



ROBERT M. BEREN
ACADEMY

**EARLY CHILDHOOD AND
LOWER SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK**

2019-2020



ROBERT M. BEREN
ACADEMY



Mission Statement

Robert M. Beren Academy is a Modern Orthodox 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

Administration & Officers

Head of School	Dr. Paul S. Oberman
Principal of General Studies, Lower School	Dr. Dawn McKernan
Principal of General Studies, Upper School	Raquel Cedano
Principal of Judaic Studies, Lower School	Rivkie Gottlieb
Principal of Judaic Studies, Upper School	Rabbi Ari Kellerman
Director of Admissions & Retention	Loren Chorn
Director of Development & Marketing	Tania Levenstein
Board President	Dr. Barry Diner



Dear Parents,

Welcome back to returning students and a special welcome to new students!

The administration, faculty, and staff look forward to working together with you to make this year one filled with academic, spiritual, and emotional growth. We want you to **take an active role** in being meaningfully engaged in your family's experience at RMBA - learning, davening, playing sports, co-curriculars, and chesed.

The first step in this process is carefully reading this handbook to be fully informed of policies and procedures for the 2019-20 school year. This handbook contains information that will help you get the most out of RMBA. Please review the policies and procedures with your child and keep this handbook readily available throughout the year for reference.

"כל שחכמתו מרובה ממעשיו, למה הוא דומה - לאילן שענפיו מרובין ושורשיו מועטין, והרוח באה ועוקרתו והופכתו על פניו. וכל שמעשיו מרובין מחכמתו, למה הוא דומה - לאילן שענפיו מועטין ושורשיו מרובין: אפילו כל הרוחות שבעולם באות ונושבות בו, אין מזיזות אותו. ממקומו"

מסכת אבות פרק ג משנה יז

"One whose wisdom exceeds his actions, to what is he compared? To a tree whose branches are many and roots are few- when the wind blows, it uproots the tree. One whose actions exceed his wisdom, to what is he compared? To a tree whose branches are few but whose roots are many- even a category 5 hurricane cannot uproot it."

Pirkei Avot 3;17

Rules are the roots that anchor the tree upon which academics can grow. Students, parents and teachers must all know them and be committed to conduct themselves in accordance with them so that we can create the best educational and Jewish environment.

We strive to make your experience at RMBA enjoyable, challenging, and stimulating. We expect each student to contribute in a constructive and positive way to the school, demonstrating tolerance and respect for fellow students and staff. Every member of the RMBA community is responsible for maintaining a safe and clean learning environment.

We hope you will take full advantage of the opportunities for growth and learning that we offer here at RMBA. We wish you much success this year and look forward to a true partnership.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Oberman
Head of School

Mrs. Rivkie Gottlieb
Lower School Judaic Principal

Dr. Dawn McKernan
Lower School General Studies Principal



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Academic Support Services

Our Academic Support Specialist is available to work with any student in lower school who may need additional guidance. Teachers may recommend this service or parents may request it. All students, whether diagnosed with a learning difference or simply seeking extra support, have the opportunity to take advantage of this service. Teachers, parents, and the support specialist will meet to create a plan that will give the child the best possibility for success. There is an additional fee for this service.

Admissions Procedures

An admissions decision will be made once the following is complete:

- Online application
- Full transcripts received
- Teacher recommendation form received
- Student meeting, testing, observation
- Guidance meeting
- Resource meeting

If the Admission Committee has a concern about accepting a student, a member of the Admission Committee will contact the family prior to the decision being made. This will allow the parent an opportunity to address and discuss the concern.

The decision of the committee is final for that academic year. Applicants may re-apply the following year. A new application will be required.

Arrival and Departure

A student should arrive at school between 7:30 and 7:45 a.m. each day. The school day ends at 4:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. On Friday, school ends at 3:00 p.m.

