

## YESHIVA TORAS CHAIM/TORAS EMES ACADEMY OF MIAMI ROHR MIDDLE SCHOOL

### *An overview by Rabbi Ephraim Palgon, Principal*

Creating a Middle School for our children has been one of the most enjoyable experiences with which I have ever been involved. No small part of this thrilling adventure has been due to the full support of our Roshei Yeshiva and the total assistance and encouragement from our educational administration at Yeshiva Toras Chaim and Toras Emes Academy. I still have not met the parent who has not offered his or her stamp of approval of our institution's decision to restructure our divisions to form the middle school concept.

What is the "middle school concept"? My research found that the middle school theory was the educational response to the junior high school concept. What is the "junior high school concept"? The name "junior high school" presupposes that the school is a "high school" slightly adjusted for shorter people. The baskets are lowered, the schedule slightly shortened, the expectations somewhat reduced. The "middle school" came from the opposite extreme. It is an elementary school carefully adjusted for budding, maturing pre-teenagers. The baskets are raised; the schedule slightly lengthened; the expectations are clearly upgraded. The adjustment from an elementary school to a middle school should be smooth. The transition from a middle school to a high school should be natural.

The first clear revelation was that "relationships" are absolutely paramount for pre-teenagers. Staffing had to be addressed. Clearly, an exclusively departmentalized program could not provide enough time for any meaningful relationships between teacher and child to develop. Instead, we grouped Social Studies with Language Arts, Science with Math, and searched for teachers who could provide for either group. This has proved to be an important decision. The students have time to get to know their teachers, and teachers have enough time with the students to understand them and try to work with them in a significant way. Our staff is totally committed to the needs of our students. Our General Studies' faculty is an excellent one.

We are privileged to have Rabbi Avrohom Anton on our administrative team as Assistant Principal. His creativity, calm manner and attention to detail is a tremendous asset to all our *talmidim*. The Middle School is also quite fortunate to have five Rebbeim of the highest caliber. Rabbi Avrohom Anton, our Assistant Principal, brings a component of administrative expertise to his classroom that few rebbeim can match. Rabbi Yaakov Fried is able to draw on his many years of experience as a seventh grade rebbe. He has helped introduce a cooperative learning environment in his classroom that has captivated his students. Rabbi Yehuda Alber, our eighth grade rebbe, has been teaching teenagers for over ten years, and is admired and adored by his talmidim. Rabbi Moti Rosenberg brings his creative talent and years of special education experience to his classroom. This past year we were privileged to have Rabbi Chaim Mandel join the Limudei Kodesh faculty. Rabbi Mandel has been a beloved rebbe at Yeshiva Toras Chaim since its inception, and has guided hundreds of talmidim on the path of Torah.

One of the goals of our middle school was to fully focus on the educational needs of each of our students. We could not be more thrilled to have our staff joined two and a half years ago by Mrs. Yosefah Berkowitz, our Curriculum Coordinator. Aside from her sterling reputation as a top notch middle school boys' teacher, she is an accomplished organizational consultant, and a master researcher of resources and materials for our educational plan. Mrs. Berkowitz works tirelessly to help upgrade our program so that our teachers are provided with any resources they need to reach each and every student. Our goal of reaching each student pushed our administrative team to help create our Smart Start program, where some of our students learn in a unique and individualized environment. We are so proud to have Rabbi Moti Rosenberg and Mrs. Beth Ruck as the instructors for our students in this program. In addition, many of our extra-curricular programs are student-driven and masterminded by our Program Coordinator, Mrs. Ruck. Focusing on students' needs also drove us to upgrade our science program. Words could not adequately describe the efforts and talents of Mr. Dan Dreyfuss who has masterminded the metamorphosis of our science program.

Building healthy relationships between teachers and students can only effectively be done through actual communication. Opportunities need to be found for students to sit down and meet with their teachers. It is not as easy as it sounds. At the Middle School, we recently conducted student-teacher conferences for each teacher and student, with a parent in attendance. Each student met for ten minutes with each of his teachers to hear and discuss a clear, honest evaluation directed toward him. It is our hope that many healthy and helpful follow-up meetings will ensue between the two parties.

“Preteens can be moody”, said a known middle school educator. “Create a school that is committed to maintaining a positive, happy environment from the moment they walk into the building”, was the advice I was given. This issue was addressed by installing an elaborate stereo-sound system throughout the school, whereby music is played as the boys arrive in the morning. At times, some of the boys are not awake enough to notice the music as they roll out of their carpools. However, the *simcha* and joy of the music somehow permeates their being. Our morning routines were carefully designed to provide inspiration for *tefila*, and motivation to succeed as a new day begins.

Our pre and post davening rituals required much thought, deliberation and discussion amongst our committed Judaic staff. Each morning at *shacharis*, the boys hear a story about one of our *gedolim*, Jewish Rabbinic leaders. The story accentuates, on the part of the *gadol*, a particular act of kindness, sensitivity, thoughtfulness or consideration toward a fellow Jew. After davening is concluded, one student is awarded the “Orange Juice of the Morning”, a cold cup of Tropicana Premium, for an act of kindness, sensitivity, thoughtfulness or consideration toward a classmate or any member of the school. The lesson that is learned is that greatness comes from the smallest things that one chooses to do. It is a beautiful message.

