



ROBERT M. BEREN
ACADEMY

LOWER SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

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	Rabbi Aharoni Carmel
Principal of General Studies, Lower School	Helene Lubel
Principal of General Studies, Upper School	Raquel Cedano
Principal of Judaic Studies	Rabbi Aaron Levitt
Director of Admissions & Retention	Loren Chorn
Director of Development & Marketing	Leigh Levine
President	Dr. Barry Diner
Vice President of Fundraising	Tania Levenstein
Vice President of Facilities	Nachum Yanowitz
Vice President of Public Relations	Dr. David Stern
Secretary	Steven Plumb
Treasurer	Roberta Schwartz
Chair of the Board of Education	Kenneth Loiselle
Immediate Past President	Uri Ghelman
Appointed	Rick Guttman



Dear Parents,

Welcome back to all returning students and a special welcome to all 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 2015-16 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 a 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 both 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,

Rabbi Aharoni Carmel

Head of School

Rabbi Aaron Levitt

Judaic Principal

Mrs. Helene Lubel

Lower School General Studies Principal

Table of Contents

Admissions Procedures.....	1
Arrival and Departure	1
Attendance	1
Books.....	2
Carpool Procedures	2
Child Abuse and Neglect	3
Communicating Concerns.....	4
Discipline.....	4
Personal and School Belongings	4
Student Council.....	4
Academic Support Services.....	5
Outside Tutoring.....	5
Guidance Counselor.....	5
Trips Off-Campus	5
Dress Code	6
Emergencies.....	6
Emergency Preparedness Plan.....	6
Homework	7
Hours, Days and Months of Operation	7
Illness	7
Kashrut.....	8
Leaving School Early.....	9
Lost and Found.....	9
Lunch and Snacks.....	10
Medications	10
Nursing Mothers	10
Parent/Teacher Organization	11
Play dates & Parties Off-Campus	11
Procedures for Parental Notification.....	11
School Closing	11
Smoking	12
Standardized Tests.....	12

Student Conduct	12
Technology.....	13
Tests	13
Visitors and Classroom Observations	13
Class Placement	14
Security Stickers for Vehicles	14
Car Seat Safety Guidelines	15
Prerequisites for Entering EC15	16
Prerequisites for Entering EC3	16
Notes of Interest to our Early Childhood Parents.....	16



Admissions Procedures

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

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

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

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. The adult accompanying the child must record the child's arrival and departure times on the sign in/sign out sheet provided and sign with initials or name.

Students enrolled in elementary may be dropped off and picked up at carpool. If a student arrives late or leaves early, the authorized adult must come into the front office to sign in/out the child.

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 excused 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 parent's responsibility to ensure that their child learns any missed concepts or skills.

A student should arrive at school between 7:30 and 7:45 AM each day. The school day ends at 4:00 PM Monday-Thursday. On Fridays, school is out at 4:00 PM during daylight savings time and 3:00 PM during standard time.

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 parent.

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 down Cliffwood and Greenwillow Drive as you approach the school
- Put down your phone after 4:00 PM, once you enter the actual parking lot
- Don't exit the line even after your children have entered your car
- Remain in your car at all times
- Be on time

Morning Drop-Off Information

- School starts at 7:45 AM and morning drop off begins as early as 7:30 AM.
- Carpools with students 4th grade and up are at the Greenwillow entrance
- Carpools with students 3rd grade and below are at the Cliffwood entrance
- 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 for morning drop-off (after teachers have re-entered the building), please park your car, walk your child/ren into school. Elementary school (K-5) parents must also go to the office, and sign them in.
- Parents of children in early childhood must park and walk your child/ren to class.

