



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

5786-5787

We feel truly privileged to have your son as an important part of the YMC family. In this packet we have outlined the standards and expectations of our talmidim. These standards and expectations are designed to allow our talmidim to glean the maximum benefit from their years at the Yeshiva. We believe that parents are integral partners in the chinuch of their children. In truth, we are all partners in your son's success. Please review the guidelines set forth in the handbook and feel free to reach out with any questions.

1. Attendance and Timeliness:

Timeliness is an important trait, which if learned when one is young, helps to pave the way for future success. YMC is committed to fostering a culture of responsibility, consistency, and engagement in all areas of student life. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to academic success and meaningful participation in the Yeshiva program. To better support these goals, YMC has implemented a revised attendance policy categorizing absences as either **excused** or **personal**, along with clear expectations regarding timeliness.

- The Yeshiva day begins at **7:50 AM**.
- Attendance is taken at **8:00 AM** (start of Shacharis).
- Students arriving after the bell will be considered **late**.

Communication and Documentation

- Any student arriving after **8:30 AM** must report to the school office before proceeding to davening/class so that his lateness can be recorded as excused or personal.
- All communication from parents regarding absences, lateness, or early dismissal must include a clear explanation for the absence so it can be properly recorded by the school.
- Any absence reported without an explanation (or if there is no parent communication) will automatically be categorized as a **personal absence or cut**.
- Parents must email the school if their son arrives after 8:30 AM, will be leaving before the end of the school day, or misses an entire day of school. Emails should be sent to office@yeshivasmekorchaim.org.

Lateness & Cuts

- An arrival of **15 minutes or more after the bell** or missing any **15-minute interval** during the duration of a class will be considered a **cut**.

- Four **late arrivals** or one **cut** will automatically result in a deduction of **one percentage point** from the student's semester grade.

Excused Absences

Absences will be considered excused under the following circumstances:

- **Illness or Medical Appointments:**

Absences due to illness or medical appointments are considered excused, provided they remain within reasonable limits. In cases of extended illness, the Yeshiva will work with the student to ensure he is able to keep up with his classes as much as possible. All such situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

- **Family Simchas:**

Students are permitted up to **four excused absences per year** to attend simchas within their immediate family. Immediate family includes siblings only. Absences for simchas among extended family (ie: cousins, aunts, uncles) are considered **personal absences**.

Any absence that does not fall within the categories outlined above will be considered a **personal absence**.

- Each student is allowed up to **three personal absences per class per semester**. These days do not carry over from the first semester.
- Any personal absences beyond this limit will result in a deduction of **three points from the semester grade** in that class.

General Expectations

- Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and school programs punctually.
- Students are responsible for completing all missed work in a timely manner, regardless of whether the absence is excused or personal.

This policy is designed to balance sensitivity to students' personal circumstances with the importance of maintaining strong attendance and punctuality habits. We appreciate your partnership in supporting these expectations.

2. Driving to School:

Students with valid drivers' licenses may drive to and from school. Only Seniors will be allowed to sign out to leave the building for lunch, provided parental permission has been given. Signed waivers must be returned to the school in order for any student to be allowed to drive during the school day and to drive other students. Signed waivers must also be on file for students to be allowed to be driven by other students. These policies are in place to ensure

the safety of your son and the continuity of their educational experience.

All students who drive to school must leave their car keys in the locker with their phones. Seniors who leave school during lunch will be allowed to take their keys, but must put them back upon returning to school.

Any student who does not put his keys in the locker, or is caught driving during an unauthorized time will lose the privilege to drive to school for one week.

3. Dress Code:

“Clothes make the man.” We want our talmidim to dress in a dignified, modest, and comfortable fashion. Our dress code (whenever students are in the Yeshiva building or on school trips) is:

Shirts / Tops: Shirts must be button down with a collar; shirts may be long or short-sleeved. All buttons must be buttoned, except the top one. The material of the shirt should contain polyester and/or cotton (similar to Shabbos shirts worn at shul). No images/pictures are permitted on the shirt. Large insignia or logos (greater than approx. one inch diameter) are not permitted, with the exception of YMC logo-wear. Outerwear of all kinds (sweatshirts, sweaters, zip-up hoodies, and jackets) must be of a solid color (black, blue, gray, or white) without large logos or text. Hoodies without zippers are not permitted. Boys are required to wear tzitzis.

Pants: Boys should wear solid-colored, full-length pants in navy, gray, black, or khaki. Jeans, cargo pants, sweatpants, jogger pants, or athletic pants are not permitted.

Shoes & Socks: Shoes and sneakers are to be worn with socks at all times. Flip flops, Crocs, slippers, sandals or any footwear without a closed front and back are not permitted. For example, Uggs, Birkenstocks, and the like are not permitted in school.

