



**Elementary and Middle School
Student-Parent Handbook
2019-2020
5779-5780**

Table of Contents

OCA Mission Statement	3
Halachic Questions	3
Introduction	4
School Information	5
Policies and Procedures	6
Arrival and Dismissal	6
Attendance	6
Field Trips/Special Events.....	7
Student Dress Code.....	7
Food.....	9
Birthday Celebrations.....	10
Health and Wellness.....	10
Safety.....	11
Technology	12
Homework.....	14
Lost and Found	14
Parent Involvement	14
Student/Parent/Teacher Communication	15
Report Cards	16
Middle School Advisors	16
Academic Support	16
Social-Emotional Education and Support	16
Code of Conduct and Discipline	17

WELCOME TO OHR CHADASH ACADEMY

OCA Mission Statement

Ohr Chadash Academy empowers students to develop *Yirat Shamayim*, refined *middot* and a lifelong love of learning to support them as they grow into confident, competent and creative contributors to the Jewish community and society at large.

Educational Environment: Our highly motivating, Torah-driven curriculum emphasizes the inherent *kedusha* of both Judaic and general studies. We ensure that each individual student accesses a carefully designed, experiential and sophisticated learning process leading to mastery of skills and concepts. We seek to instill an appreciation for and commitment to a life of Torah, *Mitzvot* and productivity.

Community: We provide a respectful, vibrant and secure atmosphere through the professionalism of our teaching staff with the collaboration of our families and administration. We cultivate and nurture relationships in our school community and actively encourage students to benefit from the world and contribute to its development. We emphasize the central role of *Ahavat HaBriot* and love of each and every Jew.

Israel: Our school extends beyond Baltimore to all of *Klal Yisrael*. We explore and foster deep and personal relationships with *Am, Eretz* and *Medinat Yisrael* through study of and connection to culture, history and Hebrew language. We believe in the religious significance of the modern State of Israel and incorporate programming to celebrate and commemorate noteworthy events.

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 2019-2020 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. At Ohr Chadash, learning is as fun as it is challenging. Our goal is to enable our students to develop their cognitive, academic, and social-emotional skills within a supportive, reflective, and respectful environment that embraces the *kedusha* (holiness) inherent in both general and Judaic studies.

The vision upon which Ohr Chadash was founded, Community, Individuality, and Excellence, is exemplified in every aspect of our school life. First, 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. Second, 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. Third, we aim to achieve excellence in everything we do. As educators, we view excellence as more than an outcome. Excellence is also a cultural standard that guides the ongoing process in which we are engaged to achieve that outcome. In every interaction among faculty, students, and parents, we are focused on mission- and Torah-driven best practices.

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 and the subsequent revisions that will be shared with you throughout the year. To achieve success as a school, parents must embrace its mission, share its values, and support the faculty and staff. 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 growth and renewal, building and rebuilding of our very special Ohr Chadash community.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Rapoport
Interim Head of School

Mel Pachino
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Address: Ohr Chadash Academy of Baltimore
7310 Park Heights Ave
Baltimore, MD 21208
Website: www.ohrchadashbaltimore.org
Phone: 410-999-2200

ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE STAFF

Administration

Mrs. Deborah Rapoport	Interim Head of School
Mrs. Randi Orshan	General Studies Principal
Rabbi Evan Weiner	Judaic Studies Principal
Rabbi Moshe Margolese	Director of Institutional Advancement and Admissions
Ms. Nechama Schwartz	Director of Academic Support, K-3
Mrs. Rena Einbinder	Director of Academic Support, 4-8
Ms. Jennifer Naiman	School Counselor
Mrs. Leah Malka Pasch	School Social Worker

Office Staff

Mrs. Rachel Lasson	Office Administrator
Mrs. Devora Cohen	Controller
Mrs. Goldie Milner	Administrative Assistant
Ms. Shira Paffrath	Administrative Assistant
Ms. Yehudis Taffel	IT Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Board Officers

Mel Pachino - President
Lanie Carter - 1st Vice President
Josh Erez - 2nd Vice President
David Reidy - Treasurer
Pam Lehmann - Secretary
Terri Rosen - Immediate Past President
Holly VanderWalde - Member at large

Committee Chairs

Jacob Blumenfeld - Development
Lanie Carter - Marketing
Josh Erez - Facilities
Pam Lehmann - Governance
David Reidy - Finance

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Lauren Schleifer	Co-President
Mrs. Michelle Rakovsky	Co-President

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 established traffic flow patterns. Our security guards oversee morning and afternoon carpool to insure that drivers adhere to safety guidelines. Drivers who drop off their children at the Elementary School building are asked not to park in the crosswalk or double-park because doing so not only impacts other Ohr Chadash parents, but Learning Ladder parents, as well. **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-6th grade students are expected to arrive between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. and go immediately to their morning classroom. Sixth grade students should be ready to begin *Tefila* by 8:30 a.m.

