



OJCS Handbook 2023 - 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Letter	4
Mission & Vision Statements	5
OJCS “North Stars”	5
CAIS Accreditation & About CAIS	6
Organisation of School	7
Contact Information	7
2023-2024 OJCS Faculty and Staff	8-9
Daily Schedule	10
Early Shabbat Dismissal Times	10
Arrival	11
Early & After Care Supervised Drop-Off	11
Drop-Off	11
Dismissal	11
Tardiness	12
Late Arrival/Early Pickup	12
Absences	12
Lockers	12
Dress Code	12-13
Physical Education Clothing	13
Dress Down Days	13
Perfumes	13
Technology Acceptable Use	13-14
Code of Conduct	14
Bullying	14-15
Parents	16
Homework at OJCS	16-18
Classroom Blogs	18
Clubs and Extracurricular Activities	18
Tzedakah	18
Kashrut	18-19
Meat/Dairy/Parve Days	19
Snack & Lunch	19
Birthday Parties	19
Health Policies	19-20
COVID-19	21
Health and Safety Matters (Medical Conditions, Conjunctivitis, Pinworm, Lice)	21
Student Services	22
Academic Programs	23
Library	24
Policy on the Selection and Reconsideration of Library and Curricular Novel Study Literature	24-25
Physical Education and Sports Teams	25

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)	
Report Cards and Parent-Teacher Conferences	25
Class Directory	25
Emergency Cards and Student Information	26
Security	26
Parking	26
Visiting School	26-27
Additional Safety Matters	27
Communications	27
Snow Day Information	28
School-Home Communication	28
Calendar	28
General Information Confirmation Form	29

"Educate children in the way they should go and when they are old they will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22.6

Dear Parents and Students,

The Ottawa Jewish Community School offers comprehensive General, French, and Jewish Studies Programs to elementary and middle school students. Our trilingual curriculum affords students an opportunity to grow academically, socially, and spiritually. We are committed to providing students with instruction that will be stimulating and enriching while enhancing critical thinking skills throughout the curriculum. We will actively engage all students in the learning process and inspire them to live their daily lives with courage, compassion and the joy of Judaism.

In addition, we promote and advocate a partnership between home and school. Together, we will create the bond necessary for all students to excel. ***Please note that for your convenience we have flagged as "(NEW)" any policy that has either been changed or has been designated for renewed emphasis.***

May we continue to grow and prosper together!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Mitzmacher', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Jon Mitzmacher,
Head of School

Mission Statement

The Ottawa Jewish Community School is an all-day, trilingual elementary school that aims to develop academic and personal excellence in its students, in an inclusive, caring, and pluralistic environment that is based on Jewish religion, culture and values.

Vision Statement

The Ottawa Jewish Community School is dedicated to enriching the lives of its students along with strengthening their character and instilling their love for Israel. Inspired by Jewish text, values and heritage, a love of learning, and guided by teaching excellence, students reach for their potential, in order to become the leaders of tomorrow, and responsible citizens of the world.

OJCS North Stars

The Ottawa Jewish Community School has a way of doing things, distinct from any other school in our city. We have defined this way of doing things by involving our whole community, making meaning from hundreds of insights, interviews and observations. There are six big things to remember about the way we do things at our school.

OJCS North Stars



Each person is responsible for the other 🕯️ There is a floor here - but no ceiling

We learn better together 🕯️ We are always on inspiring Jewish journeys

We own our own learning. We own our own story. 🕯️ Ruach

CAIS Accreditation

The Ottawa Jewish Community School is thrilled to share that it made a successful application to the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS) and is now considered a “Candidate School”.

About CAIS

The Canadian Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) was established in 1981 as a national network for member schools supporting collaborative initiatives in leadership, education, management and governance. Its key activities included organising, coordinating and facilitating conferences, benchmarking, senior management compensation surveys and advocacy.

The Canadian Educational Standards Institute (CESI) was established in 1986 as an organisation to develop and promote educational excellence and school improvement in independent schools. Its key activities were to establish national Standards/Best Practices and accreditation process, conducting 10 accreditation visits per year, and research and targeted Professional Learning.

In October 2009, votes were held at the Annual General Meetings for CAIS and CESI to create a new national organisation, and after extensive consultation with membership, the organisation changed its name to Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS) in February 2010.

Today CAIS includes over 90 schools, all of which commit to undergoing a reflective and collaborative school improvement process, meet National Standards, and participate in research and professional learning.

Parents of CAIS schools can expect the best.

About Being a “Candidate School”

From CAIS’ letter of welcome to OJCS: “Congratulations on becoming a Candidate School with CAIS and choosing to meet the National Standards in all aspects of school life. As you know, CAIS schools value continuous whole school improvement and commit to a voluntary assessment process that is rigorous and thorough. As a Candidate, your school will now enter into the CAIS National Accreditation Calendar and be scheduled for its first full accreditation review. This review must be scheduled to take place within three years of acceptance as a Candidate School.”

OJCS joins Ashbury College and Elmwood School as the only CAIS schools in Ottawa.

ORGANISATION OF THE SCHOOL

The administrative team asks for your support and cooperation in implementing its procedures relating to the day-to-day operation of the school:

- Any academic and social issues should first be addressed directly to the appropriate classroom teacher.
- The administrative team stands ready to participate in any and all conversations when their participation is warranted and constructive.
- The OJCS Board has a position of “Board Ombudsman” to have an alternative channel of communication available to the parent body in extreme situations. If there is a system breakdown and a parent is of the opinion that his or her voice is not being heard by the administration, a parent can voice their concern to the Board Ombudsman as an alternative conduit for communication to the Board.

