



Parent Handbook

What You Need to Know

2019-20

Table of Contents

Philosophy & Goals	3
Alef Bet Mission Statement	3
Contact Information	3
Daily Schedule	4
Prepare Your Child for School	4
First Day of School List	5
Transition and First Days – 🎵📄 Mommy Comes Back	5
Absences	6
Arrival Times & Dismissal	6
Carpool Line and Traffic	7
Drop Off & Pick Up	7
Communication with the School	8
How Does the School Communicate with Parents?	8
How Do Parents Communicate with the School?	8
Health, Safety & Medication	10
Health & Forms	10
Sick Policy – 24 Hours Rule	10
Medications and Sunscreens	10
Allergies	11
Head Lice	11
Diaper Changing in Classroom	11
Behavior & Code of Conduct	12
Staff	12
Parents	12
Students	13
Student Life	15
Dress Code	15
Potty Training Policy	15
Bringing Materials/Toys from Home	15
Extra-curricular Class Activites & Field Trips	15
Kashrut: Lunches & Snack	16
Lunch, Snacks and Nutrition	17
Toddler’s Snack	17
Kashrut and Pizza Friday	17
Birthday Parties	17
Emergency & Security Policy	18

Philosophy & Goals

Alef Bet Montessori School provides a unique and innovative education that integrates a traditional Montessori curriculum with Hebrew and Judaic Studies. We welcome infants through children 6 years of age.

Alef Bet Montessori School is a proud member of Montessori Schools of Maryland and certified by AMI (Association Montessori Internationalè) and Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW), Washington DC's most prestigious organization of private non-for profit schools

Alef Bet Mission Statement

Our mission is to instill love of Torah, Israel, and fellow human beings through our commitment to citizenship, ethics, morality, personal responsibility and independence.

During this school year, we will give your children an unparalleled early childhood experience, learning skills and refined social skills. They will be able to experience a **full discovery zone** of learning and enjoy the love of Torah, Israel and community.

Contact Information

E-mail: Info@AlefBetMontessori.org

Phone: 301-556-5010

Daily Schedule

Toddler Day in Brief (14 months to 3 years old)

Children in the Toddler class start:

8:45 to 9 a.m. a nice welcoming exercise at 8:45 am.

9:00 a.m. They move into a morning routine of Montessori “work” until around 10 am. At that time snack is served and they eat together around the table as a community.

10:45 a.m. Children will visit the playground and play outside for half an hour. After the outdoor play, they will go back into the classroom.

11:15 circle time and prepare for lunch

11:30 Lunch

12:30 Dismissal

Most of our toddlers nap at noon time until around 2 pm. The after nap activities include story time, playful toys and more.

Primary Day in Brief (ages 3 years – 6 years old)

Children in the Primary class start:

8:45 to 9 am. a nice welcoming exercise and circle time Tfilah. They sing and say *Tefilah* (prayers).

9 am they move into a morning routine of Montessori “work” until around 11:50 am. During the morning the children enjoy snack as they please.

11:45 playground and play outside for half an hour

12:15 go back into the classroom for lunch.

12:30 Dismissal – eat lunch at home.

12:45 pm, they will enjoy some free play until 1 pm.

1 pm – 2:45 pm the older children resume the classroom work of Montessori math, reading and writing. Younger children will continue free play at our playroom or nap.

2:45 Dismissal.

Prepare Your Child for School

The week before school starts, we recommend taking the following steps to prepare your home and your family for school:

- Gradually **adjust the bed time**. Good sleep is a major factor in our children’s development and behavior. It is better to start dinner at 6 pm and allow children time in their PJs by 7:30 pm so that they get enough sleep during the week before school starts. Please make sure your child gets enough sleep (10 -12 hours at night). Recommended bedtime is 7:30 or 8 pm
- **Eliminate morning electronics** viewing (TV, iPod, iPhone, iPad, DVD, any Screen Time). Our children’s brains are greatly impacted by the viewing of electronics. It often effects their behavior and their attitude. We also highly recommend limiting the afternoon viewing time for a half an hour to an hour per day. Often children will be resistant to attend school or participate in morning regular activities (breakfast and dressing themselves) because of the overstimulation of electronic viewing.
- Talk to your child about school and let them know they will be attending school. However, it is important not to build up **false expectations** about school such as a “countdown.”

