



OHRCHADASH
ACADEMY ישיבת אור חדש

Early Childhood Center

Student-Parent Handbook

2022-2023 | 5782-5783

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WELCOME TO OHR CHADASH ACADEMY

VISION

Community-אחדות

Individuality-יחידות

Excellence-הצטיינות

MISSION STATEMENT

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

HALACHIC QUESTIONS

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

INTRODUCTION

Dear Ohr Chadash Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year, a year ahead which, b'ezrat Hashem, will be filled with opportunities for our students to observe, explore, question, and study the full range of academic pursuits, from mathematics to Chumash, Ivrit to social studies, and so much more. Our goal at OCA is to enable our students to develop their emunah, knowledge, and commitment to Torah, and cognitive, academic, and social-emotional skills within a supportive, reflective, and respectful environment.

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

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

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

Your signature in ParentLocker 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 wonderful year of learning and growing ahead!

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Rapoport, Head of School

Lanie Carter, President of the Board of Directors

SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE STAFF

Administration

Mrs. Deborah Rapoport	Head of School
Mrs. Elisheva Levitt	Elementary School Principal
Rabbi Chaim Gourdji	Elementary School Assistant Principal, Judaic Studies
Rabbi Mordechai Bennett	Middle School Principal
Mrs. Dawn Kreisberg	Director, Early Childhood Center
Morah Tzippy Levin	Assistant Director, Early Childhood Center
Mrs. Reeut Singerman	Director of Admissions and Marketing

Academic and Student Support Team

Mrs. Leah Malka Pasch	Director of School Counseling
Mrs. Lauren Schleifer	School Social Worker
Mrs. Brocha Lawrence	School Nurse
Ms. Nechama Schwartz	Director of Academic Support, K-3
Mrs. Rena Einbinder	Director of Academic Support, 4-8

Office Staff

Mrs. Devora Cohen	Controller
Ms. Adina Levitan	Office Manager
Mrs. Malky Feldman	Admissions and Marketing Coordinator
Mrs. Rachel Lasson	Human Resources/Finance
Mrs. Goldie Milner	Building B Secretary/Receptionist
Mrs. Miriam Rosen	Building A Secretary/Receptionist
Mrs. Michelle Rakovsky	Systems Organization Director
Ms. Yehudis Taffel	IT Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Board Officers

Lanie Carter - President
Holly VanderWalde - Vice President
David Reidy - Treasurer
Yael Schwarzenberger - Secretary

Committee Chairs

Avrami Rakovsky - Development

Ari Taragin - Governance

David Reidy - Finance

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER PHILOSOPHY

The educational philosophy of Ohr Chadash Academy Early Childhood Center is based on the belief that children possess a natural desire to learn, which when nurtured within an environment that develops strong social-emotional and cognitive skills, will prepare them for a lifetime of learning. Our student-centered classrooms, both indoors and out, are designed to encourage learning and exploration in an atmosphere of warmth, affection, and respect for each child. We encourage our students through both structured and imaginative play-based experiences to develop creative thinking, problem-solving, and social skills, while learning the foundations of Torah, mathematics, science, social studies, chaggim, creative arts, language arts, Hebrew, music, and movement. All interrelated aspects of the child's growth and development are nurtured – intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, physical, and creative.

CURRICULUM

At Ohr Chadash Academy, our curriculum is informed by various research-based teaching methods, but is primarily based upon the Objectives for Development and Learning from *Teaching Strategies, Creative Curriculum for Preschool* (a Maryland State Department of Education-approved curriculum). The Creative Curriculum supports key areas of a child's academic development, including social-emotional, cognitive, language, and physical skills.

Cognitive Skills	Rotating and building objects, looking for patterns, 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 developing expressive and language skills
Social Skills	Playing together, taking turns, problem-solving

Literacy Skills	<p>Oral language. listening comprehension, oral language vocabulary.</p> <p>Alphabetic Code, alphabet knowledge, phonological/ phonemic awareness (the ability to discriminate sounds in words), invented spelling.</p> <p>Print Knowledge/Concepts.</p>
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At OCA, we embrace an integrated approach to teaching Judaic and general studies. Our curriculum provides opportunities for the children to engage in parsha (weekly Torah portion) and chaggim (holiday) activities through STEAMM (science, technology¹, engineering, art, math, and mindfulness). Included in the arts are expressive/language arts, visual arts, and dramatic arts (i.e., imaginary play), which together foster the development of oral language skills as a foundation for early literacy or prereading skills.