There has been much talk about our traffic light. Its creation has its educational roots. Discussions with heads of middle schools indicated that “lunchtime” is indeed a challenge. The students desperately need a relaxed, enjoyable break from their studies and from “authority”. Our traffic light was designed to help avoid confrontations during breakfast and lunch. While the light is green, students may speak freely. When quiet is needed, the request is sent by turning the light to yellow. A few seconds later, the light turns to red. No person has to ask for quiet. Lunchtime has truly become a pleasurable experience at our Middle School.

Our classroom clean-up contests have created much excitement. Each classroom is marked on a scale from one to ten covering five different categories. The class that receives an average score per week of at least nine and a half, including one day with a perfect score of ten, earns a treat for lunch on Friday. If this idea sounds controversial to you, I ask you to please consider the excellent habits that are being formed and practiced each day. Middle school boys are not typically known for their attention to detail in the area of spotlessness. Creating an environment that teaches the importance of cleanliness as a value needs to be presented in a most enjoyable way. It is for this reason that we hung a basketball hoop on top of the garbage can in the boys’ restroom. It is the same reason that we praise the rotation of boys who help straighten up our breakfast tables each day.

Maintaining the nurturing environment that our students received at our Elementary School was a high priority. To this end, credit goes to the One above for arranging for a most perfect office team, providing motherly love for bruises, scrapes and missing lunches.

Our slogan is still quite fitting. **“There’s nothing MIDDLE about our middle school.”**

For further information, or to schedule a visit to our school, please call the  
Principal, Rabbi Ephraim Palgon at 305-947-7779

May you have much *nachas* from your children!

YESHIVA TORAS CHAIM/TORAS EMES ACADEMY OF MIAMI  
**ROHR MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
1051 NORTH MIAMI BEACH BOULEVARD  
NORTH MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33162

*If you are registering a student **transferring into** a new division:*  
(example: 6<sup>th</sup> grade from Toras Emes Academy to Rohr Middle School  
or 9<sup>th</sup> grade from Rohr Middle School to Yeshiva Toras Chaim)

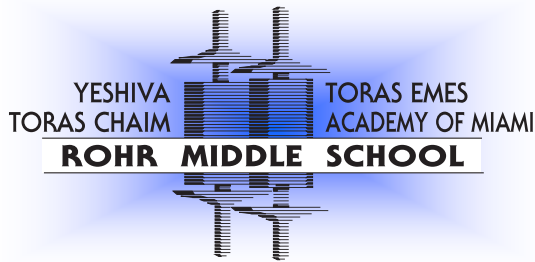
- an application must be filled out from that respective division.
- your son must be accepted by a Principal before he can be considered registered.
- you may still take advantage of our *early bird* registration by sending in a check for your registration fee.  
( In the event that your son is not accepted by the Principals,  
your registration fee will be fully refunded.)

*If you are registering a student **transferring into** a new division:*  
(example: 6<sup>th</sup> grade from Toras Emes Academy to Rohr Middle School  
or 9<sup>th</sup> grade from Rohr Middle School to Yeshiva Toras Chaim)

- an application must be filled out from that respective division.
- your son must be accepted by a Principal before he can be considered registered.
- you may still take advantage of our *early bird* registration by sending in a check for your registration fee.  
( In the event that your son is not accepted by the Principals,  
your registration fee will be fully refunded.)

*If you are registering a student **transferring into** a new division:*  
(example: 6<sup>th</sup> grade from Toras Emes Academy to Rohr Middle School  
or 9<sup>th</sup> grade from Rohr Middle School to Yeshiva Toras Chaim)

- an application must be filled out from that respective division.
- your son must be accepted by a Principal before he can be considered registered.
- you may still take advantage of our *early bird* registration by sending in a check for your registration fee.  
( In the event that your son is not accepted by the Principals,  
your registration fee will be fully refunded.)



Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print full name)

Grade Applying to: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your interest in Yeshiva Toras Chaim/Toras Emes Academy Rohr Middle School. In order to determine the compatibility of the Yeshiva for your son, we require the following prior to acceptance:

1. A completed **Application Form** (including *student essay*).
2. A \$75.00 non-refundable application/processing fee.
3. **Transcripts/records** from previous school(s).
  - a. **New Families:** a Transcript Request Form is enclosed to be completed by you and sent to your son's previous school.
  - b. **Students transferring from Toras Emes:** your son's transcripts will automatically be forwarded to the Middle School Office.
4. A **composition** entitled "What Constitutes a Good Jew?" written by the student, in the student's own handwriting (approximately 150 words).
5. A **written and oral examination, and an interview** will be administered by our Principal to determine the student's proficiency in both Limudei Kodesh and General Studies.