Each child enrolled in the Early Childhood Program must be accompanied to and picked up from his/her classroom by an adult who is responsible for ensuring that a staff caregiver is aware of the child's arrival as well as his/her departure. **Each child must be signed in/out in the classroom.**



Students enrolled in lower school (K-5) may be dropped off and picked up at carpool. Unloading begins at 7:30 a.m. If a student arrives late (after 7:45 a.m.) or leaves early (before 4:00 p.m.), the authorized adult must come into the front office to sign the child in/out. Students may not be pulled out of class; the office will call the teacher and have the child sent to be picked up from the office. **Students arriving after 7:50 a.m. will be marked tardy, and this will be reflected on school progress reports. Students who miss more than half of class will be marked absent for that period.**

When children are late being picked up at the end of the school day, they will be taken to the office. Parents must come inside to pick up their child and sign them out. Children who are picked up late more than twice **will be charged a fee that will automatically be added to their monthly tuition payment.**

Attendance

Regular attendance assures students the maximum benefit from their RMBA experience. Absences which are unavoidable such as personal illness, medical appointments, life cycle events, or severe weather conditions are excused. Please inform your child's teachers three days in advance of a planned absence so that they can prepare make-up work for your child.

Absences due to vacations are unexcused absences. Upon returning from vacation, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child learns any missed concepts or skills.

Arriving at school late is stressful to the child and disruptive to others. Please make every effort to be on time to enable your child to start the day on the right foot.

Books

Students will be utilizing textbooks for many 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. The school will replace a workbook lost by a student at the expense of his/her parents.

Students are encouraged to check out books from our school's extensive library. Books which are not returned by the end of the year must be paid for.



Carpool Procedures

Carpool Safety

Safety is RMBA's first priority and carpool is a time where we all have an important role! Please:

- Drive slowly (10 mph) down Cliffwood and Greenwillow Drive as you approach the school
- Put down your phone once you are in the carpool lane, or parking lot.
- Don't exit the line even after your children have entered your car unless being directed by a staff member
- Remain in your car at all times
- Be on time

Morning Drop-Off Information

- School starts at 7:45 a.m. and morning drop off begins at 7:30 a.m.
- The Greenwillow entrance is reserved for families with cars that are being parked and children walked into the school building
- The Cliffwood entrance is reserved for carpool drop off - **Please do not park on the Cliffwood side**
- Please pull up to the furthest cone before dropping your child off so that we can fit 4 cars at one time
- In the event of a late arrival (**after 7:45 a.m.**) for morning drop-off, please park your car and walk your child/ren into school. Lower school (K-5) parents must also go to the office and sign them in.
- Parents of children in early childhood must always park (on the Greenwillow side) and walk your child/ren to class.

Afternoon Pickup Information

- Students in Early Childhood must be signed out of their classrooms
- Students in Kindergarten through 5th Grade will be in the Small Ulam and must be picked up from there. No student may wait in the office or the lobby.
- Carpools with students in Kindergarten and older are at the Cliffwood entrance



- **The Greenwillow entrance is reserved for families with early childhood students who must park and sign their child out of their classroom.**
- 15 Month, 2 and 3 Year Olds - 12:00, 2:00, or 4:00 p.m.
- 4 Year Olds - 2:00 or 4:00 p.m.
- Please follow the directions of staff at carpool at all times.
- Parents of children in early childhood must park and pick-up your children
- RMBA Staff will assist with loading your children into your car safely
- Don't bypass the car in front of you in the carpool line unless directed by RMBA staff
- Children picked up more than 15 minutes after their designated dismissal must be picked up from the office.
- If you are late on more than two occasions, a financial penalty will be enforced
- Friday dismissal is at 3:00 p.m.
- Please notify the front office by emailing office@berenacademy.org, or call (713) 723-7170 if your child will be picked up by someone who has not been identified on your enrollment forms
- You must also notify the office of the pickup schedule for the JCC bus, if applicable
- Due to safety, early check out time ends at 3:30 p.m.