We believe that parents are our partners and therefore we encourage you to be in touch with us. Here is a quick guide to assist you with your feedback, questions or concerns.

Questions for:	Contact:	E-mail Address:	Telephone:
Head of School	Jon Mitzmacher	j.mitzmacher@theoics.ca	613-722-0020 ext. 333
Principal	Keren Gordon	k.gordon@theoics.ca	613-722-0020 ext. 334
Director of Recruitment	Jennifer Greenberg	j.greenberg@theoics.ca	613-722-0020 ext. 345
Director of Development	Staci Zemlak-Kenter	s.zemlak-kenter@theoics.ca	
Executive Assistant to the Head of School	Ellie Kamil	e.kamil@theoics.ca	613-722-0020 ext. 333
Director of Special Education	Sharon Reichstein	s.reichstein@theoics.ca	613-722-0020 ext. 329
Student Life Lead	Lianna Krantzberg	l.krantzberg@theoics.ca	
Librarian	Brigitte Ruel	b.ruel@theoics.ca	613-722-0020 ext. 331
School Social Worker	Quinn Rivier-Gatt	counselling@theoics.ca	613-722-2225
PTA		pta@theoics.ca	-
Board President	Joanne Gorenstein	president@theoics.ca	
Ombudsperson	Miriam Peters	ombudsperson@theoics.ca	-

The 2023-2024 OJCS Faculty & Staff

Lower School General Studies Faculty

- Junior Kindergarten: Susan Wollock & Linoy Oskar (EA)
- Kindergarten: Andréa Black, Maryse Cohen (French) & (EA) and (EA) [TWO Cohorts]
- Grade One: Julie Bennett, Efi Mouchou (French) [TWO Cohorts]
- Grade Two: Ann-Lynn Rapoport, Efi Mouchou (French) [TWO Cohorts]
- Grade Three: Lianna Krantzberg & Caitlin Honey, Aaron Polowin (French)
- Grade Four: Faye Mellenthin, Chelsea Cleveland (Math), Dr. Sylvie Raymond (Extended French) & Aaron Polowin (Core French)
- Grade Five: Charles Watters, Dr. Sylvie Raymond (Extended French) & Marie-Josée Bertrand (Core French Teacher) [TWO Cohorts]

Lower School Jewish Studies Faculty

- Kitah JK: Susan Wollock
- Gan: Jaqui Gesund-Kattan [TWO Cohorts]
- Kitah Alef: Ada Aizenberg [TWO Cohorts]
- Kitah Bet: Dana Doron [TWO Cohorts]
- Kitah Gimmel: Sigal Baray [TWO Cohorts]
- Kitah Dalet: Yulia Elgin
- Kitah Hay: Marina Riklin [TWO Cohorts]

Middle School Faculty

- Science: Josh Ray
- Mathematics: Michelle McWhirter (Grades 6 & 7) & Josh Ray (Grade 8)
- Language Arts: Jess Mender
- Social Studies: Michael Washerstein
- Extended French: Wanda Canaan
- Core French: Marie-Josée Bertrand (Grade 6) & Dr. Sylvie Raymond (Grades 7 & 8)
- Hebrew: Jaqui Gesund-Kattan (Grade 6-8, Level I) & Liat Levy (Grade 6, Level II) / Ruthie Lebovich (Grades 7 & 8, Level II)
- Jewish Studies: Michael Washerstein
- Rabbinics: Corinne Baray

Specialists

- Visual Arts: Andy Koren
- Drama, Music & Dance: Andy Koren
- Early Years PE: Susan Wollock (JK), Andréa Black & Jaqui Gesund-Kattan (SK)
- French Language PE: Aaron Polowin & Josh Ray (Grade 1), Aaron Polowin (Grades 2) & Stéphane Cinanni (Grades 3-8)
- Library: Brigitte Ruel

Leads/Coordinators

- Makerspace: Josh Ray
- Mitzvah Trips: Michael Washerstein
- Student Life: Lianna Krantzberg
- Teaching and Learning Coordinator: Melissa Thompson
- Student Support Coordinator: Ashley Beswick

Department of Special Education

- Sharon Reichstein - Director of Special Education
- Ashley Beswick - Student Support Coordinator
- Caitlin Honey, Faye Mellenthin and Melissa Thompson - Resource Teachers
- Chelsea Cleveland - Math Resource
- Corinne Baray - Hebrew Resource
- Maryse Cohen - French Resource

Administration

- Josh Max: Director of Technology
- Ellie Kamil: Executive Assistant to the Head of School
- Sharon Reichstein: Director of Special Education
- TBD: Chief Accountant
- Staci Zemlak-Kenter: Director of Development
- Jennifer Greenberg: Director of Recruitment
- Keren Gordon: Principal
- Dr. Jon Mitzmacher: Head of School

Schedules At-A-Glance

LOWER SCHOOL SCHEDULE

ENTRY	8:30 AM
Morning Block	8:45 - 10:45 AM
Outdoor Recess for Grades 1 - 5	10:45 AM - 11:05 AM
Middle Block	11:05 AM - 1:05 PM
Nutrition Break / Recess	1:05 - 1:25 PM
Recess / Nutrition Break	1:25 - 1:45 PM
Afternoon Block	1:45 – 3:45 PM

MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULES (Grades 6, 7 & 8)