When the above requirements are met and the results are deemed satisfactory by our Admissions Committee, your son will receive an acceptance letter from me for matriculation at the Rohr Middle School. At that time, new students will receive:

- An acceptance letter.
- A schedule of tuition and fees.
- **New Families:** A Registration Packet along with a schedule of tuition and fees will be mailed to you.
- **Students transferring from Toras Emes:** When receiving a Registration Packet please Follow the application process.

The registration process must be completed and returned with all relevant fees to the financial office at Yeshiva Toras Chaim prior to enrollment.

Thank you once again for your interest in the Rohr Middle School.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Ephraim Palgon  
Principal, Rohr Middle School

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESENT STUDENT INFORMATION**

STUDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE APPLYING TO: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL SECURITY # \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please affix  
a recent photo  
here

**PARENT INFORMATION**FATHER'S TITLE: MR. DR. RABBI  
(Circle One)MOTHER'S TITLE: MRS. MS. DR.  
(Circle One)

FATHER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ MOTHER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_ MOTHER'S OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S WORK# \_\_\_\_\_ MOTHER'S WORK# \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S CELL# \_\_\_\_\_ MOTHER'S CELL# \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ MOTHER'S E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESENT SCHOOL INFORMATION**

NAME OF SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINCIPAL \_\_\_\_\_ REBBE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

FAX#: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTENDED ABOVE SCHOOL SINCE GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

**PREVIOUS SCHOOLS ATTENDED (including Toras Emes)**

<u>NAME OF SCHOOL</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>PHONE</u>	<u>DATES ATTENDED</u>

**PERSONAL REFERENCE:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

**ACADEMIC REFERENCE:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

HAS YOUR CHILD RECEIVED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING (EITHER PRIVATELY OR IN SCHOOL) WITHIN THE PAST TWO YEARS?

**CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:**     SPEECH THERAPY     OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY     PHYSICAL THERAPY

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES     SPECIAL EDUCATION INTERVENTION     EDUCATIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

INDICATE IF YOUR CHILD IS TAKING ANY MEDICATION ON A REGULAR BASIS. PLEASE LIST AND EXPLAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Medication)\_\_\_\_\_  
(Reason)\_\_\_\_\_  
(Medication)\_\_\_\_\_  
(Reason)\_\_\_\_\_  
(Medication)\_\_\_\_\_  
(Reason)**THE FOLLOWING MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION:**

- \$75 Non-Refundable Application Fee (per applicant)
- Student Picture
- Student Essay "What Constitutes A Good Jew?"
- Copy of Transcript Request Form

**New Families Only:** Transcript Request Form must be sent to your son's present school

BY SIGNING BELOW, I INDICATE MY AUTHORIZATION TO HAVE THE PRINCIPAL EXAMINE MY CHILD'S RECORDS FROM THE PREVIOUS PRINCIPAL AND FACULTY TO HELP DETERMINE ACCEPTANCE AND PLACEMENT.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature\_\_\_\_\_  
Date**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

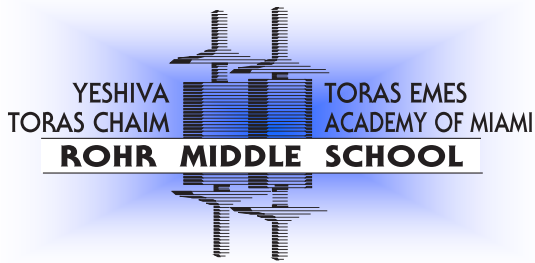
Transcripts:  Yes  No\$75 Fee:  Yes  No

References: 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Application:  Yes  NoStudent Picture:  Yes  NoStudent Essay:  Yes  NoApplicant Accepted:  Yes  Not AcceptedRegistration:  Yes  NoStudent Enrolled:  Yes  No





# TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM

I request that the school record of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print student name)

be forwarded to:

**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR  
ROHR MIDDLE SCHOOL  
1051 NORTH MIAMI BEACH BOULEVARD  
NORTH MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33162**

for the purpose of admission review and academic placement.

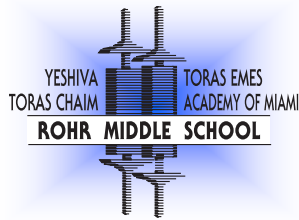
**Please include the following information:**

- Transcript/academic/interim report records for Limudei Kodesh and General Studies from 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up.
- Results of standardized achievement and/or aptitude tests.
- If applicable, copies of special personal evaluations or psychological reports.
- Copy of medical and immunization health records (absolute must).

I also authorize the school and teachers to release information about my child which would identify apparent learning strengths or weaknesses and patterns of behavior.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## For Bar Mitzvah Information

- English Name (please print):

---

- Hebrew First and Middle Name (exact spelling in Hebrew):

---

- Hebrew Last Name (exact spelling in Hebrew):

---

- Bar-Mitzvah “Bo Bayom” English Date:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

- Bar-Mitzvah “Bo Bayom” Hebrew Date:

\_\_\_\_\_ תש"\_\_\_\_\_ חדש \_\_\_\_\_ יום

- Bar Mitzvah Parsha:

---