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RJJ/YESHIVA MERKAZ HATORAH
STELLA K. ABRAHAM PRESCHOOL

Preschool Parent Handbook



August 2021

Dear Preschool Parents,

Attending Preschool is one of the most important milestones in a child's life.

This handbook was prepared to assure parents that their children are in the hands of warm, professional, and sensitive teachers. In addition, it contains an outline of our early childhood program. It can be used as a reference so keep it handy.

Nothing, of course, takes the place of direct contact between parents and schools. At this young age the child's school life should be an extension of that of his home-life. Parents are invited to call the school to discuss any questions or uncertainties regarding their child's preschool education. Parents are also asked to let the school know of any changes or happenings occurring in the home that might have an effect on the child in school.

With this in mind, I look forward to a fully cooperative and successful relationship with the parent body.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Laya Leeder/Alster
Preschool Director



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FOREWORD:

RJJ/ Merkaz Hatorah Preschool has attained a sterling reputation and popularity in the Staten Island community. In a large measure, this justifiable popularity is due to the wonderful achievements of our program which instills a deep love and pride in our youngsters for Torah and Yiddishkeit. We are committed to taking each individual child into consideration as we recognize and respond to their unique learning style. A carefully programmed curriculum of training for Torah living has been planned and has been most successful.

The physical facilities for the preschool are extremely attractive, spacious, and well equipped with the most modern teaching aids and toys.

Our curriculum consists of:

Instilling a love for Hashem and the love for Torah

A joy in the performance of mitzvos

Davening, giving Tzedakah, Parsha, a knowledge of Yomim Tovim, learning Brochos, and learning the Aleph Bais

The Pre 1-A classes master Kriah, reading Hebrew, which culminates with our students receiving their first Siddur.

An extensive Hebrew vocabulary is developed through constant repetitive usage.

From colors, shapes, numbers, and letter recognition to exploring themes: weather, the four seasons, community helpers, the five senses, etc., learning is in abundance in preschool. By the end of Pre 1-A our children are reading and writing words, poems, songs, and even short stories. Teachers enhance the curriculum with the use of songs, music, arts and crafts, stories, and games.

Our Preschool is privileged to have two UPK classrooms for our four year olds. The Universal Pre Kindergarten government funded program

is geared to benefit every child. This program provides educational support for our trained and certified teaching professionals who implement their knowledge and creativity in every thematic unit and lesson. The Common Core Curriculum prepares the children with the foundation of skills: reading readiness, phonemic awareness, and writing skills to start them off on a path to succeed throughout their educational career.

We are also privileged to have a 3-K full day program. This government funded program includes free tuition, free lunch and snacks.

All of our classes are under the direction of experienced and dedicated teachers who will make the preschool program an especially rewarding and exciting experience for our students. Our staff is planning for a very fruitful and enriching experience for your child, and we look forward to a very successful school year.

INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL

Parents will receive a letter notifying them as to the date and time of Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Kindergarten orientation. Mothers should accompany their children during this orientation as they meet their new teacher. This will help the child adjust to their new classroom environment.

All Preschool parents are invited to Back to School Night shortly after the start of the new school year which will be done via Zoom. The teachers will provide an overview of the objectives of the school year, including their goals, teaching methods, and daily routine, and class procedures. Parents may ask questions and discuss any concerns they may have at this time.

COMMUNICATION



Fostering a healthy relationship with home is of vital importance, as this can lead to insights regarding the child placed in our care. Parents should feel free to call the Preschool Director to discuss any aspect of their child's preschool experience.

Two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the year. This will give you the opportunity to meet with individual teachers to discuss the particulars of your child. If you feel there is an issue you wish to discuss with the teachers at any other time, please write a note or call the office, and the teacher will respond.

DAILY SCHEDULE:

School hours for all Pre-school children:

Monday - Thursday

8:45 A.M - 9:00 A.M. Arrival

9:00 A.M.-3:15 P.M. - Regular school hours (children may arrive in classrooms at 8 :45 A.M.)

Friday

8:45 A.M - 9:00 A.M. - Arrival

9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. - Regular school hours (children may arrive in classrooms at 8 :45 A.M.)

9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. - Pre1-A class

DISMISSAL FOR PRE N, NURSERY, AND KINDERGARTEN CLASSES ON FRIDAYS IS AT 12:30 SHARP!!!



