



# Elementary & Middle School

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**Student-Parent Handbook**  
**2021-2022 | 5781-5782**

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## WELCOME TO OHR CHADASH ACADEMY

### Vision

Community-אחדות

Individuality-יחידות

Excellence-הצטיינות

### Mission Statement

Ohr Chadash Academy (OCA) is a Torah-driven Orthodox Jewish day school for boys and girls in early childhood through 8th grade, where the divine spark and unique worth of each individual are celebrated. We emphasize the inherent *kedusha* of both Judaic and general studies and promote a personal relationship with *Medinat Yisrael*, *Eretz Yisrael*, and *Am Yisrael*. Within a warm, nurturing environment, we instill the values of *chesed* and *middot* in our students and foster intellectual curiosity and critical thinking skills through active learning and collaborative problem-solving. At OCA, we inspire students to be independent and inclusive, caring and confident, educated and engaged members of the community and society as a whole.

### *Halachic Questions*

All *halachic* questions involving the school are to be directed to the Administration. The Administration will, at their discretion, consult with the school's Orthodox rabbinic authority, Rabbi Marwick, before making a decision. The decision of the Administration is final.

## INTRODUCTION

Dear Ohr Chadash Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2021–2022 school year, a year ahead which, *b'ezrat Hashem*, will be filled with opportunities for our students to observe, explore, question, and study the full range of academic pursuits, from mathematics to Chumash, Ivrit to social studies, and so much more. Our goal at OCA is to enable our students to develop their *emunah*, knowledge, and commitment to Torah, and cognitive, academic, and social-emotional skills within a supportive, reflective, and respectful environment.

Ohr Chadash's mission is manifest in every aspect of our school life. First and foremost, we are a Torah-driven institution. In every interaction among faculty, students, and parents, we make sure that Torah is guiding and steering us. At OCA we believe that there is *kedusha* (holiness) inherent in both general and Judaic studies that each of our students possess a unique divine spark within them. We nurture students' individuality by offering opportunities to develop a wide range of student interests, by actively connecting content learning to students' lives and experiences, and by fostering students' ability to advocate for themselves. Ohr Chadash is a family, and we encourage collaborative, mutually supportive effort to help the community achieve shared goals. That commitment extends beyond our school walls to fostering a deep connection to and personal responsibility for *Am, Eretz, and Medinat Yisrael*, and to the larger global society, as well.

In order for our students to gain the most from their Ohr Chadash educational experience, we ask parents and students to familiarize themselves with the expectations, policies, and procedures contained within this handbook. Please read through it carefully in its entirety and refer to it when questions arise.

While we have tried to include the full scope of policies needed to support the smooth functioning of our school, no general policy can, or should, dictate what must happen in every situation. Therefore, from time to time, situations may arise which require or deserve special handling different from what is prescribed in this handbook. If parents have questions about decisions and policies made by OCA, we are available to answer any questions.

Your signature at the end of this handbook reflects both your understanding and acceptance of our policies and procedures and your commitment to partnering with us in the education of your children. If you have any questions about the information in the handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are looking forward to a year of learning, growing, and renewal of our very special Ohr Chadash community.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Rapoport  
Head of School

Lanie Carter  
President of the Board of Directors

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Address:** Ohr Chadash Academy of Baltimore  
7310 Park Heights Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21208  
**Website:** [ohrchadashbaltimore.org](http://ohrchadashbaltimore.org)  
**Phone:** 410-999-2200

## ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE STAFF

### Administration

Mrs. Deborah Rapoport	Head of School
Mrs. Randi Orshan	Elementary School Principal
Rabbi Mordechai Bennett	Middle School Principal
Mrs. Dawn Kreisberg	Director Early Childhood Center
Mrs. Reeut Singerman	Director of Admissions and Marketing
Rabbi Moshe Margolese	Director of Institutional Advancement and Finance

### Academic and Student Support Team

Ms. Nechama Schwartz	Director of Academic Support, K-3
Mrs. Rena Einbinder	Director of Academic Support, 4-8
Rabbi Evan Weiner	Elementary School Judaic Studies Instructional Coach
Mrs. Leah Malka Pasch	School Social Worker
Mrs. Lauren Schleifer	School Social Worker
Mrs. Brocha Lawrence	School Nurse

### Office Staff

Ms. Yehudis Taffel	IT Director
Mrs. Michelle Rakovsky	Systems Analyst
Mrs. Rachel Lasson	Office Administrator
Mrs. Devora Cohen	Controller
Mrs. Goldie Milner	Building B Secretary/Receptionist
Mrs. Miriam Rosen	Building A Secretary/Receptionist
Mrs. Malky Feldman	Admissions and Marketing Coordinator

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### ***Board Officers***

Lanie Carter - President

Holly VanderWalde - Vice President

David Reidy - Treasurer

Pam Lehmann - Secretary

### ***Committee Chairs***

Jacob Blumenfeld - Development

Pam Lehmann - Governance

David Reidy - Finance

Ken Gelula - Strategic Planning

## **PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

OCA views its parents as essential partners in the education of their children. To be successful in its mission, OCA depends upon the cooperation of its parents, who understand and embrace the School's mission, share its core values, and fully support its curriculum, faculty, and staff. A mutually supportive parent-school relationship helps children develop positive *middot* and effective problem-solving skills by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty, and respect. Thus, when joined by a common set of beliefs and goals, parents and the School exert a powerful developmental influence on children.

The relationship between parents and the faculty and administration is formally governed by the school's written enrollment contract and this handbook, in which its procedures are spelled out. When parents choose to enroll their child in OCA, they agree to subscribe to its mission, follow its rules, and abide by its decisions.

OCA encourages parents to work productively with teachers and administrators by staying informed about their child and important events in the life of the school. Thoughtful questions, suggestions, and concerns are welcomed by the School. Likewise, parents can expect the School to provide them with timely and pertinent information.

Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. It is that trust and mutual respect that are the essential underpinnings of an effective working relationship between parents and the School. Efforts by parents to lobby other parents, particularly on social media, will be viewed by the school as counterproductive. Social media is neither an appropriate nor effective forum for understanding policy decisions or resolving issues.

All professional communications between parents and administrators, teachers, or staff must be conducted through in-person or phone conversations or email. Text, Whatsapp, Facebook messenger, and other informal social communication tools are inappropriate means of communication with school personnel.

Finally, parents should not expect the Board of Trustees to act as an appeals board for school decision-making. Ohr Chadash is fortunate to enjoy a mutually supportive relationship between the Board and Head of School founded on frequent and open communication. Thus, any concerns that parents raise with trustees will be conveyed to the Head of School who holds the responsibility for policy and decision-making.

While parents may not agree with every decision by the School, in most cases, the parent and School will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship. In the extreme case, however, an impasse may be so severe that the parent cannot remain a constructive member of the community. In such cases, both the parent and the School should consider whether another school would be a better match for the family.

#### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT - PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (OCA-PTA)**

Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of our school and Ohr Chadash is very fortunate to be supported by an active PTA.

The OCA-PTA presidents for the 2021-2022 academic year are as follows:

Mrs. Tzipora Hastings	Co-President
Mrs. Chana Kuhnreich	Co-President

Please keep abreast of the various PTA activities throughout the year and show support for the OCA-PTA, faculty, and administration by both participating and volunteering. Volunteering for many PTA-sponsored activities and programs requires no daytime commitment, so parents who are employed during school hours are encouraged to participate fully.

The OCA-PTA raises money for the school, plans family and community events, and promotes camaraderie amongst our community. Among the many PTA-sponsored events, are the following:

- Back to School Picnic
- Saturday Night Learning
- *Rosh Chodesh* Treats
- Parent-Teacher *Melava Malka*
- Purim Kids' *Megilla* Reading
- New Parent Welcome Packages
- Back to School Teacher Gifts
- *Yom Ha'atzmaut Tekes* and Celebration
- *Shavuot* Bake Sale
- Hot Lunch
- OCA Gear
- Hershey Park Tickets
- Amazon Smile

- Box Tops

In addition, the OCA-PTA organizes the Class Parents program. Volunteers are always needed for this important role.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

#### **Carpool protocol**

Carpool procedures are developed with the safety of children and staff in mind. Drivers are expected to drive slowly, cautiously, and courteously, and to follow designated traffic flow patterns. Our security guards oversee morning and afternoon carpool to ensure that drivers adhere to safety guidelines.

