

Meira Academy

Where Young Jewish Women Shine

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK 2016-2017



MEIRA
ACADEMY

Meira Academy
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MISSION STATEMENT

Meira Academy empowers young Jewish women through an education devoted to academic excellence in both Jewish Studies and General Studies. Nurturing students toward a bright future in the Jewish community, the school supports them in all aspects of their personal growth: intellectually, spiritually, socially, and creatively. Meira Academy provides a safe and comfortable environment for young women to learn and develop with self-assurance and integrity.

Make Jewish Values A Guiding Part Of Your Life.

Excel in Academic Pursuits

Interact Effectively

Realize your role as a Jewish woman in the 21st Century

Achieve Through Critical Thinking

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Graduation Requirements

| COURSE | MEIRA REQUIREMENT | UC REQUIREMENT |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Chumash | 4 years | |
| Navi | 4 years | |
| Tefilla | 4 years | |
| Halacha | 4 year | |
| Torah Sheb'al Peh | 1 year | |
| Kesuvim | 4 years | |
| Jewish Philosophy | 4 years | |
| Jewish History | 4 years | |
| Bkuis | 4 years | |
| History | 4 years | History/social science "a" 2 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World History ● US History |
| English | 4 years | English "b" 4 years |
| Mathematics | 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Geometry ● Algebra II ● Precalculus *4 years are strongly recommended. Students must take a 4th year of either math or science. | Mathematics "c" 3 years *4 years are strongly recommended |
| Science | 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Biology ● Chemistry ● Physics *4 years are strongly recommended. Students must take a 4th year of either math or science. | Laboratory Science "d" 2 years of laboratory science *3 years are strongly recommended |
| Foreign Language: Ivrit | 4 years | Language other than English "e" 2 years *3 years are strongly recommended |
| Art | 2 years (equivalent to 2 semesters) | Visual & Performing Arts "f" 1 year |
| Elective | 1 year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Computer Science ● Spanish | College-Preparatory Elective "g" 1 year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Computer Science |
| Physical Education | 4 years (equivalent to 4 semesters) | |
| <i>Chessed</i> | 30 hours per academic year | |

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Academic Expectations and Grading Policies

Learning and academic achievement are at the core of Meira Academy's mission. A positive attitude toward learning and a desire to achieve academically are hallmarks of a Meira Academy student. Teachers and administrators are devoted to helping students gain as much knowledge and as many skills as possible in preparation for ongoing learning at the seminary and university level. Although teachers enjoy some leeway in terms of how they conduct their classes and grade student work, the following can be expected across the board:

- Regular, daily homework on average will not exceed 3 hours. Students are expected to complete homework on time.
- Quizzes, tests, projects and papers will be assigned in all academic classes. Students are expected to be prepared for quizzes and tests and turn in completed projects and papers on the assigned due date.
- Teachers will strive to coordinate homework/project/paper due dates and test dates so as to not overburden the students with work on a given day or week. No more than 2 test or major assignments/projects will be due on any given day. If a parent feels that the amount of work is overwhelming their daughter, please bring it to the attention of the Principal.
- Teachers will notify students at least one week in advance of a test and remind students of looming deadlines (e.g., projects or papers).
- At the teacher's discretion students will have the opportunity to make-up missed assignments.
- For extended absences, it is the student's responsibility to work with her teachers and principals to create a plan to make up missing work.
- A mid-term will be administered towards the end of first semester for core classes while a final exam will be administered at the end of the academic year.
- A failing grade in a course will result in the student attending summer school to pass the course. However, with proper and timely communication among teachers, students, and parents as outlined in this handbook, a student's lack of achievement (despite her making an effort) should be detected early enough to prevent such a failure (through the student receiving extra help, tutoring, etc.).
- Mathematics courses and some Jewish studies courses will be organized by tracks to accommodate the various skill levels and background knowledge of all Meira Academy students.

Expectations of a Meira Student

Meira students are expected to embody the qualities set forth in our ESLRs. Students are expected to take their academics, both General and Judaic Studies, seriously, to treat teachers, staff, and fellow classmates with consideration and respect, and to take personal responsibility for their academic achievement. A Meira student.....