Car Seat Safety Guidelines

Texas Law States:

- All children under 17 years old must be secured in a safety belt or child safety seat, whether they are sitting in the front seat or back seat.
- Children under 5 years old **and** less than 36 inches tall must ride in a child safety seat.
- Children more than 36 inches tall **and** at least 5 years old but younger than 17 years old must be secured by a safety belt.
- The Best Safety-Seat Parents/Guardians can use is:
 - 1) One that fits their car
 - 2) Easy to use
 - 3) Appropriate for their child's height and weight

What Type of Child Car Safety Seat Should I Use?

If your child is:



- Under a Year old and less than 20 pounds, use a rear-facing infant car seat. A rear-facing infant car seat should never be placed in the front seat of a car with an airbag. The infant child seat should sit at a 45-degree angle or the angle specified on the seat. This helps keep the baby's head from drooping forward and cutting off the airway.
- Under a Year old and less than 30 pounds, use a rear-facing convertible car seat. A rear facing convertible car seat should never be placed in the front seat of a car with an airbag. The convertible child seat should sit at a 45-degree angle or the angle specified on the seat. This helps keep the baby's head from drooping forward and cutting off the airway.
- For a child who is at least one year old and 20 to 40 pounds, use a convertible car seat. You may turn the seat to face forward.
- For a child who is at least one year old and 30 to 40 pounds, use a booster seat with a harness.
- Over 40 pounds and less than 4'9", your child should use a booster seat but remove the harness straps. The booster seat must be used with a lap/shoulder seat belt until the child is about 4'9".
- Over 4'9" tall, your child must use a lap/shoulder seat belt. Children younger than 13 years old should never ride in the front seat of vehicles with active passenger airbags.

You can make an appointment for a free car safety seat check, sponsored by Texas Children's Childhood Injury Prevention Center and the Greater Houston Coalition for SAFE KIDS. Visit www.texaschildrenshospital.org/carecenters/InjuryPrevention/Childsafety.aspx for a list of the locations in the greater Houston area offering free car safety seat checks or call Texas Children's Hospital to learn more valuable information regarding Child Car Seat Safety.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The following information concerning child abuse and neglect is provided for your review. We are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The school is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse or neglect. You will be notified if your child is questioned as part of the investigation.

There are three kinds of child abuse:

- Physical Abuse—inflicting bodily injury on a child (hitting, burning, etc.)
- Sexual Abuse—using a child in or exposing the child to sexual activities with or without the child's consent
- Emotional Abuse—demanding that the child do more than he/she is able to do, severely criticizing or humiliating him/her for not living up to a demand, or placing upon the child



such unclear requirements that the child cannot understand what he/she is supposed to do.

There are at least two kinds of child neglect:

- Physical neglect–failure to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter, or medical care; failure to provide adequate education, guidance, or supervision
- Emotional neglect–failure to give a child the love and affection he/she needs.

Class Placement

Every effort is made to place your child in a learning environment where he/she will experience the most success. We look at multiple factors regarding classroom placement. Placement requests received before May for the following year will be considered, but not necessarily honored.

Once the school year commences changes are not recommended unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Teachers are expected to have the skills to help children adjust. We rarely change an assignment, because it can cause a chain reaction within the class balance that would be unfair to many students within the group. While we feel we consider the individual child during the placement process, please realize that your child is part of a complex equation in school placements.

If your child is having difficulty in his/her environment, we will do everything we can to problem-solve in other ways before moving classes or programs. The following protocols must occur first:

1. Parents must first meet with the teacher to share concerns and work together to address them.
2. If, after at least 2-3 full weeks of school, the problem persists, parents will meet with the principal. Be prepared to be very specific about the concern. (Child's learning style is not a good fit, negative on-going social situation, etc.)
3. A conversation with the principal may not lead to a switch; however, often the intervention of the principal can be beneficial.
4. During this process, it is crucial that you, the parent, continue to send a positive message to your child about school, the teacher, and the community.
5. The final decision on student assignments will rest with the school staff and Administrator.
6. All moves must be made by the end of the first trimester; otherwise a move is not possible until the following school year.