Drivers who drop off their children at the front entrance to Building A are asked not to stop to let out their children at the curb alongside the Learning Ladder drop-off zone between 8:45 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

**To maintain the attention and vigilance required when driving on school property, drivers are expected not to talk on or otherwise use their cell phones, even hands-free, unless parked in a designated parking spot.**

#### **Arrival**

K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students are expected to arrive between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and go immediately to their morning classroom.

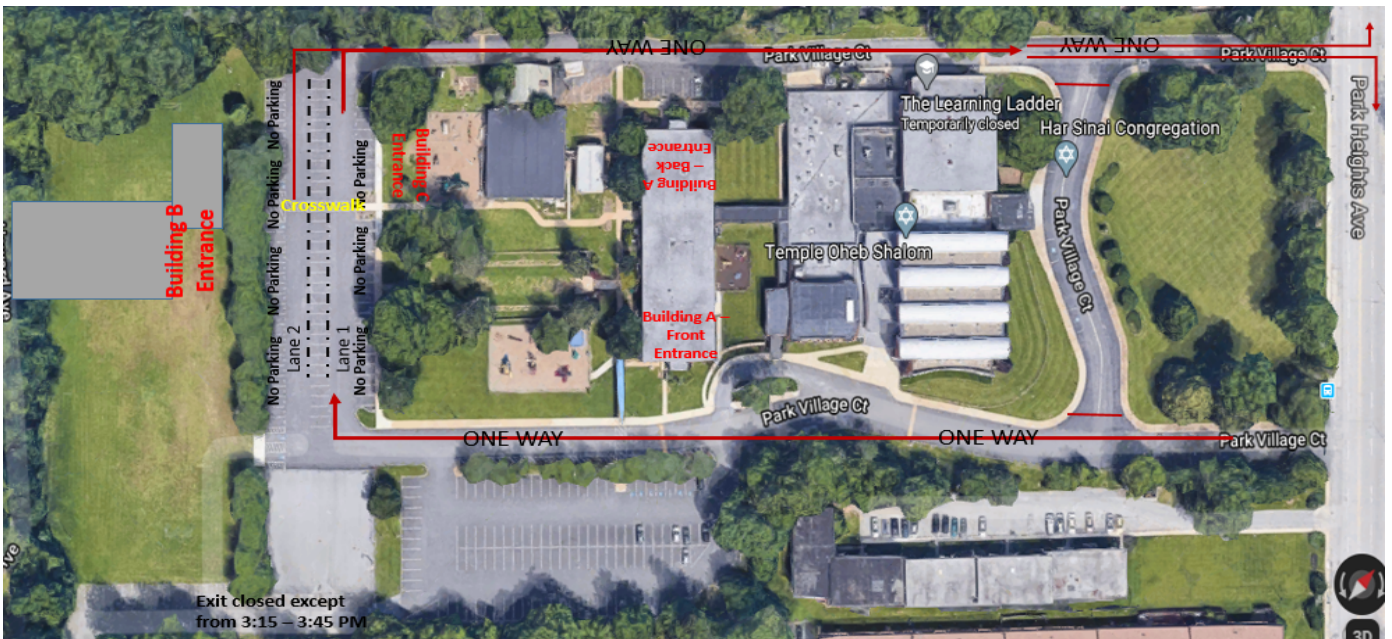
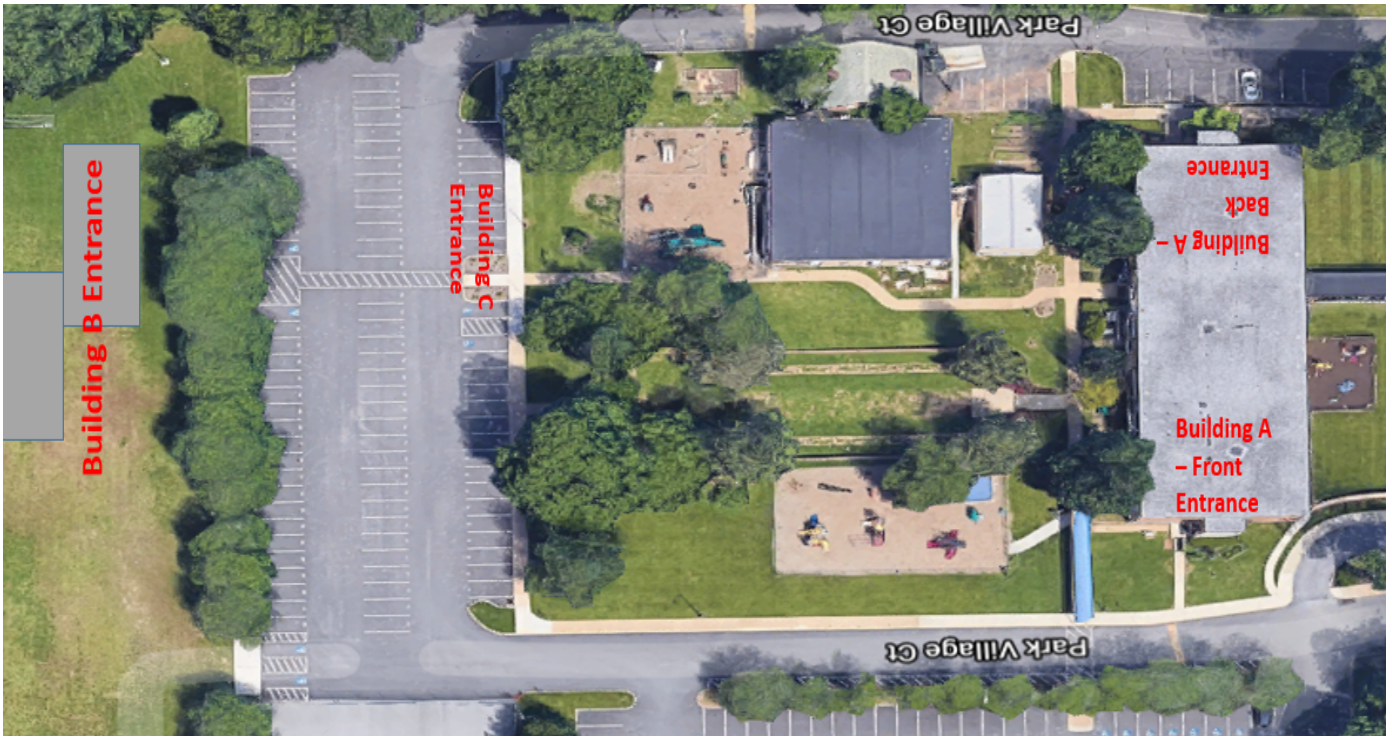
Middle School students should arrive between 8:15 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. proceed directly to their designated davening room to begin *Tefila* at 8:25 a.m. Students will eat breakfast in school after davening.

Drop-off will proceed as follows:

**The driveway around the OCA/Har Sinai/Oheb Shalom property is one-way all day.** When you arrive, pull into the **designated lanes** according to your children's drop-off location.

- Middle School students will be dropped off in the semicircular drive in front of the HSOSC chapel, adjacent to the Building A front entrance.
- Kindergarten, 1st, and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders will be dropped off in front of Building B.
- ECC students will be dropped off in front of Building C (ECC building). If older siblings of ECC students need to go into Building B, they will be walked across the street at the crosswalk once they have been checked in.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders should be dropped off at the back entrance of Building A.





**Late Arrivals**

If a student arrives after 8:30 am, parents are asked to call the office at 410-999-2200 to let the staff know their child has arrived. A staff member will come out to meet him or her. Please wait in your assigned drop-off zone. Stopping, even briefly, at the curb alongside the Learning Ladder drop-off zone to let children out of the car between 8:45 - 9:30 a.m. is not permitted.