TRANSPORTATION

Carpool Procedure:



Children in Pre-Nursery, Nursery, and Kindergarten are transported to and from school through carpools. Parents must form their own carpools, and fill out the necessary form by the date designated on the form.

- Cars will pick up and drop off in front of the building, forming a line going around the "U". The "U" should accommodate about 5 - 6 vehicles at one time. If you are the first car in the parking area, pull up as far as possible so that you are adjacent to the gravel parking area. This is to maximize the number of cars able to pull up to the building at one time.
- Cars will go around the "U" to avoid reversing in the parking lot.
- No reversing in the "U" is allowed at any time. This presents a tremendous safety hazard.
- **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS ANY PARENT ALLOWED TO PULL AHEAD OF THE CAR IN FRONT OF THEM.** This has proven to present a serious safety threat. This rule must be followed to ensure the well-being of your children and their classmates. The order in which you enter the parking lot should be the order in which you exit.

Arrival and Dismissal:

Drop off will begin at 8:45 am.

- Parents will drop off children by the front door, where a teacher will escort the children to their classrooms.

Dismissal: Dismissal is at 3:15 P.M. **SHARP.**

Cars should please follow the marked arrows in the parking lot

- Parents pull up into the driveway and remain in their cars. Teachers will bring the children to their cars.
- We understand that occasionally changes are needed. If any change is needed to a carpool, the school office must be informed before 2:15 PM, plus a text should be sent to Mrs. Leeder/Alster by 2:15 PM as well, Monday-Thursday and 10:30 am on Fridays.
- Before dismissal, students will be placed in their respective waiting areas
- Please refrain from engaging other parents or faculty in prolonged discussions at dismissal time. It is important that you pick up your children and proceed promptly in order to maintain a smooth, orderly flow of traffic. **Parents should stay in their cars and the children will be brought out to the car.**

Bussing



Pre-1A classes have the opportunity to be transported by Pioneer Bus Company. Bus routes and pickup stops are determined by the New York Bureau of Pupil Transportation. A listing of current bus stops assigned to the school has been sent out. Parents should select the stop nearest to their home.

Children will be permitted to ride only their designated route to their regular bus stop. No other arrangements will be allowed without a note from the parents clearly stating the alternate destination. Parents who wish to pick up a child at dismissal must likewise notify the office. Students will be placed on their usual bus unless we are notified.

Students are required to adhere to safety rules on the bus.

They Must:

- Enter the bus quickly and sit down
- Sit in their assigned designated seats
- Remain seated at all times when the bus is moving
- Keep head and arms inside the bus
- Keep voices low
- Obey all directions of the bus driver
- Help keep the bus clean and in good condition
- Be courteous and mindful of the rights of others to ensure a safe and comfortable ride

Consult the calendar for days when parents must provide transportation.

FOOD:

Snack:

Preschool students should bring from home two nutritious snacks and drinks bearing appropriate kashrus endorsement. A plain K is an insufficient kashrus symbol without additional clarification from a reliable rabbinical authority. There are children in preschool with serious allergies. Therefore, all snacks must be nut free. Children in 3-K and 4-K classes get free snacks.

Lunch

Lunch can be brought from home or purchased from the caterer that the school has appointed. Details will follow in a future letter. We are a nut-free school. Please do not send any foods that contain nuts.

Children in 3-K and 4-K classes get free lunches.



LOST AND FOUND:

All outer clothing, lunch boxes, etc. should be labeled with your child's name. Possessions that are not labeled will be brought to a designated "Lost & Found" area in the office. If they are not claimed by the end of the school year, they will be discarded.

OUTDOOR PLAY:



Children are taken outside daily, weather permitting. They make use of the playground equipment in our back yard. Please make sure your child has appropriate outdoor clothing and climbing shoes.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES:



A birthday party to celebrate a child's birthday is a very important preschool activity! We want this event to be a memorable one for every child. Parents who want to schedule a birthday party in school for their child should contact the teacher a week in advance to set a date and time. A list of guidelines for the birthday party will be sent home with your child.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION:

The Parents' Association plays a vital role in enhancing your child's educational experiences in school. The Parents Association sponsors many activities, purchases educational games and toys for the classroom, subsidizes trips and distributes Rosh Chodesh treats. All parents are urged to show their support, not only to the annual membership drive but also by becoming involved and volunteering assistance for Parent Association projects.