PERIOD	TIME
ENTRY	8:30 AM
1	8:45 - 9:20 AM
2	9:20 - 9:55 AM
3	9:55 - 10:30 AM
Tefillah	10:30 - 10:45 AM
Recess	10:45 - 11:05 AM
4	11:05 - 11:45 AM
5	11:45 - 12:25 PM
6	12:25 - 1:05 PM
Nutrition Break	1:05 - 1:45 PM
7	1:45 - 2:25 PM
8	2:25 - 3:05 PM
9	3:05 - 3:45 PM

EARLY FRIDAY SHABBAT DISMISSAL TIMES

October 27	3:00 PM dismissal
November 10 – February 9	2:00 PM dismissal
March 1 and March 8	3:00 PM dismissal

ARRIVAL

- Arrival is at 8:30 a.m.
- **Children are expected to be in class and ready to learn by 8:45 AM.**

EARLY SUPERVISED DROP-OFF

- OJCS has early supervision for a cost of \$4.00 per child, per day - beginning at 7:30 AM. Students will be supervised in the Gym. Students may not join aftercare after 8:15 AM.
- Children must be registered and credit cards for billing must be on file. Please contact the office for information and forms.
- [Click here to access our Early Care Form](#). Please contact Ellie Kamil at e.kamil@theojcs.ca if you have any questions.

AFTER CARE AT THE SJCC

- The SJCC offers a [5-Day After Care Program](#). They also have many exciting after school programs that you can sign your child(ren) up for.

DROP-OFF

- Please park your car in a legal parking spot and escort your child(ren) to their designated entry.
 - Children in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, as well as in Grades 1-4 will come in through the MAIN Entrance at the front of the building (you may let them out of your vehicle in front of the school).
 - Children in Grades 5-8 will use the door in the SOUTH parking lot, Entrance A.
- Please note that siblings in Grades 5-8 can bring in their sibling(s) through either of the designated entrances.
- Parents/grandparents/guardians will NOT be able to enter the building at drop-off.

DISMISSAL

- To ensure the secure dismissal of all our students, we kindly ask that parents wait outside at their designated door so that students can be dismissed with our sign-out system. OJCS personnel will ensure Junior Kindergarten to Grade 4 students are signed out directly to a parent or guardian.
 - Junior Kindergarten - Grade 4 students (as well as all students taking the Alta Vista school bus) will be released from the MAIN Entrance.
 - Grade 5 & Middle School students (Grades 6 - 8) are free to leave through Entrance A without the need to sign out.
 - Families with carpools or multiple children can all access the same door for pick-up.
- It is important that children are picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal especially before Shabbat, Jewish holidays and other special occasions.
- The school reserves the right to charge a supervision fee for children who require care after the fifteen-minute window.

TARDINESS

- Punctuality and conscientious attendance are expected.
- Parents will be contacted if students habitually arrive late throughout a semester.
- Consequences for chronic tardiness may include detention, an inability to participate in extracurricular activities, sports teams and field trips, and in the most extreme cases, suspension.

LATE ARRIVAL / EARLY PICK UP

- All absences will be noted by the first period teacher in the child's designated classroom.
- Students who are late to school must check in with Ellie in the office to ensure they are marked present.
- Should you need to pick up your child early, please make **Ellie** aware by [email](#) or phone message of pick-up times before the school day begins.
- At the appointed time, we kindly ask that you wait outside and use the intercom to let Ellie know you have arrived. Your child will be brought to the front doors of the school to meet you, and Ellie will log that they have been signed out.
- Children leaving with someone other than a parent/guardian must provide a letter or email in advance granting permission from their parent/guardian. The school reserves the right to refuse a child to leave the school with someone who is not a parent.

ABSENCES

- Please contact the school if your child is going to be absent. Students who are absent are responsible for work missed. You may request that your child's homework be available to be picked up at the end of the day by notifying teachers. You should be sure to check your child's Classroom Blog(s) to stay best informed.
- Classroom teachers are not responsible for providing special school work packages in advance of planned vacations scheduled during regular school time.

LOCKERS

- School lockers are the property of OJCS.
- All students will have an assigned school locker (or a cubby in JK & SK).
- Lockers may be opened for inspection by the Administration at any time.
- No decals, writing, or other materials are to be placed on the outside of the locker.
- Lockers should be kept clean and organised.
- Only materials or pictures appropriate to OJCS standards can be placed in lockers.
- Students will be held responsible for any damage to a locker.
- The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- Students from Grades 5 - 8 may have a lock on their lockers. However, they will have to provide their homeroom teacher with the combination for easy access.

DRESS CODE

- Students are required to wear their uniforms at all times, except for Dress Down Days. **Uniform shorts must be a solid navy colour**, just as uniform pants and skirts.
- No baseball caps are allowed in class; caps are allowed during outdoor PE or during recess only.

- All Jewish males must wear kippot at all times within the school building.
- Earrings should be small and tasteful. (No large hoop earrings or long dangly earrings for safety reasons.)
- Dresses, skirts and shorts must fall to the kneecap.
- No low-cut or cropped tops or spaghetti straps shirts.
- No offensive wording on shirts.
- **Shorts may not be worn when the temperature falls below 10 degrees.**
- **Students in violation of the Dress Code will be provided a change of clothes until their parent or guardian can bring an appropriate replacement.**

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLOTHING

- No gym uniforms are required for Physical Education classes.

DRESS DOWN DAYS

- Held on the last Friday of each month (or soonest opportunity if the last Friday is a holiday, etc...).
- Students are encouraged to donate a loonie/toonie with funds raised directed towards various charities selected by the Knesset.