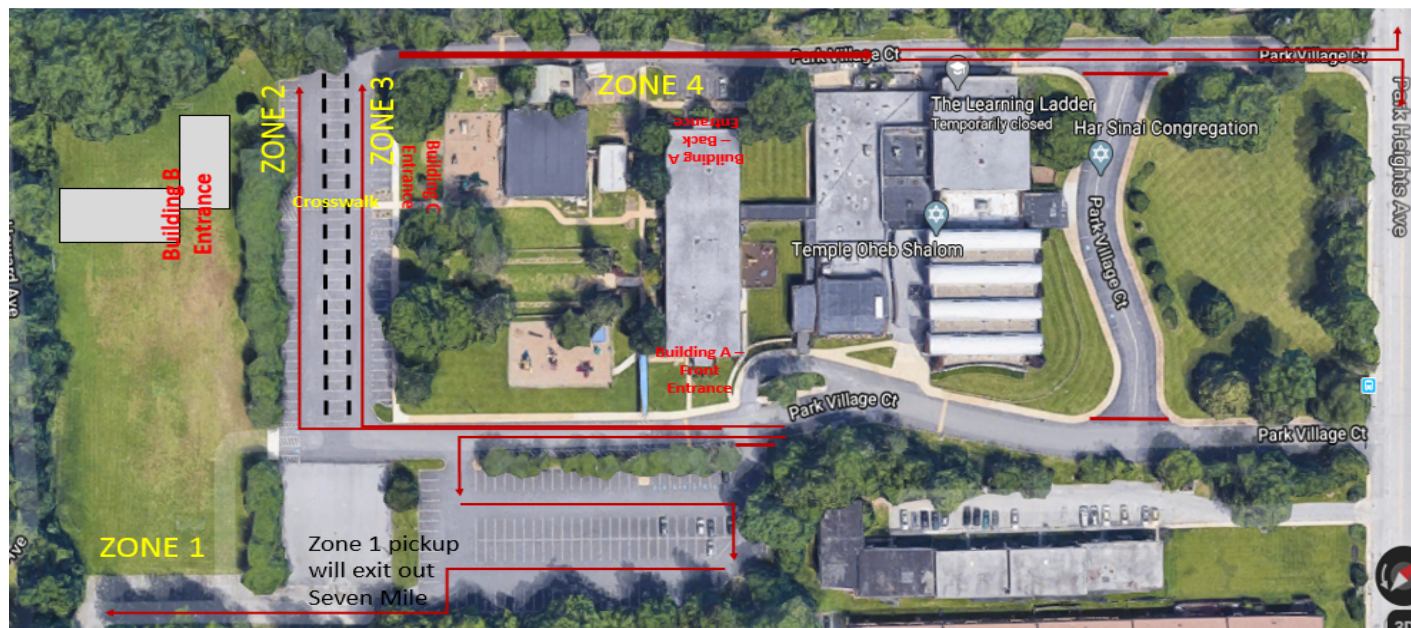
**Dismissal**

All K-5<sup>th</sup> students will be escorted out of the building Monday – Thursday at 3:30 p.m. and at 2:20 p.m. on Friday. Middle school students will be ready for pick-up at 4:35 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 2:20 p.m. on Friday.



Parents will be assigned a **zone** where they should wait for their child(ren). Zones will be assigned depending on which locations your child(ren) is located and if you are picking up children from multiple locations. Vehicles should be parked in a line facing the exit assigned to them. No vehicle should be parked in a parking spot. Parents are requested not to get out of their cars. Children will be directed to your vehicle.

Parents may come to the parking lot as early as 3:20/4:20 p.m. Monday-Thursday or 2:10 p.m. on Friday but parents are required to stay in their vehicle. Daily, except for Fridays, Middle School students will be picked up along the curb in front of the ECC playground. Middle school students who have a younger sibling should go to the younger siblings' zone on Friday and early dismissal days.



The exit onto Park Heights Avenue is two-lane, so drivers turning right should stay to the right-hand side. Drivers turning left should stay to the left-hand side.

We understand that there may be traffic or other unplanned situations that arise. Therefore, we provide a 10-minute grace period. If your child is not picked up by 3:40 p.m. (Elementary School) or 4:45 p.m. (Middle School), your child will wait in the Building A office. Chronic lateness will incur a \$20 fee.

Middle School students who walk or bike home by themselves must have written parental permission to do so on file in the Middle School office.

To avoid communication errors and the emotional distress that can ensue, if your child is to be picked up by an individual other than the parent or other daily carpool driver, even if that individual is listed as approved to pick up the child, the office must receive written notification before we will allow that individual to take your child.

If parents make arrangements with an OCA employee to regularly drive a student home after school, the parents must list the employee as a designated carpool driver and send an email to

[office@ohrchadashbaltimore.org](mailto:office@ohrchadashbaltimore.org) on the days on which the parent requests the employee to drive the student home. This is considered a private arrangement outside of the responsibility of the School.

### ***Custody Agreements***

Divorced parents are responsible for providing OCA a copy of their current custody agreements which will be kept in the Head of School's confidential file.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in school is important for a student's academic and personal growth. Excessive absences disrupt students' learning and prevent the consistency necessary for skill development. Prompt arrival is not only important for the individual student, but it helps to maintain a regular classroom environment and cuts down on distractions for the rest of the students in the class.

### **School Attendance Absence and Lateness**

OCA recognizes that students may miss school due to illness, medical or dental appointments or any other pressing personal commitment. When students return to school following an absence, a parental note or email is required to be submitted to the office. Absences of three or more consecutive days due to illness require a physician's note.

In the case of absence from class that day, teachers will gather the student's assignments and books to be sent home or will leave them in the division office to be picked up by the parent or designee.

In the event of a student's planned absence from school for reasons other than illness, prior arrangements for work must be made with the child's teacher. Regular attendance in school is a prerequisite for scholastic achievement; therefore, family vacations are discouraged when school is in session.

Extended and frequent absences may be cause for investigation and parents will be held accountable under the Maryland Compulsory Attendance Law. Students who miss school for extended periods of time and who do not make up missed work may not be eligible for promotion to the next grade.

### **Make-Up Work**

In the event of a period of absence, a reasonable amount of time to be determined by each teacher involved will be given for the student to make up classwork and home assignments.

In general, the school policy is that missed tests must be made up. However, this might vary if a particular teacher chooses to find other ways of assessing the student's knowledge and understanding.

### **Class Attendance**

Students are expected to be in class on time and are not permitted to leave class without the teacher's permission. Students are not allowed in the halls, in another building, or outside during a scheduled class period without teacher or staff permission. Unexcused absence from or repeated lateness to class will incur disciplinary consequences.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field Trips are a key component of experiential learning. While on these trips, students should keep in mind that they are *b'nai Torah*, representatives of Ohr Chadash Academy and of the Jewish community. They should act and dress appropriately and in accordance with school policies and expectations.

The cost of field trips is included in the student activity fee. Parents are asked to provide permission at the beginning of the year for their children to participate in all field trips. At least one week prior to any given field trip, the teacher will email parents information about when and where the students will be going. If parents have any questions or concerns about any specific field trip, they should contact the teacher directly.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

While we encourage entrepreneurship, students are not permitted to sell anything at school unless vetted by an administrator and the proceeds go to tzedakah as part of a Student Government or chesed project.

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

To provide for the safety and security of employees and the students, only authorized visitors are allowed in the School.

All visitors must report to the main office of the building they are visiting. Upon arrival the visitor must;

- State the reason for the visit,
- Provide a valid driver's license which will be held for the duration of their visit,
- Obtain and wear the provided badge for the duration of the visit,
- Be escorted to the proper destination.

When visitors return their badge to the office and sign out, their driver's licenses will be returned to them.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

OCA's dress code is designed to promote an atmosphere conducive for Torah learning and reflective of OCA's commitment to balancing individuals' need for personal expression and the value of tzniut (personal modesty). Please be aware that good taste and tzniut cannot always be defined in specific terms. The administration therefore reserves the right to determine whether a student's dress is appropriate for OCA's standards.

Students attending school activities after school hours are expected to adhere to the dress code. Clothing that is worn for recreational activities either at school or on trips should also be in keeping with dress appropriate for b'nai and b'not Torah.

Parents and visitors are encouraged to respect the spirit and letter of the dress code when in the school building or when attending school-sponsored events.

## **Shirts:**

Collared polo, oxford or button-down blouses/dress shirts in any **solid** color may be purchased from any store. Shirts may not have writing on them.

- **Girls Grades K-4** and **Boys Grades K-8**, short sleeve,  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeve, or long sleeve shirts are acceptable (not capped sleeves).
- **Girls Grades 5-8** are expected to wear shirts covering their elbows. Long sleeve, solid color shirts may be worn under polo shirts.
- **Boys Grades K-8** must wear tzitzit.