Other: A Yarmulke on the head is required at all times for boys during the school day and during all school sponsored activities, including sporting events.

All dress code expectations will ultimately be determined by the administration.

Hair must be neat and of appropriate length as determined by the administration. Students should style their hair in a manner consistent with that common for B'nei Torah. One's hair should not be long enough to appear shaggy, disheveled, or unkempt. As a general rule, if the length interferes with the proper placement of tefillin shel rosh in the front, or if it is long enough to be gathered together and tied into a braid or a ponytail, it is too long and must be cut.

There are halachic limitations as to how males can cut their hair:

- a. It is forbidden by Torah law to shave off one's payos.
 - i. This includes all the hair that grows below a line extending from the top corner of the forehead to the top of the ear.
 - ii. The payos should be left to the bottom of the bone that protrudes next to the ear. It includes the entire width of the sideburns.
 - iii. The hair in this area may be cut with a "#2" guard on a trimmer but should not be shorter than that.
- b. One may not cut the hair on the sides of his head short and leave the hair on top of his head much longer. Additionally, there should not be a significant, sudden change or "step" in the length of one's hair from the side to the top.

The Yeshiva does not permit any type of body piercing, including earrings, and nose rings. Bracelets or necklaces (of any material) may not be worn at school, or any school event, including sports games, trips or Shabbatons, etc. If a student is wearing a bracelet or necklace, it will be confiscated.

4. Technology:

We want our boys to reap the maximum benefit from their time in Yeshiva. We want them to get the most from their learning and General Studies classes. Furthermore, school offers young men the opportunity to create and forge relationships and cultivate meaningful life skills. The use of phones during the school day is an unnecessary distraction and erodes the impact of the educational process. We want the boys to be fully immersed in the meaningful experience we hope to create for them. We therefore have the following policies in place:

Students who own a phone **must** bring it to school and place it in a designated “phone locker” upon arrival. Students may not bring smartwatches and other internet-enabled devices to school. YMC will provide each talmid with access to school-owned electronic devices for specific in-class use (when needed). If a student is found with his phone, smartwatch, or earbuds in school, the item will be confiscated for one week. Similarly, misuse of the school’s Chromebook will also result in a one-week confiscation and potential additional ramifications. Should a student need to contact a parent, the office phone will be made available for use.

Every student will be required to have a filter that blocks all adult content. In addition, the filter must restrict the user from downloading new apps without first entering a passcode. The passcode should be known only to the student’s parents and/or Rebbi. This will ensure that a conversation between the student and his parents/Rebbi will occur before downloading any new app. These conversations can be helpful and pivotal in helping our talmidim to make informed and appropriate decisions.

YMC has worked with TAG of Baltimore to determine which types of filters are effective and acceptable. TAG recommends the MBSmart filter, which is both effective and cost- efficient. MBSmart filters out adult content, prevents downloading of new apps without a passcode and allows for various levels of additional filtering. Parents can choose what level of additional filtering is necessary (e.g., social media apps). You can find more about it on their website: <https://landing.mb-smart.net/>. To place this filter on your son’s phone, please set up an appointment with TAG.

Parents may choose a different filter (e.g., gentech, netspark, google family link, bark, etc.), as long as it restricts adult content and requires entering a passcode before downloading new apps.

The school will be periodically checking phones to ensure that all phones have an active filter in use. If a phone is found without an approved filter, the phone will be confiscated for one week.

5. Student Conduct:

We expect our Talmidim to behave in a way that is "mikadeysh shem Shamayim." Our talmidim are expected to be honest, courteous, respectful, and responsible. Our talmidim

should behave in a way befitting a ben-Torah demonstrating respect for themselves and others.

Students receiving consistently low citizenship grades in any class (below 4 out of 5) will be subject to disciplinary action which will include the inability to participate in extra-curricular school activities (events, Shabbatons, sports games, etc.) as determined by the school administration.

The use of inappropriate language, behavior, bullying, hazing, including cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Any recording/photographing/videoing of another student, faculty, or staff member without his/her consent will be treated as bullying or hazing.

Sexual harassment is halachically and ethically reprehensible and against the law. It is defined as conduct or communication of a sexual nature which has the effect of substantially interfering with an individual's self-esteem or sense of personal safety. Complaints of sexual harassment should be made to the administration and will be promptly investigated.

For more information on YMC's expectations about student conduct, see YMC's School Conduct Policy.

No weapons are permitted in the school building or at any school events at any time.

6. Sports

Being a member of a YMC sports team is a privilege, and like any privilege, comes with responsibility. As such, all student athletes are expected to adhere to the following:

1. Any student with a grade of D+ or lower in any class will not be allowed to play in any games until the grade is at a C- or above.
2. Should a student receive a suspension for any reason (including davening), he will not be allowed to participate in the next game.
3. Students must wear a yarmulke at all times both during practice and games.