PERFUME

Please refrain from wearing perfumes when in the school building as many of our students and faculty suffer from asthma and allergies. Your cooperation is appreciated.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

OJCS encourages students to make use of devices for their learning. However, students must follow the OJCS guidelines for technology usage while in school.

- Technology is to be used only for educational purposes.
- Students may not duplicate, store, or transmit copyrighted material or software that violates copyright laws.
- Students are responsible for their personal accounts and under no circumstances should they share their password.
- Internet access is only permitted with teacher supervision. **Social Media sites, such as, but not limited to, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram, are not permitted to be used during the school day, unless given permission by a teacher.**
- When on devices and online, students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical and polite manner in accordance with the OJCS Code of Conduct (see below) and may be disciplined accordingly.
- Use of the network, email or internet for illegal, obscene, harassing, or inappropriate purposes is prohibited. **Damaging or modifying other users' files is also unacceptable. If anyone accidentally comes across something unacceptable online, it is their responsibility to inform a staff member immediately.**
- Students must have consent if taking pictures/video or recording voice with any device. **No student is allowed to post digital or still images of another student,**

students or staff on the Internet or any social networking site without the permission of the student(s) and staff seen in the image(s).

- Students in Grades 4-8 are required to bring their own devices to school. The school does not assume responsibility for any lost or damaged devices brought to school. Students must store devices safely and securely in their lockers when not in use. Please refer to the OJCS Website for more information about our BYOD Program.
- **VPN Policy (NEW):** In order to maintain the security and integrity of our digital networks, the use of a Virtual Private Network - or VPN - is not allowed. Students are not allowed to bring any VPN-enabled devices to school, any VPN program(s) that have been previously installed on devices should be uninstalled (preferable to disablement), and any browser-based VPN extension(s) should be removed. (If you are not sure whether or not your child's device has a VPN, please email support@theoics.ca and our Director of Technology can check on your behalf.)
- **Plagiarism Using AI Programs (NEW):** Plagiarism occurs when a student submits the thought, writing, inventions, work etc. of another as his or her own. Students are encouraged to use AI programs (e.g. Chat GPT) in responsible ways to enrich their academic experience, such as smart search engines to explain more challenging concepts, generating ideas and/or writing prompts, and for text and images in their own work, as long as this content is properly attributed. AI content used without proper attribution would be considered plagiarism according to OJCS's Code of Conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Ottawa Jewish Community School's philosophy of behaviour expectations is anchored in our "North Stars" and organised by the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People". Everyone has a right to learn in a safe, supportive and cooperative environment. Students, therefore, are expected to:

- Strive toward self-discipline;
- Treat faculty and fellow students with courtesy, dignity, and respect;
- Work hard and cooperatively;
- Solve differences with discussion;
- Seek assistance from a member of the school staff whenever needed;
- Respect the private space of the other person (no pushing, shoving or fighting);
- Complete homework assignments neatly and on time;
- Respect personal, public, and private property;
- Avoid plagiarism, including the use of AI (e.g. Chat GPT);
- Strive to achieve to the best of their ability;
- Be punctual to all classes;
- Attend school regularly;
- Use appropriate language, always;
- Maintain a positive Jewish identity;
- Remain on campus at all times, unless permission is granted to leave;
- Respect and comply with all school rules;
- Keep cell phones turned off and in your locker and refrain from using it to communicate externally during the school day;
- Refrain from chewing gum in school.

BULLYING

ONTARIO MINISTRY DEFINITION OF *BULLYING*:

Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where:

(a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,

(i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or

(ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and

(b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education.

OJCS ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF *BULLYING*:

Bullying behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

- Bullying adversely affects a student's ability to learn.
- Bullying adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships
- Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on school climate.

Cyber-bullying

Bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

(a) Communicating material electronically, to one or more than one individual, or posting material on a website or through the use of an app, that may be hurtful or inappropriate and be accessed by one or more individuals;

(b) Impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet or through social media; and

(c) Creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person.

OFFENCES AND CONSEQUENCES

In the event a student engages in prohibited conduct, a member of the administrative team will decide on the appropriate investigation and response. Such response(s) may include:

- Behavioural contract
- Restriction of privileges
- Detention
- Parental contact
- Temporary withdrawal of certain privileges or participation in school activities

- In-school suspension program
- Out of school suspension (up to 10 school days)
- Out of school suspension (over 10 school days)
- Immediate removal from school premises pending a hearing
- Probation
- Referral to outside agency
- Expulsion

PARENTS

Parents are responsible for abiding by all policies and procedures while in, or representing, our school. The consequences for not acting in accordance with this Code of Conduct include revoking privileges, discharge from the school, and non-re-enrollment of family for subsequent school years.

HOMEWORK AT OJCS

We encourage families to read the entire OJCS Homework Philosophy that has been posted [online](#).

The philosophy at the Ottawa Jewish Community School regarding JK - Grade 8 homework, is that it should only be assigned if it is meaningful, purposeful, and appropriate. Most learning will take place during the school day (except when utilising an explicitly “[flipped pedagogy](#)”). Homework will serve to deepen student learning and enhance understanding. Homework should be consistent with the school’s “North Stars” and strive to incorporate creativity, critical thinking, authenticity, and student ownership.

Legitimate academic purposes for homework include:

- practising a skill or process that students can do independently, but not fluently,
- elaborating on information that has been addressed in class to deepen students’ knowledge,
- enabling students to finish classwork that they were unable to complete in class, and
- providing opportunities for students to explore topics of their own interest.

Non-academic purposes for homework include:

- developing better study habits and skills,
- developing independent problem-solving skills and better time organisation, and
- greater parental appreciation of, and involvement in, schooling.