## **School T-Shirts:**

School t-shirts are a great way to show school spirit on special days such as School Spirit Days and may be required to be worn on school field trips. OCA t-shirts are not intended to be worn to school, otherwise. School t-shirts can be purchased from the OCA-PTA in the school office or at PTA events.

## **Sweatshirts, Sweaters and Vests:**

Sweatshirts, sweaters, vests, and light jackets in any color, without words or pictures, are acceptable for wearing indoors. Items may have small logos (less than two inches across), but large branded lettering is not permitted. Optional Ohr Chadash Academy sweatshirts are available from the OCA-PTA. All sweatshirts and sweaters must be worn with dress code-approved collared shirts underneath.

## **GIRLS**

### **SKIRTS/JUMPERS:**

Skirts or jumpers may be purchased from any store as long as they meet dress code standards. A-line skirts (plain or pleated) are required. Straight (pencil) skirts are not dress code appropriate. Skirts and jumpers must fall at least 1" below the knee when standing *and* sitting. Solid color, collared, polo dresses that meet the criteria for length and shape are also acceptable. Appropriate length skirts are available at local stores such as Bedazzled and Bella Bambini, The Robe Man, Lands' End, Three Bows, Kidichic, and Kosher Casual. Approved colors are: Navy, Black, Gray, and Khaki. Denim is not appropriate school attire.

Girls are encouraged to wear bike shorts, leggings, or tights under their skirts, depending on the season. Please note that leggings and tights do not render skirts dress code appropriate if the skirts are too short. Sweatpants are not permitted.

## **BOYS**

### **PANTS:**

Solid color pants may be purchased from any store. Students in **grades K-3** may wear shorts. Students in **grades 4-8** may **not** wear shorts. Denim, sweatpants, and cargo pants are not appropriate school attire. Approved colors are: Navy, Black, Gray, and Khaki.

**OCA maintains a *gemach* of gently worn school clothes. Please call the school office to visit the gemach.**

### **SPECIAL DRESS DAYS:**

On special occasions, such as school trips, Rosh Chodesh, and special assemblies, students may be asked to dress according to a modified or specific dress code. Special days may be designated by the

Administration or by individual teachers for their classroom. On these occasions, students may dress in clothing such as Shabbat clothing that meets or exceeds dress code guidelines.

At other times throughout the year, themed dress-up days may be planned. In advance of those days, parents will receive guidelines as to what their children may wear to school. Costumes or themed clothing must conform to standard guidelines for clothing length.

#### **SHOES:**

Shoes must be worn throughout the day. Due to safety concerns, open-back shoes, wheelies, and crocs are not acceptable in school. Sneakers are required daily for gym and auditorium usage. We encourage parents to provide a spare pair of shoes to leave in school in case their children's shoes get wet or muddy when playing outside.

#### **OUTDOOR CLOTHING:**

Please send your child to school in clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather. Students will typically be outside for recess on days on which the temperature is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Students will also be waiting outside for dismissal and carpool pick-up, so if it is anticipated to be raining, please plan ahead so that your child has appropriate rain gear.

#### **FOOD**

Children may bring dairy, pareve or fleishig to school. If eating fleishig, students will sit at a designated table covered with a tablecloth.

#### **Kashrut**

OCA maintains a high standard of kashrut so that the entire Ohr Chadash community can readily participate in all activities and celebrations. All food brought into the school must have proper rabbinical supervision. An excellent resource can be found at <https://kosherquest.org/kosher-symbols>. Questions about food products should be directed to the Va'ad HaKashrut of Baltimore.

OCA has a **No Nut** policy. Any lunch or snack items that **may contain peanuts or tree nuts** are **not permitted** in school. You may send in snacks that say, "are processed in a facility made with nuts." If there is a question about a product, please call the division office.

#### **Snacks**

School does not provide snacks. Snacks for the morning and the afternoon are provided by parents. Please send in two **nutritional** snacks each day. For safety reasons, no glass bottles will be accepted in school.

#### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are celebrated differently in each grade. When planning an in-school celebration, please follow these guidelines:

- Birthday celebrations must be scheduled with the teacher. Parents should make arrangements with the teacher at least 1 week in advance.
- No home-baked goods are permitted. Snacks must have acceptable kosher certification and adhere to the school's no-nut policy. In addition, please check with the teacher to see if any



children have allergies, eat only *Cholov Yisrael*, or have other dietary restrictions and provide the snacks accordingly. All food must be purchased pre-packaged in individually wrapped portions.

- Birthday parties and bar/bat mitzvah celebrations outside of school should be planned with equal sensitivity to kashrut and the allergy needs of the OCA students invited.
- If planning a birthday party outside of school in which Ohr Chadash classmates and friends are invited, invitations cannot be distributed in school unless all students in the child's class are invited. Additionally, if the majority of the students in the class are invited, the entire class should be invited. This policy is intended to ensure sensitivity to all students and reinforce our vision of Ohr Chadash as a community of inclusion.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

**PLEASE SEE SEPARATE COVID-19 PROTOCOLS FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION.** These protocols are updated regularly as guidance changes.

Keeping your child healthy and safe is important to us. OCA's part-time school nurse, Mrs. Brocha Lawrence, is available to care for students in all three divisions of the school. Her office is located in the Building A office suite.

Children who are not feeling well should not be sent to school. Sick children are not available for learning and germs are shared quickly among children. Your child must be symptom-free without Tylenol or any other fever reducer for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please keep your child home if he/she has:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees F
- Nausea or vomiting
- Heavy nasal discharge or constant cough
- Diarrhea
- Communicable or contagious illness or any untreated parasitic conditions such as lice, pinworms, or scabies
- Lethargy or inability to participate in class activities

If your child is found with lice, you will be contacted to pick up your child. Per Maryland State Department of Education regulations, children are permitted to return to school once appropriate treatment has begun and no live lice are found.

Basic first aid will be given for minor injuries that occur at school. If a child becomes seriously ill or injured at school, parents will be contacted immediately and asked to pick up their child. If the child's parents are not able to be reached, the child's emergency contacts will be contacted. If an emergency arises, OCA administration and staff members will call for emergency support by calling 911 and/or Hatzalah. Parents will be notified after 911 and/or Hatzalah is called and asked to come immediately.

### **Medication**

Maryland State regulations require a physician-signed form for all prescription and over-the-counter medications (including vitamins) to be administered at school, whether by School Staff or self-administered.

In addition, the following regulations apply:

- Medications to be administered at school will be stored in a locked cabinet in the child's division office.
- Each prescription and over-the-counter medication requires its own form to be completed and signed by you and your physician.
- OCA staff is not allowed to administer routine doses of medications (including prescription, over the counter, and vitamins) unless this form is completed allowing them to do so, and is signed by a physician.
- OCA staff will contact parents before administering OTC medication to their child
- All prescription medications must be provided by the student's parent or guardian.

Regardless of the limitations established by this document and without respect to whether a parent or guardian has followed proper procedures for providing emergency medication, the staff of Ohr Chadash will not withhold administration of medication that is properly marked and prescribed for that student, in the event of a possible life-threatening emergency (e.g., asthma inhaler for respiratory emergency; epi-pen or similar prescription in the event of anaphylaxis).

### **Medical Forms**

All medical forms must be completed *before* the first day of school. On these forms, parents must notify the school of any medications their child is taking, whether or not the child takes the medications at school. All forms can be found on ParentLocker.

### **Vaccinations/Immunizations**

All children attending Ohr Chadash need to be up-to-date on their vaccinations. Documentation must be provided before the start of school indicating that vaccinations are current. Maryland State Law requires that all children attending school have their immunization certificates on file at school.

**OCA strongly recommends that all students be vaccinated against influenza early in the fall.**

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **Inclement Weather**

Please send your child to school in clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather. Students will typically be outside for recess on days on which the temperature is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Students will also be waiting outside for dismissal and carpool pick-up, so if it is anticipated to be raining, please plan ahead so that your child has appropriate rain gear.

### **SNOW DAYS and LATE OPENINGS**

If snow, ice, or other weather conditions make driving to school hazardous, Ohr Chadash, Har Sinai/Oheb Shalom, and Learning Ladder will be in communication regarding the conditions of the streets and parking lot. The OCA administration will make the final decision about school closings and late openings. Parents will be notified by email and text of that decision.

