grades 6-12) boys must wear long pants (no shorts)
- Navy blue or khaki pants are allowed. Cargo pants, jeans, and sweatpants are not allowed.
- Pants may not have any writing, stitching, or other detail.

3) Girls' Skirts

- Three colors are acceptable: Navy blue, khaki, or plaid
- All skirts must be at least 2 inches below the knee (when sitting) as to ensure modest dress.

- Navy blue and black maxi skirts are acceptable and must be at least 2 inches below the knee.
- Skirts may not have writing, stitching, or other detail.
- Denim material is not allowed.

4) Sweaters & Sweatshirts

- Any solid color sweatshirt or sweater is acceptable.
- Sweatshirts/sweaters may not have any writing or logo on them, with the exception of school sponsored attire (ex. Drama, Basketball, School trip)
- Hooded sweatshirts are allowed as long as they are a solid color. The hood may not be worn during school.
- Collared shirts must still be worn under the sweater or sweatshirt and be visible.

5) Footwear

- Closed toe shoes or sneakers are acceptable
- Slippers, sandals, Crocs, or plastic slip-on type sandals are not permitted.

6) Kippot, Tzitzit and Tefillin

- All boys are expected to wear kippot while on campus, including during P.E. class and sports practices and games.
- Boys are expected to wear Tzitzit at all times. Tzitzit may be purchased from the school office.
- Boys above the age of Bar Mitzvah must wear Tefillin for Davening.

7) P.E. Clothing

- This may only be worn during the P.E. class and at after-school games and practice.

8) Hairstyle

- Unclean or unkempt hair is not allowed.
- Coloring or other distracting styling of hair is not allowed.
- Boys' hair length is to be above the shirt collar and may not cover the eyes and ears. In accordance with Jewish law, sideburns may not be cut short.

9) Jewelry

- Earrings and necklaces for boys are not permitted.
- Modest earrings and necklaces for girls are allowed.
- Multiple ear piercings are not allowed.
- Body piercings (such as nose rings) are not allowed.

10) Special Dress Days

There are occasions where the dress code is modified by the administration for special events such as special dress up days in anticipation of Purim, Spirit Days, certain field trips, etc. Whenever a change is made, students and parents will be informed in advance.

All students are entitled to a “dress down” day on the day of their Hebrew birthday. If that date is not a school day, students may dress down the school day preceding their Hebrew birthday. See http://www.chabad.org/calendar/birthday_cdo/aid/6228/jewish/Jewish-Birthday.htm if you want to find out your Hebrew birthday!

III. Food Service and Kashrut

In order to maintain a community where everyone feels comfortable and included all food brought by students to school, served at school functions, and served at parties such as bar/bat mitzvahs to which RMBA students are invited should follow Houston Kashrut Association (HKA) standards.

1) Outside Food

Food brought for personal consumption on the campus or at a school activity must be kosher dairy or pareve. No meat or chicken should be brought on campus. Home cooked food (ex. cake for a friend’s birthday) may not be shared at school. Sealed foods with a kosher symbol may be shared at school, including prepared foods from HKA supervised restaurants, bakeries, or stores - as long as the HKA sticker is still intact.

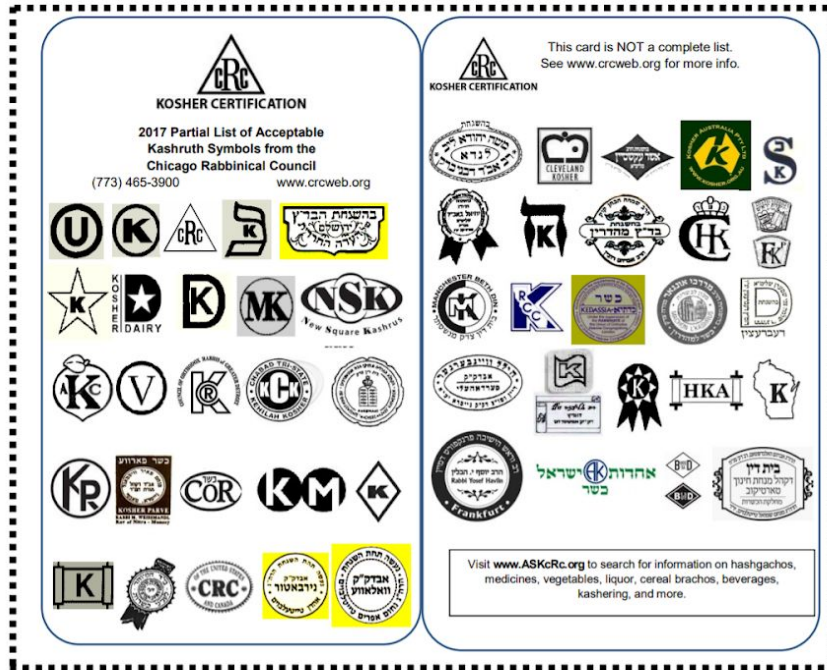
2) Cooking In School

Food prepared in the school’s kitchen must be prepared under supervision arranged several days in advance with the school Mashgicha (kashrut supervisor), Mrs. Tsivi Freilich. Ingredients must be checked for a kosher symbol and cooking must be supervised. Afterwards kitchens must be cleaned.

3) Kosher Symbols

Most products do need kashrut supervision. They must bear one of the universally accepted kashrut symbols (see chart below). The plain letter “K” or other symbols do not necessarily represent a recognized kashrut supervising organization. See a complete list of acceptable Kosher symbols [here](#). Feel free to ask RMBA Mashgicha, Mrs. Tsivi Freilich, or Either of our Judaic Principals, Rivkie Gottlieb and Ari Kellerman, if you have any questions.

Here is a quick reference guide or Kosher symbols you can print and keep in your wallet:



IV. Lunch

1) Hot Lunch

Hot lunch, which on certain days may be pareve, dairy, or meat, is available for an additional charge from our vendor. Pizza is available once a week as a fundraiser through the Parent Teacher Organization. We provide separate tables for those eating meat lunches and those eating dairy lunches.

2) Lunch Locations

Students are not allowed to eat anywhere in the building other than in the Ulam, Sukkah, or in a classroom with a faculty member supervising. Students may not eat lunch in the hallway, gym, library, or the parking lot. Regardless of where they are eating, students are expected to clean the area when they have finished.

3) Lunch Off-Campus

Only 12th grade students who meet the following criteria may leave campus for lunch, beginning August 27, according to the following rules and expectations:

Rules and expectations:

- The School must have the signed *Open Lunch Consent Form* on file for each participating 12th grade student.

- The School must have a copy of the student's driver's license and proof of insurance.
- **Students are required to sign in and out in the main office.**
- It is understood that this privilege is reserved for 12th grade students only. Any student who drives a student in 9th-11th grade during lunch will lose open lunch privilege for the remainder of the year. It shall be noted that the 9th-11th grade student will face a consequence as well.
- All food items purchased must be kosher.
- Students are expected to abide by the behavioral expectations of Robert M. Beren Academy while in public places, including dress code.
- No speeding or driving recklessly in the neighborhood or in the School parking lot.
- Students who violate any of the above mentioned expectations will lose their open lunch privileges for the remainder of the year.

4) Fast Days

On fast days, students from the age of eleven and up are encouraged to fast. However, all students are expected to participate in all of their classes (except for rigorous exercise during physical education). Upper School students will also be dismissed early on fast days. If a student who is fasting does not feel well enough to be in class or has any questions regarding fasting, he/she should speak to the Judaic Studies Principal. There are no tests and quizzes on fast days.

