



PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

2021-2022

BERMAN

MELVIN J. BERMAN HEBREW ACADEMY

תש"ב 5782

SUPPLY CHECK LIST

BY FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

- Classroom information form (to be completed via your Parent Portal)
- MSDE Office of Child Care Emergency Form (enclosed in this mailing- one per child)
- Allergy Action Plan Form (as needed)
- 2 sets of extra clothing
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 1 box disposable masks*
- Family picture
- Sleeping roll or sleeping mat
- \$60 diaper fee

ONGOING

- Backpack
- Lunch box (wipeable)
- Kippah or hat (boys)
- Tzitzit (boys)
- Lunch tickets/extended day coupons as needed
- Appropriate outdoor wear as needed
- Safe shoes for play and climbing (no crocs or flip flops)

Please remember to LABEL EVERYTHING.

***Our Covid guidelines for next year are still being determined and will be shared via email with families.**

Berman Preschool is licensed by MSDE. For information: <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/licensing>

WELCOME!

I am delighted to welcome you and your child to the **Berman Hebrew Academy Preschool!**

We are so proud of our rich and engaging program. It is a true joy to watch the children grow and develop. Our professional and caring teachers and assistants weave together a tapestry of age-appropriate and child-centered learning opportunities that bring out each child's natural curiosity and confidence. We strive to nourish and excite each child and to foster his/her social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and cognitive growth.

As members of their classroom communities, children and teachers collaborate to capture the magic of discovering our world. Our children develop a love for learning, a love for Torah, and a love for life. We cherish our relationships and strive to create a strong bond between children, teachers, and families that supports the continued growth and development of the whole child.

This handbook contains important information about our Preschool. Please read it carefully and keep it handy. I encourage you to look it over with your child as well. As always, should you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or me at any time.

Warmly,

Rebecca

Morah Rebecca Gautieri
Preschool Director
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STARTING PRESCHOOL

The first day of school is an exciting milestone in your child's life. Your child is embarking on a journey that will lead to many roads of discovery and learning.



The Preschool staff will be available to provide support and assistance to your child and to you. Below are a few suggestions for helping create a smooth, happy transition for your child.

- > **Prepare your child for school by explaining what to expect.** Answer questions directly and honestly.
- > **Convey a positive attitude.** Young children are aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure your child that school is a fun and exciting place.

- > **Establish a routine involving both the night before any school day as well as morning preparation.** Routines and rituals add predictability and are comforting in unfamiliar situations.
- > **Let your child know where you will be and when and how he/she will come home from school.** If someone other than you will bring your child to school or will pick them up, please make sure to tell your child.
- > **Maintain a clear goodbye routine.** This may include warning the child you are leaving in one minute, a kiss and a hug, or a wave from the window. Once you tell your child you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the goodbye tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Avoid sneaking out, as this may encourage your child to become less trusting and make the next days of school more difficult.

Our goal is to create a smooth, happy transition during the first few days of school for both children and parents. We appreciate working with you to help this happen.



NAPPING

Children are asked to bring a sleeping roll or mat for napping and rest time. Children will stay in their classroom for this designated rest time. You are welcome to send a special item that comforts your child at nap time. These items will be sent home periodically for washing. Remember to return them promptly.

Napping takes place after lunch, beginning at approximately 12:30 or 12:45. Remember to label everything!

REST TIME: Children who do not nap have rest time. During this time, they engage in a quiet activity such as listening to a book on tape, "reading a book," or engaging in a quiet hands-on activity.

TOILET TRAINING AND DIAPERS

The Preschool staff is happy to work with you to help potty train your child. If you think that your child is ready, please contact your child's teacher and she will discuss a plan with you. We find that it is important to have a plan that is consistent at home and at school.

If your child is still in diapers, we will ask for \$60 three or four times during the school year for diapers, wipes, gloves, and disposable changing table liners. Please send the first payment on or before the first day of school. We will let you know when the next payment is required and ask for a prompt response at that time. Make checks payable to Berman.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

We believe in a strong parent/teacher partnership and keep in regular communication with you. Our preferred method of communication for non-urgent matters is email. We will use the email address you have provided on your registration materials.

Should you need to contact us during the school day, please call the classroom phone number from the chart included inside the cover of this handbook. If we are busy having fun with the children, please leave a message and we will return your call ASAP. If you have an immediate need, you are welcome to call Morah Rebecca at ext. 400 or the front desk at ext. 600.

If you choose to send a note to school with your child, please safety pin the note to your child's shirt. Do not leave notes in your child's backpack as they may be missed. We may occasionally send a note pinned to your child's shirt or backpack.