- Comes to class on-time, prepared to learn
- Stays on-task and uses class-time effectively
- Asks questions and seeks clarification when necessary
- Takes personal responsibility for her academic work and accepts the consequences graciously when she does not work or behave to her potential
- Understands that feedback and constructive criticism are a necessary part of the learning process and accepts such feedback graciously
- Interacts effectively with her classmates and teachers in the classroom, raises her hand when she wishes to speak, does not interrupt or talk over others, and contributes only relevant comments to classroom discussions
- When necessary, makes use of all the available resources the school offers to support learning, including one-on-one meetings with teachers and the principals, after-school homework clinic, and recommended online resources
- Works cooperatively with classmates, listens to and respects differing opinions, supports classmates and offers help and encouragement when necessary

Expectations of a Meira Honors and AP Student

Meira offers Honors and AP courses for students, in good academic standing, who wish to take on additional academic challenges. Students should recognize before committing to an Honors or AP course that these courses are more rigorous than regular courses, move at a faster pace, and require students to complete more homework and studying outside of the classroom. Students should not expect leniency or reduced workload in their regular classes as a result of enrollment in an Honors or AP course. Students should not commit to an Honors or AP class unless they are willing and prepared to take on the additional work and academic challenge.

Honors Classes

Placement in Honors classes is determined by overall GPA, demonstrated proficiency in the applicable subject area, and teacher recommendation. In order to be considered for an Honors class, a student should have at least a 3.0 GPA and a B average or higher in the applicable subject area. Honors classes move at a faster pace and cover more material in greater depth than a regular class. Students taking an Honors class should expect a greater amount of independent work, including homework assignments and projects, than in a

regular classes. Due to the increased academic demands, students completing Honors courses will receive an extra .5 towards their GPA (see grading scale below).

A Meira Honors student:

- Is self-motivated and disciplined
- Accepts the responsibility of an increased work-load and manages time effectively
- Assumes personal responsibility for her learning and seeks out help when necessary
- ALWAYS Comes to class prepared and on-time
- ALWAYS Completes and turns in all assignments on-time
- Uses class-time effectively, is always on task, and is never disruptive
- Takes responsibility for communicating with the teacher regarding missed classes and assignments
- Accepts the consequences when she is unprepared or does not complete assigned work

Students in an Honors class who do not follow these expectations will be placed on probationary status and may be moved to a regular class.

AP Classes

Advanced Placement® courses offer students the opportunity to earn college credit by taking rigorous courses in high school. Students who demonstrate mastery of the material on a national standardized end-of-course exam – a score of 3 or higher out of 5 – may be eligible for college credit for the course. Students taking an AP class should expect a greater amount of independent work, including homework assignments, projects, and exam preparation, than in a regular class. All students enrolled in an AP class should plan to take the AP exam in the Spring. Students will not be eligible to receive college credit if they do not take the AP exam. Due to the increased academic demands, students completing an AP course will receive an extra point towards their GPA (see grading scale below).

A Meira AP Student:

- Is self-motivated and disciplined
- Assumes personal responsibility for her learning and seeks out help when necessary
- Accepts the responsibility of an increased work-load and manages time effectively.
- ALWAYS Comes to class prepared and on-time
- ALWAYS Completes and turns in all assignments on-time

- Plans appropriately and uses effective time-management during the time of AP testing so that she is able to keep up with all other classes
- Uses class-time effectively, is always on task, and is never disruptive
- Takes responsibility for communicating with the teacher regarding missed classes and assignments
- Accepts the consequences when she is unprepared or does not complete assigned work

Students in an AP class who do not follow these expectations will be placed on probationary status and may be moved to a regular class.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The following is the grading scale used at Meira Academy, which will determine a student's Grade Point Average (GPA):

| Numerical Grade | Letter Grade | Standard Scale | Honors Scale | Advanced Placement (AP) Scale |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 97-100 | A+ | 4.0 | 4.5 | 5.0 |
| 93-96 | A | 4.0 | 4.5 | 5.0 |
| 90-92 | A- | 3.7 | 4.2 | 4.7 |
| 87-89 | B+ | 3.3 | 3.8 | 4.3 |
| 83-86 | B | 3.0 | 3.5 | 4.0 |
| 80-82 | B- | 2.7 | 3.2 | 3.7 |
| 77-79 | C+ | 2.3 | 2.8 | 3.3 |
| 73-76 | C | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| 70-72 | C- | 1.7 | 2.2 | 2.7 |
| 67-69 | D+ | 1.3 | 1.8 | 2.3 |
| 65-66 | D | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 |
| • 65 | F | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Testing Accommodations