Be assured that we want your child to thrive and will partner with you to ensure that this occurs.

Communicating Concerns

- Any concerns regarding a student's progress in a particular class should be directed to the teacher of that class.
- If there is still concern, parents should meet with the [General Studies Principal](#) or [Judaic Studies Principal](#).
- If further assistance is needed, the parent may then meet with the [Head of School](#).

If parents have concerns relating to the emotional or social development of their child, they should contact our [lower school counselor](#).

Counseling Department

Our school counselors assist in the emotional and social development of each child. They work with the children individually, and in groups, to aid in their ability to create conversations, advocate for themselves, and develop healthy peer relations. They also work directly with teachers and parents in order to support each child. Counselors do not provide long term counseling for students, but are a resource for referrals for counseling and other mental health needs.

In the event a student makes a suicidal threat, whether it is verbal, written, or physical, there is a specific protocol to be followed and a detailed description of that protocol is available upon request through the counseling department. If at ANY time a student is removed or leaves the school for mental health related issues, a psychological evaluation by a psychiatrist and a report is required before that student can return to his/her regular schedule.

Discipline

We focus on each child's academic, social, emotional, and spiritual development. We discipline children using techniques to preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Our goal is to promote children's self-control, teach responsibility, and help children make thoughtful choices.

Discipline will be strictly enforced. Inappropriate behavior that inhibits the learning environment or the physical and/or emotional well-being of another student or teacher will have consequences, which may include notifying parents, calling parents in for a conference with the team of teachers and administrators, sending a child home for the day, in-school suspension,



out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. The consequence will depend on the severity and/or longevity of the action.

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.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

There is an Emergency Preparedness Plan folder in each administrative office and each classroom with specific directions in regards to fire alarms, severe weather alerts, and lockdown procedures. Please ask the front desk if you would like to see this folder.

Homework

Homework may be given in grades Kindergarten through 5th Grade. Each teacher establishes homework policies for his/her classes. Students in 3rd through 5th Grade are responsible for writing assignments in their planners on a daily basis. Teachers may deduct points each day a homework assignment is not turned in unless previous arrangements have been made, an IEP is implemented, or for a reason the teacher finds acceptable.

A parent who suspects that his/her child is spending too much time on homework or is overwhelmed academically should contact the appropriate teacher(s).

Hours, Days, and Months of Operation

The Early Childhood Program is available August-June and is open Monday-Friday, 7:45-4:00 p.m. with early dismissal at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays. Pick-up is available at 12:00, 2:00, and 4:00 p.m.

The Lower School Program is available August-June and is open Monday -Friday, 7:45-4:00 p.m. with early dismissal at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays.



Illness

In the interest of both the student and his/her classmates, 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 illness
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- An undetermined rash
- Feeling too ill to remain in school
- Lice or nits. The school checks all students before school begins in the Fall.

To prevent exposing other students to illness, 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 illness or lice.

Kashrut

Food brought by students to school, served at school functions, and served at birthday parties and bar/bat mitzvahs to which RMBA students are invited **MUST** follow Houston Kashrut Association (HKA) standards. These standards are:

1. **The following products do not need kosher certification;** milk, sugar, flour, frozen fruit, fresh fruits (though strawberries and raspberries have to be checked for insects), dry roasted nuts in their shells, soda (if not a fruit flavor), canned vegetables (without seasoning or pasta) and canned fruit (without natural or artificial flavors or colors, and

not from China).

Certain dry fruits do not need certification; goji berries, peaches, pears, raisins (domestic only) and pineapples. Dates, prunes, nectarines, apricots and figs do not need supervision when they have no flavors added.