Parent/teacher conferences are offered two times during the school year. Information about the online conference scheduling system will be emailed to you two to three weeks prior to parent/teacher conferences. Please make sure to update us and the school registrar if any of your contact information changes.

VOLUNTEERS

Montgomery County high school students may elect to fulfill their community service hours by working with children in Berman Preschool. College students majoring in Child Care may observe our classes in order to fulfill their course requirements. Berman Preschool follows MSDE guidelines concerning volunteers.



PRESCHOOL NEWS

Your child's teacher will keep you informed about happenings in the classroom. She may post pictures on a Google App or send them via email. We encourage you to share pictures and news with your children. Ask them to tell you what's going on in the picture. Children learn and internalize experiences more with review and reflection.

Please read our communications carefully. In addition to informing you about your child's life at school, we will share information about upcoming events. Check out our school website and Facebook pages for pictures and updates too.

www.facebook.com/BermanHebrewAcademy
www.bermanhebrewacademy.org



FOOD AND NUTRITION

Good nutrition has been proven to help children develop strong bodies and brains, to have energy to participate in activities, concentrate, and maintain focus.

MORNING: If your child is hungry in the mornings or does not have time to finish breakfast, he/she is welcome to bring something from home to eat when he/she first arrives at school.

SNACK: Snack will be provided mid-morning and mid-late afternoon. Snack consists of fruits and/or vegetables at least 3 times per week, non-sugar cereal, or whole grain crackers. Milk or water is given to drink. Challah and grape juice are given on Friday, Erev Shabbat. Each child takes a turn to provide the challah for his/her class. More information about our challah program will be sent out when school begins.

LUNCH: Your child may bring a lunch from home in a lunch box. Children may bring milchig (dairy) or fleishig (meat). Please label the lunch box with the following information: your child's name, if the lunch is meat, and if there are perishable items. Your child's lunch may be placed in the refrigerator. An ice pack may be included but is not a substitute for refrigeration. Send a drink in a thermos or a juice box and any necessary utensils.

Send only items with a reliable hechsher (kosher symbol). Below are the most common symbols that are accepted by the Washington DC kosher supervising agency, the Vaad Harabonim of Greater Washington. Let your child's teacher know if your family eats Cholov or Pas Yisrael.



For a more complete list of reliable symbols, please check the following website: www.crcweb.org/agency_list.php or consult your local rabbi.

Please note that should your child have a less healthy item in his/her lunchbox, such as chips or dessert, he/she will be strongly encouraged to eat healthier items, including proteins, vegetables, and fruits, first. Since children's needs often change, should we find your child is frequently still hungry after eating their whole lunch, your child's teacher will be in touch with you.

LUNCH TICKETS: Hot lunch may be purchased and will be brought to your child's classroom. Menus are available on the Berman website. **Please note that due to the risk of choking in children under 4 years of age, a substitute will be provided on the days that hot dogs are on the menu for all children in our 2's and 3's program, regardless of birthday.**

Allergies

Berman Hebrew Academy has a peanut-free policy. Please do not send any items containing peanuts. In addition, your child's class may have further restrictions concerning nuts or other allergens. Your child's teacher will let you know at the beginning of the school year if no nuts at all are allowed in the classroom. This may include all tree nuts as well as anything labeled "manufactured on equipment that also processes..."



Make sure to inform your child's teacher if your child has any allergies or dietary restrictions.

Please be sure to fill out the Allergy Action Plan (signed by a physician) and the Medication Authorization Form for each medication your child may need in the event of an allergic reaction, such as Benadryl or EpiPen. One form is required for each medication and must be signed by your child's physician. Forms are enclosed in the Berman Summer Packet or on the school's website.

ENRICHMENT AND SPECIAL EVENTS

ENRICHMENT: Each class participates in weekly Music classes with Morah Leah Kott, as well as monthly sing-alongs with Rabbi Uri on Rosh Chodesh.

HEBREW LANGUAGE: The Children participate in interactive sessions in Ivrit five times per week with Morah Anat Perets in our new dedicated Ivrit room. Children are also exposed to the language throughout the day in their regular classrooms. Activities that foster connections to Eretz Yisrael are frequently included.



GARDENING: Our children enjoy gardening in the Vera Lieber Garden in our Preschool playground.

We experience indoor and outdoor gardening and nature activities, many of which are tied to the Preschool curriculum throughout the year. Our gardening committee works with the children and morot as we learn where our food comes from and to care for the Earth.

BIRTHDAYS: We love to celebrate your child's birthday in school. When providing birthday snacks, please send healthy items. If you'd like to include a small baked item, it must be purchased from one of the kosher bakeries or have a reliable hechsher (kosher symbol). Please be sure to observe the allergy restrictions for your child's class.