First Day of School List

Please bring to school for the first day:

1. A picture of your child on the first day of school to be placed on his cubby so that he/she can recognize their own spot.
2. Indoor shoes that are easy to put on
3. Rainboots to keep in school – we are gardening and playing with water outdoors
4. An extra winter set of clothing (summer and winter) to be kept in the class. Make sure to **mark your child's name** on the clothing and keep it in a sealed bag or shoe box.
5. Toddlers should also have a diaper bag with extra diapers, wipes and a blanket.
6. Parents who would like their child to nap at school, should send a sheet, a blanket and a pillow with their child. Sheets and covers are washed at school.
7. Winter in our area is cold and snowy. Make sure to have at home an outdoor play gear: a heavy coat, mittens, hat and boots for snow and snowsuit. Please make sure to have all these items on hand before the weather turns cold. We will play outdoors in most weather, including snow.
8. Toothbrush and toothpaste

Transition and First Days – 🎵 😊 Mommy Comes Back

On the first week of school we expect new children, both in the Toddler and Primary classrooms, to go through a Transition Period.

During the Transition Period, the **Toddlers** are expected to attend **one hour** during the first week. We slowly extend that hour into 2 & ½ hours on the second week and only later start the child on a full day program.

The **Primary class** children attend **half day** for the first week of school (noon dismissal) as part of their Transition Period. Even returning students, who moved from Toddlers to Primary will attend half day of the first week of school to allow a smooth and positive transition.

Why do we do Transition Period? It is hard for a child to say goodbye. It is difficult for the child to understand that you will always come back for him/her. There is no way to explain to a young child what is 5 minutes or 2 & 1/2 hours. Children ages 18 months to 5 years old are not capable of understanding the **concept of TIME** as we do. Only in the Elementary class do they start realizing how short a minute is in comparison to an hour. There is a little switch in the brain that kicks in at the Elementary level. But before that, children cannot tell what is one minute vs. 7 minutes vs. 2 hours. They can only sense it through the schedule of the day, rhythms of the people and activities around them.

What can we do to help the child? How do we transition? There are no shortcuts, no free rides. Transitions are always difficult.

- Talk to your child at home. Say that you are going to school and Mommy/Daddy will always come back.
- Assure them that you are confident – as their little sensors can tell when you are lying about it.

- Believe in your heart that they are in a good place.
- Sometimes it is the parents who cannot separate from the child. Find the child in you, and let go.

Once in school, a child will become accustomed to the order and sequence of the activities in the class. This way, he/she learns a routine. The routine helps him/her understand the following: first we sing, then we read, then we play, then we eat, then we go outside, then we sing again and then MOMMY COMES BACK! “Mommy Comes Back” is a sweet song that can be found at www.cdbaby.com.

Absences

Please let us know if your child is not coming in, or is ill or is going to be late. We will miss your child and will wait for you to let us know. E-mail the office info@alefbetmontessori.org.

Children arriving after 8:45 for Primary level considered to be late.

Children arriving after 9 a.m. for Toddler level considered to be late.

Children who are late will have difficult time adjusting to class. Please be on time.

Arrival Times & Dismissal

Early Bird Drop Off	7:30 am – 8:30 am
Primary Half Day*	8:30 am – 12:30 pm
Primary Full Day – Kindergarten*	8:30 am – 2:45 pm
Toddlers Half Day	9:00 am – 12:30 pm
Toddler Full Day	9:00 am – 2:45 pm
After Care (Mon – Thurs. No Fridays)	until 4:45 pm

Carpool Line and Traffic

See chart at last page

Drop Off & Pick Up

Arrival: Kiss & Ride or Park Your Car

Kiss and Ride: A staff member will come to your car, assist your child/children out of the car and escort them to class. **Please stay in your car** and keep moving up the line until a staff member greets you. When parents stay seated in their cars, the carpool line moves at a quicker pace. This procedure **prevents cars from stacking up and blocking traffic**. It is also a courtesy to other parents so they will not be unexpectedly delayed exiting the school. **Do not leave your car unattended** when using the “kiss & ride” car pool line. If you need to apply sun screen, tie your child’s shoes, get them dressed, etc., please park your car. While waiting in line, please do not block the exit driveway.

