



HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2027

Vancouver Talmud Torah

Vancouver, British Columbia | talmudtorah.com



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

Where our children learn, grow and thrive, nurtured by Jewish values and traditions.

Overview

“

I don't know if there is an elementary Jewish Day School anywhere in North America that has more momentum than VTT.

- Quote from a Vancouver Jewish community member

”

Fact: Vancouver BC Canada is the only city in the entire Western Hemisphere to host both the Winter Olympics and World Cup Soccer matches.

The intersection of a thriving school in a uniquely desirable location presents a terrific opportunity for the next Head of Vancouver Talmud Torah (VTT) who will start in the summer of 2027. This early childhood (ages 3+) through grade seven (King David - the Jewish high school - starts at grade 8) pluralistic Jewish day school serves 550 young learners from across the entire spectrum of Jewish observance, of family backgrounds, and learning styles. Indeed, VTT is the largest Jewish day school in Canada west of Ontario and is both at the core of and treasured by the entire Vancouver Jewish community.

The school is recognized for both high academic standards and Jewish-values-based character development, inclusive of building Jewish knowledge and identity. A strong senior leadership team, excellent faculty, a visionary board, and a physical facility that, while full, serves the school's mission well, combine into a foundation for future growth and expansion both physically and programmatically.

The current Head deserves great credit for bringing the school to its present excellent state. She seeks new challenges and will be leaving to lead one of the largest private day schools in Canada in the summer of 2027. A new Head who understands and appreciates what is already a great school, will have the opportunity to bring a vision of growth in both numbers and program to build on what is there and partner with an extremely supportive parent and broader Jewish community to take the school to even greater heights in the future. The pieces are in place to be the model of the great pluralistic Jewish Day School of the future.

A WORD ABOUT VANCOUVER

There is no doubt that Vancouver British Columbia is one of the most unique and desirable urban areas in North America. The physical beauty is jaw-dropping with mountains and water literally abutting the city. With a temperate climate it experiences mild winters, warm and dry summers and greenery is everywhere in the city. A major international gateway, Vancouver's airport provides excellent connections to just about anywhere. Its modern cosmopolitan vibe is matched with its historic maritime and timber background. Nature-based recreation is just moments away.

Suffice it to say that Vancouver is one of the most desirable places to live. One must see it to fully understand. But once someone visits Vancouver, they "get it."

For an overview check out: <https://vancouver.ca/news-calendar/our-city.aspx>



STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

In Vancouver's tightly knit Jewish community of nearly 30,000, VTT welcomes the full range and diversity of Jewish families (inclusive of inter-faith families) and students. That diversity enriches both the education and the character development of the school's students. VTT's community is both deeply rooted and continually evolving. It includes families with multi-generational ties to the school, newcomers from Israel, Latin America and around the world, and families who come to Vancouver for medical fellowships. Whatever brings a family to VTT, the school welcomes them with warmth and creates a genuine sense of connection and belonging. Its pluralism is grounded in substantive engagement with multiple Jewish perspectives, shared educational expectations and respect for differences. Beyond this wonderful community feeling, other strengths of the school include:

- Solid finances, balanced budgets, no debt, a history of fiscal prudence.
- A skilled senior leadership team, faculty and staff, several of whom are VTT alumni themselves, who care deeply about each student as well as the overall mission of the school.
- A leadership team that works collaboratively with one another, each of whom is experienced and highly capable in their respective roles.



- The broader Vancouver Jewish community, has a history of unwavering collective and collaborative connections to the school. From congregational Rabbis to still-connected alumni, to strong support from individuals, foundations and the Jewish Federation of British Columbia, VTT touches countless members of the community and is one of the community's strongest institutions.
- As an example, the capital campaign that built the current school in 2016, was the then largest ever in the history of the Vancouver Jewish community.
- Since its founding in 1918, VTT has benefitted from the wisdom of generations of strong capable board members. The current board understands its role in a best-practices, governance-focused relationship with the Head and administration. The Board provides thoughtful, forward-looking leadership while honouring the school's rich history and traditions.
- The school benefits from an active engaged parent association that is an important partner in the fabric of support for the school.
- One parent said, "Extracurriculars here are amazing: Athletics, Robotics, Musical Theater, and lots more."
- With several innovative programs and initiatives, VTT is on the leading edge of the ever-evolving Jewish day school landscape.
- The school embraces the full diversity of its community, welcoming secular, interfaith, observant, and families across the spectrum of Jewish practice and identity, while affirming Israel's enduring importance as a homeland for the Jewish people.
- The school values and benefits from its membership in multiple associations including Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS) <http://www.caiss.ca>; Independent School Association of British Columbia (ISABC) <https://www.isabc.ca> and Prizmah. The current normal-cycle re-accreditation by CAIS will be completed before the new Head starts.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Even as its diversity is a great strength, it is continually working to balance the needs and desires of such a multi-faceted student/family population. Because VTT seeks to welcome any Jewish student/family, not only does it need to make everyone feel a valued member of the community, but the school must meet the broad range of student needs across the spectrum of religious observance, learning profiles, cultural backgrounds and financial capacity. Affordability is a concern for the many families who receive some form of tuition assistance.



