



**Early Childhood Center  
Parent Handbook  
2019-2020  
5779 -5780**

# Table of Contents

<b>OCA Mission Statement</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Halachic Questions</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>School Information</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>ECC Vision/Mission</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Curriculum</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Approach to Social Emotional Learning/Behavior Guidance</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Arrival and Dismissal Procedures</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Health and Illness</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Attendance</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Student Dress Code</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Field Trips/Special Events</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Toys</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Lost and Found</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Inclement Weather</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Safety</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Food</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Parent Involvement</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Student Dress Code</b> .....	<b>17</b>

## WELCOME TO OHR CHADASH ACADEMY

### **Mission Statement**

*Ohr Chadash Academy (OCA) 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 learning process. 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.

Dear OCA 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 OCA was founded, Community, Individuality, and Excellence, is exemplified in every aspect of our school life. First, OCA 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 OCA 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 OCA 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](http://www.ohrchadashbaltimore.org)

**Phone:** 410-316-9056 ECC office  
410-999-2200 OCA main office

## **ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICE STAFF**

### Administration

Mrs. Deborah Rapoport	Head of School
Mrs. Leah Golfeyz	Early Childhood Center Director
Mrs. Tzippy Levin	Assistant Early Childhood Center Director
Mrs. Leah Malka Pasch	School Social Worker
Rabbi Moshe Margolese	Director of Institutional Advancement and Admissions

### Office Staff

Mrs. Rachel Lasson	Office Administrator
Mrs. Devora Cohen	Controller

## **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

## **ECC VISION/MISSION**

The mission of the Ohr Chadash Early Childhood Center (ECC) is to support the individual development of each child through a Torah-driven, developmentally appropriate, child-directed approach. Attentive to each individual child's different abilities, interests, and needs, we use a variety of multisensory teaching tools and materials to ensure that our environment is stimulating and relevant to the growth and potential of each child. Our classrooms are equipped with centers and materials that encourage open-ended exploration within an integrated Judaic and general studies curriculum. Embracing empirically based teaching strategies and experiential learning opportunities, our program supports children's growth through play and small/large group activities. Through all of this, the Early Childhood Center accomplishes Ohr Chadash commitment to Community, Individuality, and Excellence.

## **CURRICULUM**

Research-based methods are at the heart of informing our everyday practice of our curriculum. Using the Objectives for Development and Learning from *Teaching Strategies, Creative Curriculum for Preschool* (a Maryland State Department of Education-approved curriculum), our curriculum provides for all main areas of a child's development: social-emotional development, cognitive development, language development, and physical development. In addition to following the objectives of the Creative Curriculum, our early literacy and numeracy curriculum follows the State of Maryland Oral Language and Pre-Kindergarten College and Career-Ready Standards.

Children learn primarily through play and through nurturing and authentic relationships with caring adults. There is a common misconception that play and learning are two separate experiences for children. According to the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC), play provides the context in which children learn naturally.

Through play, children learn and develop:

- cognitive skills – rotating and building objects, making comparisons and identifying differences, making decisions in a pretend grocery store
- physical abilities – building with blocks, balancing, manipulating objects with fine motor and gross motor movements
- language– acquiring the specific vocabulary to express their feelings or ideas while playing with toys
- social skills – playing together in a pretend car wash, taking turns, problem solving
- literacy skills – creating a menu for a pretend restaurant, listening to sounds, segmenting words through rhythm and rhyme

At OCA, we embrace an integrated approach to teaching Judaics and general studies. Our curriculum provides opportunities for the children to engage in parsha (weekly Torah portion) and chaggim (holiday) activities through STEAMm (Science, technology\*, engineering, art, math, and mindfulness). Included in the arts are expressive/language arts, visual arts, and dramatic arts (imaginary play), which together foster the development of oral language skills as a foundation for early literacy or prereading skills. (\*Exposure to technology is limited in order to focus on providing opportunities for hands-on exploration.)

Our visual arts curriculum emphasizes the process of creating artwork, rather than on the creation of a uniform end-product. Process art is open-ended and is based on the child's own discovery and exploration. When the focus is on the journey itself, children are stimulated to develop creativity, confidence, language and literacy skills, while concurrently developing fine and gross motor skills. With a few exceptions for a specific theme or holiday craft in which the goal is to create a content teaching tool, OCA's process-oriented artwork focuses on the following objectives:

- There are no step-by-step instructions or sample for the children to follow; There is no right or wrong way to create art.
- The art is focused on the experience and on exploration of techniques, tools, and materials, as opposed to the appearance of what the end-product looks like. Therefore, each child's art is unique and original.
- The art is entirely the children's own, driven by a child's choice to engage in art; it is a relaxing, enjoyable, and/or calming experience.