Afternoon Pickup Information

- Carpools with students 4th grade and up are at the Greenwillow entrance
- Carpools with students 3rd grade and below are at the Cliffwood entrance
- 15 Month, 2 and 3 Year Olds - 12:00, 2:00, 4:00 or 6:00 PM depending on what you signed up for
- 4 Year Olds and Kindergarten - 2:00, 4:00 or 6:00 PM depending on what you signed up for
- Please pull up to the furthest cone so that we can fit 4 cars at one time



- Parents of children in early childhood must park and pick-up your child/ren.
- 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
- If you arrive 15 minutes after your pickup time, your child/ren will be waiting for you in the office. Please park your car and sign out your child/ren in the office.
- If you are late on more than two occasions, a financial penalty will be enforced.
- In winter (November 11, 2016 - March 17, 2017) the latest Friday dismissal is 3:00 PM
- In fall and spring, the latest Friday dismissal is at 4:00 PM
- No 4:00-6:00 extended day on Fridays
- Please notify the front office (office@berenacademy.org) if your child will be picked up by someone who has not been identified on your the enrollment forms
- You must also notify the office of the pickup schedule for the JCC bus, if applicable
- No parents are allowed to enter the building 20 minutes prior to carpool to collect their child/dren and are asked to wait outside the building to ensure an efficient and safe carpool experience.

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 Program 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:

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



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 a parent has concerns relating to the emotional or social development of their child, the parent should contact our **school counselor**.

Discipline

We focus on each child's academic, social, emotional, and spiritual development. We use Love and Logic as our system of discipline 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 of the action.

Personal and School Belongings

Your child's name should be attached to all belongings – sweaters, coats, hats, kipot, 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.

Lost 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.

Student Council

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



Academic Support Services

Our Academic Support Specialist is available to work with any student in elementary that may need additional guidance. Teachers may recommend this service or parents may request it. All students, whether diagnosed with a learning difference or just wanting 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.

Outside Tutoring

For purposes of this policy, tutoring is defined as the 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 resources available.

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 between the tutor, family, and school in order to benefit the student.

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

Guidance Counselor

Our guidance counselor assists in the emotional and social development of each child. She works with the children individually, and in groups, to aid in their ability to create conversations, advocate for themselves, and develop healthy peer relations. She also works directly with teachers and parents in order to support each child.

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. **Parental chaperones are asked to conform to the dress policies and Kashrut policy of the school while accompanying students on trips.**



Dress Code

Shirts

- **Polo Shirts**
 - Three colors are acceptable: white, light blue or navy blue for all students.
 - Both boys and girls must buy the unisex (men's or boys) shirt as these sleeves are of appropriate length.
 - Short-sleeve or 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 long pants and shorts are allowed. Pants may not be cargo style or have any writing, stitching or other detail.

Girls Skirts and Dresses

- Skirts (pleated), skorts, 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 Tzizit for boys.

There are occasions where 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.

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

Each teacher establishes homework policies for his/her classes. Students 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 with early dismissal at 3:00 during Daylight Savings Time. Pick-up is available at 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Extended Care is available Monday-Thursday from 4:00-6:00.

The Elementary Program is available August-June and is open Monday -Friday, 7:45-4:00 with early dismissal at 3:00 during Daylight Savings Time.

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.