### **Emergency Procedures**



Ohr Chadash is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors. Ohr Chadash is housed on shared property, and therefore, security is VERY important. For the safety of all employees and the students, reporting any unsafe or threats to security is everyone's responsibility.

The following are the precautions we employ in order to ensure the safety of Ohr Chadash students:

- All Ohr Chadash faculty and staff must wear an Ohr Chadash badge at all times.
- All Doors to the school building must remain closed and visitors must buzz into the building.
- All visitors must sign in and out at the office and wear a visitor's badge.
- Parents who come to pick up their children early must sign out the student at the front office.
- Students who are to be dismissed early will be brought to the division office. Parents may not pick up their children from the classroom.
- Teachers will not release any students to an unauthorized individual, including a minor sibling, without expressed written consent from a parent.
- A security guard is on-site at all times.

### **Fire/Evacuation Drills**

Ohr Chadash practices evacuation drills in compliance with Baltimore City Fire Department regulations. Evacuation drills will be conducted each month in conjunction with Learning Ladder and Oheb Shalom. Each room has an exit plan displayed. Students are taught appropriate procedures and proper decorum during an evacuation drill exercise by their teachers.

### **Lockdown Drills**

Ohr Chadash has developed protocols for appropriate actions to take in the event of an active shooter on campus. The School practices lockdown drills to prepare faculty, staff, and students in case such an event were ever to occur.

### **No Weapons Policy**

Ohr Chadash prohibits all persons from carrying handguns, firearms, explosives, or prohibited weapons of any kind while on School property or while conducting School business or attending School-sponsored activities that are not on School property. This policy applies to all School employees, contract and temporary personnel, invitees, family members, and visitors. The only exceptions to the policy are police officers and security guards in the line of duty.

School property covered by this policy includes, without limitation, all property owned, leased or under the control of the School, including surrounding and adjacent areas such as sidewalks, walkways, driveways, fields and parking lots. The policy also pertains to any property where the School is conducting its normal business such as field trip sites and at other School-sponsored functions. The School reserves the right to conduct searches of work areas and objects carried into work areas. Employees have no personal claim to privacy with respect to these areas and objects.

Any individual who carries a weapon onto School property in violation of this policy will be immediately removed from the premises.

### **Child Protection Policy**

Ohr Chadash employees are required by Maryland State Law to immediately report suspicion of child abuse or neglect, both orally and in writing, within 48 hours to Child Protective Services (CPS) in the

jurisdiction in which the abuse or neglect occurred. Staff members who have suspicions of child abuse or neglect must follow the chain of command by immediately notifying the School Social Worker and the Head of School. The School Social Worker and the Head of the School will plan and execute the course of action to be in compliance with the OCA Child Protection Policies and Procedures and applicable laws.

## **TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

Technology in all of its forms serves as an important tool for research, writing, and communication. In the Middle School, students are required to sign a technology contract that stipulates the expectations as described below to promote appropriate and safe technology use at OCA.

### **Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices**

The School recognizes that some students need to be able to reach parents during the day; however, students may not use or carry cell phones during school hours. All cell phones must be given to the secretary at the front desk upon arrival and can be retrieved at the end of the day. If students need to call a parent during the day, they may use the office phone. If students are found to be in violation of this policy, students' cell phones will be confiscated and held until retrieved by a parent. Wearable devices, such as an Apple watch, may not be used for phone calls or text messaging. If used in violation of that rule, the Apple watch will be held by the office until retrieved by a parent.

### **Email Address and Account Passwords**

Students will be issued an account with a password. Only the assigned account owner may use his/her own account. Students are responsible for preventing unauthorized use of their own accounts as well as refraining from using someone else's account.

Students in grades 4-8 are issued an Ohr Chadash email address. All email communication between students and teachers must be sent to and from students' school email accounts.

### **Tablets and Chromebooks**

Technology integration is a central component of teaching and learning at Ohr Chadash. Chromebooks are used in class for research, skill practice, communication, and cooperative learning. In kindergarten, students use tablets in the classroom. First through eighth-grade students are assigned Chromebooks to facilitate and enhance in-class learning.

School-issued Chromebooks are enrolled in OCA's G Suite for Education account, and as such, are limited by school policies. Only Ohr Chadash accounts may be used to login to the Chromebooks. Chromebooks are to be used solely during class time or for school-related tasks, in accordance with teacher instructions. They are not to be used during breaks or lunchtime in school, unless to finish or make up assigned work with the approval and under the direct supervision of the student's teacher. When taken home, chromebooks are not for family usage.

Chromebooks must be treated respectfully and carefully to ensure that they are not damaged. Students may pick up their Chromebook from their designated charging cart each morning and returned to the cart for charging at the end of the school day. Each student will have an assigned, labeled slot where his or her Chromebook should be charged. Students whose Chromebooks are not in the assigned slot will be considered as inappropriately handled. Between classes, students do not need to return the

Chromebooks, but may carry them with their other supplies to their next class. Students should not leave their Chromebooks (or other supplies) lying on the tables or desks. If the Chromebooks are not being used during a class or when the students go on break/lunch, the Chromebooks should be safely stored either in the cart or in the students' lockers or in a designated space in the classroom. Parents will be charged the cost of replacing lost or damaged Chromebooks.

Students who do not abide by the school's expectations for proper usage, storage, and handling will be subject to consequences which may include losing access to the Chromebooks indefinitely at the discretion of the administration.

### **Network Security and Safety Features**

Computers may not be used in any way that is detrimental to the normal operation of OCA's network or its users, or the networks of any other organization. Any authorized or unauthorized use in school or out of school of computer software, computer networks, telecommunications devices, information technology, and related technologies, which disrupts or interferes with the educational process in any manner is prohibited and may result in suspension. No software programs of any kind may be downloaded onto school devices. No defamatory, harassing, obscene, or patently offensive materials may be sent, received, or displayed to others. Computers may not be used for cheating of any kind. Unauthorized sending or receiving of copyrighted materials or trademarked materials is prohibited. Any violation of the above rules will result in the loss of computer privileges. Further disciplinary action may also be taken.

Built into the OCA network are multiple filters to protect students from accessing inappropriate or harmful content from any device on our school's network. OCA's IT department has access to all students' account activity and browser history. Additionally, our students' Chromebooks come pre-loaded with filtering, monitoring, and reporting software called GoGuardian. GoGuardian is active in school and remains active if students take their chromebooks home. GoGuardian helps us make sure that students are accessing the internet in a healthy and safe manner; however, this protection is not guaranteed. We will receive an alert if your child visits an inappropriate or concerning site and will follow up to ensure that expectations for safe chromebook use are upheld. As warranted, parents will be informed of their children's internet use and disciplinary action may be taken.

When your child is learning from home, we cannot ensure that he/she is protected from harmful internet browsing. Even with GoGuardian, when students use their chromebooks at home, we recommend that parents monitor their children's online activity to the extent possible. We recommend only permitting your children to use their Chromebooks in a public setting within your home (such as a dining room or living room) with some level of adult supervision. Our IT department may recommend options for internet filters for your home network if parents need assistance.

### **Technology and Social Media Conduct**

We recognize that social networking tools provide students and parents, alike, opportunities to share news and events with each other. However, using these communication tools can have negative consequences. Everything posted online must be considered public and permanent, regardless of privacy settings. Parents should be mindful that whatever they post online about their children becomes part of their children's permanent digital footprint.

Parents are asked to reinforce the message that there are multiple risks of their students posting or sharing photos of themselves with their friends online or through social media. At the very least, those photos may send either intended or unintended messages of social exclusion, especially if unkind words or threats are used with the intent to hurt others. Students' online or social media interactions may negatively impact students' ability to learn in school. Therefore, no student may take, text, or post a photo of another student on social media without the student's consent. As a reminder, most social networking tools do not permit children under 13 years of age to access their sites.

Technology-based conduct, as in-person conduct, must reflect behavior worthy of *b'nai* and *b'not torah* and demonstrate respect for self and others. Conduct which violates expectations of *derech erez* in face-to-face interaction is similarly impermissible in online interactions. If the School has evidence that a student is harassing or bullying another child online or on social media, the administration will take action per the Code of Conduct.