V. Health, Wellness, and Emergency Management

The physical and emotional well-being of our students is a top priority. RMBA has a School Nurse as well as a Guidance Counselor available. It is essential that parents communicate proactively with the school to alert us about any concerns you have about your child's health.

1) Medications

All medication which is to be taken by a child during the school day must be brought to the office and administered to the child in the office by the school nurse, administrator, or office personnel. It shall be noted that the aforementioned personnel are not authorized to administer medication, including prescription or over-the-counter, without physician and/or parent written authorization as per below. This includes Tylenol, Advil, Benadryl, etc. No other Robert M. Beren Academy employee may administer medication.

All prescription medications must be left in the school office in the original labeled bottles to be administered by designated school staff. The school must have on file a physician's request to administer prescription medication. Non-prescription medications may be administered with a written request on file from the parent or legal guardian. Robert M. Beren Academy reserves the right to deny the request to administer medication at any time. Students are not permitted to keep medication in their possession or in their lunch boxes or lockers. A student in possession of

medication is subject to disciplinary action. When necessary, parents will be contacted during the school day if their child becomes ill or requires first-aid treatment.

2) Illness

A student is not allowed to remain in school if he/she exhibits any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4 °F or higher
- Suspected contagious disease
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- An undetermined rash
- Feeling too ill to remain in school
- Lice or nits

To prevent exposing other students to disease, a student should not come to school for 24 hours following the cessation of symptoms if he/she has the following:

- Medication, with the exception of antibiotics or chronic medication
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- An undetermined rash
- A fever of 100.4 °F or higher

Students who have been diagnosed with a bacterial infection must be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

The school nurse or school personnel may check all students returning to school following a contagious disease or lice.

3) Medical Emergencies

In case of emergency, as determined by school personnel, 911 will be called to respond. 911 does not bill parents for service unless the patient is transferred to the hospital or other facility. Parents will be responsible for any charges incurred on behalf of their children.

4) School Emergencies

RMBA has safety procedures for various emergency situations such as fire, severe weather, and lockdown situations.

If the school will not open due to inclement weather or an emergency, an email will be sent to the family's primary email address (that is on file in RenWeb) to alert them of the situation by 6 a.m. of the day in question. Please ensure that all of your contact information is correct with the School.

If there is an extenuating circumstance in which the School must close earlier than the regular dismissal time then an email will be sent immediately to all families in order to pick up their child/ren from the School. All families must pick up their child/ren as soon as possible while ensuring personal safety. Please know that all children will be supervised until picked up by an appropriate parent/guardian/carpool option.

Students will not be held accountable for tardies and absences when weather situations have prevented them from getting to school.

VI. Academic and Curricular Information and Policies

All Robert M. Beren Academy students pursue a dual, college preparatory, curriculum of General and Judaic Studies designed to provide students with a balance of intellectual, aesthetic, religious, and extracurricular experiences. Students who successfully complete the program are well prepared to meet the challenges of higher education. This curriculum design also affords students the opportunity to take advanced study in a variety of fields, including Honors and Advanced Placement courses in most academic areas.

The Judaic Studies curriculum includes a broad program of study that is designed to provide extensive exposure in the areas of Bible, Talmud, Jewish Law, Jewish History, Jewish Philosophy, and Hebrew Language. The curriculum emphasizes the connection to *Eretz Yisrael* (The Land of Israel), the beauty and joy of *Chesed* (Communal Responsibility), and the importance of practicing *Middot Tovot* (Ethical Behavior). And in the spirit of *Torah U'Madda*, our students are taught to make connections between their Torah and General Studies.

Course Load

At Robert M. Beren Academy a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum presupposes that a student will successfully complete all of the General Studies and Judaic Studies curricula offered. Robert M. Beren Academy counsels its students to challenge themselves wisely, to achieve excellence by selecting courses judiciously, and to value depth of attainment over mere breadth.

The English, History, and Science departments offer courses on a rotational basis to broaden their offerings and ensure flexibility in planning student schedules.

Grades and Grading

Grades and Reports

Report cards are sent home on a quarterly basis. Additionally, weekly progress reports are sent via RenWeb to monitor progress. Parents are welcome to contact teachers on a more regular basis for updates.

Definition of Letter Grades

While aspects of the affective realm including effort, improvement, and attitude have a place in grading, the primary emphasis in grading at Robert M. Beren Academy is placed on a student's cognitive achievement.

- "A" indicates achievement of high distinction. It involves conspicuous excellence in most, if not all, of the following: completeness and accuracy of knowledge; sustained and effective use of knowledge; independence of work; originality; and initiative.
- "B" indicates commendable achievement. It may involve excellence in some of the areas listed in the definition of "A", and certainly indicates real competence in the first three of these.
- "C" indicates adequate achievement. It connotes competence in course content and/or appropriate skills.
- "D" indicates limited achievement with serious deficiencies but is still worthy of credit. It will be decided by the teacher if the student is prepared for the next level of coursework.
- "F" indicates a failure to meet minimal requirements and merits no credit.

At RMBA, the numerical equivalent for grades is as follows:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	75-79
D	70-74
F	69 and Below

GPA Grading

Only semester grades appear on the High School transcript and are averaged into a student's GPA. These grades are broken down as follows:

40% Quarter Grade
40% Quarter Grade
20% Final Examinations

Advanced Placement (AP), Honors, Pre-AP, and Advanced courses are given 1.0 higher on the GPA scale.

A = 4.0
B = 3.0
C = 2.0
D = 1.0

A final grade of F in any class results in no credit for the class.

Graduation Requirements

To obtain a Robert M. Beren Academy diploma, a student must complete the following credits, in addition to the service learning requirements, outlined below (see page 19), and a four year residency requirement:

English	4
History/Social Studies	4
Math	4
Science	4
Hebrew	3
Jewish Literacy	2
Chumash/Bible	4
Gemara/Oral Law	4
Judaic Electives	4
General Studies Electives	4

Total 37

In order to receive the graduation diploma and transcripts, all financial obligations to the school must be paid in full. All sports equipment, uniforms, and any borrowed materials must be returned.

Note that .5 credits are given for a single semester course and 1 credit is given for a full year course.

Course requirements and selection will be coordinated by the Upper School General Studies Principal and the Judaic Studies Principal.

In specific circumstances, a student who cannot fulfill a Robert M. Beren Academy graduation requirement may be granted a waiver. Such cases usually involve a student with a professionally documented learning difference or extenuating circumstances.

Students and parents should understand the possible consequences of such a waiver for a student's college and career options. To that end, before a requirement is waived, it must go through a committee process which is chaired by the Head of School. Students and parents must also understand that RMBA may not be able to replace a waived requirement with another academic course, and that a student who has been granted a waiver will not receive any special treatment in the scheduling process.

Incomplete Grades

The final grade on the report card reflects the full spectrum of activities and assignments required in the class. All work must be submitted by the end of the quarter. On rare occasions, if a student is missing work at the end of a quarter due to extreme circumstances, he/she may be

granted an extension to complete his/her missing work. Examples of such circumstances include a death in the family or a severe illness.

Additions to/Withdrawal from Courses

A student has the first two weeks of school to either add or drop a course and may do so only with the approval of a parent and the respective Principal. After the initial period of grace, no student will be permitted to drop a course without consultation with the teacher and a written statement of approval from the Principal. A late withdrawal remains a permanent part of the student's transcript. Until approval is secured from the Principal, the student is expected to meet all of the obligations of any course to be dropped. A *Change of Schedule* form may be obtained from the Principal.

Honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP Courses

In order to enroll in a Pre-AP or AP course students must have the recommendation from the previous year's teacher in the respective discipline as well as a year-to-date average of 90 or higher. Moreover, it must be understood that Pre-AP and AP courses are challenging and require a significant amount of reading and homework; thus a student must show a strong work ethic, academic integrity, and the ability to be an independent learner that can positively contribute to classroom discussions. Additionally, students in the Pre-AP and Advanced Placement courses will be required to complete summer work as assigned by the faculty member prior to the first day of classes. These assignments will be given to the students at the culmination of the school year prior to summer break.

For placement in advanced English and history courses, students will be required to take a placement exam, which will be administered in mid-March during class periods for current high school students and current 8th grade students, as one of the forms of evaluation to measure the student's preparedness for such a course in which clear written expression is essential for success. The exam will consist of an essay of historical significance in which the students will be given the topic in advance of the exam date.

In the spring, individual departments make recommendations about appropriate class placement and course selections for each student for the following year. Students are aware of these recommendations when they choose classes for the subsequent year.

It must be noted that from a college admissions perspective, a student withdrawing from a challenging course mid-year is highly frowned upon. Thus, the demands of advanced coursework must be understood as the administration will not approve the dropping of a course after the regular add/drop period.

Chesed / Service Learning Requirements

All Upper School students (grades 6-12) must participate in service learning throughout the year. Middle School students must perform a minimum of 15 hours of pre-approved Chesed (service learning) per year. Opportunities for community service will be presented to students and their parents throughout the year by the school.

High School students (grades 9-12) must perform a minimum of 25 hours throughout the year, 10 of which *must* be done for causes outside of one's immediate Jewish community. (i.e. causes that are not affiliated with one's synagogue, school, or youth group). The school will provide suggestions for fulfilling those hours in an appropriate setting. These Chesed (service learning) hours are in addition to those required by National Honor Society. Students who enter after the beginning of the school year will have the number of hours required for credit prorated based on the date of their enrollment.

Textbooks

Students will receive books for each of their classes. Each student is personally responsible for his/her books and must pay for any damaged or lost books at the end of the school year.

Students will purchase their own books for summer reading.

Homework

Each teacher establishes homework policies for his/her classes. Teachers may choose not to accept late homework at all or may deduct points for each day that a homework assignment is submitted following its due date. Students with an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) directive are the only exceptions. Students with extraordinary situations may ask for exceptions.

Final Exams

Eighth grade and high school final exams are scheduled at or near the close of the second semester. No high school classes are scheduled at this time; however, in order to take the final exam, students are required to attend Tefilla on the days that they have a morning final. Eighth grade students will take exams in the areas of Hebrew and math, and will take such exams during regular class periods. Seventh graders taking Algebra 1 take a final exam during their regularly scheduled class.

All students who take an AP exam will be required to take a practice exam in April/May of each year prior to scheduled AP testing dates in May. The practice exam will count as the student's final exam in the respective AP class.

Seniors who have maintained a 90 or above average for the year in a particular subject and have not exceeded the number of permitted absences for the year (see Attendance section) may be exempted from the spring final exam at the discretion of the teacher and administration.

The final exam schedule is based on a student's individual schedule of class periods. A student may be scheduled for one, two, or no exams on a particular day. Students who do not have an exam and are present in school must study in the library. Vacations should be planned accordingly. Alternative exam dates will be scheduled in the case of student illness.

Test/Major Assignment/Project Calendar

To help minimize the "crunch" that can come at certain times during each quarter/semester, the faculty are asked to list major papers, tests, and projects on the *Test Calendar* for each division,

which is located on the RMBA website. Generally, students will not have more than two tests in a day. Students may have quizzes in addition to the two tests. Due dates for major long-term assignments will also appear on the *Test Calendar*.

Administration of Tests

- Tests or papers will not be scheduled the day after a religious holiday or after an extended school holiday.
- If a student is absent on the day a test is given, he or she should be ready to take the test on the day he or she returns to school. When it is appropriate to make adjustments to the stated policy because a student has been absent for an extended period of time or is overwhelmed with a lot of make-up work, arrangements should be discussed with the teachers and the respective principal.

Guidelines For Taking Exams

The following guidelines represent a set of procedures under which final exams are to be conducted. These guidelines are meant to create a safe environment wherein students can do their best work:

- No books, book bags, notes, Ipods, Apple watches, computers/tablets, overcoats, backpacks, bags, or cell phones will be allowed in the examination room unless the teacher specifies otherwise.
- No talking will be allowed in the room. Questions will be directed to the teacher only.
- Any break during the exam will be absolutely silent. No student may leave the examination room until he/she finishes the exam.
- All students must remain in the examination room for at least one hour.
- Receiving or giving communication will be construed as cheating and will result in the immediate termination of the exam for all the students involved in the communication.

In the case of a student whose exam is terminated, the respective principal will take whatever action is deemed necessary after a review of the circumstances involved in the incident.

Extended-Time Testing

To ensure fair and orderly testing situations, students are normally expected to complete quizzes, tests, and examinations in the time set by the teacher. Students with special learning needs are granted extended time on tests only if they have submitted documentation of educational testing by a specialist or institution approved by the School, specifically indicating the need for additional time. This educational evaluation must be current (i.e within the last four years; however, the College Board and the ACT Program may require updated documentation every three years).

Students who qualify for extended-time testing are allowed a maximum of twice as much time, barring extraordinary circumstances, as students who take the test under standard circumstances. Students must take such tests either in several discrete segments or at a single sitting.

In order to qualify for extended time testing for national standardized tests (e.g. SAT I, SAT II, PSAT, AP), a student must fulfill the requirements set by the College Board: a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a psycho-educational evaluation conducted by a qualified and licensed specialist or, in some conditions, a signed letter by a physician must be on file with the Principal and College Counselor. Moreover, students should be receiving accommodations at the school as per the evaluation submitted. Each of these documents must specifically indicate that extended time testing is warranted. The document must be dated no more than three years prior to the initial testing date.

Extended time testing for SAT I and SAT II is available at national testing centers on the regularly scheduled testing dates for those students who qualify and who meet the published registration deadlines. The ACT also offers extended time testing, but on a more limited basis. Please work with the College Counselor and the Upper School General Studies Principal and plan in advance.

Standardized Testing

Students in Grades 6-8 take a standardized assessment (CTP5) each spring. These tests are used to assess student learning, and the results are also shared with parents/guardians. The students are assessed in the areas of language and mathematics.

Students in Grades 9 through 11 are required to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), administered in the fall on a date established by the College Board. The PSATs are tests of verbal and mathematical abilities and are in preparation for the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT I) taken by juniors and seniors, which are important criteria in college admissions. The students are given information booklets prior to the test's administration.

The SATs and ACTs are taken at Robert M. Beren Academy on certain Sundays and are paid for by each individual student. Further information can be found on the College Board website (www.collegeboard.com) and the ACT website (act.org). RMBA students are required to sign-up prior to the deadline. Please see the SAT or ACT websites for more information on test dates and registration deadlines.

Upper School students are also encouraged to take SAT II tests. These are subject-area tests that assess a student's actual achievement in the subject area. Students should take SAT IIs if they have successfully completed a course, have spoken with the teacher, and as soon as possible in the sequence of the completion of the course. For instance, a student in Grade 9 who has completed the biology class with an A or B, should take the Biology SAT II. A 10th or 11th grade student who has successfully completed US History should sit for that exam upon the completion of the course (in June). Students with questions about SAT IIs, should speak with the subject-area teacher and/or the College Counselor. Please note that most Ivy League and highly competitive colleges require three SAT IIs.

