



Parent – Student Handbook

תשפ"ג – 5783



Bais Chaya Mushka School
 4375 Chesswood Drive • Toronto, ON M3J 2C2
 (416) 398-9532 fax (416) 631-1110
info@bcmschool.ca

Table of contents

Letter from the principal	3
BCM Goals and philosophy	4
Absence	5
Attire	5
Birthday Celebrations	6
Bas Mitzvah Celebrations	6
Books	6
Carpools.....	7
Chassidishe Yomim Tovim	7
Calendar	7
Cancellation of School	7
Communication	8
Discipline	9
Electronic Devices	9
Cell/Smart phones	9
Health and Immunization	9
Homework	10
Illness	10
Insurance	10
Lateness	10
Lice Checks	10
Lunch and Snacks	11
Messages	11
Middos Tovos	11
Parent Involvement	11
Photocopies	11
Recreation	12
School Records	12
Sign in/out Policy	12
Visitors	12



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Rabbinic Advisory
Committee

Rabbi M. Bernstein
Rabbi Y. Gansburg
Rabbi L. Jacobson

Rabbi Nochum Sosover
Executive Director

Rabbi Yaacov Vidal
Principal

Mrs. Elaine Rubinoff
Remedial Support

Summer, 5782

Dear Parents and Students *sheyichyu*,

The accompanying handbook provides some basic guidelines of the goals of *Bais Chaya Mushka*, and the mutual expectations of us as partners in achieving these goals. Please review carefully the information contained herein with your daughter. The adherence to these guidelines will facilitate the smooth and successful incorporation of our goals and, ultimately, enable us to achieve success in the *chinuch* of your daughter.

A keyword in the success of our school is "partnership". Please remember that in a partnership, while each individual brings his unique skill and ability, the success of the partnership is only realized when there is an identified and shared common goal. Each partner must always be aware of the goal, and focus their activity towards it. Focusing on the goal is the only way the parent/school partnership can achieve the meaningful and lasting *chinuch* of your daughter.

We trust that you recognize this handbook as a means of establishing and communicating the goal and the way by which to acquire it. I sincerely expect that you will take the time to read the handbook and familiarize yourself with the expectations that BCM has from the parents and students alike so we can work together in educating each individual student to maximize their potential academically, socially and emotionally. As always, should you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Looking forward to a successful שנת הלימודים where each one of our Talmidos will grow in all the above mentioned areas,

Wishing you and your family a כתיבה וחתימה טובה,

Rabbi Vidal

An Affiliate of the

BAIS CHAYA MUSHKA

GOALS AND PHILOSOPHY

- To provide a Jewish education based on the teachings and philosophy of Chabad Chassidus;
- To instill in our daughters strong Chassidische and Torah'dike values and Midos emphasizing Ahavas Yisroel, Ahavas Hashem, Yiras Shomayim, Aidelkeit, Derech Eretz and Tznius;
- To provide our daughters with a well rounded education in both Jewish and general studies;
- To maximize student achievement in:
 - ✓ Personal Growth
 - ✓ Refinement of Character
 - ✓ Emotional Maturity
 - ✓ Mastery of Skills
 - ✓ Proficiency of Information

"A Lubavitcher chinuch – one that connects the previous generations to this one, emphasizing that the students are descendants of the Avos and Imahos, and that they must therefore follow in those ways as taught in our Living Torah – ensures that they will develop and grow to be an upright and blessed generation." (Igros Kodesh Vol.10, p.411)

A chossid of R' Mendel of Kotzk poured out his troubled heart to the Rebbe. He said, "I have a poor memory, which hinders me in my study of Torah. No matter how much I strive to study and become a great scholar, I am held back by my weak memory. What can I do? When I learn anything, I promptly forget it."

"Who told you that you must become a learned man?" asked the Rebbe. "Is it not sufficient for you to be a decent, upright Jew who studies Torah because he was thus commanded?"