In addition, beloved features of OCA's ECC program include:

- **Moving and Grooving:** Jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping, balancing, and singing are only a few of the gross motor skills the children enjoy in Moving and Grooving. This special allows the children to have opportunities to develop the large muscle movement and hand-eye coordination. Moving and Grooving is offered in each class once per week.
- **Gross motor room:** Our Gross Motor Room provides an alternative indoor space for children to exercise their large muscles and develop their gross motor skills such as: running, balancing, jumping, skipping. This indoor space is also used for music and movement activities, yoga, and other school activities.
- **Music:** The children experience a range of musical instruments and songs during music, singing along to a variety of beats and rhythms. Music is offered in each class once per week.
- **Guidance lessons:** Our school guidance counselor visits each classroom once per month and provides an exciting guidance lesson to further enhance our social-emotional curriculum.
- **Oneg Shabbat:** Building a sense of community, the entire ECC gathers together on most Fridays of the year to sing and celebrate in preparation for Shabbat. Each class takes turns performing a song or presentation for the other classes.

In all, our teachers and administration work together to ensure that lesson plans reflect developmentally appropriate practice, provide a balance of child-initiated and teacher-guided activities, and supports individual children's needs, interests, and developmental levels. Our teachers and administrators are life-long learners, and we value using best-practice and up-to-date research to incorporate strategies and ideas from other research-based philosophies of education, including Reggio Emilia and Waldorf. Our staff participates together in several professional development opportunities throughout the school year, as well as is encouraged to participate in national and global Early Childhood professional development opportunities to stay current in our field.

#### **Parent resources/Recommended reading:**

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2017/case-brain-science-guided-play>

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/10-things-every-parent-play>

<https://teachingstrategies.com/our-approach/our-38-objectives/>

#### **APPROACH TO SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING/ BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

##### **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

Social-emotional competence is the foundation of children's well-being and predicts success more than a child's actual cognitive skills. Therefore, our social-emotional focus is a key element of student's learning experience in the ECC. Partnering with Mariposa Child Success Programs, our approach is rooted in a deep understanding of the development of social-emotional competence in young children and is designed to foster self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. (For more information on Mariposa education, visit <https://www.mariposaeducation.org/about/>).

Our approach begins with recognizing that children must understand their own emotions in order to understand how to connect with others. Our teachers, administration, and support staff are trained to use empathy to build authentic relationships with each child while increasing a child's self-awareness of his/her emotions. We establish an environment which proactively meets many of the children's core needs such as focusing on strengths, recognizing and describing a child's emotions and/or behavior in neutral terms, communicating empathy to build connections, and decreasing behavior challenges while engaging with children in social-emotional learning through play. In addition, our program offers modeling and support to help each child develop oral language skills to communicate his/her needs and solve problems.

When a child's behavior needs guidance or redirection, our teachers first try to support the child in the classroom or context in which the behavior occurred using the above mentioned methods. At times, children need a break from their environment in which they can restore their ability to use language to describe their feelings and keep themselves and their classmates safe. Teachers may bring a child to a quiet place in or out of the classroom to help a child regain his/her composure and to process/discuss what occurred in an age-appropriate way.

As mentioned above, our main goal is to foster the whole child's development beginning with self-awareness and additional social-emotional support when needed. When a child needs more immediate assistance to ensure they and their classmates are safe, the following protocol will be implemented:

1. Teacher applies Mariposa framework skills and applies calm-down/de-escalation strategies
2. ECC administration and/or support staff assist in helping the child to self-regulate him/herself.
3. ECC administration and/or support staff remain in the classroom to ensure the child adjusts back into the class.

Maintaining a safe and productive environment in the classroom is a priority for all children's success. When a child's behavior cannot be redirected, despite the implementation of the ECC support plan, OCA reserves the right to send that child home for the day to allow for him or her to start fresh the next day. The criteria for sending a child home for behavior difficulties depends on the age and developmental stage of each age group. In rare situations, a child may be asked to stay home until a formalized plan is developed to insure his/her success.

The ECC administration values open communication between parents and school. When an individual challenges arise, we offer a team approach to collaborative problem solving and guidance. As needed, our 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

In the event that a child needs additional support beyond the above mentioned interventions, our administration and support staff will provide referrals to outside providers when necessary.

