

OHR CHADASH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

HANDBOOK



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A new school year is beginning, filled with dynamic and creative programs, engaging texts and creative learning. At Ohr Chadash this school year promises to be an exciting one for both our students and our faculty.

The school meets once a week on **Sunday mornings, from 9:00 AM until 12:30 PM. Classes are for children from 4-years-old through Post Bar/Bat Mitzvah.** Every week we begin the day with a program for the entire school which includes Havdalah, songs, prayer, the weekly Torah portion, and visits from our participating rabbis. The rest of the day is divided by subjects and each age group rotates in three major subjects: Tanach (Bible)/Jewish History, Jewish Holidays, and Hebrew Language.

To succeed in our endeavor, we need parental help. We would like to encourage you to be as active and supportive as possible in your child's Jewish education. The more involved you become, both at home and by attending the individual synagogue programs, the more meaningful you and your child's experiences will be. Here are just a few ways in which you can become more involved:

- Encourage your child to attend Youth Shabbat Services/Junior Congregation
- Attend the Family Programs at one of our partner synagogues
- Check our weekly emails for updates on school activities and upcoming programs and visit our website to learn about our experiential events

This handbook serves as a basic guide to our school. We hope you will read this handbook and learn about our vision for Ohr Chadash. The information in this handbook should answer many of your questions about our philosophy, goals and academic programs. Please keep it and use it as a reference throughout the year.

We look forward to working closely with you and your family. Please feel free to contact me throughout the school year with any thoughts, suggestions or concerns you may have. Wishing a successful year for everyone!

B'Shalom,
Shari Zuber, School Administrator

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS



Ohr Chadash Religious School endeavors to nurture the child in the context of the family and the community. The goal of our school model is a religious school that your children will eagerly look forward to attending, not just this year, but in the years ahead as well. We strive to instill a love of learning and intellectual curiosity in all our students.

Educational Objectives:

- The ability to read Hebrew print
- The ability to be comfortable using the Siddur (prayer book) on Shabbat, holidays, and weekdays. This includes vocabulary that reflects important concepts in prayer, holidays, and observance.
- A basic knowledge of the structure and meaning of religious services
- Knowledge of select Shabbat, holiday, and weekday prayers
- An understanding of the observances of Shabbat and holidays and their meanings
- An understanding of the observance of mitzvot and Jewish values
- The development of positive ethnic and religious identification
- A commitment to "Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh La'zeh": all Jews are responsible for one another
- An understanding of stories and key historical figures depicted in the Tanach: The Torah, Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings)
- The ability to identify various laws and the proper moral behavior which accompanies them
- Knowledge of various time periods throughout Jewish history

At the conclusion of their attendance at Ohr Chadash we hope our students' beliefs will include the following:

- A constructive affirmation of God
- The Bible as a source of wisdom and guidance for living
- A pride in their Jewish Heritage and in themselves as part of that heritage
- Prayer serving as a source of personal comfort and community connection
- Mitzvot as guidelines for an ethical and rational way of life
- The centrality and necessity of the State of Israel for the continuance of the Jewish people
- Shabbat as a positive focal point of their personal lives and that of their families
- The value of Tzedakah in building character and helping others
- The Holidays as a connection to the past and a continuity for the future
- The Home and the Family as primary focuses of Jewish expression
- Our traditions as a basis for and an expression of our Jewish identity

Academic Program

Our curriculum for ALL grades is outlined below and will include three subject components for each grade, using age appropriate materials. The main subjects are Tanach (Bible)/Jewish History, Holidays, and Hebrew Language. All classes will meet on Sunday mornings from 9:00 AM until 12:30 PM. The curriculum for each class is outlined on the following page.

The morning begins with a **Weekly Opening Assembly** during the first forty-five minutes of school which involves all our students. Activities include Shabbat and Holiday songs, learning Tefillah (Prayers), reviewing the weekly Torah portion, discussing holidays and meaningful Jewish current events, and visits by the participating rabbis.

The specific curriculum in each grade level will vary for each subject, thereby insuring that our students can look forward to learning new material the following year while building upon past learning. The material described is meant as a guide and will be modified as circumstances warrant.

Ohr Chadash incorporates **Art and Music** to enrich school programs and provide a creative outlet for our students.