Seventh & eighth grade students should arrive between 8:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. and go directly to the Beit Midrash to begin *Tefila* at 8:25 a.m.

Late Arrivals

All students are expected to be in class on time every school day. **Students who arrive at school after 8:30 a.m. must be accompanied by a parent and escorted to the division office to be signed in. No student will be admitted without an adult signing him/her into school.**

Dismissal

All K-5th students will be escorted downstairs Monday – Thursday at 3:30 p.m. and at 2:20 p.m. on Friday. Middle school dismissal will be at 4:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 2:20 p.m. on Friday. Parents will be assigned a carpool spot number where they should wait for their child/children. Children will be directed to their spots. You may come to the parking lot as early as 3:20/4:20 p.m. Monday-Thursday or 2:10 p.m. on Friday. 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 4:40 p.m. (Middle School), we will send your child to our Stay and Play program. Each *parent will be assessed a \$20 per child, per hour fee, which is the drop-in rate. Stay and Play pick up is at 4:30 p.m. for the first hour and 5:30 p.m. for the second hour. You will be charged whether you leave your child for the full hour or pick them up prior to 4:30 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. On Fridays or early dismissal days, you will be charged \$20 per child after 2:30 p.m.

*If your family is in a carpool, the carpool driver will be responsible for the Stay and Play fee.

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

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, such as family *smachot*, or G-d forbid, family losses. 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 absence 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 class work 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/SPECIAL EVENTS

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 DRESS CODE

A person's appearance impacts one's self-image and simultaneously projects respect for Torah and *Derech Eretz*. The dress code contributes in large measure to the atmosphere in our school, reflecting OCA's commitment to finding the balance between an individual's 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. For **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** should 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 and are recommended on School Spirit Days (every Rosh Chodesh) and other special days. School t-shirts are required on all school field trips. School t-shirts can be purchased from the OCA-PTA in the school office or at PTA events.

Sweatshirts, Sweaters and Vests:

Solid color sweatshirts, sweaters, and vests, in any color, without words on the front or back may be worn. They may be purchased in any store. Optional embroidered Ohr Chadash Academy sweatshirts are available from the OCA-PTA. All sweatshirts and sweaters must be worn with the proper uniform shirt underneath.

Girls:

Skirts/Jumpers:

Uniform skirts or jumpers may be purchased from any store as long as they meet dress code standards. Plain or pleated A-line skirts are required. Straight skirts are not dress code appropriate. Skirts and jumpers must be 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. Denim is not appropriate school attire. Local stores such as Basic Colors, Old Navy, Children's Place, and Target carry many styles that are appropriate. The Robe Man often carries appropriate skirts as well. Approved colors are:

- Navy
- Black
- Gray
- Khaki

Girls are encouraged to wear bike shorts, leggings, or tights under their skirts, depending on the season. Please note that wearing leggings or tights does 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 choose to 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
- Khaki

Boys must wear a **kippah** at all times.

OCA has a uniform gemach located at the Gonsher home. Please call 410-484-0208 for hours/location.

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 that meets or exceeds dress code guidelines.

Shoes:

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.

Hair:

Students may not come to school with hair dyed in unnatural colors. For the Purim carnival, only, students may use temporary hair dye if part of their costume.

Piercings:

Earrings are permitted for girls only.

Dress Code Infractions

Our dress code is designed to maintain students' and teachers' focus on learning, rather than on what students are wearing. When students are out of dress code in school, however, as is the case whenever students' actions breach the rules and expectations of the school, we must work with them to return to compliance without removing a student from class, embarrassing the student, or engaging in a power struggle. Students experience growth spurts which may, within a short period of time, cause them to outgrow their clothes. We encourage parents to prepare for that inevitability by purchasing clothing their children can grow into.

In the Elementary School, when students are observed out of dress code, their parents will receive an email from the school (ESdresscode@ohrchadashbaltimore.org) informing them of the infraction and requesting that the student return to compliance the next day. If a student has been observed out of dress code three times in one year, the school will call the parent to follow up.

In the Middle School, when students are observed out of dress code, they may be asked to change into dress code-appropriate clothing, if they or we have a suitable item available. The student and parent will receive an email from MSdresscode@ohrchadashbaltimore.org informing them of the infraction and requesting that the student return to compliance the next day. If a student has been observed out of dress code three times in one year, the school will call the parent to follow up.