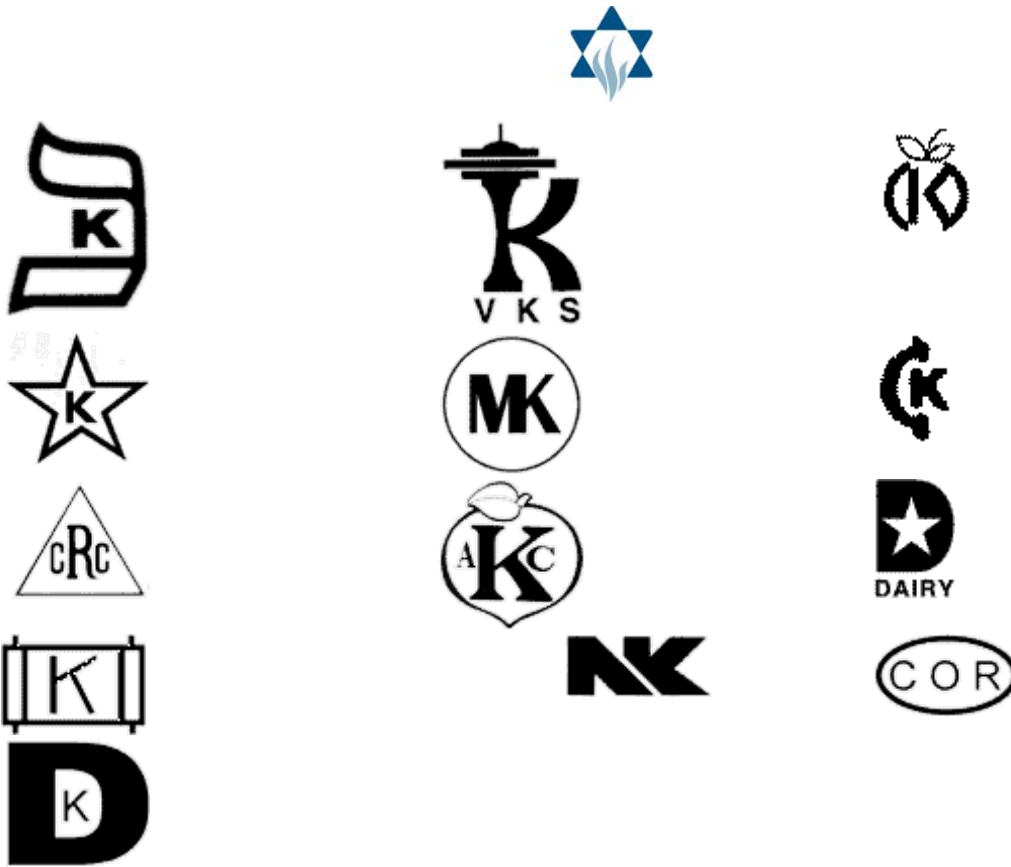
The **school nurse** or school personnel may check all students returning to school following a contagious illness or lice.

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 should 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 are acceptable. 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 Mashgicha Tsivi Freilich. If you have any questions, please contact Tsivi Freilich at tfreilich@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.

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, which on certain days is dairy and certain days is 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.

Medications

Medication policy of RMBA. If your child needs medication during the school day, it **MUST** be kept in the RMBA clinic. No student should have any medication on them 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
- 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).

Nursing Mothers

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



Parent/Teacher Organization

Parents are encouraged to join PTO. Joining 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.

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.

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 to say *birkat hamazon* (grace) after eating. Please see the Kashrut section regarding food served at birthday parties.

Procedures for Parental Notification

Notifications to parents may be done through email, phone call, 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 will be sent to each family's primary email address 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.



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

CTP4 Assessments are given each year to students in the first through eighth 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, elementary 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 utilizes a psychologically sound parenting and teaching student conduct program called Love and Logic. Its philosophy is to make learning fun and rewarding, instead of stressful and chaotic. Love and Logic provides practical tools and techniques that help teachers and parents achieve respectful, healthy relationships with their children.

Students may not bring anything to school which may resemble a weapon such as toy guns, bows & arrow, knives, etc.

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

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, is untruthful in responses to adults will be dealt with proportionally.

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.

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 (though 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.

Visitors and Classroom Observations

All visitors to the school (including parents, grandparents, etc.) must sign-in at the main office, visibly wear the 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.

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

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, "personality" conflict between teacher and child, 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 this occurs.

Security Stickers for Vehicles

A full-time security guard will be stationed at the Cliffwood Gate during carpool hours and stationed in and around the campus during off hours. Small security stickers for cars that will be used to drop off and pick up students as well as to 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 one of the schools and register all vehicles that will be used for carpool.

We understand that there may be occasions where 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.

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.
- At least one year old and 20 to 40 pounds, use a convertible car seat. You may turn the seat to face forward.
- 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.



Prerequisites for Entering EC15

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. The child must be walking independently.
3. The child must be able to eat finger food independently.
4. Start dates other than the beginning of the school year will be handled on a case by case basis and is subject to enrollment availability.

Prerequisites for Entering EC3

1. The child must be fully toilet trained.

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, Helene Lubel.

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

<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>

Calling the Houston local office: 713-394-4000

Calling the hotline at 1-800-252-5400