7. Academic Integrity:

Cheating and plagiarism inhibit one's personal and academic growth. Neither behavior will be tolerated.

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work” (dictionary.com).

Any form of Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) (i.e. ChatGPT, etc.) use for classwork, tests, or any other schoolwork is also not permitted.

Students who plagiarize, cheat, or otherwise misrepresent submitted work will fail the assignment and may be subject to further disciplinary actions.

8. Drugs, Alcohol, Vaping, and Controlled Substances

Substance abuse, which includes drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products, is a serious health issue and an action contrary to Torah values. The school reserves the right, at any time, to test any student for drug and/or alcohol. Students who voluntarily report their own use of drugs or alcohol will not be subject to disciplinary action.

Rather, parents will be notified and they will be confidentially guided in receiving the help they need in a manner that allows them to preserve their dignity.

If a representative of the school has a reasonable belief that a student (who has not self-reported) has a problem with drugs and/or alcohol, parents will be notified immediately, and the student will be required to submit to a confidential screening interview performed by a qualified substance abuse counselor selected by the school. The school reserves the right to also require drug testing as part of the screening process. If intervention or treatment of any kind is recommended, the student and his parents will meet with the substance abuse counselor to discuss and implement the treatment plan. Both the student and his parents will be required to sign a contract with the school confirming that:

- The student will follow and participate in any course of treatment or therapy deemed necessary by the evaluation.
- The student commits himself to refraining from the use of illegal drugs or alcohol throughout his tenure at YMC and also commits himself to refrain from associating with or being in the same place as other young men or women who are drinking or using drugs.
- This commitment is in force at all times, including evenings, weekends, school breaks,

and the summer.

- The parents grant permission to the school to have their child drug-tested whenever and wherever it deems appropriate at the parents' expense.
- Any future use of drugs or alcohol by the student or refusal to be tested for drugs when required to do so by the administration will lead to a further evaluation and may result in dismissal from the school.

Depending on the circumstances, the above-described process may require that the student be out of school for periods of time while receiving treatment. Nevertheless, as long as the student and his parents agree to and abide by the entire plan, the student will remain in good standing at the school throughout the process.

Certain behaviors involving substance abuse that endanger other members of the school community will be dealt with as a serious disciplinary issue and may be grounds for immediate expulsion. Thus, a student will face grounds for dismissal in the event that:

- He hosts a party at which drugs or alcohol are present. Even in the event that illegal substances are brought by others without the host's knowledge or consent, nonetheless, the host will be held responsible.
- He is found to provide drugs or alcohol to others.
- He possesses or uses drugs, alcohol, nicotine products (including, but not limited to cigarettes, vaping pens, e-cigs, etc.) on or off the school premises.

9. Lockers:

A locker is assigned to each student. Locker doors must be kept closed during the day and preferably locked. All locker decorations must conform to school standards. Lockers are the property of the school and may be routinely opened for inspection by the school administration.

10. Food:

Students are responsible for providing their own lunch and snacks. All food brought into school must have proper kosher certification. Only kosher food from restaurants and bakeries

with accepted supervision is allowed at school activities or celebrations. The Yeshiva will supply bowls and spoons for breakfast. Students must bring their own utensils for the rest of the day. We recommend keeping a refillable water bottle in school.

There is no eating during class time. As high school students, there is ample time for eating during breakfast, lunch, and breaks. Consistent eating during class is disruptive and often creates unnecessary distractions. Students may drink during class time, provided the drink is in a container no larger than 32 oz. Large thermos containers are not permitted.

11. Student Medical Information:

All Students must have a current health form on file. At the beginning of each year, the health form must be updated to reflect a doctor's office visit within the last 12 months. All new students must submit immunization records, and do not require annual updates.

Parents must update the school with any changes in medical information or emergency medical information. If there are any changes to the information parents entered during the enrollment process, they should contact the Office immediately.

12. Photography & Videoing of Students:

Students at YMC may be photographed or videoed for the school's use in internal and external communications. This includes, but is not limited to, promotional material, flyers, newspapers, videos, websites, and social media. If you do not want your child's photo to be used in school materials, please e-mail office@yeshivasmekorchaim.org.

It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with: (1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not: (i) Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; (ii) Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or (iii) Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT RECEIPT

This is to acknowledge that we have received a copy of the Student & Parent Handbook and understand that it contains important information about Yeshivas Mekor Chaim's school policies and about my privileges and obligations as a member of the YMC community. I acknowledge that I am expected to read, understand, and adhere to the school's policies and will familiarize myself with the material in the handbook. I understand that I am governed by the contents of the handbook and that the school may change, rescind, or add to any policies or practices described in the handbook from time to time.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent(s) Name(s): _____

Parent Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

Students may not attend school unless this form has been signed and submitted to the office.