



# STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

2023-2024 • 5784





# *Successful intelligence is the kind of intelligence used to achieve important goals.*

ROBERT STERNBERG

At Bnei Akiva Schools we strive to teach students to be *successfully intelligent* – that is, we teach students to both capitalize on their strengths and to compensate for their weaknesses. Our approach encourages the development of analytical, creative, and practical approaches to learning, with the goal of enhancing students' opportunities for success at school and in life.

## **SERVICES OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM**

1. To empower our students to be self-advocates for their learning.
2. To teach and instill learning strategies to our students and help them implement those strategies.
3. To create an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students, in consultation with students and parents. The IEP will reflect information gleaned from the psycho-educational assessment or mental health document submitted to the school.
4. To provide teachers with information regarding a student's profile, and to recommend accommodations and any strategies which might facilitate teaching/learning.
5. To work one-on-one with students on an individual basis to discuss their learning difficulties and/or social emotional concerns.
6. To provide confidential academic, social, emotional, and religious guidance and counselling.
7. To communicate, consult and liaise with outside professionals on behalf of students and parents.
8. To collaborate regularly with teachers, parents and students to ensure success.
9. To be available to address academic, social or emotional concerns of students and parents.
10. To provide individual and/or small group tutoring in specific academic subjects by a learning strategist.
11. To provide students and parents with strategies and resources to support education planning and the course selection process.
12. To help students manage their work load and stress levels.
13. To help students improve their executive functioning and organizational skills.
14. To help students have a rewarding, successful and enriching high school experience.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations may be granted to students based on recommendations in the psycho-educational assessment, taking into account the structures within our school and practices that we believe to be within the best interests of our students. There are no guaranteed accommodations; each student is reviewed individually, based on the information provided.

Possible accommodations include:

- Differentiation in the classroom and classroom material
- Extra time for assessments
- Computer use
- Assistive technology
- Duplicate notes
- Preferential classroom seating
- Oral instructions to supplement written or vice versa for assignments
- Memory aid
- Oral testing when possible
- Additional accommodations may be discussed on an individual basis

## ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

All students are eligible to utilize student support services. However, in order for a student to have an IEP and receive accommodations, the student must have a psycho-educational assessment which identifies learning issues that might interfere with academic success. A student who does not have a psycho-educational assessment but is being treated by a specialist for a physical ailment or mental health, and requires access accommodations must submit a signed letter from the specialist (on the professional's official letterhead) stating this requirement and the reason for this requirement. All determinations are made on a case-by-case basis.

## LEARNING HUB

Each campus has a learning hub staffed by learning strategists. The hub is used primarily to support students

during their assessments. Students are welcome to use the hub as a quiet space to work. Our strategists are also available for tutoring during the school day (for a fee) to work one on one with students for either curriculum- or subject-specific tutoring or executive functions support.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SERVICES

Understanding that high school is an incredibly challenging and unique time in the growth of today's adolescent, a priority of ours is ensuring the social and emotional well-being of all of our students. Our goal is to ensure that every student is able to access confidential support and guidance to suit their diverse needs. Ulpanat Orot's Guidance team is available throughout the day as needed. Students and parents should feel comfortable contacting our Guidance and Support team members at any time for support or consultation. Recognizing the importance of psycho-education and mental wellness, our Grade 9 students take a class that strives to broaden their own understanding of psychological and mental health concepts with a focus on integration into modern Jewish life. We also incorporate mental wellness programs and speakers throughout high school to help ensure our students cultivate and maintain life and self-care skills.

At Bnei Akiva Schools, we promote an **ACTIVE** approach to learning. Students are encouraged to participate actively in the learning process and to apply strategies to help themselves. An active approach to learning means that students should strive to:

**A**ttend all classes

**C**ome prepared for all classes, i.e. text, binder, writing utensils

**T**ake notes in all classes

**I**ncrease efficiency through organization

**V**ocalize, i.e. participate in class discussion

**E**yes and ears are focused on the lesson



# MEET OUR SUPPORT STAFF



**MRS. SHARI WEINBERG** *Director of Guidance • [sweinberg@bastoronto.org](mailto:sweinberg@bastoronto.org)*

Mrs. Shari Weinberg has been a vital part of Ulpanat Orot over the past 30 years. She has held an administrative role for the last 14 years while continuing to teach Physical Education. At Ulpana, Mrs. Weinberg provides guidance to our girls on a daily basis and especially in advance of their post-secondary academic decisions. Mrs. Weinberg has also been instrumental in the introduction and success of alumni and career days. Mrs. Weinberg has principal certification and is a Specialist in Guidance Education. Her door is always open, as students and staff alike seek her guidance and level-headed decision-making skills.



**MRS. MIRIAM KLEIN** *Director of Educational Support • [mklein@bastoronto.org](mailto:mklein@bastoronto.org)*

Mrs. Miriam Klein has worked as a teacher and student support staff member for over 15 years. Prior to joining Bnei Akiva Schools, she worked in Netivot HaTorah Day School in various grades, both in General and Judaic Studies. Mrs. Klein received her degree in Education and Special Education from the University of Toronto and is an active member of the Ontario College of Teachers. She believes strongly in student support and ensuring the students can meet with success academically, socially and emotionally. Mrs. Klein works closely with the students, parents and faculty at Bnei Akiva Schools to ensure an inclusive environment for all types of learners.



**MS. ATARA ENGLISH** *Social Worker • [aenglish@bastoronto.org](mailto:aenglish@bastoronto.org)*

Ms. Atara English is an Ulpanat Orot alumna and holds an MSW degree from Wurzweiler School of Social Work. After graduating Ulpana she completed her year in Israel and then attended York University where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. She has experience working with children and youth in schools and community agencies throughout Toronto. She builds on students' strengths and believes in empowering them to reach their full potential. Atara enjoys meeting with students, creating therapeutic relationships and promoting mental wellness within the school culture!



**MR. DANIEL LERMAN** *Student Support • [dlerman@bastoronto.org](mailto:dlerman@bastoronto.org)*

A Philadelphia native, Mr. Daniel Lerman has been living in Edison, NJ for the past several years and has experience tutoring and mentoring students privately. He holds a B.Sc. with a major in Supply Chain Management from Pennsylvania State University, focusing on entrepreneurship. When he's not at work, Dan enjoys an active lifestyle outdoors, camping and travelling, as well as singing and playing guitar.



**MRS. RIFKA SONENBERG** *Student Support • [rsonenberg@bastoronto.org](mailto:rsonenberg@bastoronto.org)*

Mrs. Rifka Sonenberg was born in Israel and grew up in Toronto. She holds an Honours B.Sc. in Chemistry from York University and a teaching certificate from Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women. She has recently added a qualification in teaching Science. Mrs. Sonenberg and her husband, Rabbi Noah Sonenberg, spent a number of years living and learning in Israel, during which she completed Nishmat's Keren Ariel (Yoatzot Halacha) program. Mrs. Sonenberg wears many hats: she serves as a resource for Ulpana students in need of additional educational support, is a beloved kallah teacher and a popular speaker, both locally and in the United States. The Sonenbergs have three children.



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