SCREEN TIME AND TECHNOLOGY: Simple technology devices, such as light tables, cameras, and digital microscopes are used to extend children's learning about their world, revisit real-life experiences, and encourage creativity and collaboration. Interactive screen time may be used on a limited basis to enhance a current unit of study. Passive screen time is limited to 30 minutes per week of age-appropriate, educational technology.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS: We hope to be able to offer 2-3 field trips during the 21-22 school year, in which we travel by Berman school buses. We will continue to include special in-school events.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: As is well known, physical activity is necessary for children to develop coordination, balance, and muscle control. Physical activity helps develop strong bodies, especially the heart, lungs, and muscles. Physical activity can help release energy and better prepare children for learning.

Children play outside in the Preschool playground or in our indoor play space a minimum of two times per day, three if they stay for a longer day. Children have the opportunity to play on the Lower School playground as well. In these spaces, children are encouraged to engage in many types of gross motor activities. In addition, children participate in a physical education class in our indoor gym once per week. Teachers also add gross motor activities to their lesson planning, such as yoga or games.

Children are expected to wear sturdy shoes at all times (no crocs or flip-flops) and sneakers are expected on gym day.

ENCOURAGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

We believe that children behave best when they feel secure and loved. We strive to create classrooms that provide safe physical environments and predictable routines, with positive reinforcement and consistent rules. Rules are simple, clear, realistic, and firm but flexible when needed.



Our goal is to help each child learn to self-regulate. Children are involved in developing rules and problem solving techniques, especially using language to help resolve conflicts.

While mitzvot (Jewish laws guiding behavior) are taught and modeled, children in group settings are more likely to be exposed to occasional negative behaviors. There are three main categories of negative behaviors: those that are harmful to oneself, those that are harmful or disrespectful toward others, and those that are harmful to things in the physical environment, such as toys or furniture.

Every effort will be made to prevent negative behaviors from occurring. For example, if a child seems cranky, we will try to identify the source of the mood—is the child tired, thirsty, hungry, having a disagreement with another child? We will endeavor to help the child overcome the source of this negative mood.

Changes in the home environment may also trigger negative behaviors, such as a parent being out of town, a move to a new home, or a new baby. We request that you notify your child's teacher if there is any change in the home environment.

Should an unacceptable behavior occur, several different techniques may be tried. The child may be redirected to a choice of one or two other activities and/or to choose a different group of children with whom to play. The behavior may be quietly reprimanded, discussed and/or modeled, or role played with the classroom teacher.

You will be notified when any of the following occurs:

- > The child has noticeably harmed her/himself or another person;
- > The child has willfully damaged the environment;
- > The child displays ongoing negative behavior. In the event of ongoing negative behavior, we will make a plan of action in partnership with you. We believe consistency between school and home is very important in creating long-term behavioral change.

Should we require further assistance, expert counselors within Berman Hebrew Academy are available. In this event, your permission will be sought prior to the consultation.

We maintain a referral directory which includes contact information for Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers, Montgomery County Child Link, and Montgomery County Child Find. Also included in our directory is a list of private therapists such as speech/language professionals, psychologist/psychiatrist/social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and developmental pediatricians. The directory is updated annually and is available to all families in the Preschool Office.

INCLUSION

Berman Hebrew Academy Preschool includes typically developing children and children with special needs. Every effort is made to help each and every child be successful, regardless of his or her developmental level. Should we find we are not able to meet the child's needs, guidance and community resources will be made available to the family.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS NOT FEELING WELL

We make every effort to maintain a safe, healthy environment for our children. Minor injuries, such as superficial cuts and bruises, will be handled by the classroom teacher. If the teacher requires further assistance, the child will be taken to the Berman health room and the school nurse will be consulted.



If there is any question as to the severity of injury, you will be called. If a child feels ill in school, you may be contacted. Please make all possible arrangements to have your child picked up when it is decided that he/she should go home.

While your child is waiting to be picked up, the child will stay in the classroom, but away from other children, or in the health room or Preschool office with an adult present at all times. In the event that a parent cannot be reached and the child must be dismissed from school, the secondary emergency contact will be notified.

If your child becomes ill, he/she may return to school when all of the following criteria have been met:

- > fever free (without Tylenol or ibuprofen) for 24 hours
- > on antibiotics for 24 hours
- > no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours

We will also share updated COVID guidelines later this summer by email.

If your child has symptoms of illness in the morning, please keep him/her home. We also ask that you adhere to the Berman nit-free policy.

Should you have any questions or if there is any change in your child's health status, please contact your child's teacher or Mrs. Miriam Kotek, our school nurse, at ext. 711.

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