The Robert M. Beren Academy CEEB Code is: 443460. You need this school code to register for SATs and ACTs.

Permanent Record

A permanent record is maintained for each student. In the Middle School, this includes copies of grades and comments, along with attendance, any disciplinary reports, and standardized testing. If you request that records be sent to another school, it is our policy to send all of this information.

For an Upper School student, a transcript is kept including the following information: grades in all classes for four years, cumulative credits, and GPA. Standardized test scores are also kept on file, along with attendance records. We are required to report any suspensions during high school to colleges, should they ask for this information.

Please note that no records will be sent to any schools or colleges if a student's account is in arrears and arrangements have not been made with the Business Manager to alleviate the debt.

Honor Roll

All Upper School students are eligible for the Honor Roll each quarter. To qualify, the student's average of all grades on his/her quarter report must be 90.0 or above. Those students whose average is 95.0 or above earn the privilege of being named to the Gold Honor Roll. Students who maintain a GPA of 95.0 or above throughout high school will earn the distinction of honors at graduation.

Summer Studies

Students who wish to participate in academic coursework during the summer at other schools in order to be considered for placement purposes at Robert M. Beren Academy must submit in writing to the administration the application to participate by May 1st. It is at the sole discretion of RMBA to allow such participation, and approval must be granted by the administration prior to participation in such studies. Moreover, qualification for placement under these circumstances is by examination administered at RMBA as well as provision of the final transcript from the accredited summer program.

The summer coursework should reflect the academic rigor of RMBA and the equivalent course hours as a traditional year-long course. Additionally, the course is to be affiliated with an accredited school or university, and an official grade report is to be submitted to RMBA. Summer coursework will not appear on the permanent official transcript of RMBA and credit will not be given. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s) to obtain copies of official grade transcripts of summer coursework that can be sent along with college applications (in the case of students in grades 9-12).

Requirements for Promotion

Promotion to the next grade is based upon developmental readiness, the attainment of the necessary academic skills, and appropriate social and emotional maturity. Student enrollment contracts may be withheld for students whose academic achievement is substandard or whose

behavior does not meet community standards. In these cases, families and students will meet with their Principal to discuss future enrollment.

If a student fails a class at RMBA, then it will be required that the student enroll in a summer course that should reflect the academic rigor of RMBA and the equivalent course hours as a traditional year-long course. Additionally, the course is to be affiliated with an accredited school or university, and an official grade report is to be submitted to RMBA. Please note that the student's grade point average will not change and the grade will not replace the grade on the RMBA report card; however, the course is required to be promoted to the next grade level and take the next level of required courses.

If a student does not meet the academic standards of the School, then RMBA reserves the right to review a student's promotion.

Allowing a student to advance more than one grade is not standard practice at RMBA. There are many factors that must be considered and reviewed prior to permitting a student to advance a grade. Such considerations include the academic standing of the student, his or her social development, and discussions among the Principal and the faculty.

National Honor Society

Robert M. Beren Academy sponsors the Rambam Chapter of the National Honor Society. To be eligible for membership students in Grades 10-12 must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 and have been in attendance at RMBA for at least half an academic year.

Those who are eligible will be notified in February of each school year and must apply to be considered. They will be discussed and evaluated by the Upper School NHS Faculty Committee on the basis of service, character, achievements, and leadership. Those candidates who are chosen will be inducted at an annual ceremony. Those candidates who were not selected will be given reasons for their non-selection at this time. They may re-apply the following year. Once selected, members have the responsibility of abiding by the National Honor Society guidelines and continuing to demonstrate scholarship (the required grade point average), character, leadership, and service (40 hours of service learning per year, 25 of which are the regular service learning requirement) to maintain their active membership status.

Academic Honesty

RMBA is an educational institution that believes in academic honesty. Honesty is at the foundation of a genuine education and is essential to our school. Presenting the work of others as one's own is unethical and subject to serious consequences at RMBA and elsewhere.

Part of the mission of RMBA is to teach students to think for themselves; cheating and plagiarism are the ultimate subversion of that mission. In addition, part of the mission of RMBA is to develop ethical character traits and values (Derech Eretz and Middot) such as integrity and honesty in our students. The work of others is devalued when individuals benefit from work that is not their own. Dishonesty can be habit forming. Colleges and universities ask about a student's

record of suspensions (and please note that RMBA has an obligation to report this honestly); colleges and universities do not tolerate academic dishonesty in their students.

Cheating includes but is not limited to:

- Lying to a teacher.
- Copying homework (does not include collaboration explicitly permitted by a teacher).
- Copying from someone else's homework, quiz, test, lab, or paper; using cheat sheets, books, or unauthorized sources of information.
- Allowing another student to copy from your work
- Illicit use of calculators (writing and storing formulas, text, or unauthorized programs) during quizzes, tests, or exams.
- Getting or supplying information about a test or quiz.
- Obtaining, without authorization, a quiz, test, exam, or any parts thereof before taking the same.
- Submitting the same material (written or oral) in more than one class without checking with teachers ahead of time.
- Fabricating data to fit the expected results.
- Altering any answers or grades on any test or assignment after it has been submitted for grading.
- Forging, falsifying, or altering any information on application forms, transcripts, school records, etc.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Submitting a paper or other work written in whole or in part by someone else (this may include but is not limited to homework assignments, outlines, reports, labs, themes, designs, web page design or content, or musical compositions).
- Using words or ideas of others (quotations, documented ideas, paraphrased passages) without citing the source. This includes information downloaded from the internet.
- Obtaining and using experimental data from other students without the expressed consent of the teacher, or using lab write-ups or data from other sections or previous classes.

Consequences for Academic Honesty Violations

If a student is found to be dishonest in his/her academic work at RMBA, the disciplinary consequences are serious. Dishonesty results in a "zero" for the piece of work (paper, test, quiz, homework, etc.) and a mandatory meeting with the Principal, student, and parent/guardian to review additional measures. Second offenses of academic honesty may range from suspension from school (and the need to respond honestly to questions posed by colleges or other schools about suspension) up to expulsion from the School.

Guidelines for Bar/Bat Mitzvot Celebrations

1) In order to try and avoid conflicts we ask that all families please contact us as early as possible to put the date of your son or daughter's *Bar/Bat Mitzva* on the school calendar. Please let us know where the *Bar/Bat Mitzva* will be, and whether there will be a party. We ask that *Bar/Bat Mitzva* celebrations do not take place during school hours, and that if there will be a party the night before school (ex. Sunday night) that it ends at a reasonable time for the students to function in school the next day.

2) We also invite you to celebrate your *Simcha* with us here at school in your child's *Makom Limud Torah* (place of learning *Torah*). We invite you to join us for *Tefilla*. One of the teachers will share a *Dvar Torah* in honor of your child. Though it is not required, many families will provide a small treat (ex. juice and donuts) for the Middle School students in honor of the occasion. If you would like to celebrate in school please contact Rabbi Levitt as early as possible to schedule a date.

Part of the excitement of the *Bar/Bat Mitzva* is celebrating with one's friends. Indeed, one of the major messages of the *Bar/Bat Mitzva* is that the young adult should feel part of *Am Yisrael* and therefore share his/her *Simcha* with the community. In order to maintain this sense of our RMBA *Kehilla* (community) please keep in mind the following guidelines when planning the celebration:

- Please invite either the entire grade, or at least all the children of the same gender in the grade. No one should be left out from any part of the *Bar/Bat Mitzva*. On the flip side, if your child is invited to a classmate's *Bar/Bat Mitzva* please make every effort to attend. While we recognize that every child has his/her closer friends and those with whom he/she may not yet be as close, these policies will help us build a community, avoid hurt feelings, and teach our children the right *middot* (values). Please make sure as well that children who do not live near you have a place to stay for Shabbat and a place to eat meals. If there is a get together *Shabbat* afternoon please ensure that all the classmates are included.
- During a time of *Simcha* (joy) one of the key practices the Rabbis teach us is inclusion. In order to make sure everyone feels comfortable and included the most respectful practice, and the school's expectation, would be to only serve Kosher food at the party. If you have any questions about this we would be happy to provide guidance and advice.