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 support individual childrens’ needs, interests, and developmental levels. Our teachers and administrators are life-long learners who value incorporating ideas and strategies from research-based early childhood philosophies, such as Reggio Emilia and Waldorf. Our staff participates together in several professional development opportunities throughout the school year, and are encouraged to participate in national and global early childhood professional development opportunities to stay current in the field.

Art@OCA

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, children are stimulated to develop creativity, self-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 samples for the children to follow because 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.

¹ Exposure to technology is limited in order to focus on providing opportunities for hands-on exploration.

PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

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

The relationship between parents and the faculty and administration is formally governed by the school's written enrollment contract and this handbook, in which its procedures are spelled out. When parents choose to enroll their child in OCA, they agree to subscribe to its mission, follow its rules, and abide by its decisions. However, that trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of effective working relationships with parents.

OCA encourages parents to work productively with teachers and administrators by staying informed about their child and important events in the life of the school. Thoughtful questions and suggestions are welcomed by the school. It is incumbent upon the school to provide parents with timely and pertinent information.

Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Efforts by parents to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive.

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

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (OCA-PTA)

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

The OCA-PTA presidents for the 2022-2023 academic year are as follows:

Mrs. Didi Neuman Co-President

Mrs. Mindy Orner, Co-President

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

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

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

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

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

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 activities, and the ways in which parents can be supportive from home.

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 becoming involved only when further support, clarification, or intervention is needed.

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

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

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

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 affect 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.

CUSTODY AGREEMENTS

Divorced parents are responsible for providing OCA a copy of their current custody agreement, which will be kept in the Head of School's confidential file. Any modifications or changes to the custody plan or agreement must be given to the Head of School.

Pursuant to Maryland law, all school communications regarding each child will take place with the child's biological and/or adoptive parents only, unless: (1) there is a Court Order that allows the school to communicate with a third party (e.g., custody or guardianship is granted to a third party, or the Court directly permits the school to communicate with a third party); or (2) **both** biological and/or adoptive parents provide written authorization allowing the school to communicate with a specific third party. Third parties may include, but are not limited to, step-parents, grandparents, etc.

PARENTLOCKER

OCA uses the ParentLocker.com online platform for attendance, school communications, progress reports, hot lunch and more. Please be sure to read all school announcements in the daily announcements, both ECC and whole-school announcements. Please check your email daily to ensure that you receive all important communications. Parentlocker can be accessed at <https://www.parentlocker.com/login.php>

OHR CHADASHOT

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

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, parents are not permitted to post any downloaded pictures/videos from Storypark of teachers and/or other children on social media.

APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

We recognize that social media provides parents 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. 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 asks 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 or for understanding policy decisions. Efforts to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

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

PROGRESS/REPORT CARDS

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

CLASS PLACEMENT POLICY

Class placement is a process conducted by the school's administrators on the advice of teachers and social workers. Our goal is to build well-functioning, heterogeneous classroom groups, balanced by age, gender, and personal characteristics. Please feel free to share any information with the Administration or the Student Support Team about your child's needs. While the school remains responsive to the expression of parent concerns, this policy affirms that final decisions regarding class placement are the school's responsibility. Requests for specific teachers cannot be honored.

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 classroom. 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 get stained. 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.

Outside play and exploration are a regular part of the school day, unless the weather is below 32 degrees F. Students must be provided with warm, waterproof, outdoor clothes (e.g., coats, gloves/mittens, hats) and footwear (e.g., 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 "Crocs" 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 your child'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 decisions as to compliance with the dress code and may institute new dress code policies, as needed. Dyed 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 (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.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Children can bring backpacks to school.

Clean sheets/blankets for rest time should be sent into school each Monday and will remain in each child's individual cubby to avoid contact with other children's sheets.

Each Friday, sheets/blankets will be sent home; these must be laundered over the weekend and sent back to school on Monday in a disposable bag. Sheets/blankets which are not freshly laundered may not return to school.

Personal items, other than lunch/snack and rest time sheets/blankets, may not be brought to school.

LOST AND FOUND

There is a Lost and Found box located in the ECC office. Please label all items brought to school. The School will attempt to reunite lost items with their owners. Photographs of unlabeled items will be periodically shared with parents through ParentLocker updates. Twice a year, items that are unclaimed will be donated to a local charity.

