

## A Parent's Guide to Getting Ready for First Grade

*The transition from Kindergarten to first grade is exciting for both children and parents. Questions may arise about how first grade is different from Kindergarten and about how to help your child be ready to meet the challenges of the new school year. We hope the information below will help make this transition a time of joy and happy anticipation. We are looking forward to welcoming your child and guiding him/her through a year of tremendous growth.*

*– HaMorah Rosalie, HaMorah Julia, Ms. Benowitz*

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### **How is the day structured in first grade? How many teachers will my child have? Where are the first grade rooms?**

*In first grade, your child will have a Limudei Kodesh teacher and a General Studies teacher. These two teachers have separate classrooms which are located on the second floor of the Brener Building. Your child will spend the morning in one room with one teacher and will go to the other classroom with the other teacher for the afternoon. The schedule reverses each day, so your child will begin some days in the General Studies room and other days in the Limudei Kodesh room. Your child will continue to have art, music, and physical education with those specialty teachers in their rooms, as in Kindergarten.*

### **Which room should my child go to on the first day of school?**

*Class assignments (indicating whether your child will be in 1A or 1B) will be mailed during the summer. Since the first day of school is a Wednesday, students in 1A will begin the day in the Limudei Kodesh room (Room 204) and students in 1B will begin the day in the General Studies room (Room 201). The first day of school, Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, is a full day for students in Grade 1.*

### **May I walk my first grade child to class on the first day? May I drop him/her off in the carpool lane? What if my child takes the bus?**

*Parents are welcome to accompany their children to class on the first day, if they choose to do so. If you prefer to drop your child in the carpool lane or if your child takes the bus, rest assured that adults will greet the carpool and bus students and will help them find their rooms on the first day.*

*If you drop your child off at his/her room, we encourage you to give a brief hug goodbye and then leave the room to let your child settle in. A few tears are not uncommon on the first day of school; this usually subsides in a matter of minutes as the child becomes involved in the class. All first grade parents are cordially invited to a Parent Welcome Back Breakfast from 8:00 – 9:00 AM in the Brener lunchroom.*

*Some parents may want to continue to go to the classroom on subsequent mornings. If you would like to do this, we ask that you limit your farewells to the doorway of the classroom. Our goal in the busy early-morning is to begin the students' day swiftly. If you would like to communicate with the teacher about your child, please leave a voicemail or email message or send a note. During the*

*year, many parents find that their first grader is successfully developing independence. When this happens, s/he may prefer to walk to class alone.*

### **What time does school begin for first graders?**

*We suggest students arrive at school by 7:45 AM each morning. This allows your child to put away belongings and greet classmates before the day of learning begins, promptly at 8:00 AM. The richness of the dual curriculum means that much is to be taught and learned in a short amount of time. Students who arrive late may feel upset and will be missing essential learning time which can be difficult to make up.*

### **My child would like to see the classrooms and meet the teachers before the first day. Is this possible?**

*Yes! First graders and their parents are invited to an informal “Drop In” to the first grade rooms on Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> from 3 – 4:00 p.m. Your child will have an opportunity to meet the teachers and see the first grade classrooms.*

### **Is there a dress code for first graders?**

*Yes. Boys wear long pants and shirts, kippot, and tzitzit. Shorts are not permitted. Girls wear skirts or dresses which are long enough to cover the knees when seated. Loose-fitting skirts, and shorts or tights under skirts, are strongly suggested to make running and climbing on the playground comfortable. For physical education classes, girls are required to wear loose-fitting sweatpants. Parents should send in a pair of sweatpants in a bag to be kept at school for physical education classes.*

*Both boys and girls are required to wear sneakers every day, in order to be prepared for physical education classes and for active play in the recess yard. Footwear with straps, heels, or buckles, such as sandals or Shabbat-type shoes, is not permitted for safety reasons. Other details about student dress are included in the Parent Handbook, which will be mailed during the summer.*

### **What should I know about food and my first grade child?**

*First graders should come to school each day with food for lunch and two snacks. Please place lunches and snacks in separate containers so that the snacks are eaten specifically at snack time. Students who remain at school after 3:00 PM need a third snack. In general, food is not provided to first grade students by the school, except on special occasions. Milk is offered daily at lunch to all children at no charge. Families are actively encouraged to send only healthy foods to school. It may help your child to have a short discussion about what foods are being packed, to guide him/her in knowing what is intended for lunch and each of the snacks. Further information about food, kashrut, and birthday parties is contained in the Parent Handbook, mailed over the summer. Please be aware that Maimonides Elementary School is a “nut-free” school. Food items with evident nut content should not be brought to school.*

### **How are birthdays celebrated in first grade?**

*The children together with the teacher celebrate birthdays in class with songs and blessings, but without birthday cake or special food. Parents may choose to honor their child's birthday with a gift for the classroom, to be coordinated with the classroom teacher.*

### **What things should my child bring to class?**

*It is necessary for your child to bring a backpack and lunchbox, all labeled clearly with his/her name. The majority of the school supplies your child will need are provided by the school. Please check the supply list to see if your child needs to bring any supplementary materials.*

### **Will my child have homework?**

*First grade students usually will have homework in either General Studies or Limudei Kodesh every night, Monday-Thursday. Homework begins right after the chagim. In the weeks before school begins, parents may want to establish a quiet place for homework and ensure that supplies are ready.*

### **What can I do to help my child be ready for first grade?**

- ❖ *Continue to read aloud to your child daily in English and in Hebrew.*
- ❖ *Encourage your child to practice using the food brachot and saying the beginning of the birkat hamazon to reinforce these skills, learned in Kindergarten.*
- ❖ *Have fun with reading and alphabet activities. Here are a few websites you might like to try for this purpose:*

[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)

[www.readwritething.org/materials/abcmatch](http://www.readwritething.org/materials/abcmatch)

[www.pdictionary.com](http://www.pdictionary.com)

[www.enchantedlearning.com/Dictionary.html](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Dictionary.html)

[www.literactive.com](http://www.literactive.com)

- ❖ *Support your child in saying the tefilot s/he has learned at home and in shul.*
- ❖ *Review the sounds of the alef-bet and letter identification, using the materials sent home by the Limudei Kodesh Kindergarten teachers.*
- ❖ *Help your child complete the reading log (found on the website), listing all books he/she has read (or had read to them) during the summer. Send the log to school on the first day.*
- ❖ *Relax and know that your child will have a wonderful first grade year!*