If your child has an identified disability, testing accommodations may be available for PSAT, SAT, ACT, mid-term and final exams, and AP exams. Visit the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com to learn more. Be advised that the process for approval can take time and often requires supporting documentation, which may need to be gathered. You are responsible for the process. It is best to do your research and start early to avoid being denied accommodation at test time.

COMMUNICATION

Parent-Student-Teacher Communication

Parents, administrators, teachers and students are all partners at Meira Academy. Regular, respectful and constructive communication between students and administrators/teachers and between parents and administrators/teachers is an important part of life at Meira Academy. Open lines of communication and feedback are key to providing the positive support that will enable our students to succeed both academically and socially, and to build a trusting and caring community throughout the school.

Parents are urged to maintain regular communication with the school to track their child's performance and to voice any concerns. Teachers will contact parents promptly should a student's performance fall below expectations. Although it is crucial for parents and teachers to maintain regular communication, we expect Meira Academy students to play a key role in communicating with teachers and parents about their progress.

Teachers at Meira Academy are devoted to helping their students succeed. Teachers will also be available to meet with students either informally or by appointment. Should a situation arise in which a student needs academic support beyond a regular check-in or catch-up session with a teacher, the teacher will be in touch with the student's parent to discuss the possibility of an outside tutor for the student.

As a matter of policy and courtesy, questions, concerns and other types of communication should be directed first to those people immediately involved or affected before involving second parties. For instance, students and parents should speak first with teachers about any academic or classroom-related concerns before involving a school administrator in the discussion.

Back-To-School Night

Back-To-School Night will be held Tuesday, August 30th, 2016 from 7:00 PM to 9 PM. Additionally, for parents of seniors, there will be a Seminary Information Night immediately after the Back-To-School Event. Parents are urged to attend this event to meet their daughter's teachers and to learn about the curriculum and academic expectations.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

In-person Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Wednesday, December 7th, 2016 from 1pm-7pm. The importance of these meetings cannot be stressed enough, as they allow teachers to inform parents of their daughter's progress thus far, and for parents to share insights on their daughter with her teachers. We encourage all parents, including those of boarders, to attend these conferences. Phone or Skype conferences can be arranged for those who cannot attend in person.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Teachers will prepare progress reports twice per year, at the end of the first quarter and the end of the third quarter. These are designed to inform parents about their daughter's performance and progress in her various courses. Progress reports are primarily narrative in nature, but will make reference to grades, as well. Report cards will be prepared and issued at the end of each semester. Like the progress report, the report card will include a narrative description of the student's progress and learning and a semester and final course grade.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Dress Code

Meira Academy's dress code is designed so that students can be comfortably dressed for the learning environment and school activities while adhering to the Jewish values of the school and the community. Students may wear a modest amount of make-up. This includes natural-colored eye-shadow and blush. Parents can shop anywhere they wish for the clothing as long as clothes follow the dress code guidelines. In order to facilitate those parents who may have difficulties in acquiring the appropriate clothing, Meira Academy will provide order forms from Fraylich School Uniforms. **Students who come to school and are not up to dress code will need to change into a school supplied uniform.**

The **regular dress code** for Meira Academy students includes:

- A white, light blue or white and blue-striped Oxford style shirt.
- A pleated black or navy skirt that **falls below the knee at all times**.
- For colder weather a solid gray, blue or black sweater, cardigan or hoody. No writing or pictures are allowed.
- Sensible, low-heeled footwear (no crocs)
- Stockings or knee-high socks.
- Leggings may not be worn under the uniform.

The **Physical Education dress code** includes:

- A comfortable long sleeve t-shirt.
- Sweatpants or sports pants.
- Comfortable and supportive running or sports shoes.