R' Mendel went over to the bookcase and took out a Tanach. He held it up before the chossid and said, "Nowhere in the entire Torah does it state that a person must strive to be a great scholar!" He opened the sefer to the first chapter in Yeshayahu. "Here," he said, pointing, "Even when the prophet says, 'Study diligently,' Rashi comments, 'We learn from here that the purpose of study is in order to become a better person, one who always does good'." (A Story a Day, 12 Shevat)

“בכל דרכיך דעה” – *"In all of your ways, [strive to] know [Hashem]."* (see Berachos 63a)

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ABSENCE

Please call the school office if your daughter will be absent for more than one day. Notify us why she is absent, and leave a message for the teacher to send home any work missed.

Students are responsible for all work/tests missed while absent.

In some grades, your daughter will have an assigned "Homework buddy" who will call her to keep her up to date if she is absent and vice versa. **It is a student's responsibility to make up missed work and take the test(s)/assessment(s) she was absent for.**

ATTIRE/UNIFORM

The most obvious way that we express who we are, is through the clothes we choose to wear. As *Bnos Chabad*, we must dress in a manner that exudes *aidelkeit* and *chassidishkeit*. Lubavitcher girls in particular, must always dress in a *tzniusdik* fashion, as they are an example to the community and must make a *Kiddush Hashem*. This applies in and out of school. In school we achieve this through the medium of a uniform. The uniform consists of the navy blue skirt or jumper, and the pin-striped blouse. **ONLY the BCM Uniform purchased through the school is**

acceptable.

Leg wear: Solid white, solid navy, solid grey, solid maroon (BCM sweatshirt colour) or solid black tights are allowed. **No socks or leggings are allowed to be worn in school.**

Students (grades 1-8) who come to school wearing leggings and/or socks will not be allowed into class. In the above scenario students can either wait at the office until tights are brought from home or change into tights that will be available for purchase at the office in which case parents will be responsible to pay for the tights. (Pre1A and below may also wear socks that cover the knees at all times).

Sweatshirts/Sweaters: The following sweatshirts may be worn: 1) BCM (available for purchase through the school office), 2) Tzivos Hashem and 3) Chidon sweatshirts. Grade 8 will be allowed to wear their grade 8 sweatshirts. Pre-school students may wear solid colour sweatshirts only. Students who wear a different sweater will receive 2 reminder notices.

After 2 infractions, we will give them a BCM sweatshirt and parents will be responsible to pay for it.

Footwear: Shoes should be neat and in a conservative style (no slippers or clogs) and *aidel* looking to reflect the look of a *Bas Chabad*. BCM reserves the right to ask a student not to wear shoes which are deemed inappropriate by school standards.

Accessories: Nail polish may not be worn in school.

Hairstyles (hair below shoulder length should be tied up), earrings, bracelets and hair accessories should be neat and *aidel* looking so as to reflect the look of a *Bas Chabad*.

Skirts/Jumpers need to be long enough so that the knees are covered at all times even while sitting, jumping etc. The recommended length is 4 inches below the bottom of the knee. **Please ensure that your daughter's uniform (skirt or jumper) covers her knees as per the**



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requirement, before the beginning of the school year to enable her to start the year on the right foot.

Skirts that aren't long enough to cover the knees at all times (as per the above requirement), will need to be lengthened or replaced by the parents.

Shirts/blouses: Only BCM uniform blouses may be worn in school. Tznius/upper buttons must be closed to ensure that the collar bone is covered at all times.

All uniform items will be available for sale before the year begins at the BCM office.

The Office maintains a supply of Tights, Shirts, Skirts, Jumpers and Sweaters to distribute to students who are in violation of the School Dress-Code. Parents will be notified and will be held responsible for a cleaning fee – or the purchase price for tights – as set by the School.