Students are responsible for:

- knowing where to find homework on the blogs and sharing with parents.
- ensuring understanding of homework expectations and asking for clarification or help when needed before leaving the classroom.
- keeping track of what is expected through an organisation strategy (agenda book, e-agenda, calendar, etc.)
- regularly completing assigned homework in a timely manner.

- managing time by staying focused, on task, and planning effectively for long-term projects.
- bringing home all necessary materials
- putting forth their best effort to produce quality work.
- completing or making up missed assignments and tests if required by the teacher.
- contacting a teacher in advance of a due date to request an extension and to provide a valid explanation.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- helping to oversee what is for homework as a child develops habits (this could be checking their agendas, e-agendas, classroom blogs, etc.).
- being an advocate for their child, while encouraging the child to advocate for himself/herself.
- encouraging reading, which might involve accessing audiobooks to accompany the book, at all grade levels.
- providing an appropriate environment, including necessary supplies, for homework to be done.
- providing a healthy balance between homework, extra and co-curricular activities, and family commitments.
- contacting the teacher if their child is not consistently able to do the homework by himself/herself within the time guidelines, or if challenges or questions arise.

Teachers are responsible for:

- sharing expectations for homework with students and parents early in the school year.
- designing homework assignments that clearly articulate their purpose and expected outcome, allowing for student questions and planning.
- providing timely feedback to students.
- ensuring any homework assigned is directly related to the classroom instruction and consists of clear, purposeful, and authentic activities.
- assigning homework that is appropriate and differentiated as needed.
- teaching the skills necessary for the students to complete the homework and become successful independent learners.
- being careful not to assign too much homework or homework that frustrates or discourages the students.
- communicating with other teachers of the same grade to be mindful of their overall workload.

Administrators are responsible for:

- monitoring homework quality and quantity.
- communicating homework expectations with parents.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

An *average* amount of daily homework - *not* including nightly encouraged reading, but including daily/weekly homework assignments, preparing for quizzes/tests/exams and work on long term projects - should not exceed:

- 0-20 minutes for Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten
- 30 minutes for Grades 1 - 3

- o 45 minutes for Grades 4 & 5
- o 60 minutes for Grades 6 - 8.

NOTE: Homework assignments will not be given over Shabbat and/or Festivals. Tests, exams and/or assignment due dates may not be scheduled on a day that follows immediately after a Festival or day(s) of observance.

CLASSROOM BLOGS

[Classroom blogs](#) are the primary address for homework (and so much more!) at OJCS. Teachers work with students to find and use the organisational tools (Google Keep, Google Calendar, a physical agenda, etc.) that make sense for each unique learner and they are to be used daily by all students, teachers and parents. The blogs are the primary means of communication of educational activities between teachers and parents. Students become responsible for organising their homework and projects with the help of teachers. Parents should review assignments each evening.

CLUBS & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES [NEW]

Clubs and extracurricular activities will be an exciting part of our 2023-2024 school year. Ms. Gordon (Clubs) and Monsieur Cinanni (sports teams and house leagues) will be in communication about what clubs and extracurricular activities are available and if there are additional fees required.

TZEDAKAH

- Students are taught the value of tzedakah (charity) as an integral part of Jewish religious and communal life and responsibility.
- Students are requested monthly on Dress Down Days and on special occasions to bring as little or as much as they wish for this mitzvah.
- Funds collected are donated to charities in our community and in Israel.

KASHRUT POLICIES

- The Ottawa Jewish Community Schools adheres Jewish dietary laws (kashrut).
- All food brought into the school must bear a universally acknowledged kosher symbol (i.e. MK, COR, OU, etc.). All nut-free packaged baked goods must arrive sealed from a kosher bakery.
- All food brought to school to be served to other children such as a class party, must be approved by our on-site *Mashgiakh* or the Head of School. No home-baked goods will be permitted to be served in classrooms.
- There are a number of internationally recognized hekhsherim/kosher certification labels. Some of the most common hekhsherim/kosher certification labels you will find locally are:



- All food purchased on outings or school field trips must be kosher.
- Only kosher food may be sent to school for lunches and snacks. Any pre-packaged foods, juices, etc. must bear a hechsher (kosher symbol). Any food that is “blatantly” non-kosher will be taken away and an attempt will be made to provide an alternate lunch. Please contact Dr. Mitzmacher with questions about our kosher policy.
- Kashrut is to be observed at all school functions on or off campus. This applies to both in-school and out of school events, ceremonies and activities.
- Teachers and staff, as role models in our school community, are expected to observe the kashrut policy. To this end, members of the staff are asked to avoid eating non-kosher foods purchased off-site in front of students.

MEAT/DAIRY/PARVE DAYS

- The OJCS has designated Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays as dairy and/or parve (neither meat nor milk) days.
- The OJCS has designated Tuesday and Thursdays as meat and/or parve days.

SNACK & LUNCH

- All grades will eat morning snacks and lunch supervised in their classrooms. The Grade 8 Class will have the privilege of accessing A Dashing Pinch cafe during lunchtime at the SJCC.
- OJCS encourages parents to provide their children with nutritious, nut-free, kosher snacks such as: carrot sticks, fruit, celery sticks, granola bars (nut-free) etc.
- Please do not send your child(ren) with any item that requires us to provide them with boiling water as it poses a danger.
- Please do not send your child(ren) with items that need to be heated up, as we do not have facilities for that.
- Devices are not permitted during lunch in order to encourage socialisation.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthday celebrations for children should be held outside school hours. We ask that parents do their best to invite the entire class. Our ultimate goal is to minimise the potential for hurt feelings when a few students from a particular class or grade-level aren't invited. Please also note that birthday invitations can only be distributed at school if all children in the class are invited.