The **Rosh Chodesh dress code** includes:

Skirts:

- Must **fall below the knee at all times**, even when sitting
- Must not have slits. Pencil skirts, or other clingy, knit, or tight-fitting skirts may not be worn.

- If a skirt appears questionable, the student will be sent to the office to change.

Shirts:

- Must cover the elbows, even when the arm is raised or bent.
- Must cover the collar-bone
- Must cover the entire abdomen and back, even when hands are raised above the head or student is bending forward.
- Students are permitted to unbutton the top button (collar) of their shirts only.
- Shirts should not be so tight as to make the buttons pull in front.
- If a shirt appears questionable, the student will be sent to the office to change

Socks:

- Knee socks, tights or stockings must be worn.
- NO ankle socks.
- Leggings may not be worn

If a student has more than 3 dress code infractions, she will be asked to attend a collaborative meeting with the principals to review school policy and create a plan to ensure that infractions do not happen again.

Code of Conduct

Meira Academy educates and nurtures its students to become young women who reflect the ideals of Torah in their everyday lives and practices. To accomplish this goal, the school creates an environment in which each student is appreciated and valued, and where each student is responsible to treat her and others with respect and dignity. At Meira Academy, each student assumes responsibility for her own behavior and academic success. Thus, a Meira Academy student honors the Meira Academy Code of Conduct, works to maintain academic success, and accepts the consequences of the failure to do her best academically or to uphold school rules, policies, and norms.

Students are required to show proper respect to both teachers and peers and to treat all individuals with courtesy and dignity. Side conversations or activities not related to class (including passing notes, playing games, doing homework from another class, etc.) show a lack of respect.

- There is no chewing gum during class or eating and drinking (with the exception of bottled water) without permission from the teacher.
- Students should act responsibly toward the property of others. A concern for the conditions and cleanliness of the building is everyone's responsibility.
- Under no circumstance may a student leave the JCC campus without permission.
- Students are expected to push in their chairs, remove personal items, and throw away any trash before leaving the classroom. Students who leave personal items or trash in the classroom will be asked to clean up during break or lunch.

Behaviors that do not reflect the school's code of conduct will result in disciplinary action.

A Code of Conduct cannot be so thorough as to cover every possible offense. Good judgment must be exercised at all times and in all places. A Jew should always examine her actions and consider their value according to the standard of "Kiddush HaShem" i.e. does my action contribute to the sanctification of G-d's name or does it detract from it ... and act accordingly.

Academic Integrity

Meira Academy students are expected to complete their assignments with integrity.

- Students are expected to produce original work and work independently in all instances that do not involve group assignments or projects. Should cheating or plagiarism be suspected, consequences may include, but are not limited to:
 - Requirement to redo the assignment or to complete a separate assignment
 - Receipt of a "0" grade for the assignment/test
 - Loss of one letter grade (for the quarter) in the relevant subject area or course
 - Loss of credit in the relevant subject area or course
 - Detention or Suspension

In cases of gross infractions of Academic Integrity (e.g. cheating on a final exam), the administration will be notified immediately.

Electronics and Internet Policy

Use of School Laptops

Meira Academy has laptops available for students to use in-class for school related purposes. Laptops may only be signed out by a teacher and must be returned by the end of class. Laptops may not be used to access social media, for personal e-mail correspondence, accessing games, videos, music, or retail sites. **School laptops may only be used in-school.** Students may not remove school laptops from the school building

It is expected that all students will respect the information technology equipment with which they have been provided, and realize that using this equipment is a privilege, not a right. Students are responsible for any damage to the physical body of the laptop. This includes damage to the screen or keyboard due to dropping the laptop, placing the laptop under heavy books, or spilling food or drink on the laptop.

School laptops are not intended for personal use. Students may not save or download personal files onto the computers. When possible, students are encouraged to use Google

Drive to access and save personal files. Students are strongly encouraged to keep a flashdrive for storing and accessing personal files.

Use of the Internet

Students may use the Internet for educational purposes in curriculum projects with the assistance and guidance of their teachers. All school laptops and desktops have internet filters that prevent access to unacceptable or harmful sites.