Kochavim (Stars) PreK, K, and Grade 1

- Tanach (Bible) - Using age-appropriate material, the children of Kochavim will learn about the Torah from the creation of the world, the tale of Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, the travails of the Matriarchs and the Patriarchs, the Joseph story, and how Moses and Aaron led the Jewish people from slavery to freedom.
- History - The students will study the Prophets who provided Divine inspiration for the Jewish people, from the patriarchal beginnings to the settlement in the land of Israel.
- Holidays - Through age-appropriate study materials, the class will learn songs, symbols, and traditions behind each of the Jewish celebrations.
- Hebrew - Kochavim students will learn the basics of the Aleph-Bet, becoming familiar with the letters and the nekudot (vowels) and learning the rudimentary vocabulary.

Chalutzim (Pioneers) Grades 2 through 4

- Tanach (Bible) - The students will recap the Books of Genesis and Exodus, refreshing their memories of what they have learned and discovering additional nuances of our Biblical traditions. They will learn of Joshua's struggle to conquer the land of Canaan and transform it into the Jewish homeland.
- History - Chalutzim will study the beginnings of the Jewish-American experience, from the days of exploration and colonization of the North American continent through the birth of the United States and the westward expansion. Discussions will include how the immigrants contributed to the development and growth of this nation and the difficulty they had in maintaining their Judaic heritage and traditions.
- Holidays - Through music, art, the Bible, and the Megillot students will build upon their basic knowledge of our faith's annual celebrations.
- Hebrew - The foundation of the students' previous knowledge of Hebrew will be increased by their growing vocabulary and their greater adeptness at writing the language.

Giborim (Heroes) Grades 5 and 6

- Tanach (Bible) - The students will enjoy a more in-depth study of the Torah which emphasizes the many challenges of the journey through the Wilderness, including the Golden Calf debacle, the blasphemy of Korach's

Rebellion, the folly of the Twelve Spies, and Moses' misdeed which barred his entry into the Holy Land. They will perform re-enactments of various incidents in the Bible through courtroom dramas, psychological group therapy sessions, and Biblical Parsha plays.

- History - Giborim will study the Jewish European experience; their migrations from country to country following various expulsions and harsh decrees, the rise of Zionism, and the longing for a Jewish homeland. The students will learn about the Holocaust and how the modern State of Israel came into being from the remnant of European Jewry, as well as the constant struggle of Israelis to maintain their nation despite repeated warfare and adversity.
- Holidays - A higher level of study of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals, the rudiments of post-Biblical celebrations and events, and an exploration of how they developed into annual observances is the core of the Giborim holiday curriculum.
- Hebrew - Learning Hebrew script, increasing vocabulary knowledge, and developing the ability to confidently converse in the language are all goals of this class.

The Geshet Program - Grade 7 and Up

The Geshet Program is specifically designed for our seventh graders and post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah students. The group will spend Sunday mornings studying, discussing, and experiencing different Jewish values and practices together with their teacher using print and electronic sources. They will also have a special opportunity to meet with the Rabbis of the three partner synagogues that support Ohr Chadash to explore relevant, current topics. Our goal is to provide an engaging and age-appropriate curriculum.

- Hebrew language module: Vocabulary, writing, grammar and conversation
- Davening (Prayer): Developing skills to be able to potentially lead services
- Tanach (Bible): Learning about stories of the Bible and the nuances of the Torah that relate to the human condition and family dynamics
- Modern Israel: The politics and social climate in the Jewish homeland
- Chagim (Holidays): Learning about the holidays of the Jewish Calendar from the original Rabbinical and Biblical sources and debates about the holidays and their modern relevance
- Machloket (Jewish Debate): Discussing contemporary dilemmas facing Israel from the Jewish sources and news media
- News Cycle: Reviewing the latest news in the Jewish world, antisemitism and the State of Israel



An important component of Jewish education at Ohr Chadash is the "experiential" part of the children's Jewish education. From time to time, each of our three Synagogues will offer exciting, meaningful and fun programs related to Shabbat, the holidays, customs, traditions, and other forms of enrichment. All students and their families are encouraged to attend these programs offered by each of the synagogues. Children are also encouraged to attend youth services/junior congregation as often as possible. These experiences will enhance and build upon what the children have learned in class.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents are continuously apprised of upcoming school programs and informed of the progress of their children. The school administrator is always available either by email, phone, or in person to discuss any concerns or questions that parents may have. If parents wish to speak with any particular teacher please let the administrator know and arrangements will be made to facilitate the meeting.

Please check your child's book bag after each session. There may be an important notice in it for you to read or a project your child has created. Encourage your child to talk about what he/she has learned in school that day. When a child senses that his/her work is important and that a parent is interested, he/she will take it more seriously and be more enthusiastic about religious school.

Although children are permitted to have cell phones, they must be kept on vibrate and are not to be used for texting or calling during school hours.

EMAIL

Each week our families will receive an e-mail from our religious school with a recap of the prior week's activities and reminders of our upcoming programs. Additionally, if you check the Ohr Chadash website you will see a synopsis and photos of our special events, as well as the projected schedule for the entire school year.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Arrival and Dismissal

Classes take place on Sunday mornings from 9:00 AM-12:30 PM. Please have your child in school at least five (5) minutes prior to the beginning of classes so that they will be present for the Opening Assembly. Similarly, please return to pick up your child five (5) minutes before the conclusion of classes to assure that all children can be dismissed on time and in a safe manner. All dismissals will take place from the lobby of the school building so that we can be sure that all children are picked up by a parent, a designated individual or a carpool.

Parents are not to wait outside the classrooms or in the hallway, as it may disrupt classes. A staff member will be waiting with the students at dismissal time until every student is picked up. **Please be courteous and be on time for drop-offs and pick-ups.**

At Hillcrest Jewish Center, all drop-offs and pick-ups are at the Union Turnpike entrance by the bench.

At Congregation Etz Hayim at Hollis Hills Bayside, all drop-offs and pick-ups will be at the 211th Street doors.

At Israel Center of Conservative Judaism, all drop-offs and pick-ups are at the 168th Street entrance.

Classes meet on a rotational basis for each half of the school year in the three participating synagogues. For the 2021-2022 school year, Congregation Etz Hayim at Hollis Hills Bayside will host classes from Sunday, September 12, 2021, through the end of December 2021. Beginning on Sunday, January 9, 2022, classes will convene at Israel Center of Conservative Judaism until the end of May.

Code of Conduct

Ohr Chadash is a Religious School that promotes respect and responsibility in a safe learning and teaching environment. It is the expectation of the school that all students will strive to maintain a high level of respect for their peers, their teachers and for each synagogue.

Guiding Principles

- This Code of Conduct is applicable to all participants, including teachers, parents and students.
- All members of the community are to be treated with respect, especially persons in roles of authority (i.e. Rabbis, Cantors, the Administrator, and the Teachers).
- All students in the school are to follow the policies set forth by the Ohr Chadash joint Board of Education.
- All school parents shall review the policies which are found in the Handbook with their children.
- If students do not adhere to this Code of Conduct, appropriate disciplinary measures will follow.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Administrator, under the direction of the joint Board of Education, shall take a leadership role in the daily operations of the school.
- Religious school faculty members, under the supervision of the Administrator, shall maintain order in the classroom. They are expected to follow the standards of the school. Teachers shall help all students work to their full potential.
- Students are to be treated with respect by the members of the faculty. In return, they are always to demonstrate appropriate behavior and follow the standards set by the joint Board of Education, the Administrator, and the teachers.
- Parents play an important role in the education of their children. They have the responsibility to support the efforts of the school staff. It is also the hope of the school that parents will join in the Jewish educational process with their children and support their learning. They are also responsible for reviewing the standards of the school with their children.
- The Board of Education and staff at the Ohr Chadash Religious School work with parents and educational professionals to provide a productive and safe learning environment for all our students.

- Students and teachers are expected to behave in a way that exemplifies the concept of "Derech Eretz," proper respect. On rare occasions, however, when a student makes it difficult or impossible for the teacher to lead the class and for the other children to learn, or otherwise behaves in a manner that is not consistent with the exemplification of "Derech Eretz" towards our teachers, administrator, school, institution, building or facilities, our disciplinary policy will be implemented. Our disciplinary policy is intended to be implemented only in those unusual circumstances where a child will not adjust his or her behavior to the requirements and safety standards of the Religious School.

Religious School Disciplinary Policy

1. In the event a student is disruptive in class, which shall constitute behavior which, in the opinion of the teacher, is detrimental to the respectful work environment in the classroom, the teacher will speak directly to the student. If the student continues to act in an inappropriate or disruptive manner after having been spoken to previously, the teacher shall alert the Administrator. The Administrator shall immediately notify the student's parent or guardian to discuss the behavior. The parent is strongly encouraged to speak with his or her child regarding this incident.