Students who repeatedly violate the Dress-Code will be sent home at the discretion of the Administration.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Your daughter's birthday during the school year should be celebrated with a *farbrengen* during class time. **Only donuts or cupcakes from a nut-free bakery** (My Zaidy's, Grodzinskis, Hermes, Richmonds, Amazing Donuts) **will be allowed.** The birthday girl will not be allowed to distribute *pekelach* of any sort to her classmates. The teacher must be given 3 days advance notice. The student should be prepared with coins for *tzedaka* to distribute to the class and a *dvar-Torah*. A *chassidische farbrengen* will then take place in accordance with the Rebbe's instructions. **Birthdays should not be celebrated with classmates at home.** A "בו-ביום" of שבת or Sunday may be celebrated with a חסידישע מלוה מלכה.

BAS MITZVAH CELEBRATIONS

The following are the BCM standards that all parents need to adhere to when inviting their daughter's BCM classmates to her Bas Mitzvah celebration.

Bas Mitzvah celebrations should be in a Chasidische style with Aidelkeit, Chasidishkeit, Divrei Torah and Chasidische Nigunim.

All food items served at a Bas Mitzvah should be:

Cholov Yisroel

Pas Yisroel

Bishul Yisroel

Lubavitch Shechita

Heimische Brands

When planning your daughter's Bas Mitzvah please bear in mind that students will need to attend school the next day and plan the timing of the event that it should not end past 9:00.

Before inviting BCM students, please contact Rabbi Vidal to go over the details of the event.

BOOKS-SUPPLIES

A list of required books along with information on where they can be purchased will be posted on our website. Some books for the students will be available directly from the school. Your child is required to have all the appropriate books.

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We expect that your child take good care of the textbooks that are rented from the school. Parents will be responsible to purchase the book at full price if it is damaged/lost.

CARPOOLS

School begins at 9:00 for all grades. Carpools can drop off from **8:45-9:00**. For the safety of the children, please follow the directives of the supervisor and adhere to the following carpool safety rules:

When dropping off at in the morning and picking up at 3:55;

- Enter from the driveway closest to Sheppard (2nd driveway when you are coming from Thornhill)
- Drive around the building
- No dropping off or picking up in front of the building during those times as this will create the need to reverse and can be very dangerous. This is Sakonas Nefashos!!!
- If you are doing 2:30 carpool, you may park in front of the building and pick up your child.
- If you made arrangements for someone to pick up your children or carpool please notify the office. We will not release any student if we don't have parental consent. When calling specify the name of the driver as well as what kind of car they will be driving.

If a child is brought to school after 9:00, she must receive a late note to be admitted into class (See "Sign-in/Sign-out"). In order not to disrupt class, students arriving late will be required to wait at the office until the next break.

Studies show that late arrival to school has an overall negative impact on a student, from her self-esteem to her academic performance. Please do all that it takes in order for your child to be on time to school.

Pick up times are: Kindergarten – **1:00 p.m.** Pre-1A – **2:30 p.m.** Grades 1-8 – **3:55-4:10 p.m.** Friday pick-up for all grades is **11:55-12:10**. Carpools that are more than 15 minutes late will be penalized an extra hour's fee (\$35) for the supervisor of the child/ren.

CHASSIDISHE YOMIM TOVIM

Chassidishe Yomim Tovim will be celebrated in school with *farbrengens*, stories, etc. On *Rosh Chodesh Kislev* and *Yud-Tes Kislev* **only** students should wear their Shabbos clothes to school and they will be celebrated with a full *seudah*.

CALENDAR

A school calendar will be available on our website www.bcmschool.ca. We may modify the calendar during the year should the need arise. Parents will be notified by means of the School Shmooze. **Please don't schedule elective appointments during school time as this causes students to miss very valuable lessons and skills that are often difficult to catch up.**

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

In the event of a snowstorm or other emergency, parents will be notified by the school by email of an early dismissal. If school is being cancelled in the morning, every effort will be made to have an email sent by 7:45am. Please be considerate of the exigency of the occasion, and promptly comply with any instruction issued. School



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cancellations, early dismissals, and other calendar-change decisions are not made lightly. Many factors are taken into consideration, and we try to avoid changes whenever possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS/SCHOOL