Use of Personal laptops or Tablets at School

While it is not encouraged, students may choose to bring a personal laptop or tablet to school for use **in class for school-related purposes**. All personal laptops or tablets must be installed with Meira's internet filter before the student will be allowed to use them in school. Student should drop off their laptop in the front office for our IT director to install Meira Academy's filter. Filter checks will be performed on a regular basis.

Students who do choose to bring personal electronics to school are reminded that Meira Academy is not responsible for the loss, damage, or theft of these items. Students should take care not to leave personal electronics unattended in classrooms, the student lounge, or the kitchen. Students should always take personal electronics home at night and should never store them in the student lounge or the cubbies.

Cell phone and smart phone use is not permitted on campus. **Students must store cell phones in front office, in designated cell phone drop, during school hours.** Phones found in the possession of students on campus will be confiscated for 72 hours.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Purpose

Regular attendance at school is essential for an individual student's learning and academic achievement, as well as for maintaining a respectful, collaborative and mutually supportive learning environment for everyone. Students must be present in class to hear the teacher's explanations, listen to student questions, perform educational

activities, and receive guidance on homework. Only through regular attendance will students build their confidence and be empowered as learners. Therefore, students are expected to be on campus during all school hours. Attendance at *Tefillah* is mandatory and is considered as essential as attendance in academic classes.

Excused Absences

Parent/Guardians or dorm parents must notify the school by 8:00 AM regarding each day the student is absent. This can be accomplished by a phone call to the school office at (650) 485-3589 or by sending an email to office@meiraacademy.org to report and explain the absence. Students leaving due to an appointment/illness during class-time must first check out in the front office. Students arriving late in the morning/after lunch, or who are returning after an appointment must also check in at the front office prior to class, otherwise, the absences will be documented as *unexcused*. Parents must notify the office in advance if a student must leave campus during the school day for an appointment. Students will not be permitted to leave otherwise.

Meira Academy has established the following parameters under which an absence from school will be considered an EXCUSED absence:

- Personal illness
- Medical Appointment
- Death in the Family יו"ט
- Family Emergency
- School-Sponsored Absence
- Pre-arranged Absences such as for a family simcha or traveling out of state **cannot exceed more than 5 days per school year or 6 days for out-of-state boarding students.**

Unexcused Absences

At no time may a student be off campus without permission from a parent (or in certain circumstances from a teacher), as Meira Academy has a “closed campus” policy.

Tardies

Arriving late to class affects the students’ studies and disrupts the class. Students are allowed the following tardies per semester, after which one point per tardy will be deducted from the semester grade.

Classes meeting 1-2 days a week = 2 unexcused tardies per semester

Classes meeting 3 days a week = 3 unexcused tardies

Classes meeting 4-5 days a week = 5 unexcused tardies per semester

Students are expected to be in class and to be prepared to learn upon the ringing of the period bell. Being prepared includes having all textbooks, notebooks, pen, pencils, etc. If

a student is not ready upon the ringing of the bell, **it will be considered a “Tardy”**. If a student is still not in class 15 minutes after the period bell has rung, it will be considered an “Unexcused Absence” unless the student presents the teacher with a note from an administrator or a Meira teacher.

Co-Curricular Events

Attendance at co-curricular activities (such as field trips, assemblies, community service projects, etc.) and extra-curricular activities (such as clubs, play rehearsals, etc.) is considered just as important as attendance in class. The school considers it derech erez to attend all of these, as a sign of respect to the organizers, the other participants, and those served.

MEDICAL & EMERGENCY FORMS & POLICIES

Meira Academy is concerned about the safety and welfare of all its students, both while they are on campus and when they are participating in school activities off campus. The school expects parents and guardians to partner in this effort, and therefore, requires parents and guardians to furnish all necessary information requested by the school about their daughter. Meira Academy complies with all State of California school regulations, and as such, is required to keep on file current, completed and signed health, emergency contact, and permission forms for each student. Parents are asked to promptly complete and return to the school all forms sent to them. **Students may not attend school until all forms are returned fully completed to the school.**

Medical forms may require a physical examination, physician signature and proof of immunization records – so please schedule all necessary appointments to take care of these well in advance of the start of the school year.