OCA partners with Baltimore City Public Schools and other private organizations to assess and provide students with special education and related services (i.e speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy). Please speak to the ECC Director for more information.

## **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. **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.**

During arrival and dismissal times, teachers need to give their full focus and attention to the children. Therefore, the ECC administrators ask that all discussions and concerns be addressed via email or by calling the ECC office to schedule a mutually convenient time to speak or meet.

### **Arrival/Morning carpool**

- Carpool drop off for ECC 3s and 4s classes begin at 8:15 a.m. The doors will not be open for students to enter the building prior to this time. Parents must supervise their children outside before 8:15. Teachers will be outside at 8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m to escort the children inside. Children generally transition to the school day more easily when parents leave quickly after drop off.
- Children in the ECC 2s must be brought directly to their classroom by a parent or designated driver. Drop off begins at 8:15 a.m.
- If you are pulling up to drop off your child, please do so by carpool spot numbers 1-15. If you are parking to bring your child into his or her classroom, please park in front of the playground in spots 16-23.

### **Late Arrivals**

- Morning carpool ends at 8:30 a.m. At this time, teachers begin the morning activities in the classroom. Therefore, they will not be outside the building or in the hallways to escort the children into the classrooms.
- After 8:30, the doors to the ECC will be locked. Please use the buzzer to be admitted into the building and come to the ECC office to sign your child in. Afterwards, parents will be responsible to bring their child to the classroom and help unpack his/her belongings.

### **Dismissal**

The ECC 3s and 4s children will be outside waiting in their appropriate zones by 3:30 p.m. on Monday – Thursday and 2:20 p.m. on Friday. Parents of ECC 2s children must come to the ECC playground every day to sign out their child. In case of inclement weather, ECC parents may have to come into the building to sign out their child.

- Parents who have students in parking spot numbers 53-86 (the middle of the parking lot) must come to the sidewalk to pick up their child.
- All students must be signed out by their designated carpool drivers.
- Children will only be allowed to leave with parents or individuals with whom parents have given written, authorized consent. If you need to update or change authorized individuals, please contact the ECC office. Any unfamiliar individual, even with written consent from parents, must be prepared to show ID. Elementary school children may not pick up their ECC siblings. Middle school children may pick up their

siblings with prior written permission from the child's parent.

- Students who are not picked up by 3:40 p.m. will be brought to the Stay & Play program. \*Parents will be charged \$20 per child for the first hour (3:40 - 4:30 p.m.) and \$15 per child for the second hour (4:30-5:30 p.m.). If a parent picks up a child in the middle of an hour, he or she will still be responsible to pay for the full hour. On Fridays or early dismissal days, parents will be charged \$20 per child after 2:30.

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

- If you need to make any last minute carpool changes, please notify the ECC office as soon as possible.

## **HEALTH AND ILLNESS**

Keeping your child healthy and safe is important to us. 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. A child who is ill will be brought to the ECC office until a parent can pick up the child. 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.

Children who are not feeling well should not be sent to school as germs are shared quickly among children and could potentially infect other children. You can help us keep all of our children healthier by observing the following rules. Please keep your child home if s/he has:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees F
- Nausea or vomiting
- Heavy nasal discharge or constant cough
- Diarrhea (of 2 or more bouts)
- Communicable or contagious illness (i.e. strep, hand/foot/mouth, flu, pink eye etc.)
- Untreated parasitic conditions such as lice, pinworm, or scabies
- Lethargy or inability to participate in class activities

Per Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) policy, if your child has a fever or two or more bouts of diarrhea, you will be asked to pick up your child immediately. Children waiting to be picked up due to an illness will wait in the ECC office until picked up. **Your child must be symptom free and/or fever free without Tylenol or other fever reducer for 24 hours before returning to school.** In addition, OCA will use their discretion to ask that a child be picked up early if he/she does not seem to feel well, is unable to participate in the daily routines due to a potential illness, or needs a medical evaluation and/or treatment. If a child leaves school early and is subsequently diagnosed, the school will make every effort to follow up to see how the child is feeling. Any absence due to illness of three or more days will require a doctor's note for your child to be allowed back in school.

Your child's sheet and blanket will be sent home weekly to be washed to help maintain cleanliness in our ECC. Please return the cleaned sheet and blanket the next school day.