Israel and College Guidance

College Counseling

Starting in 9th grade, students meet with the College Counselor and learn about expectations for college. In the fall of the Junior year, students begin to meet one-on-one with the College Counselor to discuss future plans. The college counseling process is highly individualized, and it is the student's responsibility to take advantage of the many services that are offered at RMBA in this area. These services include a full library of college catalogues, resource books, and videos, information about standardized testing, information with regard to essay-writing and interviewing, creation of college lists, coordinating the college visits, application strategies, and much more. Various colleges send representatives to RMBA, and juniors and seniors are encouraged to attend these meetings.

The emphasis throughout the college admissions process at RMBA is on empowering the student to make as wise and informed a decision as possible so that the college or post-secondary education chosen will be a good fit for the individual student.

Because meeting deadlines for college applications is extremely important, students need to submit their college list and requests for credentials to the College Counselor well in advance, in order to ensure that the transcripts and letters required can be well prepared. Students must ask faculty members if they would be willing to write a letter of recommendation on their behalf by October 1. A copy of their college resumé must also accompany the request.

The RMBA college application deadline is November 1, to ensure that materials are received in a timely manner. If a student is applying to a regular decision or rolling decision school, their application must still be completed by the deadline. The responsibility for mailing the college application itself, meeting deadlines, and any financial aid applications remains solely with the parents and the student.

Family Connection and Naviance College Guidance Software

This year, RMBA will be using Family Connection – a comprehensive website that you can use to plan for college and a career. Family Connection is linked with Naviance, a service that RMBA uses to track and analyze data about college and career plans.

Family Connection allows you to:

- **Get involved in the planning and advising process** – Build a resume, complete online surveys, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers
- **Research colleges** – Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from our school for students who have applied and been admitted in the past
- **Research careers** – Research hundreds of careers and career clusters, and take career assessments

- **Create plans for the future** – Create goals and to-dos, and complete tasks assigned to you by the school to better prepare yourself for your future college and career goals

Family Connection also lets RMBA share information with students and their parents about upcoming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other resources for college and career information. Families can also use the site to stay in communication with the counseling office.

Students and parents will have a personal access code and instructions for accessing Family Connection at <http://connection.naviance.com/rmba>

Israel Guidance

Many RMBA graduates choose to spend a year in Israel after High School before starting college in order to deepen their Jewish identity, connection to Israel, and love of Torah learning. At RMBA we not only highly value a college education and promote each of our students to pursue their academic studies, we also see tremendous growth and benefit from first spending a year in Israel.

Starting in 11th grade, students attend presentations from visiting Gap Year programs and begin thinking about what they would like to do after graduation. In 12th grade students meet one on one with Israel Guidance advisors to discuss possible options for the coming year. On the 12th grade Israel trip students choose which programs they would like to visit in person. When they return from Israel they apply to the programs that most interest them. We work closely with the yeshivot, seminaries, and other programs to promote our students and keep close tabs on their progress while they are in Israel.

Athletic Department and Extracurricular Activities

Students are urged to balance their academic program with experiences outside the classroom that provide personal challenge and growth. For this reason, participation in extracurricular activities is a vital aspect of the School's philosophy and education.

In the Upper School, there are many extracurricular opportunities. It is important for a student's social development and personal individuation, as well as showing depth of school involvement on their college applications, to be involved in school activities. We encourage parents to support their children in these extracurricular activities.

Athletics

In concert with an individual's athletic development and team experience are character development and good sportsmanship. Sportsmanship and fair play are critical components of the RMBA athletic program. Coaches and athletes are expected to represent Robert M. Beren

Academy in a manner that is respectful to others, both on and off the field of play. This model deportment is expected of our community, e.g. our fan base, as well. It is our objective to develop and maintain the highest standards of courtesy, emotional discipline, and good sportsmanship.

No Pass-No Play Rule

Any student arriving after 11:00 a.m. will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities, (e.g. athletic games, school plays). Additionally, students who do not participate in school field trips will not be allowed to participate in after school activities, e.g. athletic games, school plays, on the day of the trip. Any student who is assigned a detention will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities on the day of their detention.

At the end of each quarter, a student will be considered ineligible if he/she receives a failing report card grade (below 70) in any course. A student is eligible for reinstatement after a period of two weeks from the end of the grading period, provided all grades in all subjects are above 70.

A student will also be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities if he/she has been placed on Social Probation by the Administration as a result of any disciplinary issues.

Student Government

In the Upper School, Student Council (SC) is composed of officers and representatives of Grades 9-12. Being on Student Council is considered an honor and comes with a commitment to attending meetings and working hard to improve the school. Issues of concern to students may be brought to the Student Council for discussion and resolution. Students may contact a student representative or ask to address the council personally to present an issue. Students may sit in on meetings, but only elected council members may vote on issues.

Only students who meet all of the following criteria may run for office:

1. Have the scheduling ability to attend all meetings and carry out their responsibilities to their school work, family life, and extra curriculums, in addition to the council.
2. Did not receive any failing quarterly grades in the previous school year.
3. No behavioral disciplinary action was taken against them in the previous school year.
4. They receive above a 3.5 average score on the Teacher Evaluation Form, to be filled out by teachers for all potential candidates.

As a member of The Student Council, you must:

- Be dependable. Attend all meetings, which will be held once a week at lunch (day to be determined). You are only allowed one unexcused absence from a meeting. You will receive an official warning for the second. After the third time, your position will be revoked. You must have a note or call from a parent if you miss a meeting, which will allow you to be excused.
- Pay attention and contribute positively to each meeting.

- Represent your constituents. Your voice in student council is not always your own. As an elected official, your job is to serve those who elected you.
- Keep your grades up. Any student with a grade below 70 for any class has four weeks to bring his/her grade up or he/she will be removed from office. The President must maintain at least a C average in all classes.
- Behave as a role model. Any student on Social Probation will be removed from his/her position.
- Maintain a strong Attendance record. Any student who has exceeded his/her maximum permitted number of absences in 4 or more of their subjects may be removed from his/her position.

Communication

Updated Parent Contact Information

RMBA believes that open, ongoing, smooth, and effective communication between school and parents is the key foundation to the success of the child. We strive to communicate clearly and proactively with parents about all school events and about the academic and social/emotional progress of your child. At the same time we expect parents to share with us all information relevant to your child so that we may support he/she as needed. In order to maintain effective communication please make sure that all parent contact information is constantly updated and accurate on Renweb.

To Whom Concerns Should Be Addressed

To address concerns about any aspect of a student's experience in an efficient and respectful manner, it is extremely important that a student or parent communicates the concern to the appropriate person. To both prepare the student for college life (where parents do not contact professors or administrators) and address the concern effectively, in most cases the student (rather than the parent) should first follow the three steps below. If the student is unsuccessful at (or unwilling to) address the concern, the parent should then intervene.

1. Concerns regarding a particular class or extracurricular activity must be directed to the **teacher or staff member** of that class.
2. If after doing so, the student is still concerned, the student should meet with the appropriate **principal**.
3. If further assistance is needed, the student may then meet with the **Head of School**.