While we recognize that each family is entitled to make such personal decisions, **we ask parents not to schedule parties on Shabbat or other Jewish holidays** and to be sensitive to kashrut when serving food. Part of being a community is being sure that all OJCS families are able to share the joy of celebrations, like birthday parties.

HEALTH POLICIES

The goal of our health policies is to facilitate the concepts outlined in the Ministry of Education document, “Healthy Schools”. This policy is designed therefore, to achieve healthy lifestyles for the students, but also for the families, teachers, and support staff at OJCS (i.e. the community of learners).

The school health program will, therefore, supplement the efforts and guidelines of

parents in educating students in good health practices.

The objectives of the school health program are:

- To promote and maintain good health habits among the community of learners.
- To promote the eating of nutritious meals during school breaks.
- To develop a supportive environment conducive to the promotion of health.
- To provide a comprehensive health education to all students, which will enable them to make healthy choices and adopt healthy behaviour throughout their lives.
- To ensure the school is a smoke-free, drug-free environment.
- To assist in the detection of physical, psychological, and social problems of students and staff.
- To implement preventive measures against illness and accidents on the school grounds.
- To incorporate the views of the community of learners, in making decisions about health care and welfare.

To strive constantly as a school, to strengthen the capacity to create a healthy setting for living, learning and working.

The OJCS Serious Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis Policy:

The OJCS is a peanut and nut-sensitive school. This means **NO** food products containing peanuts or nuts are permitted on school grounds (inside and outside) at any time in an effort to ensure the safety of those children with serious peanut and nut allergies.

Sabrina's Law:

OJCS continues to enhance the safety procedures at school in order to protect anaphylactic students using the following measures as mandated by (Sabrina's Law).

- Emergency Posters (including pictures of students with allergies) in all classrooms with Emergency Health Protocols
- Regular Teacher Training in EpiPen Administration and First Aid
- An Emergency Response Team consisting of teachers and security staff with advanced first aid training;
- Ensuring that all students in grades one and up with serious food allergies carry an updated EpiPen with them at all times. It is recommended that an extra EpiPen also be stored in the office. Students in Kindergarten must provide EpiPens for storage in their classroom.
- No Food Sharing Policy.
- EpiPens and Emergency Supplies that are carried by teachers on yard duty.
- Ongoing review of the procedures by the Health Committee

Most importantly, we need support from you, our OJCS families, to make our school community a safer environment for these children.

The OJCS has the following policy in effect:

- When providing food for the class or the school, the food item must be peanut and nut free, kosher, and must NOT contain the "may contain peanuts and/or nuts" warning.

- If additional food allergies exist, in a specific classroom, specific instructions may be put in place to provide additional locations in the school for students to eat lunch.

COVID-19

When to stay home and return to school:

As we continue to prioritise protecting our school community from COVID-19, we are asking our families to use the Ontario School and Child Care Screening Tool (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>) when making decisions about whether your child(ren) can attend school.

HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS

Fever: Children who have a fever **MUST** remain at home. They may return once they have been **fever-free for 24 hours**.

Vomiting or Diarrhea: Children who have been vomiting or having diarrhea **MUST** be kept home until their symptoms have improved for **at least 48 hours**.

Children with medical conditions, (i.e. diabetes or anaphylactic allergies that require EpiPen injections), must have a picture and a completed release form on record at the school office.

Conjunctivitis: If your child is infected or suspected of being infected with conjunctivitis (pink eye) or another minor communicable disease, they will be sent home from school. The child may return to school after being treated for 24 hours with antibiotic eye drops.

Lice: If your child is found to have nits or live lice, you will be asked to pick them up immediately and ensure the problem is treated before they return to school. **You are asked to bring your child to the office upon their return so that their head can be re-checked before re-entering the classroom.**

Pinworm: Pinworm can be common in children and can spread easily among them. If you think your child has pinworms please consult your family doctor as treatment will be needed. Please inform the school if your child does have pinworms so that more rigorous cleaning protocols can be activated to avoid spread.

Sun Safety: To reduce the risks of skin damage due to sun exposure, ensure that a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a rating of at least SPF-15 is used. Please apply sunscreen to your child before they are dropped off at school. Students are also requested to bring sunscreen to school. Please make sure your children wear sun hats when necessary.

STUDENT SERVICES

Our Student Services' mandate is to assure the most productive learning opportunities for all members of our school community. Our primary objective is to support and meet the needs of the students in our school. This involves being responsive and supportive of the cognitive, social and wellness needs of our students.

Our team consists of our Principal, Director of Special Education, Student Support Coordinator, School Social Worker, as well as Special Education Resource Teachers. We also consult with Mental Health Specialists, Reading Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists and Physiotherapists (through Community Care Access and/or as privately arranged by parents).

Students' academic growth and development are formally and informally assessed in order to develop and implement educational and/or behavioural accommodations, modifications and support plans. At times parents will be asked to secure a private psycho-educational assessment from a psychologist in order to create an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Objectives and accommodations featured on the Support Plan and Individual Education plans are reviewed on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the Director of Special Education, Principal, teachers, parents (and when appropriate the student), to ensure it continues to properly support the child with their growth and learning.

Student Services offered include in-class assessments, remediation and enrichment, and ESL and HSL instruction. We consult regularly with parents, teachers and administrators to provide resources, to suggest instructional methods and/or set behavioural objectives, as well as to discuss individual student progress and achievement.