FOOD

Children may bring dairy, pareve or fleishig to school. If eating fleishig, a tray will be provided.

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 is a **nut-free** school. This includes any snack items that **may contain** peanuts or tree nuts. 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 a classroom specific event (i.e. birthday party), 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 nut-free 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.
- We promote healthy habits at OCA, so please bear that in mind when bringing in birthday treats for the class.
- If planning a birthday party 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. 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

Keeping your child healthy and safe is important to us. 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

The school will have lice checks throughout the year, beginning with the first day of school. 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.

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 (i.e., 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. If there are reasons as to why vaccinations are not up-to-date, proper documentation needs to be provided to the school with a date as to when vaccinations will be given. Maryland State Law requires that all children attending school have their immunization certificates on file at school.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Inclement Weather

Oheb Shalom, Learning Ladder, and Ohr Chadash will all be in communication regarding the conditions of the streets and parking lot in bad weather. The administration will make the final decision about school closings and late openings. Parents will be notified by email and text of any delays.

Emergency Text Alerts

In order for you to receive emergency text alerts (for school closings, etc.) on your cell phone from Ohr Chadash, please opt in by **texting "OCA" to 292929**.

Emergency Procedures

Ohr Chadash is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors. Ohr Chadash is housed in a public building, and therefore, security is VERY important. 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.
- The 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.
- A security guard is on site at all times.

Fire Safety/Emergency Drills

Ohr Chadash practices fire drills in compliance with Baltimore City Fire Department regulations. Fire 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 a fire drill exercise by their teachers.

Child Abuse Policy

Ohr Chadash employees are mandated reporters per Maryland State Law. Any suspicions of child abuse or child neglect will be reported to the Baltimore City/County Child Protective Services (CPS).

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

Students may not use or carry cell phones during school hours. All cell phones must be given to the administrative assistant 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.

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 are also 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

Computers may only be used for instructional use for classes and research. In kindergarten through third grade, students use tablets in the classroom. Fourth through eighth-grade students are assigned Chromebooks to facilitate and enhance in-class learning. Chromebooks are to be used solely during class time, in accordance with teacher instructions. They are not to be used during breaks or lunch time, unless to finish or make up assigned work with the approval and under the direct supervision of the student's teacher.

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 Chromebooks their children lose or break.

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.

Computer Lab

OCA maintains a computer lab that is used to extend classroom learning, teach keyboarding, and provide choice time (elective) opportunities for students to learn coding, app building, or electronic music, depending on student interest.

Because of the importance of students spending time interacting face to face with other students, the computer lab is not available for student use during breaks and/or lunch, unless given written permission by a teacher/administrator and supervised by a teacher.

Use of Technology and Social Networking Tools

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 loss of computer privileges. Further disciplinary action may also be taken.

Teachers use a monitoring system called GoGuardian to oversee and control students' Chromebook activity during class time. 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. Additionally, our IT department has access to all students' account activity and browser history.

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.

Children, themselves, are now recognizing that social media plays a large role in generating social anxiety. As partners in the education of our students, we ask parents to reinforce the message that posting photos of themselves with their friends carries multiple risks. At the very least, those photos potentially send either intended or unintended messages of social exclusion, especially if unkind words or threats are used with the intent to hurt others. Therefore, no student may take, text, or post a photo of another student on social media without the student's consent. We ask parents to adhere to the same guidelines. 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.

HOMEWORK

Homework will be given on an as needed basis for students in grades K-5. The purpose of homework is to reinforce developing academic skills. Elementary students have nightly reading and kria. They may also have studying or long-term assignments/projects that are given throughout the year. When an individual child needs extra practice in a specific content area, the teacher will provide extra practice for homework. That extra practice should be purposeful, engaging, and something the child is able to complete independently. Teachers will notify the parents that they are sending that home with the child.

Middle school students will receive homework as deemed necessary by their teachers. The goal of homework in the Middle School is to support students' academic achievement and to provide practice in study skills. Homework should be relevant to the content area(s) and to the individual student and should reflect the learning that took place in school. The flipped classroom model is often used as a homework method in which students will be assigned to read or watch a video about a particular subject the night before and then engage in activities based on the reading or video the next school day. Middle School students will also be assigned long-term assignments/projects throughout the year and tests and cumulative end-of-year final exams for which they will need to study.

Parents and students are encouraged to use ParentLocker to view long-term assignments and homework. An automated email will also be sent out nightly with each child's assignments.

LOST AND FOUND

There is a Lost and Found box located outside of each division office. Please label all items brought to school. Items left for several weeks will be donated to a local charity.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT - 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. 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
- Shavuout 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.

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, class projects, 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 interaction 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 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 that is 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.