Park Your Car: If you need to get out of your car to assist your child or escort them to the door, please park your car in the parking lot. Please walk your child to the door where a staff member will greet you. If you need to come into the building after you have dropped off your child, please park in the street.

Late Arrival: In the morning, doors close at 8:45 am, after that please sign your child in at the office. When your child arrives late, it means something has been missed, your child will find it hard to adjust to the classroom, and will miss morning circle time - it is also disruptive to the rest of the class. Usually, a child that is late feels distraught and misplaced. The class has already started and he/she missed the welcoming part of the morning. Being on time is important in our classroom. Please make every effort to bring your child on-time.

Late Pick up: There are currently several dismissal times: 12:30 pm, 2:45 pm, and 4:45 pm. Please be mindful to pick up your children on time. We allow a 15 minute grace period for pick up.

Late Pick up fee: For late half day pick up, children will be transferred to the office to wait and parents will be charged a fee of \$1 per minute after 12:30 pm. For late full day pick up, children will be transferred to after care and parents will be charged \$1 per minute after 3:00 pm. For late after care pickup, parents will be charged \$1 per minute after 5:00 pm.

Communication with the School

E-mailing info@AlefBetMontessori.org is the **BEST way** to leave non-urgent messages for the school. This e-mail is checked at least twice a day by multiple staff members.

Executive Director, Ayelet Lichtash	301-556-5010 x3
	Ellie@alefbetmontessori.org
Admissions & Registration, Gabi Cohen	301-556-5010 x1
	Gabi@alefbetmontessori.org
Office Manager, Edith Gvartzman	301-556-5010 x2
	Edith@alefbetmontessori.org

How Does the School Communicate with Parents?

We use the contact information provided on the Application Form and Emergency form to contact the parents. MSDE requires that Parents keep the school updated through the year if daytime phone numbers, designated emergency numbers, or emails change, so that you can be reached if necessary. In case of a health question or problem, the school should be able to contact you directly and immediately.

Emails

We communicate school information to parents primarily via email. *Note – If you have not received an email from us this summer around mid-August, welcoming you to the school that means that you are not on our email listing.* Please email info@alefbetmontessori.org to be added on the list serve.

Website

Our school has its own website, www.AlefBetMontessori.org. Please check the *Blog* section of our website on a weekly basis to see what the school and students are up to.

How Do Parents Communicate with the School?

For communications concerning your children:

The staff believes that parents' issues and concerns about the School are best addressed and resolved by prompt, direct and open discussion. If a parent has a particular concern related to a classroom situation, it is encouraged that the parents speak directly with the child's lead teacher. If the parent does not feel the problem has been effectively resolved after speaking with the lead teacher, the parent should request a meeting with the Executive Director. They will then determine what action, if any, is necessary. The Executive Director will inform the parent and the teacher how the School proposes to deal with the issue. Issues regarding any other member of the staff or any administrator should also be raised with the Executive Director, who will follow up with a similar procedure to such issues.

Communication from the Executive Director

The Executive Director, Ayelet “Ellie” Lichtash, writes to and meets with the School’s parents throughout the year to share school news and to maintain an open line of communication. Parents are invited to “Coffee with the Director” scheduled throughout the school year between 8:45 – 9:45 am. If you need to meet privately or schedule a different time, you can call or email Ayelet, to schedule an appointment that is mutually convenient.

Communication with Teachers

We ask parents to understand that the beginning and close of the school day is a busy time for teachers and therefore not recommended as an opportunity for discussing serious issues. Parents are invited to meet with the teachers for general sessions every first Wednesday of the month from 2 – 2:45 pm. To privately communicate with your child’s teacher, please leave a phone message at 301-556-5010 ext.1 or send the teacher a note via email to info@alefbetmontessori.org (Meet with the Teacher). Please indicate in your phone or written message, specific times when you would be available to speak via telephone or in person, and briefly describe the topic or issue if possible.