Fresh vegetables must be checked for insects; however, Dole, Redi-Pac and Fresh Express bagged salads that contain green cabbage, red cabbage, or iceberg lettuce do not have to be checked. Other types of lettuce (romaine, Boston, etc.) and spinach need to be checked for insects if they are not certified kosher.

2. **Most products do need kashrut supervision;** they must bear one of the universally accepted kashrut symbols. The plain letter “K” or other symbols do not necessarily represent a recognized kashrut supervising organization. If you want to bring food to school *which bears a different symbol than those below, please ask the Judaic Studies Principal.*





Prepared foods from HKA supervised restaurants, bakeries, or stores are of course acceptable.

Food prepared in the school's kitchen must be prepared under supervision arranged by our Mashgiach Rabbi Eli Litvintchouk. If you have any questions, please contact Rabbi Litvintchouk at elitvintchouk@berenacademy.org.

Leaving School Early

Parents or guardians must enter the office to personally sign out their child if picking him/her up early from school. If your child is to leave school at the end of the day with a friend, the parent must notify the school by 3:30 p.m. by either emailing office@berenacademy.org or calling the front office at (713) 723-7170. Play dates must be arranged prior to the start of the school day. Students will not be able to call home from the office to arrange playdates.

Lost and Found

We highly recommend that you write your child's name on all clothing, backpacks, and lunch boxes. Items found at school whose owner cannot be identified are stored in a cabinet in the small ulam and are discarded at the end of each semester.



Lunch and Snacks

Students may bring kosher (pareve or dairy – **no meat**) snacks and lunches to school. See the kashrut section of this handbook for kashrut guidelines. Since families have varying standards of kashrut, **sharing food at school is not allowed.**

Healthy lunches and snacks are recommended. Candy and soda are not allowed.

Hot lunch is available for an additional charge from our vendor, Genesis. Students must order in advance on the portal. More information is sent home at the beginning of the year to describe the process in greater detail. Pizza is available once a week as a fundraiser through the Parent Teacher Organization. RMBA provides separate placemats for those ordering meat lunches (via hot lunch) and those bringing dairy lunches. If you have ordered a meat lunch for your child, please do not send dairy snacks for that day so that Kashrut standards can be met.

Medical

Immunization Requirement

All students attending RMBA must be immunized in accordance with the Texas Minimum State Vaccination Requirements for Child-Care Facilities and Students Grades K-12. An up-to-date immunization record from a licensed physician must be on file in RMBA's clinic before a student is allowed entry to class. The only exception to this policy is a valid medical condition that precludes a student from getting immunized. The medical exemption must be explained in writing from a licensed physician and must be renewed every year. Exemptions for reasons of conscience are not accepted at RMBA.

Hearing & Vision

At age 4, the nurse screens students for hearing and vision in accordance with the Department of State Health Services Requirements.

Tuberculin Testing

We do not require proof of tuberculin testing.



Medications

The Medication policy of RMBA is that if your child needs medication during the school day, it **MUST** be kept in the RMBA clinic. No student should have any medication on him or her while at school. If your child needs prescription or over the counter medications at school you **MUST** submit the medication with **this form**. Permission for the school to administer Tylenol, Advil, Benadryl and Tums is done during online enrollment. For more details see the excerpt from the student handbook below.

Medications

All medication, that needs to be taken by a student during the school day must:

- be brought to the office
- be left in the school office in the **original bottles labeled with the student's name and date of birth.**

The school must have a physician's order on file to administer prescription medication. Non-prescription medications may be administered with a written request on file from the parent or legal guardian. The medication form can be found on the school website. Medication will be administered to the student in the office by the school nurse, administrator, or office personnel, NOT in the classroom by the teacher. 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 lunchboxes or lockers. A student in possession of medication is subject to disciplinary action. An exception to this is lifesaving medication (i.e. insulin, inhalers, epi-pens).