If a parent has concerns relating to the emotional or social development of his/her child, the parent should contact the school counselor or principal.

Conferences

Conferences are important and facilitate the communication between you and your child's classroom teacher. Please make every effort to attend. Special conferences may be requested by a teacher, the Principal, or a parent, if the need arises. Do not hesitate to call the School and leave

a message for your child's teacher if there is cause for concern. The desired goal is the success of your child. This will be optimized by the exchange of information between the School and home.

Conduct

RMBA as both a religious and educational institution is a place where **teachers and students are respectful to one another**. Because we take this mission seriously, there are significant consequences to any behavior which compromises the values of our school community.

As a Jewish school part of our mission is to develop **ethical character traits and values (Derech Eretz and Middot)** in our students. Since **parents and teachers are partners** in a student's education, parents may be called in for a meeting with the administration in the case of inappropriate conduct.

Specific inappropriate behaviors and their consequences are listed below. A student who assists, enables, or promotes another student's contrary behavior may be liable for the same consequences. Students whose **repeated behavior is deemed to be a danger to themselves or others** (physically or emotionally) or who **do something extraordinarily egregious** may be removed from school for an extended period or permanently.

Since **RMBA is a place where every student must feel safe**, students involved in a physical altercation will face very serious consequences as determined by the administration.

Sexual harassment both in and out of school, including but not limited to inappropriate or suggestive comments, sharing inappropriate images or photographs, or physical harassment, is punishable by detention or suspension, the length of which will be in proportion to the offense.

Bullying (including both verbal and physical) is punishable by detention or suspension, the length of which will be in proportion to the offense.

Threatening to either harm someone physically or emotionally is punishable by suspension, the length of which will be in proportion to the offense.

Obscene gestures, vulgar language, racial slurs, etc. are punishable by detention or suspension, the length of which will be in proportion to the offense. In addition, because there are lower school students in the building, upper school students should be particularly mindful of their language and behavior as they are role models for the younger students.

Stealing and destruction of property belonging to a student, teacher, or the school requires restitution and/or restoration and may result in a detention or a suspension.

Public disrespect of a teacher or of the School (both in and out of school, including social media) is punishable by a detention or suspension.

Since RMBA's core mission is education, **disrupting class is a serious offense**. Depending on the circumstances, the consequence for disruption of class is detention or suspension.

Public displays of affection between members of opposite genders are inappropriate according to Halacha. Students who do so repeatedly at school or school functions may receive a detention or suspension.

Gambling at school is inappropriate and punishable by detention. Exceptions for charitable causes may be requested in advance from the administration.

Selling merchandise or services on campus or at school events is prohibited unless it is part of an approved school-sponsored program.

The campus of Robert M. Beren Academy is a **non-smoking** area. Students, parents, teachers, and visitors are not permitted to smoke anywhere on the campus, including the parking lot and fields, and may not smoke at any RMBA sponsored event or at any extra-curricular activity.

Social Probation

Students having behavioral issues may be placed on social probation.

- A student may be placed on social probation following an egregious action, a suspension or non-compliance with set standards of conduct (ie. the *Middle School Expectations*).
- Parents will be notified of the probationary period.
- The major consequence of being on social probation is that an additional infraction may result in expulsion. Other consequences may include being barred from certain school activities (e.g. extracurricular activities, class trips, athletics, etc.); these will be decided on an individual basis by the Principal.

Detention

- Detentions are issued by the Principal for serious offenses such as but not limited to excessive tardiness, skipping a class, or behavior contrary to the standards of our community. Detentions are served after school from 4 p.m.-5 p.m. under the supervision of a teacher. Detentions will be scheduled at the earliest possible date and will not be scheduled at the convenience of the student.
- A student assigned to detention must arrive promptly. During detention students will sit quietly. They may not read a book or do work.
- If a student misses an assigned detention, he/she must meet with the Principal and his/her parent(s) before being allowed to return to school. This action may result in an additional detention or an in-school suspension.

Suspension

A student may be suspended immediately from school for serious offenses. Both violations of major school rules and repeated violations of **any** school rule may result in suspension. The student and the parent must participate in a parent-student conference with a Principal prior to returning to class. Certain violations may be considered serious enough to result in expulsion

from school. A student who has earned the consequence of two or more suspensions will be considered for immediate expulsion.

A student who is suspended from the School may not be present or participate in after school events for any reason during the period of suspension. Furthermore, students who are suspended are independently responsible for meeting all academic expectations. Major assignments (tests, essays, projects, etc.) will be counted as late and will receive an academic penalty in keeping with departmental policy. Students will receive no credit for all other missed work (homework, class work, quizzes, class participation, etc.). During the time of the suspension, the student must compose a written statement that will be submitted to and deemed acceptable by his or her Principal before the student will be allowed to return to school. A copy of the statement will be sent to the student's parent/guardian, and must be returned to school with the parent/guardian's signature, and will remain in the student's file. An apology will also be written, if appropriate.

The student's statement should address the following three points:

1. What happened and why
2. The student's understanding of why his or her behavior was inappropriate and violated the RMBA Code of Conduct and/or Community Standards
3. A pledge that the behavior will not re-occur, and a list of steps to be taken to assure that it will not.

Expulsion

Expulsion is an extraordinary punishment. A few offenses, including drug possession, use, or distribution on campus or at a school-sponsored event, or violent behavior, require expulsion on the first offense. However, repeated misbehavior of any kind may result in expulsion. RMBA is dedicated to serving students who want to learn and contribute positively to the RMBA community. A student will not be expelled until he or she has met with the Principal and Head of School with his or her parent/guardian.

Alcohol/Drugs/Illegal or Harmful Substances

ANY USE OR POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS IS ILLEGAL AND HARMFUL. For the purpose of this handbook, the term "drugs" shall mean all substances including, but not limited to, alcohol, alcoholic beverages, marijuana, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medication, look-alike drugs, inhalants, pills, tablets, capsules and all other harmful legal and/or illegal drugs or substances.

It is required that students who take medication while at school give the medication to the school nurse along with the required documentation of the prescribing physician.

The school reserves the right to administer random substance testing.

Those students whose use of drugs or alcohol at a non-school-sponsored event off-campus comes to the attention of RMBA will be required to have drug counseling, and RMBA will monitor compliance. A second incident of off-campus use (at a non-school-sponsored event) may result in expulsion.

A student is in violation of this section if he/she uses, sells, or attempts to sell and/or distribute

drugs or substances represented to be drugs by the seller or distributor and/or thought to be drugs by the buyer or receiver on school property, in any vehicle a student brought on school property, or on property being used by the school, at a school function, at any school event held away from school, or while the student is on his/her way to or from school.

RMBA has zero-tolerance of substance abuse. Any possession for the personal use or distribution of controlled substances or alcohol at RMBA or at a school-related event will result in immediate expulsion.

Any student charged or convicted of a legal offense for aberrant behavior in or out of school, which is thoroughly inconsistent with the school's norms and mores, is grounds for expulsion.

Students or parents may appeal a suspension or expulsion to the Head of School.

Search and Seizure

The student lockers and other school property remain the property of the School at all times.

To maintain overall school safety and security, and to maintain order and discipline on school property and at school-related events and to protect the health, safety and welfare of students and school personnel, RMBA has the right to perform unannounced searches to seize illegal contraband and stolen and other unauthorized materials. The administration and authorized staff members **may search a student's purse, backpack, gym bag, or other personal property** (including the contents of any electronic device). Student automobiles may be searched under the conditions described in the next paragraph.