## **HOMEWORK**

The goal of homework is to reinforce developing organizational and executive function skills, provide practice in academic and study skills, and support students' academic achievement. To that end, Elementary School students will have brief nightly homework designed to be purposeful and able to be completed independently in general and Judaic studies. Long-term assignments will also be given throughout the year, broken down into smaller tasks with intermediate due dates. Students are provided with a Homework Planner to write down and keep track of assignments. Parents are asked to sign the planner once the student has completed his or her assignments. If students have difficulty completing an assignment, parents are encouraged to communicate that feedback by writing a note in the planner or by emailing the teacher. Open communication between home and school helps support student learning.

Daily homework for Middle School students will be assigned in all content areas, reflecting the learning that took place in school. As students mature, they develop increased capacity for higher order thought, independence, and self-management. Homework assigned in the Middle School reflects the goal of preparing students for High School. Thus, students will be assigned tasks of increasing challenge and complexity, consistent with what they are learning in school. Middle School students will also work on long-term assignments/projects throughout the year and study for tests and cumulative mid-term and end-of-year final exams.

Middle School parents should access ParentLocker and Middle School students should access Google Classroom to view long-term assignments and homework. An automated email will also be sent out at approximately 4 pm each afternoon with each child's assignments.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

There is a Lost and Found box located in each division office. Please label all items brought to school. The School will attempt to reunite lost items with their owners; however, items left for several weeks will be donated to a local charity.

## **STUDENT/PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS**

Effective communication among parents, students, and school is essential to the success of every child. You can expect to receive ongoing communication from teachers regarding student progress, academic assignments, class activities, and the ways in which parents can be supportive from home.

At Ohr Chadash, we teach students the skills of positive, respectful self-advocacy to equip them with the capacity and confidence to ask for help, raise concerns of their own, suggest new ideas, and to participate in conversations with parents and teachers as agents of their own learning process. As is developmentally appropriate, beginning in the Elementary School, we encourage parents and teachers to include the students, themselves, in all formal meetings. When children express concerns to parents, in keeping with our goal of developing positive self-advocacy in our students, we encourage parents to help support their children in sharing those concerns directly with their teacher or appropriate staff member.

Parent questions and concerns for which students cannot for a variety of reasons be supported in asking themselves should be communicated directly to the appropriate teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Teacher-parent conversations should be the first line of communication when issues arise pertaining to a specific class, with the administration only becoming involved when further support, clarification, or intervention is needed.

In keeping with our intention to maintain a respectful, productive, and mutually supportive professional partnership between parents and the school, we request that questions or concerns about school policy and administrative decisions be directed to the appropriate administrator. Social media is neither an appropriate nor effective forum for resolving issues, nor for understanding policy decisions. Efforts to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive.

Please bear in mind that all communications between parents and administrators, teachers, or staff must be conducted through in-person or phone conversations or email. Text, Whatsapp, Facebook messenger, and other informal social communication tools are inappropriate means of communication with school personnel.

Divorced parents are responsible for providing OCA a copy of their current custody agreements which will be kept in the Head of School's confidential file. Pursuant to Maryland law, all school communications regarding each child will take place with the child's biological and/or adoptive parents only, unless: (1) there is a Court Order that allows the school to communicate with a third party (i.e. custody or guardianship is granted to a third party, or the Court directly permits the school to communicate with a third party); or (2) **both** biological and/or adoptive parents provide written authorization allowing the school to communicate with a specific third party. Third parties may include, but are not limited to, step-parents, grandparents, etc.

Finally, parents should not expect the Board of Trustees to act as an appeals board for school decision-making. Ohr Chadash is fortunate to enjoy a mutually supportive relationship between the Board and Head of School founded on frequent and open communication. Thus, any concerns that parents raise with trustees will be conveyed to the Head of School who holds the responsibility for policy and decision-making.

### **ParentLocker**

OCA uses the ParentLocker.com online platform for COVID-19 screening, attendance, school communications, report cards, and more. For homework and important class notices, please make sure to check ParentLocker daily and read the daily updates emailed each night.



### **Ohr Chadashot**

The school's biweekly newsletter, Ohr Chadashot, provides parents with relevant and timely information written by administrators and teachers. Ohr Chadashot is distributed via email and sent home with the eldest child in each family every other Friday afternoon.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

There will be two scheduled virtual conferences throughout the year. These conferences provide an opportunity to discuss the progress of each student, update parents on their child's skill development and academic performance, and assess the extent to which students are achieving their goals for the year. Parents may also arrange appointments with the teachers at other times to discuss specific problems or concerns.

### **Report Cards**

Three report cards with written comments will be posted each year on ParentLocker. In accordance with OCA's focus on process as much as product, our report cards emphasize students' skill development, engagement, participation, and preparedness, in addition to academic performance (formal and informal assessments, classroom work, long-term projects, and homework).

### **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

Our administration, teachers, and academic support staff are dedicated to providing what each child needs to achieve success. Within the context of both Elementary and Middle School classrooms, Ohr Chadash teachers utilize differentiated instruction to provide the appropriate level of challenge for every student.

Our two Directors of Academic Support facilitate individual students in understanding their learning profile, developing a strength-based approach to tackling academic challenges, and strengthening their academic and organizational skills and academic content knowledge. The directors provide guidance and consultation to classroom teachers to ensure that differentiation, accommodations, and academic and environmental modifications are provided for the instruction of students, as needed. They are also responsible for administering OCA admissions testing, organizing standardized STAR testing, and monitoring student progress.

Additionally, they make referrals to parents for outside testing and tutoring support. After students are evaluated, the student's Academic Support director writes a draft Academic Success Plan which is reviewed and agreed upon in a meeting with the parents (and students in the older elementary and middle school grades) prior to sharing with the classroom teachers. The goals of this collaborative student-centered process are to:

- support the student in developing positive self-awareness as a whole, yet complex, individual with both strengths and areas to work on.
- engage the student in developing positive self-advocacy skills and a set of learning strategies that will work for that particular student in different academic domains.
- empower the student to become a self-directed, growth-oriented, and self-confident student.

When this process is begun at an early age, students feel validated, understood, and better prepared for success.

The academic support staff provides both classroom push-in support and individual and small group Learning Center support. *New for 2021-2022* in our middle school, qualifying students may be exempt from one course in order to be supported by a learning specialist across subject areas in a one-on-one or small group setting. Parents will be charged a fee for the year in addition to tuition based on the number of sessions of support scheduled per week.

When a student's needs cannot be met by the high level of differentiation and collaboration within the classroom, educational services will be provided by learning center specialists, Title I providers, or a member of the SHEMESH staff, Ohr Chadash's community partner. As necessary, outside support services can be provided by Baltimore City Public Schools, private therapy organizations, and/or private tutors. Close collaboration among the School, parents, and service providers is essential for each child's academic and social development. To that end, the Ohr Chadash student support team will coordinate needed services with parents, teachers, and service providers and monitor student progress.

### **ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT**

As an extension of OCA's commitment to differentiated learning, our Elementary School enrichment program is designed to provide students with exposure to higher-level academic content, curricular integration, critical thinking, as well as advanced research and writing skills. Once weekly group enrichment is offered to students whose standardized testing data and classroom performance indicate that they would benefit from deeper and more advanced learning opportunities.

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORT**

Ohr Chadash recognizes that the development of strong, resilient social-emotional skills is the foundation of both academic and social success in school and in life. To that end, we embrace a fully integrated model of social-emotional education and support from the Early Childhood Center through Middle School.

Our two school social workers provide our students with both proactive and responsive social and emotional education, skill development, support, and intervention services. Because social-emotional and academic success is highly intertwined, the team meets regularly with the Directors of Academic Support to formulate and refine plans of support based on individual students' strengths and needs. All students are most successful in internalizing new skills when the contexts in which students live and learn support and reinforce those skills. Within that broader framework, the counseling team provides information, training, support, and modeling for teachers and parents to round out the full range of school-based education and intervention services provided.

The social workers are available to support the Ohr Chadash community predominantly in the areas of intervention and support for individual student needs:

- Classroom-based social-emotional skill instruction
- Short-term individual student counseling and family support
- Parent and teacher education on social-emotional development
- Referrals to outside mental health professionals
- Case management (internal and external) services/supports
- Responsive Behavioral Management
- Teacher support for individual students and challenging classroom behavior
- Creation and facilitation of behavior intervention plans
- De-escalation support for in-the-moment behavioral or emotional issues

- Admissions observations and consultation

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORS**

In the Middle School, each grade has an advisor who mentors and supports students to develop and achieve their educational goals.