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 such as a 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.**

No Nut Policy

OCA has a No-Nut policy. This includes any snack items that may contain peanuts or tree nuts. You may send in snacks that say that they "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, in a lunchbox. Children may bring in dairy, pareve, or meat items in their lunch. Glass bottles or glass containers are not allowed. Unless there is a special circumstance discussed with your child's teacher or an administrator beforehand, students may not bring candy to school.

Hot dogs, grapes, and cherry tomatoes must be cut in half lengthwise, as these food items are considered a choking hazard when left whole. Popcorn will be allowed in the ECC 4s

only.

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.
- OCA promotes healthy eating habits. Please use discretion when bringing in birthday treats for the class and bring in no more than one special treat per child (e.g., one cupcake, one piece of cake, one ice-pop, or one serving of ice cream). If you would like to bring additional food items (although unnecessary), please only bring in a healthy option such as fruit. Parents are asked not to send in party favors/goody bags/candy for school parties.

ARRIVAL/ DISMISSAL

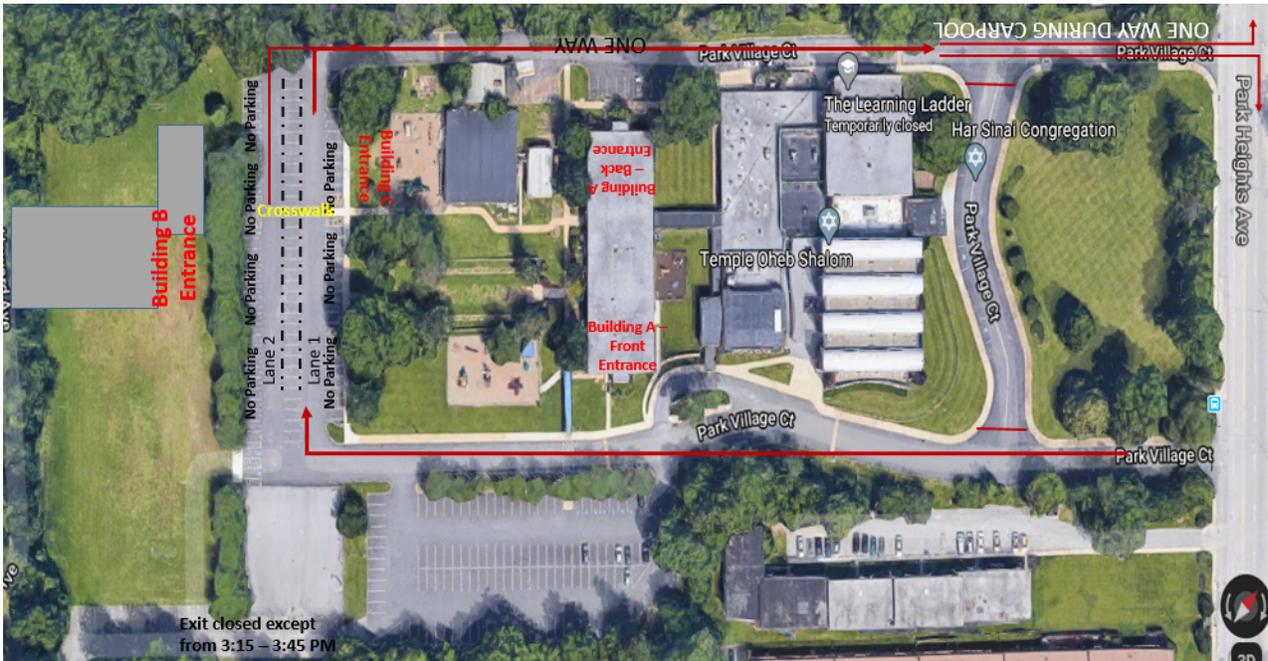
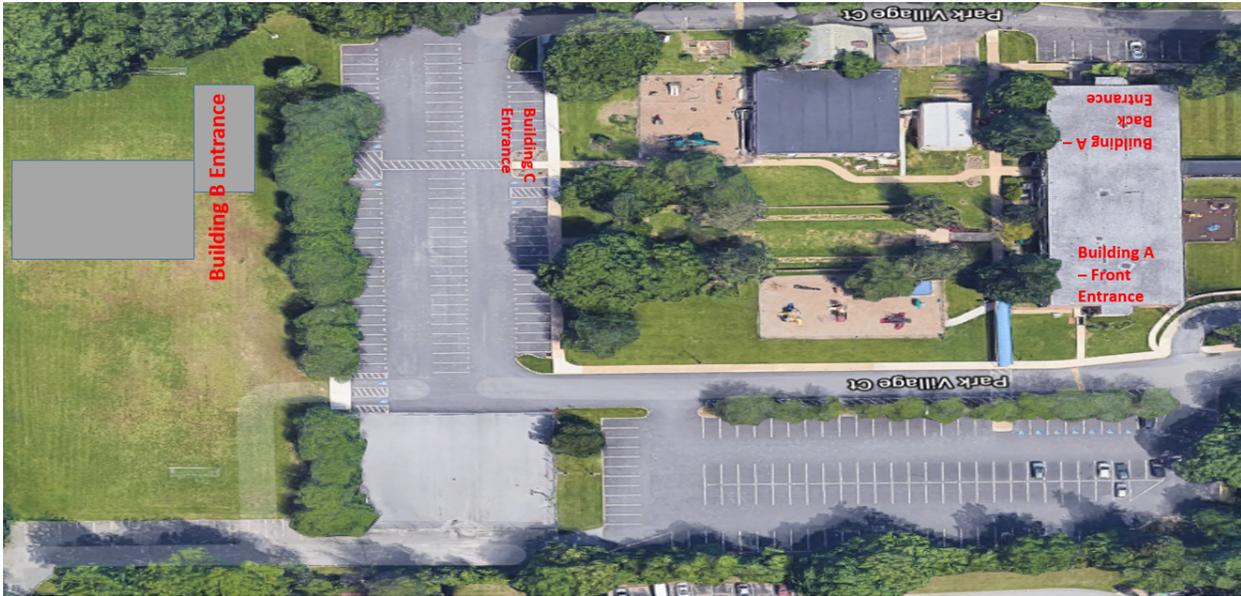
Arrival Carpool Protocol