When a student is believed to have contraband or illegal substances **on his/her person**, the school will request that student allow the school to search him/her. If a student fails to comply, the student's parents will be contacted, and the police will be summoned for further disposition.

The school reserves the right, where an item presents an immediate, clear and present danger, to take whatever steps necessary to eliminate such danger. **All items deemed to be illegal, illicit, disruptive, or a general nuisance** to the educational process, may be confiscated by staff. Storage, return, or destruction of such items shall be at the discretion of the administration, subject to legal impoundment.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Robert M. Beren Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions, financial assistance, educational, or other school policies. Every RMBA student is admitted to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School.

Harassment Policy

RMBA does not tolerate any form of harassment based on racial, cultural, sexual, or ability differences. Diversity is our strength. Harassment is the creation of a hostile environment by speech or conduct. Not all unpleasant speech or conduct constitutes harassment. However, speech or conduct that is either intended to or reasonably could be expected to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment and thereby interferes with the opportunities offered by the School, constitutes unacceptable harassment. Harassment may be subtle and ambiguous or direct and overt. It may arise between students, or between a student and an adult, including visitors to the school. Whether or not harassment exists depends on the circumstances. It is not, therefore, possible to give a complete list of conduct that constitutes unacceptable harassment. The following are examples of conduct prohibited by this policy whether the conduct is that of a student or an adult:

- Persistent and unwelcome requests for a personal or physical relationship, including a dating relationship.
- Unwelcome and offensive jokes, remarks or epithets based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.
- Speech or the display of written or graphic materials, which is intended to be demeaning or degrading or reasonably could be considered so.
- Unwelcome physical contact including, but not limited to, violence, patting, pinching, hugging or kissing which is either persistent or intentional.

The prevention of harassment requires a thoughtful educational program. Each year, administrators and counselors will discuss this policy at meetings of students, teachers, and staff so that everyone will understand the intention of the policy, how to take action, and the possible consequences of violating the policy.

What you should do if you believe you have been a victim of harassment?

First, consider telling the other person that the conduct is offensive and request that it stop. If it is difficult for the student or adult to speak directly to the person or if the offensive conduct does not stop after a request to cease, an individual may report it to any faculty member, to the Principal or Head of School, or may ask a parent or guardian to do so. A faculty member will tell the Principal who will report the conduct to the Head of School. A prompt and thorough investigation will follow.

Confidentiality

Reports of harassment will be treated confidentially and will be reported to others within the school community only on a need-to-know basis. However, in almost every circumstance, the offending person will have to be informed to be able to gather the relevant facts. The School reserves the right to bring any matter to the attention of the parents and guardians of the students involved.

Consequences

All complaints regarding harassment will be investigated promptly. Nothing will be placed in a student's or an employee's file unless harassment is found and action is taken. If the complaint is

determined to have merit after consideration of all relevant facts and circumstances, the School will take appropriate action.

No member of a community should be afraid to make a complaint for fear of reprisal or getting another person in trouble. Retaliation or threats of retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint of harassment is itself a violation of this policy and will be considered cause for discipline. If harassment has taken place and the harasser has not left the School, there will be follow-up to ensure that the behavior has ceased.

Technology

Information technology is integrated across the curriculum and faculty are constantly exploring ways to incorporate appropriate technological advances into their curricula. Computers are an exciting and useful tool in the gathering of knowledge, the exploration of our world, and the development of thinking skills. For students growing up in this age of fast-paced technological growth, it is imperative that they have the necessary exposure and familiarity with this kind of approach to information technology.

Expectations Regarding Computer Use

Each student in grade 6-12 has a unique log-in and password for use on school-provided devices. Each account will be monitored, and it is forbidden to use another student's account for personal use without their permission. Additionally, students in grades 6-12 are given a school email address. All communication with Robert M. Beren Academy staff should be sent using the school email address.

RMBA has an Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Information at the end of this Handbook, and all students must sign a copy and return it to the Principal. Parents are encouraged to implement like-minded policies at home.

RMBA provides a complete set of network and computer tools designed to support easy access and facilitate communication and learning. Certain uses of these technologies are not permitted on the school computer network. In addition, there are appropriate procedures to guide student use of school networks, technology, and communications systems. In general, all users of these systems are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with Robert M. Beren Academy's Mission Statement as well as state and federal laws governing copyright. The following activities are not acceptable on the RMBA computers:

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing, insulting, or attacking others
- Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using another's password
- Trespassing in another's folders, works, or files

- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the network for commercial purposes
- Electronic game playing

Violations may result in loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

Electronic Devices

Middle school students may not bring tablet computers, laptops, game consoles, etc. to school, unless mandated by psycho-educational testing or given specific permission in a special circumstance by a teacher. Middle school students must place their cellphones in the designated area, which will then be stored in the Main Office until the end of the school day at which point they will be made available for student pick up.

High school students may use a laptop, tablet computer or cell phone during lunch. High school students who wish to use a laptop or a tablet computer in class to aid in the learning process and has such documentation filed with the School with regard to such accommodations must sign an Acceptable Use Agreement and may use them only for this purpose during class. High school students may not use cell phones or have them visible during class nor may they use tablets or laptops in class. Devices such as laptops and tablets may only be used in the classroom if the instructor has given prior approval for such usage and the use of the electronic device is under the direct supervision of the instructor.

Use of personal and school electronic devices is governed by the “Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Information” (Appendix A) which is required to be signed by all students and parents. Students who do not follow these protocols may have their devices confiscated for the remainder of the day (on the first offense) or multiple days (on repeated offenses). A student who refuses to hand over his/her electronic device is disrespecting a teacher and will be suspended.

In addition to the above, the following consequences will be implemented when an electronic device has been used that does not comply with the policy:

First Offense: Item is confiscated, brought to the Main Office, and is to be picked up by the student at the end of the school day.

Second Offense: Item is confiscated, brought to the Main Office, and the student will make a phone call to his/her parent requesting that the parent pick up the item at the end of the school day.

Third Offense: Item is confiscated, brought to the Main Office, and the parent must pick up the item from the Main Office at the end of the school day. There will be a fee of \$18 to pick up the device, which will be donated toward tzedaka. At this point, the student may not bring or utilize any electronic device on campus for the remainder of the semester.

Middle School Expectations and Consequences

The Middle School students have an agreed upon set of expectations that are posted in each classroom. With that the students agree to uphold behavioral expectations as we see ourselves as STARS who commit to the following:

Sportsmanship

Teamwork

Amazing Attitude

Respect & Responsibility

Safety

As part of our system, if a student violates the behavioral norms of the Middle School then he/she will receive a *Reflection Form*, which is to be completed by the student, signed by the student and teacher, and sent home for the parents' signature. With that, an electronic notification will be sent home at the end of each school day stating if a child received a *Reflection Form*.

As per the Middle School Expectations and Consequences, the following consequences apply:

- 3 reflection forms: lunch detention
- 4 reflection forms: after school detention
- 5 reflection forms: in-school suspension
- 6 reflection forms: social probation and parent conference. Social probation will last for a period of nine weeks

Ensuring that each child is in an academically, socially, and emotionally safe environment in which learning can take place without interruption is essential for each member (child and adult) of the Middle School. With that, we ask that you continue to partner with us by having further

conversations at home with regard to appropriate behavior at school as well as having your child understand that there are consequences for such.

Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Information

Section 1. Purpose of Technology Use

Robert M. Beren Academy provides technology resources to its students solely for educational purposes. Through technology, the school provides access for students and staff to resources from around the world. Expanding technologies take students and staff beyond the confines of the classroom, and provide tremendous opportunities for enhancing, extending, and rethinking the learning process. The goal in providing these resources is to promote educational excellence in the school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication with the support and supervision of parents and staff.