### **Medication**

If your child needs medicine, please administer it at home if possible. If your child must take medication during school hours, **a parent and physician must complete a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved medication administration form for each medication given (including over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, Benadryl eye drops, diaper rash cream, and throat lozenges.** This form is available in the ECC office. Prescription medications must come labeled with the physician's instructions in the original medication container/packaging. Medicine may only be handled by adults; children may not bring in medication in their backpack. Vitamin pills and any natural remedy should be treated as medicine. All medications must be handed to a staff member directly from the child's parent (or an approved adult through

written permission from the child's parent) and will only be given to a child with proper documentation sent in.

If you have administered any medication or cream before your child comes to school, please let the ECC office and your child's teacher know. Should the need to administer acetaminophen become necessary before 11:00 a.m., the parents will be contacted to ascertain that a dosage was not administered to the student prior to school. **No student will be permitted to self-medicate.**

### **Medical Forms**

All medical forms must be completed before the first day of the school. Children will not be permitted to attend the first day of school without all necessary forms filled out in completion and handed into the office. Safety is our top priority and we can only ensure the safety of each child if we have completed forms handed in before the school year begins.

### **Basic Self Care Items**

Per MSDE policy, the ECC staff may only apply basic care items as a preventative measure. Once using basic care items is no longer preventative (i.e. using diaper cream on an existing rash), a medication consent form must be filled out and signed. (See above).

### **Toilet Training**

Learning to use the toilet is one of a child's first opportunities to independently manage an activity of daily living, a dramatic step in his/her development. Toilet training should be based on a child's developmental stage, rather than a child's age. Readiness is demonstrated by the child's ability to indicate his wants and needs and have the motor skills necessary to sit on, rise from, and use the child-sized toilets in our ECC bathrooms. Per MSDE regulations, individual toilet seats are not permitted in school.

If a child is not physically or emotionally ready for toilet training, parents are encouraged to delay training. Often, adults' expectations exceed a child's ability. Pushing a child too soon causes stress and frustration for a child and can ultimately prolong the training process. The process of learning self-management for a child may take time. Occasional relapses are not seen as a failure, but rather as a natural step in development. As with other milestones we help children reach, a consistent approach often brings greater success. Parents are asked to speak with their child's teacher to coordinate their efforts during the training process to avoid confusion for the child. If a child is not toilet trained by the age of four, OCA will refer the child to his/her pediatrician for guidance. OCA encourages children to eat a nutritious diet, filled with high-fibers foods, as this assists with developing and maintaining healthy bowel movements.

Until children are ready to begin toilet training process, they must wear diapers or Pull-ups. Once the training process has begun, we work together to determine if it is best for a child to wear Pull-ups or underwear. If the child does not display signs of readiness or is having repeated accidents, OCA will ask parents to send their child to school in Pull-ups or a diaper.

In our two-year-old classroom, teachers keep a daily log of food intake and Pull-up/diaper changes or bathroom visits. All children in our ECC are encouraged to use the bathroom twice daily or when displaying signs of need. Children who wear Pull-ups or diapers have them changed twice daily at predetermined times. Teachers monitor children's Pull-ups/diapers throughout the day and change them, as needed, as well.

## Vaccinations/Immunizations

All children attending OCA 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 medical 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. Please review the chart below. The number in the box is the number of doses required for that vaccine based on the CURRENT law requirements.

Vaccine	DTaP/DTP/ DT/TD	Polio	Hib	MMR	Varicella (Chickenpox)	Hepatitis B	Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV)
doses for 2-5 years old	4	3	at least one dose given after 12 months of age	1	1	3	1

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in school is important for a student's development and personal growth. Excessive absences disrupt a child's learning and prevent consistency necessary for appropriate development. Arriving to class in a prompt manner is not only important for the individual student, it also helps maintain a regular classroom environment and minimizes distractions.

### Absence and Lateness

Per MSDE policy, medical absences of three or more consecutive days will require a physician's note. If your child will be absent from school for reasons other than illness, please let the ECC office know.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

**Please send in a complete LABELED set of seasonal, size-appropriate change of clothes (including undergarments and socks) to be left at school.**

As recommended by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC), our program is designed to engage students in a wide variety of multi-sensory experiences in and out of the classrooms. Whether it is indoor art exploration incorporating paint and glue or outdoor science exploration with mud and leaves, exploration is often messy. We, therefore, ask that you dress your child(ren) in clothes which you will not worry about if they will get ruined. Please let your child(ren) know that it is ok to get dirty in school. We ensure that the children learn and practice proper handwashing procedures after engaging in messy nature exploration. To learn more about messy, outdoor science exploration, visit:

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/apr2018/preschool-play-plans-mud-luscious-play>

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/support-science-learning>

Outside play and exploration is a regular part of the school day, unless the weather is below 32 degrees F.

