

Student Bill of Rights • and • Code of Conduct

I. Preamble

The intent of the Student Bill of Rights is to set forth the fundamental rights of the student body at Akiba Hebrew Academy. We, the students, recognize the responsibilities that correspond to these rights and understand that all rules and procedures listed in the Handbook are in force without exception.

II. The Student Right to Pluralism and Acceptance

A. Pluralism in the classroom

Akiba Handbook, p. 1:

“It was the vision of the founders that Jewish adolescents come together to study their common heritage in a pluralistic setting, learning to respect all positions and the sincerity with which they are held.”

Akiba Handbook, p. 2:

“Akiba fosters a respect for... participation in a pluralistic society....”

- Akiba students have a right to learn in a pluralistic environment in which students of different backgrounds, beliefs, and practices are respected.

B. Student Acceptance

Akiba Handbook, p. 1:

“Because we feel that freedom of expression enables individuals to thrive and excel, we strive for it in all aspects of the school. In every subject we encourage openness in discussion and expect teachers to listen as well as to instruct... Committed to the individuality of every student, we believe that curriculum, the activities and the staff of the school must be responsive to the emotional, social, physical, religious and intellectual differences among students.”

Akiba Handbook, p. 2:

“Akiba fosters a respect for individual expression....”

Akiba Handbook, p. 16:

“Harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, etc.) is unacceptable at Akiba Hebrew Academy.”

- Students have a right to self-expression in and out of the classroom, as long as that expression is not inappropriate or offensive to other individuals or to the Akiba community.

- Students have an obligation to refrain from verbal and physical fighting since it causes damage not only to the direct participants, but also to the entire school.
- Personal appearance and dress constitute an important sphere of self-expression. However, students must adhere to the dress guidelines provided in the Handbook, with special attention to *Tzniut*, or modesty.
- Students shall not be discriminated against or harassed on the basis of religious beliefs, political views, or sexual orientation.
- The students' right to self-expression is not unlimited and may be restricted by a teacher or administrator when a student's right conflicts with the values of the community. However, such restriction should take careful consideration of the beliefs, needs, health, and practices of the individual student.

C. *Kippot*

Akiba Handbook, p. 4:

“Males must wear kippot to Judaic Studies and Hebrew classes, to any programs involving prayer or the study of Torah, and at meals eaten communally.”

- At the discretion of individual Hebrew or Judaic Studies teachers, a cap or baseball hat may be substituted for a *kippah*.
- A male student who comes to a Judaic class without a *kippah* shall be considered simply unprepared for class, in the same way that a student would be considered unprepared due to a lack of certain class materials.

D. Jewish Observance

Akiba Handbook, p. 4:

“Teachers will refrain from scheduling homework assignments and tests which would entail desecration of Shabbat or Yom Tov.”

- Students should make every effort to complete their assignments on time.
- Teachers should consider postponing tests, quizzes, and assignments for students whose workload threatens to compromise their observance.

III. The Student Right to Objectivity

Akiba Handbook, p. 1:

“We require all teachers and students to interact with each other in a respectful, just and caring manner.”

A. Evaluation of Students

- Teachers should evaluate students fairly and objectively.
- Cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable.

B. Disciplinary Measures

- Regardless of any positive or negative relationships between teachers or administrators and a particular student, all disciplinary policies should be applied objectively and universally.

C. Discipline Notations and Detentions

- Respectful behavior is expected both inside and outside the classroom.
- Both individual and school property must be respected. Students must not steal, damage, or vandalize individual or school property.
- Since Upper School discipline notations and Middle School detentions are cumulative and may result in significant consequences for students, teachers should write them only for matters that should be brought to the attention of the principals.
- If a student believes that his/her discipline notation or detention is unwarranted, he/she should speak with the teacher, the department chair, and the Principal, in that order. If the matter remains unresolved, the student may request that the Judicial Board be convened.

D. Academic Exceptions and Extensions

- Students must request exceptions to class requirements promptly, and teachers must respond to such requests fairly and objectively.

E. Extra-curricular Activities

Akiba Handbook, p. 19:

“It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to make up work missed due to an absence.”

- When students miss class for extra-curricular activities, they are responsible for any missed work. However, students’ extra-curricular participation shall not be held against them.
- Students must follow the guidelines for missing class due to extra-curricular activities, including, but not limited to, informing the teacher of the expected absence and not leaving class until the scheduled time.

F. Late Notes

- Teachers should give late notes when they hold students after class.
- Students must arrive at their next class as promptly as possible, even if they have a late note.

- Students with late notes should not be penalized for missing class.

IV. The Student Right to Judicial Review

A. Judicial Board

- In cases which do not involve expulsion, the Student Association (SA) Constitution provides the opportunity for a student to bring a grievance, to the Judicial Board. If the SA Secretary believes that the student's grievance should be considered by the Judicial Board, the four SA officers will notify the faculty and SA representatives of the date, place, and time of the hearing. The Judicial Board will convene in the forum of an SA Meeting.
- A student who believes he or she has been treated unfairly should contact the Chair of the Judicial Board (i.e. the SA Secretary) to begin the process described above.
- While the findings of Judicial Board are not binding on the school's administration, they should be considered carefully.

V. The Student Right to Health

A. Illness

Akiba Handbook, p. 19:

"It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to make up work missed due to an absence. Students returning from an absence should make appointments promptly with their teachers to set up a schedule for completing required work. Deadlines for make-up work must be followed."

- Teachers should accommodate students who are sick, granting them permission to leave class when necessary. Students, in turn, should return to class as soon as possible.
- Teachers should accommodate the needs of students when they return to school after illnesses. Students, in turn, should promptly make up work they have missed.

B. Bathroom

- Teachers should respect a student's need to use the bathroom. Students excused to use the bathroom should return to class promptly.

C. Stress

- Teachers should not circumvent the limitations on number of tests within a day or week by calling tests 'quizzes' or 'quests.'

- Teachers should attempt to avoid assigning work all at once, particularly towards the end of the marking period, and should abide by policies aimed at distributing the students' workload.
- Teachers should be flexible when planning long-term assignments and should bear in mind the high level of stress students may be experiencing. Teachers should create deadlines that encourage students to do their best work.
- It is student's responsibility to make teachers aware if the student is experiencing unusual stress.

IV. A Final Word

- The students, faculty, and administration are obliged to enforce the principles of this document.
- The Student Association Executive Board of 2004-2005