Parents’ Visit and Class Observation

Parents are most welcome to observe our class while it is in action. The first month of the year is always piled with breaks for the High Holidays. However, by the second month, the children settle into the classroom routine and we are ready to invite you for a visit at the end of the second month – check the calendar and RSVP your slot, so that we do not have more than 2 observers per class at a time. While observing the children, please be reminded that they are ‘working’ on tasks or chores and interruptions, such as loud voices, might distract them from their work. It is just like having another person walking into your office and talking to a third person while you are working. So come and enjoy watching us concentrate!

Inclement Weather / Area Emergency

Our school follows the Montgomery County Public Schools for closings and late openings on the first day of snow only. After that if there are additional snow days, parents will receive an email by 7:15 am or as soon as the action for the school has been determined. In the case of an early dismissal, the staff will also attempt to notify all parents/caregivers by phone.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences will be held twice a year in November/Early December and March. The purpose of the conference is to communicate and provide information about each student’s growth in social, emotional and academic areas, as well as other aspects of each student’s development. Parents and teachers can also request additional conferences should the need arise. We provide a student record for your child.

We Want Feedback

We pride ourselves on our flexibility and responsiveness. It is tragic to us if we hear too late about something we could have fixed what has spoiled a student’s or parent’s experience. Let us hear from you! (We take compliments too!) Send us an email, set a time to meet with us in person – and we will make the time to listen. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST.

Health, Safety & Medication

Health & Forms

In compliance with Maryland law, the school is required to have a health inventory form, emergency contact information and immunization log for each child attending the class. In the absence of these forms, the child cannot be admitted to the class. The forms have to be in the office before the first day of school.

Sick Policy – 24 Hours Rule

If your child is sick with a fever (a 100 or over is considered fever), vomiting or diarrhea please check with your pediatrician when the child can attend school again. Make sure your child is free from fever or other related symptoms for **at least 24 hours** before returning to school. In the case of Conjunctivitis or “Pink Eye,” we require that the child remain at home for a full 48 hours after being on medication before returning to school.

Children who are deemed too sick to be in school will be sent home. If parents cannot be reached, a person noted on the Emergency Forms will be asked to pick up the child. If a child must be isolated from other children due to illness, he/she will be kept in a quiet area of the classroom on a rest mat. All contagious diseases must be reported to the Executive Director Office and will be posted for parents to see.

We must ask for each and every parent’s cooperation with issues which are extremely important for the wellbeing of all. We must have complete cooperation in keeping contagious diseases out of the school. It is the school’s responsibility to determine whether a child is too sick to be permitted into class, as we must protect all the children. The following situations will at all times require a child to not be permitted into class or for the child to be picked up:

1. any fever (a 100 or over is considered fever)
1. any unidentified rash
2. drainage from the eyes or nose which is greenish in color
3. diarrhea or persistent cramping
4. vomiting
5. infected skin patches of any nature
6. dark urine/blood in urine or bowel
7. sore throat or trouble swallowing
8. severe coughing
9. difficulty breathing
10. any unusual behavior that might be associated with illness

Medications and Sunscreens

We prefer not to give any medications to our students. If your child must have medication, State law mandates a doctor’s permission in writing. A Medication Permission form may be obtained from the office. You must give the prescription medication and the form to the Executive Director for the medication to be put in a locked box in the kitchen. Please send any approved medication in its original prescription container. We will not administer non-prescription drugs of any kind (including cough drops and vitamins).

We strongly encourage you to apply sun screen/bug repellent before your child is brought to school. It is difficult for the staff to apply lotion to all the children.

Allergies

Help us accommodate children with allergies - please check with your child's teacher before bringing in any class snacks that are not on the approved snack list. Also, after breakfast, please make sure to have your child wash his/her hands before coming to school so no leftover residue from an unknown food is transferred to the classroom. Parents and the school provide daily snack for the children and therefore you must inform us if your child has any allergies regarding food and beverages of any kind.