PROGRESS REPORTS:



Child friendly, as well as developmentally appropriate progress reports are sent home three times a year. There will be a time allotted in the form of conferences; if parents and/or teachers feel further explanations are needed.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION



When inclement weather necessitates the closing of local schools and especially the Public Schools, RJJ/Merkaz Hatorah will also close. In the event we cancel school and the Public schools remain open, we will endeavor to notify parents via text alert. We are attaching instructions for signing up with the text alert system for those that are not signed up as yet. Those parents who signed up last year need not apply again. Parents may also call the school hotline number@ 718- 982-8745 Ext. 9 If for any reason school must be dismissed during the day, the yeshiva will follow the procedure designated by the parent on the emergency form. Please indicate on the school emergency form where parents can be reached if such an occasion arises and where to send a child if parents cannot be reached.

VISITORS:

No visitors will be allowed into the school building. If parents need to drop off a forgotten lunch, book, etc. they should bring it to the entrance and our staff will make sure it gets to the classroom.

SANITIZING:

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer:

Students will be encouraged to wash and sanitize their hands frequently. This will be specially monitored each time a student transitions into the classroom, i.e. upon arrival to school, after using the restroom, after recess, as well as after eating snacks and lunch.

Schoolwide Sanitizing:

The maintenance staff will be disinfecting high traffic areas, such as bathrooms, throughout the day. Classrooms will be disinfected after lunch and at the end of the school day.



ILLNESS:

We ask for your cooperation in keeping children at home when exhibiting signs of illness. Should a student start to not feel well during the day, a parent will be called and notified to pick the student up from school, or to make alternate arrangements. Students are not to return to school after an illness until they are without fever for 24 hours. If the child has a stomach virus, he/she can only return after 24 hours free of symptoms.



APPENDIX A:



EMERGENCY HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROCEDURES:

Please fill out the enclosed Emergency Health Procedure Form and return it to the school office on or before the first day of school. The school can then follow the wishes of the parent in case of an emergency. If a student has a special medical condition or health problem, the parents must advise the school of any procedures and/or accommodations that may be necessary. We now have a registered Nurse on premises who is available to address your child's health needs.

Medical Records:

The New York State Department of Health requires that all medical records be completed and submitted to the school office before the child is allowed to attend school. Until the age of six (first grade), every child is required to complete a physical exam every year, and to be up to date with his/her immunizations. Medical forms must be submitted to the school office by the first day of school. Your child will not be permitted to enter school without an updated medical form.

Medication Policy:

No medication of any kind may be administered without a written and signed note from the parent. Prescription medication must be kept in a container that is labeled with:

- the child's name
- name of medication
- dosage
- time of dispensation
- A small refrigerator will be available for medication.



APPENDIX B:



EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES:

Fire Drills and lock down drills are conducted throughout the year.

When a Fire Alarm in an emergency is sounded, the following takes place:

1. Deputy Fire Wardens (Mrs. Esther Akerman, Mrs. Leah Leeder/Alster and Elvis) report to their respective wings and assist teachers in evacuating children into the hallways.
2. Assistant Fire Wardens (Naomi Goldman and Blossom Newman) assist classroom teachers in preparing students for evacuation into hallway:
3. Buddies (Ms. Goldstein and Mrs. Hershowitz) report to their designated children to assist them in evacuation.
4. Searchers (Mrs. Gross, Mrs. S Rosenbaum, and Mrs. Rosenberg) will assist classroom teachers in preparing students for evacuation into hallway. Once this is done, searchers begin inspection of empty classrooms, bathroom, storage areas and offices for stragglers.
5. Once the children are in the hallway, the Fire Warden (Mrs. Esther Akerman) will instruct the Deputy Fire Wardens as to which exits will be used to evacuate the building. The evacuation can be effected through both wings, the cafeteria or through the main entrance.

Fire Drills may be conducted in place dependent on weather conditions.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE CHILDREN ARE INSTRUCTED TO REMAIN QUIET FOR THE DURATION OF THE FIRE DRILL!

Looking forward to a rewarding and successful year in Preschool!