Students must be provided with warm, waterproof, outdoor clothes (i.e. coats, gloves/mittens, hats) and footwear (i.e. rain and snow boots, thick socks) on cold, rainy, and snowy days. If a child comes to school without proper gear for outdoor play, parents will be called and asked to bring in missing gear.

### **School T-Shirts**

School t-shirts are a great way to show school spirit and are recommended on school spirit days (including 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 office. If a child comes to school on a trip day without his/her OCA t-shirt, he/she may be given a new shirt to wear and parents will be charged \$10.00.

### **Shoes**

Shoes must be appropriate for running and physical activity. Due to safety concerns, open back shoes and “cros” are not acceptable in school. Sneakers or closed toe shoes are required daily. The children play daily on the playground and closed shoes can help avoid injuries. **Additionally, please send in a pair of rain boots to be kept in the children’s cubby.**

### **Boys**

Boys ages 3 and above are encouraged to wear a kippah/hat and tzitzit at all times.

### **Girls**

Girls are encouraged to wear leggings, tights, pants, or shorts under their skirts/dresses. This helps protect them on the playground and while playing.

### **Boys and Girls**

Current trends in appearance will be addressed as they arise. The administration will make the decisions as to compliance with the dress code and may institute new dress code policies, as needed. Dyes or otherwise colored hair is not permitted (with the exception of temporary dyes or hair coloring on a dress up day).

### **Dress-up Days**

On special days (i.e. holidays, dress up days, school spirit days, etc.), children are asked to dress with special attention to honor the event or occasion. Extra finery or costumes increase the celebration or occasion.

## **FIELD TRIPS/SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are a key component of the experiential learning that OCA strongly encourages. OCA encourages hands-on parent involvement with the students. A great way to achieve this is through joining field trips and special activities. As needed, the ECC will ask for chaperones for trips and support to run an activity. Students are required to wear an OCA t-shirt on field trips. T-shirts can be purchased in the ECC office.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays are celebrated differently in each class. If parents choose to celebrate in school, 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 an acceptable kosher certification and be nut free (see Kashrut).
- If you are making a birthday party out of school, you may have your child's teacher distribute invitations as long as all students in the class are invited. Class lists and parent information may be accessed on Parentlocker.
- OCA promotes healthy eating habits. Please use discretion when bringing in birthday treats for the class and bring in no more than one unhealthy treat per child (i.e. one cupcake, one piece of cake, one ice-pop, or one serving of ice cream). If you would like to bring additional treats (although unnecessary), please only bring in a healthy option such as fruit. Parents are asked not to send in party favors/goody bags for school parties.

## **TOYS**

OCA strongly encourages toys to stay at home. Toys that come to school may get lost or broken, upsetting your child. Each ECC classroom is equipped with carefully thought out supplies to promote a certain type of play. At times, bringing in other toys may promote a type of play and interaction which is not appropriate in our classroom setting. Please note, if you do send in a toy, the school will not take responsibility for the item.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

There is a Lost and Found box located near the front doors of the ECC. Please label all items brought to school. Items left for several weeks will be donated to a local charity.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Oheb Shalom, Learning Ladder, and OCA will all be in communication on 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/or text of any delays.

### **Emergency Text Alerts**

If you would like to sign up to receive emergency text alerts (for school closings, etc.) from Ohr Chadash from your cell phone, please text "OCA" to: 292929.

## **SAFETY**

### **Emergency Procedures**

OCA is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors.

OCA is housed in a public building, and therefore, security is VERY important. The following are the precautionary guidelines that OCA employ in order to ensure the safety of OCA students:

- All OCA faculty and staff must wear an OCA badge at all times.
- A security guard is on site at all times.
- The doors to the school building must remain closed after 8:30 a.m.
- Teachers will not release any students to an unauthorized individual.

- Parents or designated adults who pick up their children early must sign out the student at the ECC office.
- All visitors must sign in at the ECC office when first entering the ECC building. Exceptions include parents/ adults bringing or picking up a child from school. Parents and relatives who visit the ECC during the day will be asked to sign in as a visitor. When visitors sign in, they are asked to complete the sign-in sheet, leave their driver's license/photo ID at the front desk, and wear a visitors badge/sticker for the duration of their visit. Visitors will have their driver's license/photo ID returned to them after signing out. The staff is encouraged to approach visitors they do not recognize in the hallway and respectfully inquire about their purpose in the building, as well as request that the visitor sign-in at the front desk.