One of VTT's innovations, the Comfort Dog program provides emotional support for students and adults with five trained therapy dogs who are a regular presence at the school. Shown is outgoing HOS Emily Greenberg with Phoenix, one of the program's first dogs. The Hebrew on the frame transliterates to "Baruchim habayim" - literally "Blessed are those who come" - a human and canine welcome to the first day of school.

- Continued excellence in general studies must be matched by an equally ambitious commitment to excellence in Jewish education. While VTT's academic program, extracurriculars, and overall student experience have earned a well-deserved reputation for excellence, the Jewish education, while strong, has room to continue to grow to that same level of distinction. The next Head must ensure excellence across the entirety of the school's program, with the delivery of Jewish education held to the same high standard as the school's secular and co-curricular offerings. Since strengthening Jewish identity and infusing students with the love and joy of their own Judaism is an essential part of the mission of the school, the school must continue to find engaging ways to embed Jewish traditions, values and culture and love of Israel into the program. Importantly, many in the community express that strengthening Jewish connection and engagement can take many forms and is not defined solely by religious practice.



- There is growth potential for VTT. To accommodate more students, the school is planning a redevelopment project and capital campaign to grow the school. This effort is likely to consume a significant amount of time and attention from the new Head. The Board is aware that given the new Head's need to learn all components of VTT, this will have to be navigated carefully to ensure the development's success.
- For historical reasons, the faculty of the school is represented by a branch of a multi-industry labor union. It is important to continue to work closely with the school's Senior Leadership Team and legal counsel to maintain the positive and productive relationship with the union. Many cite that the collective bargaining agreement (which will be renewed before the new Head starts) simplifies school-employee matters because it provides clarity and structure that govern many personnel issues.
- As noted above, VTT is a major institution in the fabric of Jewish Vancouver. As such, decisions made at the school must take into consideration not only what is best for the school itself, but what is best for the overall community of which it is an integral part. In fact, the Head of School is seen as a leader in the broader Jewish community and needs to connect with and be active in all aspects of the Jewish community in greater Vancouver.
- VTT does not screen students based on academic ability. As a community school, it is committed to ensuring that students with a broad range of learning needs and strengths are supported and able to thrive. As is the case in many schools, there is a significant population of neurodiverse students at the school. While embracing these students as valued members of the school community, the school must also continue to provide the resources and learning support necessary to help those students be successful. Likewise, the school must continue to challenge the students ready for greater academic challenge. Continuing to meet the needs of such a diverse range of learners remains an important focus for the school.
- The school's insatiable appetite for innovation requires thoughtful sequencing of new and current initiatives while being mindful of its capacity for maximizing each.

QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES



Among many characteristics successful candidates will possess are:

- A strategic and forward-thinking leader who can partner effectively with the Board in developing the school's next strategic plan, build upon its vision and priorities, and lead the organization in bringing them to life.
- Ideally, the successful candidate will bring a knowledgeable and personally meaningful engagement with Jewish life. Whether or not personally Jewish, the Head must demonstrate an authentic commitment to Jewish life, learning and peoplehood, and be able to articulate a compelling vision for a pluralistic Jewish day school. The Head will bring sufficient Jewish knowledge and understanding to set priorities, ask informed questions, and ensure strong Jewish educational leadership, while serving as a passionate and compelling ambassador for the value of Jewish education. They will set the "tone at the top" that VTT is not only an exceptional school, but distinctively a Jewish school. The successful candidate will bring the intellectual humility to know what they don't know and will actively draw on appropriate Judaic expertise to ensure that the delivery of Jewish education reflects the same rigor and excellence as the rest of VTT's program.
- As both the Head of School and an important community leader, an intangible "leadership presence and CEO mentality" combined with authentic approachability.
- A charismatic connector who easily relates to and welcomes everyone across the full diversity of the school and the Vancouver Jewish community. As comfortable with public officials and major donors as on the floor reading with a second grader.
- A track record of building an environment of trust and collaboration with and among faculty and staff.
- "Collaborative backbone." An inclusive leader who listens whenever possible, makes decisions when necessary, and can say "no" when required.
- Proven ability to set high expectations, provide support and a culture of accountability. Compassionate and fair, but firm.
- Robust fundraising experience is a strong asset; at minimum, the successful candidate will demonstrate the skills, confidence and relationship-building ability to become an effective fundraiser and not only an eager but also a compelling storyteller for the school.
- Sufficient financial literacy to be an effective partner with the CFO and the Board in order to continue to optimize the use of resources while continuing the history of fiscal prudence.
- High emotional intelligence and able to bridge the many elements of the school community to assure that everyone feels that they belong and that their needs are being met.
- A team-builder who delegates thoughtfully but stays engaged where necessary.
- Experience working in a best-practices partnership with a Board.
- A deep understanding of what it means to be a community school.
- A strong orator who enjoys engaging a room.
- A servant leader who is motivated by purposeful work and building a stronger community.

LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [Vision and Values](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Inclusive Education](#)





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- Statement of leadership experience in a sizeable multi-faceted organization and, if applicable, Jewish education;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

SKIP KOTKINS

Senior Consultant

skip.kotkins@carneysandoe.com



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES