



# Middle School Handbook

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*Ruth E. Cohan Early Childhood Center  
Hebrew Academy Elementary School  
Hersch ben Yehuda Middle School*

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## Mission Statement

By providing a nurturing, and motivating environment  
based on the values of Torah and Chassidus  
we will develop in our students:  
a lifelong commitment to Torah and Mitzvos;  
an awareness of Hashem's loving and detailed involvement in our lives;  
the ability to be independent and life-long learners;  
the refined character and personal life skills needed to live with integrity, joy and confidence  
and a commitment to serve in their community

### **Our Vision Statement**

"If we wish to have a future generation of identifiable, Torah observant Jews, we must involve ourselves in the guidance of children from the youngest age in the proper Torah path."

(Hashlichus Hachinuchis B'igros Ha'Rebbe)

The Hebrew Academy Community School, founded at the behest of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, believes that every Jewish child has a "birthright" to an authentic Torah education of the highest academic standards, along with an excellent general education to enable him/her to grow into a productive, successful, and committed member of the larger Jewish and world community. As emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the world view of Chabad philosophy guides our vision and propels us forward.

Our vision is a school where any Jewish child, regardless of affiliation, can receive instruction at his/her level with the view to advancement in all areas. Different backgrounds and levels of knowledge and observance should enrich the school population and nurture our empathy and acceptance of all Jews as expected of us in the verse, "ואהבת לרעך כמוך".

Until recently a Jew could be isolated from or assimilated into the world. Our vision is not a compromise between these two. It is a bold new course charted by the Rebbe's view of a Jew's place in the world. Our goal is to educate children to be more than personally observant, rather that they will see themselves as G-d's personal ambassador to perceive the good in the world, and to bring their own corner of the world closer to the purpose for which it was created.

## School Educational Philosophy

### We Believe That:

- Opportunities must be provided for all Jewish children to receive excellence in Jewish and general studies education. Should a child require services not available at our school, we will guide the parents in identifying suitable placement.
- A quality program must include a caring and nurturing environment in which children can flourish while discovering their strengths.
- Students should be taught respect for all individuals regardless of background.
- In order for students to achieve the highest level of learning, they must be taught a love of learning and an understanding of the learning process.
- Loyalty to Judaism cannot be separated from Jewish learning.
- Through professional instruction, the Torah can be made accessible in its original, unadulterated form to every child.
- The teaching of ethical and moral values and the development of *midos tovos* (good character traits) are an important component of complete education.
- Effective Jewish education is achieved by promoting spiritual and ritual observances. Special care is taken to instill an appreciation of the importance of being *midakdek* (punctiliousness) in halacha and minhagim.
- A well-rounded education goes beyond traditional classroom teaching and should expose children to the arts, physical wellness, and athletics.
- The safe use of technology can greatly enhance one's pursuit of knowledge.
- The creation of the State of Israel is an important event in Jewish history. Recognizing the significance of Israel and its institutions, we seek to instill in our students an attachment to Israel and its people as well as a sense of responsibility for their welfare.
- Students should be aware of their civic responsibilities and be prepared to become productive, committed members of their family, community and people.
- It is important to appreciate what it means to be an American.
- Students should be aware of current events in their community and worldwide.

**We Believe That** the students of the Hebrew Academy, through a well-balanced religious and general studies education, will be capable of functioning as dedicated men and women in the context of the American society emotionally, academically, socially and spiritually.

### We Will Strive To:

- Instill in students an intellectual curiosity.
- Prepare students to achieve to their highest potential.
- Teach students to develop self-responsibility.
- Teach children to respect their physical and personal environments.
- Teach students to study and comprehend material in a wide array of content areas.
- Expose children to the world community, its problems and history.
- Impart to our students the total Hebrew Academy philosophy.

## Welcome to Middle School

Middle School is a time of personal change and social growth. There are more classes and teachers, challenges and responsibilities. Student council, yearbook, minyan, the middle school trip and the camping trip are all part of the changing and more demanding environment of the Middle School. Most importantly, the Middle School students are the role models serving as examples of what Hebrew Academy students should aspire to be.

### ARRIVAL

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Students should arrive in enough time to go to your lockers to take what you need for your morning classes. Middle School students begin davening at 8:10 AM sharp. You should be in your davening rooms with your siddurim. For boys who have had their Bar Mitzvah, you should also have your Tefillin bag and be ready in the shul. You should not arrive at school before 7:55 AM and may never enter a classroom alone unless directed to do so by a teacher or Principal.

### ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

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It is of utmost importance to maintain regular attendance in school in order to achieve success. Unless you are ill, any absence is unexcused and interferes with your learning. However, when an absence does occur, you are fully responsible for the learning and assignments of that day. A classmate may be called to review any notes and material covered that day.

**If the you need further assistance**, speak to your teacher or leave a note in the office for the appropriate teacher and s/he will schedule a meeting with you. The Hebrew Academy recognizes the nature of mitzvot and trips required to attend weddings and other special life cycle events. The school and your teachers need to be told at least two full school weeks before you are absent so that teachers have time to prepare work for you.

Within any semester three unexcused absences will result in the reduction of an earned grade by one half (i.e. C to C-, C- to D). Six unexcused absences will result in the reduction of an earned grade by a complete letter grade (i.e. C to D, A to B). This includes classes missed due to tardiness and/or early dismissal, such as Tefillah. FINAL decisions as to excused or unexcused absences are made by the Principal.

### BOOKS / VALUABLES

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All books should be covered (with a non-sticky cover) and treated with care and respect (no Sox covers please). Every student will have a book number for the majority of his/her books. Books not needed for homework/studying should be put away in your locker by the end of each day. YOU are responsible for the condition of the books. Loss or excessive damage will result in replacement or repair charges. Books found on school campus or outside lockers will be confiscated by a Principal who may levy a fine for their return.

**Other valuable items such as Tefillin and tallisim should not be left in school. The Hebrew Academy does not take responsibility for these items left here overnight.**

### **Overnight/All-Day Trips**

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The Hebrew Academy gives the privilege of overnight and all-day trips to Middle School students. Graduates also choose a theme park for a Senior Day trip. You may participate if your homework, classwork, attendance, Chessed Hours, and, behavior is up to par. Your teachers will outline your objectives for you. Cost of these trips can be reduced by the sale of yearbook ads and other Student Council sales.

### **CHESED – COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS**

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Each student in Middle School is required to perform Chessed hours of volunteer service to the community during the school year.

- 6<sup>th</sup> graders – 30 hours
- 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders – 40 hours

Students may volunteer at schools, synagogues, hospitals, community events, charities, nursing homes, shelters, etc. or by providing *unpaid* help to individuals. **Helping out at home or in businesses or professional offices does not constitute chesed hours.** Your progress in incurring chesed hours will be shown on your report card. 1/4 of your required Chessed hours must be completed before the end of each marking period.

Make sure to submit your properly filled out ***Chesed Hours Community Service Log*** form, found at the end of this Handbook, to the office one week before the end of each marking period.

**Students who have not completed this requirement are ineligible for inclusion in the Honor Roll, participation in trips, camping or Student Council.**

The year-end deadline for submitting Chessed Hours is the week before finals. Credit for Chessed Hours will not appear on your report cards if you do not submit them on time.

### **CHUMASH**

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One of the curricular goals of the Hebrew Academy curriculum is that each student learns Chumash from the Hebrew source. Students are not permitted to use an English Chumash in school, unless special circumstances exist and written permission has been received from Mrs. Denburg or Rabbi Sheinberger.

### **CLEANLINESS**

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Learning is most successfully achieved in a pleasant environment. Since Middle School students share classrooms, it is the responsibility of each group of students to leave a classroom in a clean,

uncluttered condition. This includes picking up any garbage from the floor, leaving desks and chairs in order and making sure that any personal items (such as Tefillin) and siddurim are neatly placed in an appropriate spot. There are garbage receptacles in the hallways and playground. Please use them.