As part of our commitment to meet the social needs of all our students, OJCS is pleased to offer social work and counselling services in partnership with Jewish Family Services (JFS). A mental health professional from JFS will be assigned to OJCS and will provide service to our students, one-on-one or in small groups, when needed, as well as in our classrooms doing strategic workshops. Please know that referrals for a School Counsellor's services can come from either parents or teachers, with appropriate paperwork available for either upon request.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

OJCS is an independent, Jewish private school located in Ottawa, Ontario. The school provides a General Studies Program, with the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Education as a starting point, a French Studies Program aligned with the guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education and a Jewish Studies Program aligned with international standards for Jewish Day School education.

General Studies Curriculum

Our academic benchmarks and standards begin with the Ontario Ministry of Education and are enhanced and adapted to best meet the needs of OJCS' students. The subjects studied are as follows: English, (reading, writing and visual communication), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Physical Education.

French Studies Curriculum

This is in accordance with the Ontario Ministry of Education requirements from Grades JK-3. In Grades 4-8, the French Studies Program is streamed into Core French and Extended French. Students in Grades 4-5 in Extended French receive two additional periods of Social Studies, while students in Grades 6-8 in Extended French receive four additional periods per week of History & Geography in French.

The French Department engages a process to identify where students would be best placed, whether in the Extended French or Core French Program, and your child's recommended placement is communicated on the report card throughout the student's Grade 3 school year. **Please ask us any questions about our French program and its outcomes, including how to best prepare your child for success in Grade 9 French immersion if that is a possible goal for your child.**

Jewish Studies Curriculum

The OJCS is a Jewish Day School where students come from a range of Jewish backgrounds. The school is run according to traditional values, laws and customs. OJCS is a Zionist day school, actively promoting the centrality of Israel for the Jewish people.

Through our Jewish Studies program we promote confident, knowledgeable graduates, whose Jewish heritage and identity will never be in question. We teach the skills necessary for an active Jewish home and communal life, including synagogue skills. We inculcate a sense of Jewish ethical values as part of Jewish life and practice. We place a strong emphasis on teaching classic texts and Hebrew.

LIBRARY

The library collection consists of over 20,000 volumes and is open five days per week, from 8:45 AM. to 2:00 PM. We have upgraded our management system so that teachers, students and parents can view the collection online. We encourage you to browse all the new features and see how much our library offers. The link for the library is bit.ly/ojcslibrary.

Every class will be able to visit the Library throughout the school year, to sign out books of their choosing, participate in workshops and/or read-aloud time with Miss Brigitte.

POLICY ON THE SELECTION AND RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY and CURRICULAR NOVEL STUDY LITERATURE (NEW)

At the Ottawa Jewish Community School we follow the guidelines presented by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations in following the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in their Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries. According to their statement;

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

When selecting books for the OJCS school library learning commons and our Language Arts novel studies, our strong selection procedures support collections that:

- Represent people of different races, genders, and ages in non-stereotypical settings, occupations, and activities
- Represent the roles and contributions of all peoples in Canada, and the factors that shaped these roles
- Share authentic voices from diverse groups, in order to accurately portray diverse cultural experience
- Share a balance of viewpoints
- Widen student horizons and exposes them to ideas
- Avoid stereotypical or outdated material with the exception of excluding important literature that will be taught in proper context
- Strongly represent Jewish authors, values, history, and holidays

We will not avoid selecting material that is challenging or controversial, or is written by authors who may be challenging or controversial. It is the goal of the library to expand

the viewpoint of our students and offer them a broad context for understanding society, culture, history, and our place within it. When our teachers lead a novel study on a challenging text, they teach the material with a critical lens and encourage students to deeply consider the context of what they are reading.

Should a parent or student have an objection to the materials in the library or the literature being taught in our classrooms, they are welcome to voice a complaint during which time there will be a 10-day review process handled by a Reconsideration Committee that will consist of the Head of School, Principal, teachers, and the librarian, reviewing the literature up for debate and guiding our decision on the basis of our selection guidelines above, as well as an evaluation of published expert critical and scholarly examinations of the text in question. A pause will be placed on continuing to teach the material until the decision has been made. A decision will be made within 10 days and the parent or student will be notified.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORTS TEAMS

Physical Education is a priority at our school. The goal of the program is to instill a life-long commitment to healthy living. Students in JK-SK have Physical Education twice per week, and outdoor play 10 times per week. Students in Grades 1-5 have Physical Education three times a week. Grades 6-8 have Physical Education daily. In addition to structured sports and athletics, units about various health issues are taught as per the Ontario Curriculum. House leagues take place during lunch recess.

REPORT CARDS & PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

- We operate on a semester model.
- Report cards will be issued electronically at the end of each term. All report cards should be carefully examined by parents. If you have a question regarding a specific grade or class, you are encouraged to ask for a meeting with the teacher and discuss your concern.
- All parents are urged to attend both Parent-Teacher and **NEW** Goal-Setting Conferences. Parents wishing to meet with their child's teacher at other times during the school year are welcome to email the teacher to schedule an appointment.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be held via video conference or in-person (if that is your preference) throughout this school year.

CLASS DIRECTORY

In late September, each family will receive a class directory by email. The class directory is ***very convenient to have and is for the exclusive use of the OJCS families and not to be shared with any other person or institution.*** Please be sure to update the office promptly if your email, address, home, business or emergency contact information changes.

EMERGENCY CARDS AND STUDENT INFORMATION

- Emergency cards (one for each new child) should be completed by the first week of school.
- Should there be a change of address, phone number (home, office, emergency numbers), or e-mail, please advise the school office. It is for the safety and security of your child that we require this important information.