In order to facilitate smooth and efficient school administration, and so that parents are aware of and involved in every phase of their child's education, continuous parent-school communication is essential. The following are school communication procedures:

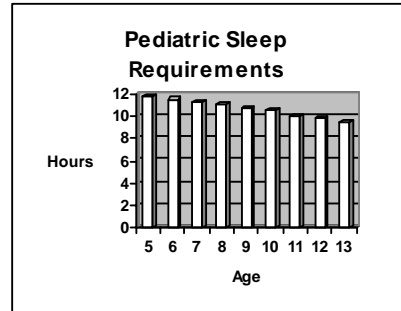
1. The Homework Book is the most up-to-date and ongoing method of communication between the school and home. It is imperative that you sign it daily – even if there is nothing written!
2. Almost all school communication is included in one place in our Erev Shabbos “School Shmooze”. We will send a weekly email update and send it home. It is up to you to encourage your daughter to act responsibly by bringing this and other notes home and showing them to you, so that you will be informed of what’s going on in school.
3. Student report cards will be sent to parents periodically via email. They represent the teacher's evaluation of the student's progress.
4. Updates on the progress in a particular subject area will be issued between reports when necessary. A parent-teacher conference night will be scheduled each year. Parent-teacher conferences are recognized as the best method for advancing mutual understanding between school and home.
5. Every teacher will send an email introducing herself at the onset of the new school year. Emailing the teacher on her school email account is the way to communicate with a teacher. If a parent would like to speak to a teacher, please email the teacher to schedule a convenient time to speak. Please allow an appropriate amount of time for the teacher to make the phone call. Please be respectful of teachers’ personal time and do not call them at home. **Additionally, a Simcha/social event/grocery store/Shul are not places where a parent should approach a teacher to discuss their child.**
6. A very effective way of communicating with the school is via email. Emails sent to teachers and to the school are archived on the school server for possible retrieval. Email is not to be used to address students’ academic progress or social and behavioral issues, but may be used to schedule a meeting to discuss such topics. **Whatsapp and/or text message should not be used to communicate with your daughter’s teacher.**
7. Staff members are forbidden from responding to discussion relating to other students or staff members, threats, accusations, disparaging or personal remarks, or to any email that may be construed as harassment.
8. When an issue arises and a child comes home distraught, whether it is a scenario that occurred between your child and another child or whether it is a concern you have with something that occurred in class, it is imperative that you call the teacher to ask for the adult version of the story as opposed to making accusations against another student or the teacher. Often, the child may have misunderstood what happened or missed out important facts which can shed some light on the scenario that occurred. Should you need further help, feel free to contact Rabbi Vidal at the office.

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DISCIPLINE

We discipline with love, care and encouragement, taking measures to ensure happy, self-motivated, self-assured children. The process, therefore, is very individualized. Please express your unconditional love for your daughter hand-in-hand with your unconditional support for her teacher. Please remember that any discipline measures have been well thought out by the school, and we expect your partnership and cooperation in handling them. Should you have concerns about any disciplinary measure taken, it should be expressed to the teacher or principal **only, and in private; not** in front of your daughter.

Our School has a Policy Statement delineating our 'zero-tolerance' for Bullying. The distinction between 'bullying' and 'bickering' (etc.) will be determined by the Principal. Research has proven that the best way to deal with a bullying situation is to empower the person being targeted as opposed to 'punish' the one who is the 'bully.' At BCM our philosophy is that we work with your daughter to build up her self-confidence so these situations do not occur in the future. If you feel your child was involved in an incident that *may* be bullying, please report it to the Principal. Please refer to the student behaviour policy for more details.



ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices such as games, cameras, organizers, ipods, MP3 players, phones etc. inevitably serve as a distraction during class or during other times that students are meant to be listening out for teacher instructions. **They are not to be brought to school at all.** If they are taken away by a teacher for any reason, the Principal may hold the item until the end of the year.