Under no circumstances shall any staff member administer any type of antihistamines with or without a doctor's permission. Please write a list of any allergies and give it to the school for us to keep on file and inform the Executive Director and your child's teacher.

Head Lice

Head lice infestations are a recurring issue in schools everywhere. Head lice can be extremely inconvenient and time-consuming to treat, and can cause discomfort, but they do not cause or spread disease. Head lice occur in people of every age, social status and income and should not be a cause for guilt, embarrassment, or anger. They do not indicate a lack of cleanliness or poor care of your child, and are simply an inconvenience that must be dealt with. We follow the most current recommendations of the county Health Department in these situations.

Prevention: Head lice infestations can be prevented if children refrain from sharing hairbrushes, combs, and hats. Hairbrushes and combs at school are for personal use only.

Lice at School: If live lice or nits are observed on a child at school, we will contact parents immediately and the child must be picked up and taken home to be treated before he or she can return to school. All school families will be informed that lice have been observed, and all children may be checked for lice as the situation warrants.

After Treatment: Children returning to school after lice treatment **will be checked by staff daily**. If lice or nits are found again, the child will be sent home as before. If lice or nits are found, it is best practice to continue treatments for up to 3-4 days. It takes usually one or two weeks before all lice is gone.

Diaper Changing in Classroom

Our Diaper Changing policy follows the strict rules of the Office of Childcare (MD State Dept. of Education). Changing diapers is done by our staff and Hand Washing policy is adhered to strictly.

Behavior & Code of Conduct

Staff

Code of Conduct Among Ourselves

Alef Bet Montessori teachers and staff is a team. We exert a strong influence on children to become better educated, but perhaps even more importantly, our team also helps our children to mature by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty and respect. It is with the latter in mind that the staff has agreed to work with these principles of conduct in mind.

- Give open and honest feedback to each other (because you care)
- Speak about the issue - not the person
- Acknowledge each other's accomplishments
- Reframe problems into opportunities
- Clearly define roles & expectations
- Work on building constructive relationships with every team member
- Always keep the mission & vision of the School in mind
- Serve as positive role models for the children

Parents

Code of Conduct with the Team and other Parents

Families with a child enrolled at Alef Bet Montessori become an integral part of our School Community. To be a successful community, the School needs and expects the cooperation of its parents, who must understand and embrace the school's mission, share its core values and fully support its curriculum, faculty and staff.

Ways to Participate, Get Involved and Contribute

Alef Bet Montessori is a non-profit charitable organization. Our joy is having our children explore the love of learning and their Jewish identities. For that reason, our tuition fees are lower than most other Montessori schools in the area. We encourage parents to consider contributions and donations to our school. Some ways you can help: Gifts of cash (during the Annual Giving Campaign), donation of supplies and meaningful volunteerism (help with events and activities at the school, fund-raising and public relations and of course: **Join the Parent Committee**).

Volunteering

How can you Volunteer? Here are few options for parents to get involved:

1. Take a position on the PTO - (Parent Teacher Organization) to help with school events.
2. Start an extracurricular activity for the Primary level: Dance, Soccer, Drama or Karate
3. Volunteer on a Field Trip.
4. Help Organize the Hanukkah, Purim or Lag B'Omer Party.

Volunteerism: When a parent agrees to perform a service for the school the entire community is counting on that person to fulfill their promise. If it becomes clear that a parent cannot, they should contact a member of the Parent Committee and arrange for a replacement right away.

Privacy: Please help us maintain the mutual trust and respect we all need to keep our community healthy by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents and staff. Passing on confidential, damaging or hurtful information is not acceptable. Keep staff and parent email addresses and phone numbers confidential. Use contact information for school-related business only, unless you receive permission otherwise.

Etiquette: Alef Bet Montessori teachers, staff and parents are all expected to strive for high standards of etiquette and behavior. Commitments should be honored, criticism should be constructive and genial, and “thank yous” should be frequent.

Communication: Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or staff member closest to the problem. The use of mass emails to contact fellow parents about sensitive issues involving Alef Bet policy, teachers, staff or students is inappropriate and counterproductive.