SECURITY

In our continuing efforts to enhance and maintain the safety and security of our students, staff and visitors, we want to emphasize strongly that every person accessing the campus can contribute to the safety and security of our children. It is our collective duty and responsibility towards our children. Policies and procedures at the OJCS are in place and we urge you to follow them. Any breach in the policies weakens the security.

As you will be accessing the campus every day, you are the eyes and ears of the campus. **Suspicious persons or activities should be reported to the security staff at 613-722-9235 or 613-816-2051 or to the school office at 613-722-0020 Ext. 1.** Please keep those numbers available at all times.

Any change of policies will be conveyed to you by email. If you are not the person dropping off and picking up your children, please relay the information regarding security policies to your caregivers, relatives and in some cases your children.

The security staff and office staff are trained to deal with any situation that may arise. You are asked to respect their instructions and requests. Teachers are also trained to respond to emergencies and carry walkie-talkies on any outing on campus. Cameras have been installed to monitor activity on campus and barriers have been installed around the perimeter of the school and campus.

PARKING

Please be certain that you drive with extreme caution whenever you are near the Jewish Community Campus and note that there is a four-way stop at Broadview and Kerr. Students who walk to school are reminded to use the sidewalk on the east side of Broadview.

- Speed limit in the parking lot is 20 km/h.
- Please ensure that you do not park in the parking spots reserved for families with parking permits for persons with disabilities.
- No use of cellphones while driving anywhere on campus.
- Exit the parking lot as soon as possible after drop-off and pick-up times.
- No parking in the semicircle near the SJCC
- No parking in the fire lane leading to the semicircle near the SJCC
- No double parking in those areas

VISITING SCHOOL

- Access to the building will remain somewhat restricted and by appointment only. Parents who are coming to pick up or drop off - early or late - or to pick up children

who are ill or who have off-site appointments will be asked to wait outside for their children.

- Use the front entrance only.
- Please identify yourself through the intercom and share the purpose of your visit.
- Enter the school only if it is necessary, if you have an appointment or you are volunteering.
- Never keep the door open for anyone following you.
- Sign in and out at the school office: name, time, and location.
- You must wear a visitor pass if you volunteer or have an appointment.
- Parents are not allowed in the classrooms unless invited or volunteering at the school.
- Only OJCS students and staff may use the south side door to exit and enter the building at arrival, recess and dismissal and only when the door is being supervised by designated Staff.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY MATTERS

- **Dogs are only allowed on the school property if they are part of a school program. Please do not take your dog out of the car for dropoff or pick up.**
- Drills are important in enhancing the safety and security of students. It is your duty to reinforce to your children the importance of obeying instructions at all times so as not to jeopardise the safety of others. All staff at the OJCS have mandatory information sessions of all the codes and emergency procedures before school resumes. Students are informed of all the emergency procedures by their teachers. We practice fire drills three times in the fall and three times in the spring as required by the Province of Ontario.
- In addition to those, we practice different code situations:
 - o Medical emergency
 - o Evacuation to a safe zone in the school
 - o Emergency Evacuation
- Lock down: Modified lock down or full lock down, 2 to 3 drills a year.
- Any parent volunteering at the school should have knowledge and information of the security procedures. The teachers' lounge, classrooms, and offices have a binder on security procedures.
- Criminal reference checks are done on all employees of the OJCS.

COMMUNICATIONS

The best way to know what is going on in your child's class is to subscribe to your child(ren)'s [Classroom Blogs](#). Other primary ways we will communicate with parents are through our weekly Hadashot newsletter, which includes highlights of the week's calendar of events. The school's [website](#) is an excellent source of information on the school. Should your child forget to bring home a form, you will find it on the website. OJCS seeks to use social media such as: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc., to meet parents where they are, but not to share new information. Please follow us on social media at your convenience.

SNOW DAY INFORMATION

It is the policy of the school to keep the OJCS open, despite weather conditions. It is a parental decision whether to keep their children home during extreme weather conditions.

In the unlikely event that children are to be dismissed early because of weather, the Administration will be in touch by email, and then notify parents as needed. In case of a very heavy snowfall during the night, parents are advised to check their email regarding potential school closings. Please ensure that your home, business and emergency telephone numbers are on file and up-to-date with the school office.

SCHOOL - HOME COMMUNICATIONS

- A parent wishing to speak to a teacher should send the teacher an e-mail or leave a message with the School Office.
- Students are not allowed to access their cell phone or be texting from their devices during the school day. All communication to parents MUST be made from the School Office.

CALENDAR

- Please refer to the updated [online Google calendar](#) on our website for dates and information.
- You are encouraged to export our [Google Calendar](#) from the website for convenience.
- Parents will be informed via e-mail and/or Classroom Blogs about any adjustments to the calendar.

Please Click Below to Complete Verification Form

Our OJCS Handbook has been prepared to tell you about our school. You will find the rules and regulations that govern our lives at OJCS and make it possible for all of us to live, learn, work and play together. Our faculty and staff are looking forward to working with each of you and assisting you in every educational adventure.

Please read this handbook carefully and be sure you understand everything in it. We ask that both parents and students read it carefully. If you have any questions about anything, see your teachers or Dr. Mitzmacher for answers.

Please give your attention to all the information contained in this packet. It is a good source of basic information needed for a successful start to our school year and a reference for questions that may arise during the school term.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to complete a form verifying all applicable Parents/Guardians and students have read the OJCS Handbook