Ohr Chadash/ParentLocker

For homework and important class notices, please make sure to check ParentLocker daily and read the nightly emailed updates.

The school's biweekly newsletter provides parents relevant and timely information written by administrators, teachers, and students.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

There will be three scheduled conferences throughout the year, two of which in the Middle School division are student-led conferences. 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

Two report cards with written comments will be posted each year on ParentLocker. Report cards reflect students' test grades, classroom work, long-term projects, and homework with points for participation and preparedness.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORS

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

- Running regular (short) advisory sessions
- Communicating with parents and administration about student conduct
- Communicating with parents to praise students
- Advocating for students
- Resolving conflicts between students
- Building positive relationships with students
- Empowering students to make good choices, plan programs, succeed, etc.
- Regularly being present with, or available to, students during lunch and break times
- Attending and sitting with students at assemblies
- Helping kids get to class on time
- Ensuring the cleanliness and organization of the locker area

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. Academic support staff 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.

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 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 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.

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 school counseling team, comprised of school social worker and school counselor, provides our students with both proactive and responsive social and emotional education, skill development, support, and intervention services. Because social-emotional and academic success are 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 school counselor is available to support the Ohr Chadash community predominantly in the areas of proactive social-emotional skill development:

- Classroom-based social-emotional skill instruction aligned with the academic curriculum
- Prosocial small student groups (e.g., Lunch Bunch, Bucket Filling Program, etc.)
- Team-building parent/child events: (e.g., Girl's Night Out, Boys' Night Out)
- Parent and teacher education on social emotional development
- Counselor Corner and Kids' Corner in *Ohr Chadash*
- Special emphasis days (e.g., Career Day, Everyone Counts Day, etc.)
- School-wide programming (e.g., Safety Kid Training, Giving Back Project, Talent Show, etc.)
- Student leadership training (e.g., Morning Announcements, Student Government)

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

- Short-term individual student counseling and family support
- Case management (internal and external) services/supports
- Responsive Behavioral Management
- Teacher support for individual student 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

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE *[Note: THIS SECTION IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION]*

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.

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

Student's 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.

Disciplinary Policy

The disciplinary policy of Ohr Chadash Academy combines opportunities for personal growth, reflection, and development of self-regulatory skills in tandem with natural consequences. 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 this section we have attempted to cover many important areas of school life in relation to Halacha; however, new areas and issues are always arising. In cases not covered by this handbook, the Administration will render the final decision.

Clear communication and clearly defined limits promote acceptable behavior. To this end, the administration, staff, and students of Ohr Chadash Academy agree to accept the guidelines for student conduct on school property with the attendant regulations and procedures which constitute the school's disciplinary policy. In all cases, these guidelines will be appropriate to the age level and maturity of the child and commensurate with the nature of the violation. Additionally, 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*.

It will be the responsibility of each classroom teacher to make sure that students know, from the beginning of school, 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. In addition, the school counselor, through classroom and group-based social-emotional skills lessons, will teach and reinforce healthy social dynamics, emotional self-regulation, team building, and problem solving skills, among many others.

Ongoing disruptive behavior on the part of one student infringes on the rights of other students. Students who display aggressive verbal or physical behavior that cannot easily be redirected or corrected by the classroom teacher and is disruptive to the classroom learning environment will be sent to the office or removed from the classroom. The school social worker or another available member of the administrative team will intervene to address the behavior. When the student is calm, he or she will be asked to complete a reflection sheet as the basis for talking about the precipitating event and the manner in which the student responded to it. The administration will impose appropriate natural and developmentally-appropriate consequences and, in

conjunction with a member of the counseling team, will utilize techniques from the concepts of restorative justice and *teshuva* to ensure that the child learns and grows from the experience. Parents will be informed of the event and the actions taken.

Ohr Chadash will make every effort to find solutions to address students' misbehavior through a collaborative effort as warranted amongst the teachers, counseling staff, 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 expel a 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;
- 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.

Harassment & Bullying

We believe that 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.**

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 a 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 expulsion, 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 the 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.

Ohr Chadash Academy admits students of the Jewish faith. Ohr Chadash Academy admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, employment, admissions policies, scholarship, or athletic or other school-administered programs. Children applying to Ohr Chadash Academy must be of the Jewish faith. Appropriate developmental, emotional, and educational benchmarks are expected. Ohr Chadash Academy accepts children with special needs, but they are reviewed on an individual basis to determine if our school is equipped to handle their learning disability or exceptionality. Ohr Chadash Academy endeavors to educate and develop well-adjusted, wholesome, happy young people in the path of Torah, complimented by an excellent General Studies education.