Conflicts between parents or parents and staff should be addressed in a calm and private manner, preferably in person or with a respectful note. Phone calls and emails should not be used to express anger, frustration or criticism. Meetings are to be held by appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Students

Positive Interaction and Positive Discipline

It is our responsibility as adults to help foster healthy and happy interactions. Developing social attitudes begin in the home. Classroom rules are centered on respect for others and our environment. The children are asked to respect another child’s privacy. A disruption usually happens by accident and the children first tell each other what he or she did to disturb the work. This is usually sufficient. If the behavior continues, the child is encouraged to enlist a teacher’s help and together they talk to the child involved. If the problem should persist, or a child needs help with confronting another child, we will assist in a dialogue exchange of listening and mirroring with the children involved.

In the Montessori system we do not use “time out” or punishments. We use techniques from methods such as Positive Discipline, Montessori Peace Education and Parent Effectiveness Training. We help the children learn to listen, respond and work out an agreement. In addition, we encourage even the shy child to speak up and respond to how he/she is feeling.

Responsive relationships and positive discipline techniques create supportive environments where children can grow and thrive. Some examples of positive discipline techniques that we use include:

- providing choices; (offering a variety of activity and material choices)
- using redirection; (positive discipline technique where the adult changes the child’s direction or focus from a negative behavior/experience to a positive one)
- having clear rules and expectations
- using reflection
- using problem solving and developing clear rules and expectations with input from

older toddlers and preschoolers. Input from the children encourages children to feel ownership of their classroom environment, in how it is run in respect to materials, teachers and friends.

Chronic misbehavior results in unhappy children and a disruptive learning environment. When a child becomes disruptive, parents will be notified. If the behavior continues, parents will be asked to seek professional guidance. Our responsibility to your child includes the obligation to limit this disruption from the learning experience. If a child cannot modify his/her behavior, the parents will be asked to remove their child from our school. Parents are responsible to reimburse or replace any school property deliberately damaged or broken by their child. We try to involve the child as much as possible in the replacement and repairs of any broken materials or property. In the rare case parents are responsible for reimbursing or replacing any school property deliberately damaged or broken by their child.

Please remember that we, as teachers and parents, need to be in continual communication concerning the social interactions of each child.

Student Life

Dress Code

In a school environment, children play outdoors, indoors and get very busy. Please send your child with clothes and shoes that are easy to wash and take off. Expensive shoes can be ruined! Fancy slippers can get lost. Keep them at home.

To mark School's Graduation Party (and Independence Day) blue and white clothing is required as standard dress for Fridays. We will be preparing our own *kippah* in class during the first semester.

Potty Training Policy

Usually parents start training their children at 2 or 2 & ½ years old to use the potty. This is an important stage in a **Toddler's independence** activities. In our Toddler classroom, the teacher may initiate a training program for a child that is ready even earlier. This is not a requirement for the Toddler Program. However, Potty Training is a requirement for enrollment at the Primary Class ages 3 to 6. At the beginning of the year, the child is expected to begin potty training, although it is not required that the child master it. The child can wear pull-ups and change into underwear at school. As long as the child has begun with the training, the school staff can help in the training. It is also important that they be able to care for themselves after using the toilet. Even though children are toilet trained, they still may have occasional accidents. It is important to have a change of clothing for them that are appropriate for the weather. A child who is not fully potty trained cannot register for the extended day in the Primary level (3 to 6).

Bringing Materials/Toys from Home

We have found that items brought from home can get lost or broken and it can cause bad feelings among the children. Parents please do not allow your child to bring toys to school. If your child wishes to bring in an educational book, game or other item, please discuss this with your child's teacher.

Extra-curricular Class Activities

Our enrichment program includes arts and crafts projects on relevant subjects of the school curriculum: Little Hands Baking, Yoga classes, and Music classes. This curriculum is subject to changes and alterations. Field trips are scheduled throughout the year. Please check the calendar and make sure to sign the authorization form and return to the office by the designated time.