ECC students are expected to arrive between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m., according to the family's designated drop-off time. When you arrive, pull into the **designated lanes** according to your children's drop-off location.

- ECC students will be dropped off in front of Building C (ECC building). If ECC students have older siblings going into Building B, they will be walked across the parking lot at the crosswalk once they have been checked in.
- Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd will be dropped off in front of Building B.
- 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders will be dropped off at the back entrance of Building A
- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students will be dropped off in the semi-circular drive in front of HSOSC's chapel, located just before the Building A front entrance.

Carpool procedures are developed with the safety of children and staff in mind. Drivers are expected to drive slowly, cautiously and courteously, and to follow designated traffic-flow patterns. Our security guard oversees morning and afternoon carpool to ensure 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.



Late Arrivals

All students are expected to be in class on time every school day. Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m. must be signed in. **Parents should park in the parking lot adjacent to the ECC. Please call the ECC office to be permitted into the building.**

Dismissal

All ECC students will be escorted out of the building at 3:30 p.m. Monday–Thursday and at 2:20 p.m. on Friday. Parents will be assigned a carpool lane where they should wait for their child(ren). Lanes will be assigned depending on which locations your child(ren) are located.

Children will be directed to your vehicle. Parents may come to the parking lot as early as 3:20 p.m. Monday–Thursday or 2:10 p.m. on Friday, but are required to stay in their vehicles.

All students must be signed out by their parent/guardian or designated carpool driver.

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

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.

The exit onto Park Heights Avenue will be two lanes during dismissal, so drivers turning right should stay to the right-hand side, and drivers turning left should stay to the left-hand side.

We understand that there may be traffic or other unplanned situations that arise. Therefore, we provide a 10-minute grace period. If not picked up by 3:40 p.m., your child will wait in the ECC playground or ECC office. Chronic lateness will incur a \$20 fee per day.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Har Sinai-Oheb Shalom, Learning Ladder, and OCA will 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

If you would like to sign up to receive emergency text alerts (for school closings, etc.) from Ohr Chadash, please be sure your cell phone number is up to date on your ParentLocker account page.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance in school is important for a student's development and personal growth. Excessive absences disrupt a child's learning and prevent the consistency necessary for appropriate development. Arriving at class in a prompt manner is important not only for the individual student, but also for maintaining a regular classroom environment and minimizing distractions. There are no tuition reductions or make-up days due to absences, vacations or holidays.

School Attendance, Absence and Lateness

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

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.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

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

All visitors must call 410-999-2200 before entering the building. Upon arrival to the ECC the visitor must follow these procedures:

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

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

HEALTH AND WELLNESS/MEDICAL

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

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 any of the following:

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

OCA will use its 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.