- 6th grade advisor - Mrs. Chavi Abramson  
Rabbi Shragi Rothman
- 7th grade advisor - Mrs. Michelle Rakovsky  
Rabbi Shragi Rothman
- 8th grade advisor - Mrs. Michelle Rakovsky  
Rabbi Mordechai Bennett

Working closely with the school counselor, school social worker, teachers, and administration, the advisors stay up-to-date on program changes and look out for the general well-being and growth of each student. Their regular job duties include:

- Meeting with students one on one to set academic goals; teach self-advocacy skills; and develop homework, organization, and study skills
- Running regular (short) advisory sessions
- Gathering teacher feedback on student academic and behavioral progress
- Communicating with parents about concerns regarding student conduct or academic progress
- Advocating for students
- Assisting students in conflict resolution
- Empowering students to make good choices, plan programs, succeed, etc.

## **HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PROCESS**

Preparing for High School is a long-term growth process that becomes an important focus of the eighth grade year. We are proud that our first three classes of eighth-grade graduates are attending a wide variety of high schools and yeshivot according to their and their family's interests and goals. The Middle School Principal assists students and their parents in the high school application process to help each student find the placement that fits him or her best. Beginning in the fall of eighth grade, parents will be invited to attend a high school information session to learn about a number of the high school and yeshiva options available throughout the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. region. Students will receive school-specific information regarding taking the Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE) and any other applicable academic testing and will work with their advisor to prepare for visits to high schools and yeshivot.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

Ohr Chadash strives to provide a safe and engaging learning environment that is based on principles of student involvement and participation, personal responsibility, respect for others, and good citizenship. As Jews, we believe in taking personal responsibility for our actions and recognizing the impact of our actions on others. We teach our students that we take upon ourselves the responsibility for caring for and improving our surroundings, whether those are in our school, our community, our country, or our world. And as a school, we partner with parents to support the development of desired behaviors and reinforce limits and boundaries to enable our students conduct themselves in accordance with Torah



and mitzvot. OCA requires all students to live their lives according to the Torah and following the *Shulchan Aruch*.

### **Each child at Ohr Chadash is a S.T.A.R.**

S - Stays Safe

T - Treasures Torah

A - Aims High

R - Respects oneself and others

### **Students' Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **Students' Rights:**

- **To feel safe** at all times in a school environment that is nurturing, caring and respectful of everyone.
- **To learn** unimpeded by the actions and comments of others.
- **To express themselves** in a way that is respectful and courteous of others.
- **To know** their belongings are safe.
- **To work and play** within a positive and engaging learning environment.

#### **Students' Responsibilities:**

- **To attend** school regularly, on time, ready to learn and take part in school activities.
- **To aim** for the highest standards of behavior in all aspects of school life.
- **To act** with honesty and integrity
- **To cooperate** with classmates, faculty, and staff and accept the authority and rules of conduct of the school.
- **To consider** and respect the feelings and property of other people both in the school and in the wider community.
- **To care** for the grounds, buildings, furniture, equipment and resources provided by the school.
- **To display** the good judgment, behavior, attitude and religious observance that reflects positively (a *Kiddush Hashem*) on the entire school community.
- **To advocate for** him or herself in a positive manner.

### **Protocol for Preventing and Responding to Misbehavior**

The **goals of an effective behavior protocol** are:

1. To maintain a safe, healthy, and productive school environment for students and teachers.
2. To support the development of students' social-emotional and self-regulatory skills.
3. To maximize students' and their classmates' ability to acquire academic knowledge and skills.

The **core concepts** underlying our ability to support students in making appropriate behavioral choices are:

1. Behavior is a form of communication.
2. Behavior has a function.
3. Behavior occurs in patterns.
4. Misbehavior is a symptom of an underlying and unmet need.
5. Behavior can be changed.

OCA's approach to cultivating good citizenship behaviors in our students is a multi-step process.

### **Step 1: Prevention**

Strong teacher-student relationships, safe and appropriately challenging classroom environments, clear communication, and well-defined limits promote positive, prosocial behavior. It will be the responsibility of each classroom teacher to make sure that students learn, practice, and are reminded of the particular routines, rules, and expectations of that classroom, which should always include the expectation that students interact with one another and with the teacher with respect (*derech erez*). In addition, the school social workers will support the development of healthy social dynamics, emotional self-regulation, effective self-expression, and problem-solving skills, among other skills.

### **Step 2: Provide clear expectations for behavior and address the misbehavior privately.**

Teachers will offer support, restatement, and reteaching of expectations privately with calm, quiet, straight-forward reminding or redirecting language, a signal, or by moving closer to the student. Students will be offered a break to calm down, regroup, and start fresh when needed. If needed, the social workers may take a child out and provide assistance resetting the student so that he or she can return to class. If a student cannot settle down within 30 minutes, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child.

**Step 3: Combining natural/logical consequences, guided reflection, and accountability measures** helps children and young adolescents grow into independent, goal-directed individuals capable of making good decisions. Teachers will initially use a natural/logical consequence, keeping it respectful, relevant, realistic and in the moment. Mistakes and their consequences are treated as opportunities for learning. We encourage students to learn from their mistakes and try again.

**Reflective discussions** and **written reflection sheets** are effective tools for helping students learn to make better decisions. When students misbehave, the teacher, grade advisor (Middle School), or administrator works with them to think about the choices they made, how their choices affected themselves and others, and collaboratively develop strategies for signaling for help or solving the problem in a positive and proactive manner. Role modeling may be used as a tool for stimulating reflective thinking.

The teacher or administrator should provide the student with a reflection sheet to complete as part of a reflective, problem-solving conversation. **Reflection sheets are to be signed by the student, the teacher in whose class the student was having difficulty, and then taken home to be signed by the student's parent. The parent will be notified by email or phone call of the incident and the reflection sheet that is coming home. The signed sheets are to be returned to the teacher the next day.**

Students who had difficulty complying with expectations, but within 30 minutes have regained their composure and readiness to learn will be sent back to class.

**Step 4: Provide more proactive, intensive support and consequences if needed or if the behavior continues.** Ongoing disruptive behavior on the part of one student infringes on the rights of other students. The school social worker or another available member of the administrative team will intervene to address the behavior with the student and peers through peer mediation. Staff will utilize techniques from the concepts of restorative justice and *teshuvah* to ensure that the child learns and grows from the experience. Parents will be informed of the event and the actions taken.

**Consequences** have been established for behaviors that are considered detrimental to the good of the school community and/or the educational and social development of our students. In all cases, these guidelines will be applied in accordance with the age and maturity of the child and the nature of the violation. The guidelines are intended to hold the child accountable for his or her behavior, while at the same time engaging the child in the reflective practice of *teshuva*.

For younger Elementary School students, natural consequences include (a) completing work at home if they missed class time, (b) eating lunch in the office, or (c) missing recess if that is when the administrator or social worker provides their intervention.

For older Elementary and Middle School students, disruptive behavior, verbally aggressive or confrontational behavior, failure to follow the instructions of a teacher or staff member, and other breaches of school rules are grounds for **lunch detention**. Multiple lunch detentions for the same infraction or a more significant infraction may warrant an **all-day in-school detention** (Middle School only). As a part of these detentions, the student will complete a reflection sheet and meet with an administrator to engage in a reflective discussion about the behavior for which the student has received that detention.

The principal will email the student and the student's parents to inform them of the detention the day before and the reason for the detention. Records are maintained to track the number of lunch detentions each student receives and the reasons for which the detentions were assigned.

If a student displays physical aggression towards a student or teacher, inflicts or attempts to inflict physical harm on another student or teacher, or otherwise threatens the safety of the classroom environment, an administrator or a social worker will be called to remove the student from the classroom. The parents will be notified to pick up their child and meet with the administration to plan and initiate an intervention strategy before the student is permitted to return to school.

In kindergarteners, physical aggression is addressed differently than in older children because they are developmentally still acquiring the ability to self-regulate and verbalize their needs. If a child hits another student, the social worker or administrator will support the child in reflecting on his or her behavior. If the child is calm, can talk about the incident, and is ready to start over, the child will be returned to class. If the child continues to struggle or if there is a second incident the same day, the parents will be notified to pick up the child. Choking will result in the child being sent home; similarly, engaging in a physical fight will lead to both children being sent home. If a pattern of aggressive behavior or language is observed, the child's parents will need to meet with the team to discuss potential interventions.