Field Trips

On planned field trips the transportation may either be provided by the school, parents or use of the metro. In either situation, every child is required to have a written permission by the parents. The number of staff will be the same as the staff ratio at school. Children are required to remain seated at all times while the vehicle is in motion secured in seat belts. The staff will have access to a first aid kit at all times.

School buses provided by the school for a Primary class field trip can hold car seats for children 25 lbs and up. Parents of children who do not meet the requirement will be travelling with volunteers.

Kashrut: Lunches & Snack

Lunch, Snacks and Nutrition

We strive to educate our children at an early age to learn good nutritional habits and ask parents to provide nutritious and wholesome food for snacks and lunches.

The school provides healthy snacks for the children consisting of water, crackers, cheese, chumus, eggs, yogurt, seeds, fresh and dry fruits and vegetables. Parents will be asked to sign up for one or two dates during the school year when they will provide the weekly snacks for the classroom

We do not allow children to share lunches for various reasons (allergies, food restrictions, etc...). We ask that you do not include candy, soda and any highly processed food items.

Toddler's Snack

Our school follows the directions of the Office of Childcare and Maryland State Department of Education regarding the recommendation of hazard and choking food items (such as hotdogs, fresh carrots, etc.).

Kashrut

Lunch at school must be dairy or *parve*. We would like to keep a "common ground" as a basic rule which makes it possible for every family at the school to feel comfortable.

Therefore, *kashrut* standards are maintained throughout the school. For that purpose, items such as challah for Shabbat or birthday cupcakes, must be bought in a kosher store such as: Sunflower Bakery, Moti's Market, Simply Kosher, Shalom Kosher Market, The Kosher Pastry Oven, Shaul's Kosher Market, The Breadsmith and Goldberg's Bagels (for challah). Packaged items must have a reliable kosher sign (see snack list for acceptable kosher signs).

Please follow these rules when holding a Birthday party at home, so that you can include all children.

Pizza Friday

Every Friday the students make pizza for lunch. Pizza will be available to those who pay the weekly pizza fee. Please ask a staff member for a form or go to our website in the parents form section to print one out.

List / Shabbat Party List

- Please mark your calendar for the dates that your family is assigned to supply snack and Shabbat items for the class.
- For a week of snacks, you will be provided with a list for the classroom.
- For the Shabbat party please provide: two rolls (small challahs), one sliced challah, and one large bottle of kosher grape juice, such as *Kedem*.

Birthday Parties

Classroom Celebration

We would love to celebrate your child's birthday with you. We will sing songs and eat cupcakes. We mark the birthday with pictures of the Birthday child and a sweet party. buy at a kosher store: Moti's Market, Shalom's, Kosher Pastry Oven, The Breadsmith, Sunflower Bakery). In the classroom, children have the opportunity to celebrate their birthday by participating in a "Birthday Walk." Parents are encouraged to bring photos of their child from each year and to write a short note about each year of their child's life. We will read it with the class. This involves a circle time experience where your child walks around the sun, marking the globe cycle, equivalent to their number of years. If your child is soon to have a birthday, please coordinate with your child's teacher a few days prior to the date. We encourage parents to join us in this ceremony and to share photographs and stories of your child, to recognize how they have grown and changed during their life thus far.

What to Bring

We ask that you please bring the following items the day before or the morning of your child's celebration:

- Sealed Kosher birthday treat (cupcakes, fruit, etc.)
- Napkins
- Flowers
- Photos of your child from each year (from birth to now)
- A present to the class (see birthday list or consult teacher for more info)

Sunflower Bakery

(301) 321-3280

6101 Executive Blvd #115, North Bethesda, MD 20852

We'd like to spotlight Sunflower Bakery, a Kosher bakery that is the only program in Maryland that trains young adults with learning differences for job success in pastry arts, baking, and related food industries. Sunflower is focused on connecting students and graduates with employment opportunities.