The school will have lice checks throughout the year, beginning prior to 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.

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 cannot 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.

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).**

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. 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 by 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, you must let the ECC office and your child's teacher know before your child enters the school building. 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.**

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 why vaccinations are not up to date, proper documentation needs to be provided with the date when vaccinations will be given. Maryland State Law requires that all children attending school have their immunization certificates on file at school.

OCA strongly recommends all students be vaccinated against influenza and COVID-19.

Medical Forms

All medical forms must be completed before the first day of 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 preventive measure. Once using basic care items is no longer preventive (e.g., 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 the 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.

When a child is ready to use the toilet, parents are asked to speak with their child's teacher to coordinate their efforts during the learning process. Until children are ready to begin the toilet-training process, they must wear diapers or Pull-ups. Once the 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 at least twice daily or when displaying signs of need. Teachers monitor children's Pull-ups/diapers throughout the day and change them as needed, as well.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

OCA is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors. The following are the precautionary guidelines that OCA employs 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.

Fire/Evacuation Drills

Ohr Chadash practices evacuation drills in compliance with Baltimore City Fire Department regulations. Evacuation drills will be conducted each month in conjunction with Learning Ladder and Har Sinai-Oheb Shalom Congregation. An exit plan is displayed in each room.

Students are taught what to expect and how to respond to an evacuation drill exercise by their teachers.

Threat Response

OCA reviews both our security protocols and infrastructure on an ongoing basis in order to protect our students and staff. Under guidance from our security team and local authorities, Ohr Chadash has developed protocols to follow in the event of an active shooter on campus, a bomb threat, or neighborhood disturbance. The School practices drills to prepare faculty, staff, and students in case a lockdown were ever to be called.

No Weapons Policy

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

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

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

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Ohr Chadash employees are required by Maryland State Law to immediately report suspicion of child abuse or neglect, both orally and in writing, within 48 hours to Child Protective Services (CPS) in the jurisdiction in which the abuse or neglect occurred. Staff members who have suspicions of child abuse or neglect must follow the chain of command by immediately notifying the School Social Worker and the Head of School. The School Social Worker and the Head of the School will plan and execute the course of action to be in compliance with the OCA Child Protection Policies and Procedures and applicable laws.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Social-emotional competence is the foundation of a child's well-being and predicts success more than a child's actual cognitive skills. Therefore, our social-emotional focus is a key element of a student's learning experience in the ECC. 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. Our approach begins with recognizing that children must understand their own emotions in order to understand how to connect with others. 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, and communicating with empathy to build connections and decrease behavior challenges. 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 has occurred. Teachers will use calm-down/de-escalation strategies such as communicating with empathy, providing a calm-down space within the classroom, providing sensory objects, guiding the student to use breathing techniques, collaborative problem-solving, use visual aids, and/or guide the student to choose a new activity. When redirecting a child's behavior, teachers may also use natural/logical consequences, keeping it respectful and relevant.

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, administrators, or support staff 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. Once reintegrated back into the classroom, teachers, administration and/or support will make every effort to remain with the child in the classroom to ensure the child adjusts back into the class.

The ECC administration values open communication between parents and school. When 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.

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. In early childhood, physical aggression is addressed differently than in older children because young children are developmentally still acquiring the ability to self-regulate and verbalize their needs. The criteria for sending a child home for behavior difficulties depends on the age and

developmental stage of each age group. If a child hits another student, the teacher, administrator, or social worker will support the child in reflecting on his or her behavior. If the child is calm and can talk about the incident, the child will be guided back to class activities.

If the child continues to struggle, or if there are multiple incidents of physical aggression on the same day, the parents may be asked to pick up the child. Additionally, If a student cannot settle down within 30 minutes, parents may be contacted to pick up the child.

In rare situations, a child may be asked to stay home until a formalized plan is developed to ensure his/her success. In the unusual circumstance in which a student's behavior warrants an evaluation before returning to school, a child may be out for a longer period of time. Regardless of the length of time at home, the parent must meet with an administrator and have an agreed-upon action plan before the child returns to school.

ECC TODDLER BITING POLICY

Biting is a very common behavior and one of the most difficult behaviors to deal with in early childhood education. Toddlers in the process of developing language and learning appropriate social behavior may try it out as a form of communication. For these children, the biting stage is just a passing phase. For others, biting stems from a variety of reasons: teething or other oral needs, emerging language skills, stress or change at home/school, or other sources of frustration. In the ECC, we believe that by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual emotional needs, we can mitigate most biting behaviors. Because many factors contribute to this behavior, we may not be able to prevent all occurrences, particularly among two year olds.