Notes of Interest to our Early Childhood Parents

- Any policy changes will be communicated to parents through email.
- To review a copy of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers or to view the most recent Licensing inspection report, please contact the Lower School Principal.

You may contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in the following ways:



1. Visiting <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>
2. Calling the Houston local office: (713) 394-4000
3. Calling the hotline at (800) 252-5400

Nursing Mothers

Mothers have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in our care. We provide a comfortable place with a seat in our nurse's office that enables a mother to breastfeed her child.

Outside Tutoring

For purposes of this policy, tutoring is defined as one-on-one or small group teaching between a teacher and student(s) for pay.

Robert M. Beren Academy offers Academic Support for our students in order to give individual attention, as needed. Therefore, we do not recommend outside tutoring for a student unless it is felt that the student has utilized all of our available resources.

If it is deemed necessary by the Academic Support Specialist, teacher, and principal that a student needs assistance that is unavailable on school premises, such as an occupational therapist or speech therapist, then an outside tutor may be recommended.

All tutors working at Robert M. Beren Academy on a private tutoring basis must be approved by the supervising principal. The principals must also approve the time of tutoring. The tutor must check in at the office upon arrival and check out upon exiting. The tutor must wait in the front office for the student to arrive and must bring the student back to the front office upon completion of the tutoring session.

Clear, on-going communication must take place among the tutor, family, and school in order to benefit the student.

This policy affects all students at Robert M. Beren Academy.

Parent *Hitnadvut* Program

RMBA Parents are required to make a service commitment of ten (10) points per family to Robert M. Beren Academy each school year. Parents will track their own *hitnadvut* (volunteer) points in the black *hitnadvut* binder in the front office. Parents will receive a raffle entry per point



towards a raffle for a \$100 gift card, drawn on the last day of school. Parents who do not complete their ten points will be invoiced at the end of the school year at \$10 per uncompleted point. Our strong preference is for you to work with us to earn as many points as possible.

Opportunities and details can be found by visiting our online calendar and selecting the [Volunteer Opportunities](#) tab. Opportunities each count as one point. Please see the RMBA Parent Hitnadvut Program Handbook for volunteer code of conduct and additional details. Every parent volunteer must first sign a confidentiality statement prior to volunteering.

Parent/Teacher Organization

Parent involvement is critical to the success of our school. Parents are strongly encouraged to join the PTO volunteer program. Joining the PTO shows an interest in your child's education and school activities, a chance to volunteer for the benefit of the children and teachers, and gives you an opportunity to meet other families.

Personal and School Belongings

Your child's name should be attached to all belongings – sweaters, coats, hats, kippot, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc.

Items found at school, whose owner cannot be identified, are stored in a box in the small ulam and are discarded at the end of each semester.

Lost school books will be charged to the student at cost. Report cards will not be mailed at the end of the school year until all books/costs are finalized.

Play dates & Parties Off-Campus

Students may give out invitations to their own birthday parties in school as long as either:

- All students of the entire class/grade are invited, or
- All students of the same gender in the class/grade are invited

So that all of your child's classmates' religious needs are met, and everyone feels included, we request that you adhere to RMBA Kashrut Guidelines when planning any event which children



from RMBA will attend. Additionally, it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that the level of Kashrut is appropriate for their child.

Cold food may be served on any clean dishes (it is preferable to use disposable dishes). Hot foods need to be served and prepared in Kosher cookware or disposable baking pans in a kosher oven. When heating kosher food in a non-kosher oven, one must carefully double wrap the food.

If you are serving bread, please offer the children the opportunity to wash their hands (*netilat yadayim*) before eating and say *birkat hamazon* (grace) after eating. Please see the Kashrut section regarding food served at birthday parties.

Please ensure that birthday parties are hosted on a weekday or a weekend day that is not Shabbat (Saturday), and in a location where all children and families will feel comfortable attending. (For example, hosting a party in a non Kosher restaurant - even with Kosher food options available, is not allowed).