## Student Code of Behavior

### **All Middle School Students:**

- Will show “Derech Eretz” - respect to all staff, faculty, and employees at all times.
- Will show consideration for other students and treat others with the accepted standards of consideration, as they themselves would like to be treated.
- Will use appropriate language at all times. Use of profanity, substitute for profanity, profane gestures or substitute gestures, racial or homophobic slurs and any other demeaning statements will be grounds for immediate suspension without additional warning.
- Will never strike, hit or harm another person with words or physical action. Doing so is cause for immediate suspension and you may be asked to leave the school.
- Will behave according to class/school rules and routine.
- Will respect school property. It is unacceptable to deface walls, desks, furniture, sidewalks, textbooks, clothing etc. You will be charged full replacement/repair cost if involved in damaging school property and may be suspended or asked to leave the school.
- Will not damage another student’s property. You will be charged full replacement/repair cost if involved in this type damage and may be suspended or asked to leave the school.
- Will behave appropriately on school trips and outings.
- **Cell phones must be checked in at the front office upon arrival. Cell phones will be confiscated if retained by the student.** It is to be picked up daily only after your name has been called for dismissal.
- Not cut class, hide or depart campus without permission, even as part of a prank.
- Pranks of any kind (i.e. Purim) are not permitted without prior approval from a Principal.
- Understand that as part of our curriculum students may have access to the Internet and will be taught to use this learning tool in an Orthodox-appropriate manner in accordance with our school philosophy. Students will be responsible for using this media in an appropriate manner. Students will NOT use school computers unless a faculty member is physically present in the room. See the **Internet Safety Rules** below:
- Silence beeping mechanisms on watches during school hours. Mp3 Players, electronic games, and other electronic entertainment devices **may not** be brought to school:
- Will respect the Hebrew Academy as a Chabad Orthodox Jewish institution. Students will bring only appropriate reading and listening material. Inappropriate materials and/or items considered dangerous or disruptive to learning will be confiscated; and disciplinary action forthcoming.

**By following this Code of Conduct, students contribute to the safe and mutually respectful learning environment that is paramount to the Hebrew Academy community.**

Should a student fail to conduct him/herself according to these basic rules, consequences may include:

1. Loss of privileges
2. Detention, working lunch, extra assignment or community service at school.
3. In-School suspension
4. At-home suspension
5. Expulsion

## **INTERNET SAFETY RULES**

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It is the policy of the Hebrew Academy to (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub.L.No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254.

The U.S. Government requires HACS to have certain rules that govern our use of the Internet to protect the safety of our students.

### **Therefore:**

- No student is ever permitted to be on a computer without a faculty member present and in a position to view the student's screen.
- Students and parents recognize that participation in a social media network or chat rooms is unsafe and not in accordance with the values of the Hebrew Academy.
- If authorized by a teacher, principal or adult advisor to use the internet, students will enter only those websites required for the project, will exhibit appropriate behavior while on-line and in websites and will remain within the authorized parameters.
- Bullying of any kind – including cyberbullying – whether during or after school hours, is expressly prohibited and will result in severe disciplinary action.

***The School regards any behavior that is not in the best interest of the School & its expectation of its Torah values, at School or elsewhere\*, as sufficient grounds for a disciplinary response.***  
*All pupils will recognize that use of the Internet and electronic devices in any form, including research or social media, must be supervised by an adult, and will be used in an appropriate manner.*

*\*elsewhere* includes our Jewish communities, the general public and cyberspace.

## **SCHOOL ATTIRE**

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Students are expected to be **clean** and well-groomed at all times. Hair length, style and color will be conservative and conventional. Hair may not fall across the face. No caps, bandanas or kerchiefs will be allowed. Tattoos (permanent or temporary) are strictly prohibited. Sweaters and sweatshirts will be solid (with no words or logos) and denim jackets, skirts and pants are not permitted. The school administration is the final judge as to the acceptability of any student's grooming and appearance. These rules will be followed whenever students are participating in a school activity, i.e. Rosh Chodesh, trips, etc.

All students will wear closed shoes and socks at all times. Socks must be visible, i.e. low cut socks are not permitted. Crocs and sneakers with wheels are a safety hazard and are absolutely prohibited. **The official uniform company is Uniforms & More, Inc.** Uniforms are available for purchase at [www.uniformsandmore.org](http://www.uniformsandmore.org) or by calling (954) 822-7177 at any time during the year. Uniforms purchased will bear the appropriate school monogram.

***Parents will need to come to school with a change of clothes if you are not wearing the uniform.***

**Girls: Grades 6 – 8:** Must wear **school skirts** that are below knee length. There are a few styles available from the uniform company. The narrow, ankle length skirts are not part of the uniform and are not acceptable. **Knee socks or stockings** must be worn at all times. Leggings and ankle socks are not acceptable. **School shirts** must be the long sleeved polo shirts. The sleeves should be of proper length. If they are too long, they should be folded over neatly. Short-sleeved polos are not acceptable. Shirts must have the school monogram. T-shirts worn beneath the school shirt must be a solid, light color.