PHONES/SMARTPHONES:

Students are not allowed to bring cell phones to school at any time. This applies to the bus to/from school as well as any school function whether during hours or after hours no matter if the function is held in BCM or elsewhere. An example would be an 8th grade carnival, Melaveh Malka etc... Phones will be confiscated.

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION

The student who is in good health has a distinct advantage when starting school. She will better be able to learn, readily adjust to classroom activities, and successfully get along with others. Therefore:

- a) We strongly urge that each student have an annual thorough physical examination and that your physician's recommendations are carried out. It is further recommended that thorough dental and eye exams are made, and the corrective work is done **prior to the start of the school year**. When such work must be performed during the year, we strongly urge you to schedule the appointments for after school hours.
- b) Care should be taken that your daughter gets enough sleep every night. While the amount of sleep needed differs from child to child, a chart of the recommended hours of sleep required is on the right.
- c) Studies have proven unequivocally that nutrition plays an important role in a child's academic success or otherwise. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day! Make sure that your child is eating a wholesome and healthful first meal. Snacks and lunches should contain healthful foods from as many food groups as possible. Make sure that your child likes the food that you are sending her, to prevent it from going to the garbage.

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- d) The school is required by law to suspend any student who does not provide us with an up-to-date record of immunizations received.

HOMEWORK

Approximately five minutes* of *Kriah* homework will be given daily for students in Pre-1A. Ten minutes* of homework will be given daily for students in Grade 1. Fifteen minutes of homework will be allotted for Grade 2; and 5 additional minutes a night for each higher grade that your child attends. In older grades projects will be assigned to be done over longer periods of time.

It is strongly encouraged that each girl has a designated spot at home to do her homework. This area should be well-lit and free from distractions. Parents should do their utmost to be available during homework time, to lend a helping hand to their daughter and be involved with her school work and progress.

Every student will receive from the school a standardized homework notebook, as indicated on your daughter's book-list.



* These times are approximations. Every student is different. What takes one child 5 minutes to complete, may take another 20 minutes. Should you have a concern about the volume of your daughter's homework as it relates to your daughter's abilities, definitely take the time to discuss it with her teacher.

ILLNESS

We ask for parental cooperation in keeping your child at home if she has any signs of sickness. If a child becomes sick during school hours, her parents will be contacted and she must be picked up immediately, or alternate arrangements should be made.

Any contagious diseases, or lice, should be reported to the principal immediately upon discovery/diagnosis as a courtesy to the other parents in the school. If a child has fever, please keep the child home for 24 hours after the child has no more fever. A doctor's note is required for re-admission to class in such a situation. The school staff is not permitted to administer or dispense any medication without parental permission.

INSURANCE

Our students are insured for any accident c"v occurring on our school grounds or on field trips.

LATENESS

The tardy student develops poor habits. She disturbs an entire class and misses part of her daily work. The child who arrives at school after 9:00 must have a note of explanation, and will be required to wait at the office until the next break. (See "Sign-in/Sign-out.") A record of each lateness is maintained and remains on her permanent record. If lateness becomes persistent, parents will be contacted. Remember... Punctuality is an area that demands fullest parental cooperation!

LICE CHECKS

We try to do an initial lice-check in school at the beginning of the school year and sometimes after long school breaks (eg. *Succos*, *Pesach*). If a child is found with lice/nits during a lice check, we will follow the advice of the professionals. **Students who have lice/nits will not be allowed back into class without a certificate from a lice clinic that they are lice/nit free.** The presence of lice is to be treated as a contagious *Illness* (see above).

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LUNCH AND SNACKS



Students will be eating lunch in school. **Students must wash for lunch every day;** so send some 'hamotzi' even if the rest of the lunch does not require washing. Lunches and snacks should be brought from home. If your child forgets her lunch, the school will provide her with matza. Students are not permitted to call home for forgotten lunches. **Do not send instant soups or oatmeal,** as students are never provided with boiling water. The school does not provide cups, spoons,

etc.