Upon notification that a student's behavior has been disruptive for the third time, the Administrator will require a meeting with the parent, the student, the teacher and, if the parent so requests, with a Rabbi. The purpose of the meeting will be to determine appropriate measures to correct the disruptive behavior. The student shall not be allowed to return to school until the meeting has taken place and a solution acceptable to the Administrator is determined. Upon return from suspension, if a student continues to exhibit disruptive behavior, the student shall be suspended for the remainder of the school year. The student may return the following year. Tuition will not be refunded for any portion of the school year for which a student has been suspended

2. If a student exhibits any other form of behavior deemed disruptive by the Administrator while the child is in attendance at Ohr Chadash, including (but not limited to) defacing school property, acting disrespectfully to teachers, the Administrator or any staff member, etc., such student shall be subject to disciplinary action as the Administrator shall deem appropriate.
3. If a child has acted in any way that the Administrator or Rabbi feels is dangerous or poses a safety risk to the other children in the school, him/herself, the school staff, or any aspect of the school environment, immediate suspension will be imposed. The length of suspension and whether the student shall be allowed to return to school will be at the sole discretion of the Administrator. Generally, the joint Board of

Education disciplinary policy shall not affect any student's ability to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at one of the partner synagogues. However, all Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates are always subject to the discretion of the Rabbi.

Parents/guardians of any student who is suspended may meet with the Rabbi to discuss alternatives in their child's Jewish education.

Dress Code

Parents should keep in mind that classes meet in a religious institution and students should dress appropriately. An important consideration is that students wear clean, comfortable clothing. Boys are required to wear a kippah in the synagogue building.

Inclement Weather Policy

Should it become necessary to cancel Religious School classes due to inclement weather, the procedures below will be followed:

An email will be sent to each family and it will be posted on our Facebook page. If you are unsure whether classes are cancelled, please call the Administrator: Shari Zuber @ 718-309-4633 before you send your child to school.

Snacks

All students may bring their own snacks (fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, or a packaged snack with a proper Kosher Certification) from home to eat during break time. Appropriate certification on the labels to indicate Kashrut may be:



All food brought into school must be either dairy or pareve. If you are uncertain about the kashrut of a particular food item, please contact one of our three rabbis.

No glass bottles are permitted. At no time may students chew gum during classes. If your child has food allergies, please alert either the Administrator or your child's teacher.

Tzedakah

For each session students are encouraged to bring money for tzedakah. While the amount collected is not important, learning the habit of regular giving is crucial. Tzedakah is collected on each day school is in session. A relevant organization will be chosen for the upcoming year with the input from our students.

Safety

Fire and lockdown drills may be performed periodically throughout the school year for the safety of the children. Parents will be notified in advance of any drills. Each synagogue has an emergency procedure in place.

Visitors

If any person would like to visit our school, please schedule a visit with our Administrator.

Homework

We recognize the fact that public school work and outside activities take up much of your child's free time. The purpose of homework is to challenge our students as well as to keep concepts fresh in their minds. It is necessary to assign a limited amount of homework. We also would like to ask you to encourage students in second grade through sixth grade to practice their reading, as practice strengthens their reading skills. We would be happy to provide you with material so that your child could also practice at home. This material would not involve a parent to know Hebrew; it would just involve time and focus for your child.

Books and Supplies

Students must always bring pens, pencils, and notebooks to school, as required by the teacher. Children are encouraged to bring their own personal kippot to religious school. Please double check that your child is equipped with these materials before leaving the house.

Parents Association/Security

The PA is an exciting and crucial asset of Ohr Chadash. Not only does the PA provide important services for our students and faculty, but it also provides a vehicle for parent involvement in the school and synagogue. Our PA seeks to build a sense of community and helps to enrich and strengthen family life. The Parents Association of Ohr Chadash is really a family membership of parents, grandparents and guardians, whose focus is to support the school, with the primary goal of further enriching the student's total Jewish experience. Activities will include various holiday promotions and gift packages, snacks, and more. They contribute to bi-annual teacher recognition, special programs, and other needs, in coordination with our Administrator. Additionally, the PA supports Mitzvah projects such as putting together Shabbat bags, letter writing, donating toys, emergency relief projects, coats, costumes, food collection drives and more. Volunteers from our group also help with school activities as directed by the Administrator and staff. We encourage all parents and guardians to participate in our periodic meetings, bring new ideas, and offer any level of help you can. This year we have added security as part of the PA dues to insure our children can learn in a safe environment.