Make-up is not permitted at school. Only very pale, light nail polish shades (no glitter) are acceptable. Jewelry should not be ostentatious or noisy (such as multiple earrings, long dangling earrings, charm bracelets or bells.) The administration will determine the acceptability of adornments.

**Boys: Grades 6 – 8:** Must wear long, plain, navy blue **school pants**, and monogrammed middle **school shirts**. Shirts must be tucked in for all boys. Jeans, cargo pants, multi- or zipper-pocketed pants, shorts or torn pants are not acceptable. Socks are always required. Low-cut socks are not acceptable. Denim jeans and jackets are not acceptable.

All boys are required to wear a kippah at all times while in school. An extra kippah should be your backpack in case yours is misplaced. Baseball caps are not for class wear. Jewelry, including rubber wrist bands and earrings are not acceptable.

On (the first school day of) **Rosh Chodesh** students may dress up in Shabbos clothing that adheres to the guidelines of the dress code. Boys must wear collared shirts. T-shirts are not acceptable.

## **MIDTERM & FINAL EXAMS**

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The Middle School has a program of progressive midterm and final examinations. These exams help you to reinforce skills and concepts developed during the course of the year.

At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, all grades will take midterm examinations. These exams will include material learned during those marking periods alone and will carry a value greater than any individual test. In June, all grades will take final exams as well. These exams will cover material learned during the entire school year as follows:

**Sixth Graders:** Language Arts and Chumash

**Seventh Graders** Language Arts, Mathematics and Chumash

**Eighth Graders:** All subjects

## HALLWAYS

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Middle School students change classrooms frequently. Changes take place while other classes are still in session. It is of utmost importance to walk through the hallways quietly and respectfully with consideration for others in school.

## LATENESS

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If you are late, before 8:45 you must go directly to class. After 8:45 you must report to the school office **with your parent or driver** to obtain a late pass. Chronic tardiness will result in internal or external suspension (depending on frequency) and/or special assignments and will impact your davening grade.

Changing classes should be done as quickly and smoothly as possible. However, if you do arrive late to class, do not disrupt the learning that is already in progress.

Latecomers will take the mini-assignment that is set aside for them and will make sure to have it done for the next day. Excessive lateness may result in grade reduction and disciplinary action.

## LOCKERS

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Every student is assigned a locker in which to keep his/her belongings. Please bring a combination lock to your Middle School orientation. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the locker **locked** and to know the combination. Students should go to their lockers in the morning, at recess, at lunch and at the end of the day only. Students **may not go to their lockers between classes**.

Lockers should be kept clean, orderly and closed at all times. **Lockers must be cleaned out completely before every lengthy school holiday (i.e. Sukkot, Winter Break and Pesach) so that cleaning and pest control may take place.**

## LUNCH

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Proper manners and “Derech Eretz” are expected of all students at the Hebrew Academy at all times, including lunch period. It is a time to eat and socialize. Just before lunch students should go quickly to their lockers, take what they need and proceed immediately to the lunchroom with their teacher. **Bentching at school is a learning and practice experience and all students are required to participate.** You are responsible for the cleanliness of your tables and floor. The lunchroom must always be left clean. Gum chewing is never allowed.

Students who are involved in special activities during lunch (such as yearbook or library squads) must be sure that the lunchroom supervising teacher has them listed as attending that activity. They must also be sure that they have enough time to wash, eat, clean up and bentch.



***Middle School students are asked to read the Middle School Handbook and submit the following Statement of Understanding:***

## **STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

I understand that the following is a summarization of the list of rules and code of conduct that will be in effect during the school year.

- As a Middle School student I have assumed more responsibility for myself and for my actions. I am aware that I am a role model for the younger students in the school.
- Class begins promptly. I understand my responsibilities concerning punctuality, having my books and materials ready and proper use of the lockers.
- Regular attendance is necessary for success. I am responsible for learning that takes place when I am absent.
- I will complete the number of community service chesed hours required for my grade level.
- I understand and will abide by the rules and consequences of the code of conduct.
- I will follow the guidelines of the dress code throughout the entire year including special days.
- Respect for the building and its cleanliness and for those who are learning and working inside are of utmost importance and must be considered at all times, including during free time.
- I understand the lunch procedure and will follow its rules and the directions of the staff in charge.
- As part of our Computer Science curriculum I may be given access to the Internet. I understand that I will be responsible for using this media in an appropriate manner.

**I HAVE READ THIS STUDENT HANDBOOK AND WILL HONOR ITS RULES.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Please print clearly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date