### **Fire Safety/Emergency Drills**

In compliance with Baltimore City Fire Department regulations, OCA will conduct fire drills each month. Each classroom has an exit plan displayed. Students are taught appropriate procedures and proper decorum for a fire drill.

### **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).

### **Appropriate Use of Social Networking Tools**

We recognize that social networking tools provide parents opportunities to share news and events with each other. However, using these communication tools can have negative consequences. Social media plays a large part in generating social anxiety in parents and children, alike. In addition, posting photos and names of children leaves them vulnerable to potential harm.

Everything posted online must be considered public and permanent, regardless of privacy settings. Therefore, parents should be mindful that whatever they post online about their children becomes part of their children's permanent digital footprint.

With those concerns in mind, OCA ask that parents not post pictures/videos from Storypark without the explicit permission of the teachers and the other class parents. We strongly encourage you to ask other parents before posting pictures from school events which may include their child on any form of social media.

In keeping with our intention to maintain a respectful, productive, and mutually supportive partnership among parents and 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.

## **FOOD**

### **Kashrut**

OCA maintains a high standard of kashrut so that the entire OCA community can readily participate in all activities and celebrations. All food brought into the school must have proper rabbinical supervision. Questions about food products and acceptable kashrut standards should be directed to the school office or the Va'ad HaKashrut of Baltimore. If food sent into school is not acceptable according to OCA standards, the product will be sent home and you will be informed.

When planning an event (ie birthday party) in your child's class, please check if anyone has allergies or keeps chalav yisrael and plan accordingly. **No homemade baked goods are allowed.**

**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 ECC office.

### **Lunch/snacks**

OCA provides milk along with a snack to the children daily. Please send in a nutritious lunch with your child each day, containing at least 5-6 food items. Children may bring in dairy, pareve, or meat items in their lunch. Glass bottles and glass containers are not allowed in OCA. Unless there is a special circumstance, discussed with your child’s teacher or an administrator beforehand, kindly refrain from sending candy or sweets into school.

## **SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

Effective communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of every child.

You can expect ongoing communication with teachers regarding student progress, class activities, and how parents can be supportive from home.

Please communicate with teachers if there are any changes at home or within the family (e.g., parent out of town, family illness, moving to a new house). These changes can impact your child’s behavior and, therefore, it is helpful for the school to be informed so that the staff can best help your child. The ECC staff will respect your confidentiality.

If a parent needs to reach a teacher during the school day, please email or call the office. Please do not text or call teachers during the school day. Teachers are **NOT** expected to return calls, emails or texts during the school day. Teachers will communicate with parents via phone calls, emails, newsletters, Parentlocker, and Storypark.

If parents have a question or concern about their child, the first line of communication should be reaching out to their child’s teacher. If further support is necessary, please be in touch with the ECC Director.

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 Chadashot/Parentlocker**

The school newsletter, Ohr Chadashot, produced bi-monthly, is one of the school’s vehicles for communicating with parents. Please make sure to fully read its contents since it contains relevant and timely information.

Parentlocker is our online platform to communicate with parents. Parents will receive classroom updates from their child’s teacher through parentlocker. “Daily updates” from the school will also be sent out as needed and contain important information for you to know. Please be sure to read all school announcements in the daily announcements, both ECC and whole school announcements. Every Sunday, you will receive an email with events/reminders for the coming week. Please check your email daily to ensure that you receive all important communications. Parentlocker can be accessed at [www.https://www.parentlocker.com/go/](https://www.parentlocker.com/go/).

## **Storypark**

OCA wants you to “experience” the everyday joy and activities your child participates in. Storypark is an online tool where teachers regularly post pictures or videos of the children in action. Storypark can be accessed at <https://www.storypark.com>. Parents will be given more information in order to create an account. If you have any difficulty signing up, please contact the ECC office.

As a reminder (see Appropriate Use of Social Networking Tools), parents are **not** permitted to post any downloaded pictures/videos from Storypark of teachers and/or other children on social media.

## **Progress Reports/Parent Teacher Conferences**

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. Twice per year, ECC 3s and 4s parents will receive a progress report indicating how their child is progressing in school.

Three parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled throughout the course of the year. These conferences provide an opportunity to discuss the progress of your child with his/her teacher. Parents may also arrange appointments at other times to discuss specific concerns. The dates of parent teacher conferences can be found on the school calendar.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

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.

*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.*