Persistent misbehavior signals that a student has underlying needs that need to be addressed through evaluation, support, and intervention. OCA takes a team approach to supporting the needs of the whole child. The Head of School, principal, social worker, academic support staff, and teachers collaborate with the student's parents to assess potential contributing factors and determine appropriate evaluations and therapeutic or academic support or intervention.

In the occasional circumstance in which a student's behavior warrants a mental health evaluation before returning to school, a child may be out for a longer period of time. During the student's absence,

teachers are asked to send work home so that the student can keep up with the academic expectations from home. Regardless of the length of time at home, when students return to school, they and their parents need to meet with an administrator to restate expectations for positive behavior and appropriate coping strategies prior to going to class.

### **Step 6: Determining whether the school can effectively meet a student's needs**

OCA will make every effort to find solutions to address students' misbehavior through a collaborative effort as appropriate amongst the teachers, social workers, academic support staff, administration, and any outside professionals who may be involved with the student.

Depending on the severity of the violation, and after all appropriate means to address the behavior, including counseling, have been exhausted, the Head of School has the right to suspend or dismiss the student pursuant to the following criteria, as approved by the Board of Directors and upon consultation with the student's teachers:

- Continued and willful disobedience or open defiance of any authority figure employed by the school;
- Theft or removal of another student's or a staff member's personal property, whether through force or by intimidation;
- Chronic refusal to adhere to the dress code or other rules of the School;
- Repeated use of profanity or obscenities;
- Causing damage to school property or the personal property of others;
- Bullying, hazing, or demeaning someone;
- Physical assault of or injury to another individual;
- Endangering the physical or moral well-being of other students and/or staff;
- Sexual or other harassment;
- Carrying a weapon;
- Possession or consumption of alcohol, a controlled dangerous substance, or drug paraphernalia on school premises, or being under the influence of such substances on school premises.

In cases not covered by this handbook, the Head of School will render the final decision.

### **Harassment & Bullying**

All students have the right to be safe from the fear of physical or verbal harm from their classmates. Harassment of any kind, even in jest, will not be tolerated.

Bullying is defined as the actions of an individual or group who, through repeated and intentional verbal, non-verbal, and physical means, hurt, harm, or intimidate another individual or group with the intention to exclude, humiliate, embarrass, control, dominate, or assert power over that individual or group. Bullying has no place in a safe school and does not align with Torah values, *derech eretz*, and the Ohr Chadash mission of promoting the social-emotional welfare of all students. Bullying behaviors are unacceptable and will not be tolerated irrespective of where they occur, including: all school facilities and grounds, school-sponsored events on and off campus, field trips, school and personal email, texting, and social media.

Specific behaviors that may constitute harassment and/or bullying include:

- Any person deliberately and repeatedly hurting or frightening another person.
- Impeding a student's ability to carry out expected activities in school by hiding or taking materials or excluding the student from instructional or non-instructional activities.
- Any movement that blocks another from moving in an appropriate manner.
- Any communication, whether verbal or written, that demeans or humiliates another person. **This specifically includes electronic communications such as email and texts, whether on school-owned or personal devices.**

The following behaviors may constitute sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome touching or other physical contact.
- Pressure for dates or for sexual activity.
- Attempts to "brush up" against someone of the opposite sex.
- Verbal or written comments of a sexual or harassing nature, including graffiti.
- Sexual name-calling, including homophobic references.
- Obscene or inappropriate gestures, jokes, comments, pictures, or leering.
- Blocking movements or stalking.
- Overly personal conversations.
- Teasing about body parts or bodily functions.
- Making fun of the student because of gender.

When an accusation of harassment or bullying is made, a hearing will be conducted by an administrator with both parties, individually, in order to determine whether the allegation constitutes an offense. Upon the discretion of the administrators, parents will be notified and invited to the hearing. A first-time offense will result in consequences up to and possibly including suspension or dismissal from school, depending on the severity of the offense.

### **Substance Use and Abuse**

The following basic principles regarding the use and abuse of addictive substances developed by consensus by Baltimore's Association of Jewish Day Schools on August 5, 2019.

- 1) Our schools recognize the challenges facing our children regarding healthy decision-making and general wellness, specifically regarding drugs and alcohol. In order to provide a proactive response to this growing challenge, the undersigned schools **have committed to launch a program to provide education regarding the dangers of drugs and alcohol.**
- 2) In order to reduce the traditional barriers of stigma and shame surrounding this growing problem, administrators have committed to **acknowledging that addiction is an illness.**
- 3) Further, these schools have committed to responding to students and families who come forward in a responsive, empathetic and supportive manner. If a student (or parent) comes forward in any of our schools and seeks help, **there will be no negative consequences or punitive measures taken.** Rather, our school will commend the student or parent for coming forward and focus on seeking support and assistance in dealing with the student's behavior and potential addiction. OCA's school social worker will help the family access appropriate referrals for mental health and physical health treatment.

4) As random testing has been shown to be both a deterrent to substance use, as well as a support to children who may be struggling with peer pressure, our school **reserves the right to conduct random or targeted drug testing** during the school year.

5) Each of our schools will develop and share **clear and specific guidelines detailing the ramifications for students found to be using (and/or dealing) drugs**.

6) Ramifications for use will include **consequences of first and subsequent offenses of use, and/or distributing illegal materials of any kind**. These guidelines will be shared with the parent and student body as well as the staff of each school. Schools reserve the right to determine, on a case-by-case basis, how to most effectively approach any particular student and family.

7) In order to provide the highest level of cohesion and consistency to our children, our schools agree that there will be **full disclosure to each other if a student leaves or is asked to leave his or her school due to substance abuse**, reflecting a community-wide effort to ensure that students receive the assistance they need. This is necessary to ensure that students receive the highest level of care, regardless of which school they attend.

### **Searches**

School personnel may search the students, their lockers, personal property, school email, and network/internet history, based on reasonable suspicion. Although Ohr Chadash does not regularly monitor student email, we reserve the right to review email for appropriate usage and behavior, and to intercept, store, archive, or delete any emails for security/audit purposes and, where necessary, instigate appropriate proceedings against the parties involved.

### **Academic Excellence and Integrity**

The Talmud teaches us that G-d's "seal" is *emet* - truth - and we are enjoined to stay far away from any falsehood. Honesty in all of our affairs is an extremely important human quality that serves as the basis for all of our relationships. In an academic setting, honesty goes to the core of what we present as evidence of our learning and thinking. At Ohr Chadash Academy, we cherish the concept of honesty and insist that it pervades school life, both in academic work and in interpersonal relationships.

Plagiarism or cheating on classwork, homework, tests, projects, or papers means passing off someone else's knowledge and effort as your own. It has no place in any academic setting, particularly a religious one. Cheating undermines the trust between students and teachers and affects the overall learning atmosphere.

Because we are an educational institution, we teach our students the skills required for writing papers, taking tests, and completing assignments. If any student has questions about whether a particular action does or does not qualify as cheating or plagiarism, he or she must ask a teacher in advance to avoid any appearance of impropriety. If a student or parent is unclear about how to appropriately use source materials, it is the obligation of the student to ask his or her teacher for clarification. Likewise, if a student is struggling to complete any assignments, he or she is expected to ask their teacher for assistance.

Each teacher has the responsibility to investigate, in partnership with the administration, whether a student has cheated. Students found cheating may be placed on disciplinary probation at the discretion of the Administration and will be subject to the following disciplinary actions.



Following a **first offense**:

- The incident will be reported to the administration.
- The administration will discuss the violation with the student and instruct the student to inform his or her parents of the violation that evening.
- The student's parents will be notified by the school the following day, after the student has had the opportunity to speak to his or her parents.
- The student will receive a zero for the work.
- A temporary note will be attached to the student's report card to be removed upon graduation from Ohr Chadash on the condition that no further cheating incidents occur.

After a **second offense**, not necessarily during the same year, in addition to all of the above consequences, the incident will become part of the student's permanent record, the student will be suspended from school, and may be subject to further disciplinary measures. Further cheating offenses will result in the student's expulsion.