In order to alleviate some of the triggers for biting, our teachers maintain the following best practices to help prevent incidences of biting:

- **Quality relationships:** Teachers develop nurturing relationships with the children, get to know each child individually, and model high quality expressive language skills and emotional self-regulation.
- **Structure of classroom:** Children are given opportunities to work individually and in both small and large groups. There is a variety of materials, and the teachers are trained to be very aware of and willing to help a child who is feeling overwhelmed. The environment is adapted to the children's needs by adding or replacing toys and materials, rearranging furniture, adjusting the schedule, as needed.
- **Social and emotional support:** Children have a daily routine that they follow and are taught how to share. The staff discuss emotions and feelings through books and other activities and teach strategies to help children learn to calm themselves. Teachers will closely observe a child who is having difficulty, redirect situations during which a physically aggressive incident may occur, determine possible root causes, and make changes in response.

If A Child Is Bitten

- The biter is calmly removed from the classroom or area, using simple words such as "biting hurts," and is taken under direct supervision by a staff or administrator.

- Another teacher immediately attends to the child who was bitten, comforting him/her and applying first aid/ice as needed. The parents of both children are contacted immediately and an accident note is documented.
- The biter will be carefully monitored by a teacher to try to prevent further incidents from occurring. The child will be talked to on a level which he/she can understand. "I can see that you want that truck, but hurting is not allowed. Biting hurts." The child will be redirected to another play area and the teacher will monitor closely to determine possible causes of the behavior. All notes will be documented.
- Teachers will report all incidents to the Director and Assistant Director on the day of the incident to review the context of the biting incident, determine what factors may have contributed to the biting incident, and discuss preventative measures to be implemented immediately.

Support For The Biter

If a consistent team-based approach involving teachers, parents and administrators is not achievable or sufficient to eliminate the biting behaviors, the following steps will be taken.

- The child will be recommended for an evaluation by a specialist in speech/language, sensory-motor, social-emotional, or other developmental area of need as appropriate.
- Parents are asked to provide documentation of the evaluation to the school and, in partnership with the school, create, initiate, and follow a plan based on the stated recommendations of the evaluator and the school.
- If additional staff is required to supervise the child in order to prevent others from being bitten, the school will ask the parents to provide an aide at their own expense.

If The Biting Continues

Classroom teachers will meet with the Director and Assistant Director on a routine basis to advise, support and strategy planning.

- A teacher meeting will be held with the parent(s) of the child who is biting to discuss the situation in detail including how many biting incidents. Outcomes of this meeting will be discussed and any changes will be made at home and in the classroom. A written plan of action will be discussed and agreed upon by the parents, social worker, teachers and administrators.
- Teachers will record every occurrence including attempted bites and indicate location, time, other children involved and their behaviors.
- Teachers will shadow children who indicate a tendency to bite in order to try to prevent biting situations before they occur, teach non-biting responses to situations, and reinforce appropriate behavior.
- Director/Assistant Director/Social Worker and teachers will work together to adapt the program and structure to the extent possible within the context of the ECC
- If the behavior persists despite the intervention, or if necessary interventions exceed the capacity of the school or family, the parents will be asked to find an alternative educational placement for their child.

Helpful Resources For Toddler Behaviors

1. <https://theinstitutecf.umaryland.edu/sefel/docs/families/Responding%20to%20Your%20Child's%20Bite.pdf>

2. Banks, R., & S. Yi. 2007. *Dealing with Biting Behaviors in Young Children*. Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting. <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/biting.html>.

3. *Understanding and Responding to Children Who Bite*

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/understanding-and-responding-children-who-bite>

4. The Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)

Responding to Your Child's Bite.

www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/documents/biting-parenting_tool.pdf

5. Zero to Three

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resouces/232-toddlers-and-biting-finding-the-right-response>

Ohr Chadash Academy ECC Handbook

2022/2023

Acknowledgment Form

Please sign and date this page, and return to the Ohr Chadash Academy preschool office.

I have read the ECC Handbook and agree to abide by the rules and regulations found therein.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian _____

Signature/Date _____

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian _____

Signature/Date _____

Signature/Date of Director: _____

Please Note:

Policies and procedures may be updated during the course of the year. The school will make every effort to keep you posted on such changes. Notifications will be emailed to parents via email or Daily Update.

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.

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