If you are interested in supporting this cause, we urge you to visit the Sunflower Bakery Catalog: <https://www.sunflowerbakery.org/products/birthday/>

Birthday Parties/Invitations Outside of School

Our school includes everyone in the party regardless of their level of Kosher observance of religious observance. Therefore, and out of consideration to all children, birthday parties and other gatherings outside of school, which members of the class are invited, should **not** be held on Saturdays. Please provide kosher food and drinks at parties or gatherings to which members of your child's class are invited. Even if there is only one child who keeps kosher, providing kosher food such as pizza, drinks, candy and cake for everyone is assuring that no child is made to feel "different" or excluded. Party invitations may be distributed at school only if the entire class is invited to ensure that all children feel comfortable and respected.

Emergency & Security Policy

Main Door Policy

The front entrance door is locked at all times with the exception of morning drop off and afternoon pick up times. All visitors must be buzzed in by the main office. Upon entering or leaving the school, parents need to make sure the door is closed behind them.

Playground Area Policy

The Playground is a gated area. During the morning outdoor playtime, there will be staff members outside with the children. If one or more children need to be escorted inside, such as to go to the bathroom, the other staff members will remain on the playground and one will go with the children and return with them to assure their whereabouts. Furthermore, one of the three staff members will be stationed at the playground to secure the gate at all times. Each day the number of children present that day will be posted on the Emergency Door bulletin board. Before entering the building after playtime, the children are required to line up with their buddy partner.

Visitors

Unknown visitors to our school should understand that they will be asked to “sign in,” stating name, address, reason for visit and show proof of ID with photo and or driver’s license.

We are happy to give parents or prospective parents a tour of our school as long as it is pre-arranged with the office. Other visitors may only visit with advanced permission from the director.

Emergency Preparedness

Our school is taking part in the national effort to be ready for emergencies. FEMA has recently published a full guideline called "Are You Ready?", an in-depth guide to citizen preparedness. This is an informative guide for times of natural emergencies such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and more, including Technological Hazards and Terrorism. Being prepared can reduce fear and anxiety. It is highly recommended that all families print out a copy of Emergency Contact Numbers that can be found under this section of Parents Page and keep it next to your phone. More info can be found on the Department of Homeland Security's website www.ready.gov or by calling 1-800-be-ready for printed information.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Agency/Service	Telephone Numbers
Ambulance	911
Emergency Operations – County Cert:	240-777-2300
Evacuation Site – Luxmanor School	301-230-5914
Health Department	240-777-3986
Hospital – Suburban Hospital	240-826-6000

Hospital – Shady Grove Hospital	301-253-6300
Local Office of Child Care	240-314-1400
Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
Utilities – Water	1-800-828-6431
Utilities – Electric (PEPCO)	202-833-7500
Utilities – Gas (Washington Gas)	1-888-941-4328
Local Emergency Alert System (EAS) Radio Stn.	WTOP 103.5 FM, WGOP 540 AM, WYKS 93.9, WSMO 98.3

Emergencies

All full-time staff members are trained in child CPR/First Aid. When your child has an emergency or is ill, a staff member will notify you immediately. We will make all attempts to contact you immediately to review or discuss a plan of action. Please be sure all your student forms are updated and current, including all phone contacts.

Evacuation Policy

Please be informed of the following procedures for the unlikely event of an emergency that requires evacuation of the School. Staff members will take the first aid bags, Emergency Forms, Attendance Sheets and evacuate the children to the parking lot.

Leaving the School

Please be advised that no child will be released to someone other than their parents without a written authorization. Parents can submit a release form that includes the names of your child’s caregiver and others you have authorized to pick up your child at Alef Bet Montessori on a regular basis. Please keep the form updated. If someone other than those authorized on the form will be taking your child home, please alert the staff with a written note that includes the name of the person that will be picking up your child from school along with contact information for that person.

Reporting of Child Abuse

Any staff member of the school who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect, or has observed the child being subject to circumstances or conditions which could result in abuse or neglect, shall immediately report such observations to the county department of human services or local law enforcement.

Parents suspecting any type of abuse can make reports through the same agency or local law enforcement. The reporting agency is Child Protective Services 240-777-4417

Carpool Line Chart

Forming Carpool line
between
7:30 to 9:30 a.m.
and
12:00 to 12:15 pm
and
2:45 to 3 p.m.
4:45 and 5 p.m