Section 2. The Opportunities and Risks of Technology Use

With access to computers and people from all over the world comes the potential availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting, or that may be harmful or disruptive. Because information on networks is transitory and diverse, the school cannot completely predict or control what users may or may not locate. It is believed that the educational value of limited access to the information, interaction, and research capabilities that technology offers outweighs the possibility that users may obtain or encounter material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the school.

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, the school installs and operates filtering software to limit users' Internet access to materials that are obscene, pornographic, harmful to children, or otherwise inappropriate, or disruptive to the educational process, notwithstanding that such software may in certain cases block access to other materials as well. At the same time, the school cannot guarantee that filtering software will in all instances successfully block access to materials deemed harmful, indecent, offensive, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate. The use of filtering software does not negate or otherwise affect the obligations of users to abide by the terms of this policy and to refrain from accessing such inappropriate materials.

No technology is guaranteed to be error-free or totally dependable, nor is it safe when used irresponsibly. Among other matters, the school is not liable or responsible for:

- Any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical, or other, difficulties;
- The accuracy or suitability of any information that is retrieved through technology;
- Breaches of confidentiality;
- Defamatory material; or

- The consequences that may come from failure to follow such policies and procedures governing the use of technology.

Section 3. Privileges and Responsibilities

The school's electronic network is part of the curriculum and is not a public forum for general use. Student users may access technology for only educational purposes. The actions of student users accessing networks through the school reflect on the school; therefore, student users must conduct themselves accordingly by exercising good judgment and complying with this policy and any accompanying administrative regulations and guidelines. Students are responsible for their behavior and communications using the school's computers and networks.

Student users of technology shall:

- Use or access school technology only for educational purposes
- Comply with copyright laws and software licensing agreements
- Understand that email and network files are not private. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and monitor responsible student use.
- Respect the privacy rights of others.
- Be responsible at all times for the proper use of technology, including proper use of access privileges, complying with all required system security identification codes, and not sharing any codes or passwords.
- Maintain the integrity of technological resources from potentially damaging messages, physical abuse, or viruses.
- Abide by the policies and procedures of networks and systems linked by technology.

Students may not use school technology for improper uses. These uses include, but are not limited to:

- Any and all illegal purposes;
- Any and all obscene or pornographic purposes, including, but not limited to, retrieving or viewing sexually explicit material;
- Any and all discriminatory purposes, including harassment and bullying of individuals based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, among others;
- Any and all purposes that would violate state, federal or international law, including
 - Copyright laws;
 - Cyberbullying laws; and
 - Sexting laws
- Any use of profanity, obscenity, or language that is offensive or threatening;
- Reposting or forwarding personal communications or images without the author's prior consent;
- Reposting or forwarding of junk mail, chain letters, or inappropriate or offensive jokes;

- Destruction, alteration, disfigurement or unauthorized access of hardware, software, or firmware;
- Obtaining financial gain or transacting any business or commercial activities;
- Plagiarizing (claiming another person's writings as your own);
- Disrupting the use of others to any process, program or tool, including downloading or otherwise spreading computer viruses;
- Engaging in hacking of any kind, including, but not limited to, the illegal or unauthorized access;
- Allowing others to use property issued under the program without authorization, including students whose access privileges have been suspended or revoked;
- Soliciting or distributing information with the intent to incite violence, cause personal harm, damage a person's character, or to harass another individual.
- Any and all other purposes that would violate the the Robert M. Beren Academy Student Code of Conduct.

INTERNET SAFETY:

Students must take steps to ensure their safety on the internet, including, but not limited to, the following rules:

- Students should never give out identifying information such as home address, school name, or telephone number to others on the Internet or by email, including in a public message such as chat room or newsgroups. If a person asks for such personal information, students must have approval of their parent or guardian before providing the information.
- Students should not post photographs of themselves in newsgroups or on websites that are available to the public.
- Students should not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they "meet" on the Internet or by email without parental/guardian permission. If a meeting is arranged, the meeting must be in a public place and the student's parent/guardian must attend.
- Student users should not respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make a student user feel uncomfortable. If a student receives such a message, he or she should provide a copy of the message to his or her parent or guardian immediately. If the message requires school action (e.g., bullying) the student's parent should provide a copy to the school administration.

Section 4. Disciplinary Actions

Violations of this policy, or any administrative regulations and guidelines governing the use of technology, may result in disciplinary action which could include loss of network access, loss of technology use, suspension or expulsion, or other appropriate disciplinary action. Violations of local, state or federal law may subject students to prosecution by appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Section 5. No Expectation of Privacy

The school's electronic network is part of the curriculum and is not a public forum for general use. Users should not expect that email or files stored on school servers will be private. The school reserves the right to log technology use, to monitor fileserver space utilization by users, and to examine users' files and materials as needed, and at its discretion. Users must recognize that there is no assurance of confidentiality with respect to access to transmissions and files by persons outside, or from persons inside the school.

Whom Should I Contact?

Please use this list to identify the correct address for any question you may have. Start with the first person listed. If he or she cannot help you, refer to the next person listed.

Our general school phone number is 713-723-7170. You may call and ask for any faculty or staff member, or you may click on the email links below.

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT:

School Policy: [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal or [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

Classroom Progress and Extra Help: Classroom teacher; [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal or [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

Classroom Behavior: Classroom teacher; [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal or [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

Family Emergency: [Tamar Harosh](#), Front Office; [Matty Malca](#), Main Office; [Aliza Stern](#), Nurse; [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal or [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

Academic Curriculum-Judaic Studies: [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

Academic Curriculum-General Studies: [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

Admissions and Retention: [Loren Chorn](#), Director of Admissions and Retention

Strategic Learning: [Shalva Berger](#), Strategic Learning-General Studies or [Tsivi Freilich](#), Strategic Learning-Judaic Studies

Class Schedules and Report Cards: [Matty Malca](#), Main Office; [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal or [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

Transcripts and Records: [Matty Malca](#), Main Office

Non-Classroom Disciplinary Issues: [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal or [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal; [Michelle Renfrow](#), Guidance Counselor; [Dr. Paul Oberman](#), Head of School

College Guidance: [Ari Kellerman](#), College Counselor

SAT or ACT General Information: [Ari Kellerman](#), College Counselor;

SAT or ACT Accommodations: [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal

Israel Guidance: [Ari Kellerman](#), Judaic Studies Principal

AP Exams: Classroom Teacher of AP course; [Raquel Cedano](#), Upper School General Studies Principal

RMBA Website: [Tania Levenstein](#), Director of Development and Marketing

School Calendar, General Communication: [Tamar Harosh](#), Main Office; [Matty Malca](#), Main Office, [Tania Levenstein](#), Director of Development and Marketing

Attendance: attendance@berenacademy.org; Classroom Teacher

Athletics: Coach of specific sport; [Chris Cole](#), Athletic Director

Guidance Counseling: [Michelle Renfrow](#), Guidance Counselor

Tuition and Bookkeeping: [Roxanne Maikoetter](#), Business Manager

Financial Aid: [Roxanne Maikoetter](#), Business Manager

Facilities, Grounds, and Security: [Roxanne Maikoetter](#), Business Manager

Donations, Fundraising: [Tania Levenstein](#), Director of Development and Marketing

School Events: [Tania Levenstein](#), Director of Development and Marketing

Parental Involvement: PTO; [Tania Levenstein](#), Director of Development and Marketing

Unscheduled School Closings (Due to Inclement Weather): Families will be notified via email