All food sent to school must be *Bishul* and *Cholov Yisroel* and bear an appropriate *hechsher*. Because of the large number of families that are stringent requiring potato chips to be *Bishul Yisroel*, we request that only Lieber's, Pashkez, etc. potato chips be sent to school.

No nuts or nut products should be sent to school. Please check all foods to ensure that there are no nuts in the ingredients. **This includes products that are produced in a facility which processes nut products or products that may contain traces of nuts.**

No glass containers should be brought to school.

No candies or sweets or sodas should be sent to school.

There is to be absolutely no sharing of food/snacks in school. The reasons for this are numerous (including allergies, parent preferences (health and kashrus), bullying, children going hungry, etc.) and we expect parents to reinforce this message from the home.

MESSAGES

The office does not take phone-calls for students, except in the case of a legitimate emergency. We will take messages and inform students of family *simchos*. Students are not allowed to call home from the office, so please make all arrangements prior to the beginning of the school day.

MIDDOS TOVOS

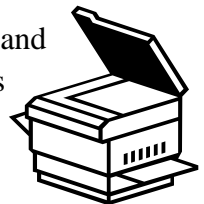
We put a great deal of emphasis on educating the students to develop *middos tovos*. One of the principal ways of accomplishing that is through coordinating our efforts with the home. Please participate in whatever is the current campaign in school, and send back the notes and charts as they are distributed. Modeling appreciation and goodwill is the best way to teach these values.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are many opportunities for parents to get involved with their daughter's school. Your involvement is often crucial to your daughter's succeed in school! Please contact the school office, PTA, or Mothers Association for more information of the opportunities for your involvement.

PHOTOCOPIES

A student who misplaces/loses books, notes or stencils distributed by the teacher and requires another copy, will be liable for the cost of the additional copies. The parents will receive an invoice for 25 cents per copy. We cannot make any personal copies or print-outs for students or parents.



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RECREATION

Students should remember (and be reminded of) their role as *Bnos Chabad* even in their leisure time. Dress code should be in accordance to the highest standards of Tznius at all times. Watching movies, videos, television, surfing the internet, listening to non-Jewish music and the reading of non-Jewish books is absolutely forbidden. Enough has been written on the subject to make elaboration here unnecessary. “Hanging out” in the mall goes against all the values that we teach in school. Between the Lubavitch Library and the various community *chessed* projects, there are many ways for girls to have fun in their leisure time while remaining within a kosher & *chassidische* framework. Regarding recreational reading or even school-initiated research, please note:

1. **Unsupervised/unfiltered use of the internet should not be allowed under any conditions!**
2. Library skills are important. Trips to the library should take place **only** with adult accompaniment.
3. A parent should screen all books **prior** to having the students read them. This applies to **all** materials, whether from the library or encyclopedias from the home or CD.

SCHOOL RECORDS

A student's official school records contain her scores on testing, health, attendance, teacher comments and grade marks. All records are kept in a file and can be reviewed only by the teachers and principal. A file of correspondence between parents and teachers for each student is maintained as well. We will not release a student's records to another school unless all financial obligations have been settled.

SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT POLICY

In order to ensure the safety of our students, we need to be able to monitor their presence in the building at all times.

- If you bring your daughter to school **any time after** the 9:00 bell has rung, you must accompany her to the office to ‘sign her in’ with the school secretary. Only then can you be sure that it was noted that your daughter is in school.
- If you are collecting your daughter early, you must come in to the school building to ‘sign her out’. This is the only way you can be sure that we noted that your daughter has left the building. (NOTE: Calling on the phone is **not** sufficient. Our safety protocol does not allow for a student to leave the building unless accompanied by an adult.)
- If you are collecting your daughter early, she should also bring a note for the teacher indicating what time she will be leaving school. This will give the teacher ample notice to prepare her homework and other needs before she is dismissed to the office.

VISITORS

No parent may visit a class or talk to a teacher during class time without making arrangements with the principal **in advance**. Any parent arriving at the school during school hours, for whatever reason, must check in at the office first.