All students are required to carry health insurance through their parents or guardians.

The school does not have a nurse or other medical professional on staff. Office staff will call 911 in an emergency, and all treatment and transportation costs will be the responsibility of parents or guardians.

Parents of students requiring medication during the school day, including over-the-counter (OTC) medications such as Tylenol or Motrin, will need to complete the Prescription Medical Release and Emergency Contact Forms noting whether their daughter can carry and self-administer the listed medication(s) or if the medication(s) should be stored in the school office. Meira Academy is not authorized to administer to students any over-the-counter (OTC) medications not specified in the Emergency Contact Form, and none will be made available to students.

Earthquake and Fire Safety

The Meira Academy is currently leasing space from the Oshman Family JCC located in Palo Alto. All safety regulations are set forth by the JCC administration and followed through by all staff and students. To maintain the safety readiness of all students and staff, regular drills will take place during the school year.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Meira students are expected to leave the premises within 20 minutes of school dismissal unless special arrangements have been made through the office. For security and liability reasons, we ask that students should not loiter outside the school after hours. If a student must wait to be picked up, arrangements must be made for her to wait at a friend's house.

Community Service

Meira Academy strives to develop a sense of caring and community in all of its students. Towards this end, every Meira Academy student is required to participate in doing volunteer/chessed work. Each girl is expected to donate at least one hour a week (or 30 hours yearly) toward community work. The goal of this program is to develop community awareness and leadership. It is our aim that students become aware and notice the different needs in the community and develop creative solution to meet these various needs.

The school will make several options available to the students by which they can fulfill their requirements. Students have the option of initiating their own chessed project subject to the approval of the Chessed Coordinator. Although we recognize that many of our students regularly lend a helping hand at home, this cannot be considered part of the chessed hours. All chessed hours must be documented on a sign-in chessed sheet so as to insure the yearly requirement has been met.

School Supplies and Books

Meira students are expected to **provide their own school supplies** such as pens, pencils, paper, etc. The school is not responsible for their loss nor can the school be expected to provide missing supplies. Items left in common space at the end of the day will be collected by teachers, staff, or administrators will be considered hefker (no owner) and right of ownership will be forfeited to the school.

Students are responsible for **all** materials required on any project or special assignment. Meira Academy cannot be expected to supply any arts and crafts materials for personal projects. It is absolutely forbidden for students to help themselves to school supplies from the storage space without permission from the Administration. Further, it is forbidden for student to take supplies, such as pens, pencils, erasers, tape, posters etc. from office.

Meira Academy will supply its students with all the necessary textbooks. Students are expected to care for their books and return them at the end of the year in good condition. Failure to return them in similar conditions as they obtained them will result in a monetary penalty. If a student loses her book, she will be expected to pay a replacement fee.

Personal Property

Each Meira Academy student will be provided with a cubby in which to store her books, coat, P.E. clothes and other material. Students are expected to keep their cubby neat and tidy and free of perishable foods.

Students are strongly urged not to bring any valuables to school. Meira Academy cannot guarantee the safety of those valuables, even if they are stored in a student's personal cubby.

Student Lounge and Meals

In recognition of the fact that Meira Academy has a closed campus, and that consequently students may not leave the building without permission, the school provides comfortable space for students to relax and "hang out" with one another.

Students are responsible for bringing their own meals to school. A refrigerator, toaster oven and a microwave have been made available for the students use. On special occasions breakfast/lunch will be served at school. Students will be advised in advance.

For public events, no outside home baked food will be allowed, with the exception of food from the Meira Faculty. As a community institution, we adhere to the highest standards of kashrus for public events (i.e. Chalav Yisrael), in order to be as welcoming as we can to everyone in the community. Any food distributed to a class, or the whole school will adhere to these standards.

Cleanliness

Teachers and students are required to maintain neat classrooms, hallways, etc. While basic cleaning service is provided (trash cans emptied, floors vacuumed), it is our responsibility to ensure that things are put in their proper places and trash is thrown away. To that regard, we ask the students to make sure that all their paper, books and supplies are put away at the end of each class. Additionally, students should clean up their trash and crumbs from their lunch.