Prerequisites for Entering ECE15

To be able to begin school at the start of the Fall Semester, the child must be;

1. At least 15 months old as of September 1st of that calendar year.
2. Walking independently.
3. Able to eat finger food independently.

Start dates other than the beginning of the school year will be handled on a case by case basis and are subject to enrollment availability.

Prerequisites for Entering ECE3

The child must be fully toilet trained.

Procedures for Parental Notification

Notifications to parents may be done through email, phone call, SMS, or mail. Please notify the front office if there is a change of email address, phone numbers, or home address.



School Closing

In most instances, RMBA will close when the Houston Independent School District decides to close school for weather related reasons. An email and SMS will be sent to each family's email address and phone number listed in renweb to alert the family if RMBA decides to close.

Even if RMBA is open, please use your own best judgment about whether it is safe for you to transport your children to or from school. Very often heavy rains and flooding affect one part of Houston, while the area surrounding the school remains unaffected.

Security Stickers for Vehicles

A full-time security guard will be stationed at the Cliffwood gate as well as the Greenwillow gate during carpool hours and stationed in and around the campus during off hours. Small security stickers must be placed on cars that will be used to drop off and pick up students as well as on the cars of faculty and staff. The stickers are to be placed on the lower right (passenger) side of the front windshield. These stickers are numbered and will be issued per registered car. To obtain your security sticker you must come into the school and register all vehicles that will be used for carpool.

We understand that there may be occasions when a non-stickered vehicle may be used to drop off your child(ren). We ask that you provide us with as much advance notice as possible, (make, model, and license plate number), when this occurs so that we may provide an exceptions list to the guard on duty.

Smoking

The campus of Robert M. Beren Academy is a non-smoking area. Students and adults are not permitted to smoke anywhere on the campus and may not smoke at any RMBA sponsored event or at any extra-curricular activity.

Standardized Tests



Standardized assessments are given each year to students in the first through fifth grades. These reasoning and achievement tests are only one measure of a student's academic progress. Classroom grades, class participation, and observation of growth by parents and teachers are the most important indicators of learning ability and academic achievement. Please check the school calendar to be sure that no vacations or appointments are scheduled during this time. During testing week, lower school students will not be assigned homework.

Student Conduct

We expect our students to conduct themselves with the highest level of middot (ethical behavior) at all times, especially while on school property and at all school sponsored events/activities.

The RMBA Lower School has high expectations for behavior. This is promoted positively for students, with expectations explicitly taught. All students are expected to adhere to these expectations. Bullying, a repeated behavior that demonstrates an imbalance of power, will not be tolerated.

Students may not bring anything to school which may resemble a weapon such as a toy gun, bow & arrow, knife, etc.

Each teacher will establish the rules for the classroom with behavioral expectations clearly defined.

The following are examples of unacceptable classroom behavior:

- Violations of rules or procedures established by the teacher.
- Refusal to participate in classroom activities.
- Unexcused tardiness to class.
- General misbehavior, such as making excessive noise, talking back, and other acts that interrupt the teaching or learning in the class.

Students who exhibit unacceptable classroom behavior will be asked (unless it is egregious) by the teacher to correct the behavior. If they do not, the child may be sent to the principal. Students will not be denied recess, lunch, or PE as a form of discipline; they may however, be assigned alternative settings for lunch or given individualized activities during recess or PE.

Honesty and integrity are core values at RMBA. The consequence for a student who misrepresents work as his/her own, misrepresents a parent's or teacher's directive, or is untruthful in responses to adults will be proportional.

Fighting, bullying, threatening, teasing, name calling, obscene gestures, vulgar language, stealing, destruction of school property, coercion of others, or any behavior that is considered to



be highly inappropriate for an educational and religious setting could result in a more serious consequence such as in school or out of school suspension. Parents of students who exhibit these behaviors at school or on a field trip may be called to pick up their child at those locations.

Students whose repeated behavior is deemed to be a danger to themselves or others (physically or emotionally) may be removed from school for a longer period or permanently. Expulsions may be appealed to the Head of School, and final decisions rest with him/her.

Student Council

Student Council is comprised of our 5th grade students. They meet throughout the year and focus on Mitzvot and Middot within our school community and the community at-large.

Technology

Lower School students may not bring cell phones, iPods, tablet or laptop computers, or video game players to school. **If a student has one of these devices at school, it will be confiscated and held at the front office for the parent to pick up.**

The Internet offers wonderful educational opportunities when used appropriately. Robert M. Beren Academy's goal is for our students to be computer literate while avoiding the many dangers present in Internet use. Therefore, we have implemented filtering and/or blocking software that restricts access to pornography, obscene depictions, and other material deemed inappropriate for a school setting. However, no software is perfect. Therefore, any user who accesses (either accidentally or otherwise) a website with objectionable material or who receives any inappropriate communications (through email, instant messages or other communication) must immediately notify a teacher or administrator.

The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked at any time if abused.

Tests

You will be notified at least 3 days in advance of a major test by email, in your child's homework folder, or in your child's planner.



Trips Off-Campus

During the school year students will go off campus on field trips. These trips will connect the work in the classroom with the world, making it significant and memorable. Students are expected to dress in school uniform unless otherwise directed by an administrator, and to behave in an appropriate manner. If students are allowed to wear non-uniform clothes, girls are expected to continue to dress modestly (skirts/dresses below the knee and blouses that cover the upper arm). Boys are expected to wear *kippot* and *tzitzit* at all times. If the trip extends over the lunch hour, students will be asked to bring a bag lunch which must be dairy/pareve. **Parental chaperones are asked to conform to the dress policies and the Kashrut policy of the school while accompanying students on trips.**

Uniforms

Shirts

- **Polo Shirts**
 - Three solid colors are acceptable: white, light blue, or navy blue, for all students.
 - Both boys and girls must buy the unisex (men's or boys) short-sleeve shirts as these sleeves are of appropriate length.
 - Long-sleeve shirts are acceptable.
 - Shirts may be purchased at any retailer as long as they are free of embellishment.

Boys Pants and Shorts

- Navy blue or khaki pants and shorts are allowed. Pants may not be cargo style or have any writing, stitching, or other details.

Girls Skirts and Dresses

- Skirts (pleated), jumpers in blue and khaki are acceptable as long as they reach to or **below the knee.**
- Polo dresses in dark and light blue are acceptable as long as they are of appropriate length.

Footwear

- Closed toe shoes or sneakers are acceptable; no casual slippers or plastic slip-on type sandals.

Kippot* and *Tzitzit for boys.



There are occasions in which the dress code is modified by the administration for special events such as *Rosh Chodesh* (first day of Hebrew month), special dress up days in anticipation of Purim, Spirit Days, certain field trips, etc. Whenever a change will be made, students and parents are informed in advance and in writing. The RMBA dress code must be met; Girls are expected to dress modestly - skirts/dresses below the knee and blouses that cover the upper arm. Boys are expected to wear *kippot* and *tzitzit* at all times, wear shirts with a sleeve and appropriate pants/shorts.

Visitors and Classroom Observations

All visitors to the school (including parents, grandparents, etc.) must sign-in at the main office, visibly wear a visitor's badge, and go to the program or classroom to which they are invited. So as not to disrupt the function of the school, visitors are not permitted to roam the halls unless accompanied by a lower school principal. 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 a maximum of 30 minutes per class/teacher.

We respectfully request that all visitors dress appropriately and modestly in a way that adheres to our Modern Orthodox mission.

Without prior approval from an administrator, guest students are not allowed on campus. With prior approval, guest students must sign in at the receptionist's desk and obtain a visitor's pass. Guest students must abide by all school rules.