



# NIGRI INTERNATIONAL SHLUCHIM ONLINE SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK 5776 - 5777 / 2016 - 2017  
(US & EU DIVISION)







## דבר מלכות

### היום יום כ"ב טבת

הכרזת אאמו"ר באחת ההתועדות: אט אזוי ווי הנחת תפילין בכל יום איז א מצוה דאורייתא אויף יעדען אידען, אהן א חלוק צי א גדול בתורה, צי א איש פשוט, אזוי איז א חוב גמור אויף יעדען אידען צו טראכטען יעדען טאג א האלבע שעה וועגן דעם חנוך פון קינדער, און טאן אלץ וואס עס איז בכוחו צו טאן און יתר מכפי כחו, זעהן פועל זיין ביי די קינדער, אז זיי זאלען געהן אין דעם דרך וואס מען איז זיי מדריך.

“My father [the Rebbe Rashab] proclaimed at a farbrengen: Just as wearing tefillin every day is a Mitzva commanded by the Torah to every individual regardless of his standing in Torah, whether deeply learned or simple, so too is it an absolute duty for every person to spend a half hour every day thinking about the Torah-education of children, and to do everything in his power - and beyond his power - to inspire children to follow the path along which they are being guided.”





The Nigri International Shluchim Online School is rooted in core Chassidische values, and devoted to superior Chinuch Al Taharas Hakodesh and instilling fine Middos in our students.

The Rebbe's path and direction is imparted to our students via Machshava, Dibbur, and Ma'aseh, in class and in the general school environment.

The goal: raising Chassidische students who are devoted to the Rebbe in their hearts, minds and actions.

Our staff helps promote educational, spiritual, and social growth, while fostering the development of each student's talents and strengths. They serve not only as educators, but caring role models whose hashpa'ah will remain with the children as they grow.







# OUR MISSION STATEMENT



## A Word from our Director



Dear Parents,

It has been a decade since the Nigri International Shluchim Online School was launched.

Over the last ten years we have seen the school grow from its infancy of conference call classes between a few Shluchim families to a vibrant online network; and from a school primarily serving the East Coast of the United States to a global institute that spans six continents. Of course, this is the result of much hard work and the realization of the Rebbe's holy brachos.

The Shluchim Office, founded at the behest of the Rebbe, provides this most necessary service as an essential part of its mandate outlined in the Sich'a of Chof Zayin Cheshvan 5747, "Where every Shlich can connect to, and receive advice or assistance in fulfilling his Shlichus in his respective location."

Not so long ago, Shluchim around the world had to dedicate hours of their precious time each day to home-school their children. There were those who paid large sums to hire teachers for their children. Many were forced to send off their children at a young age in pursuit of proper chassidische chinuch, an endeavor that cost much money and emotional hardship. The herculean efforts of these Shluchim created the impetus for the creation of the Shluchim Online School so that you and your children won't have to endure those same challenges now.

Today over 750 children on Shlichus receive their day-to-day chinuch in the Shluchim Online School. We are well aware of this tremendous responsibility and we thank you for entrusting us with the education of your most precious treasures.

*Rabbi Moishy Shemtov*

Director - Shluchim Online School





## A Word from our Principal

Dear Parents,

It is with a great sense of enthusiasm that I welcome you all back to school. For those families that have been with us in the past I say “hello friends,” and commit myself once again to provide your children with a quality Chassidische Chinuch in the comfort of your home. To all the new families joining us this year, I say “hello friends - and welcome aboard!” I am confident that your child will benefit not only from the lessons with the teachers but will also gain tremendously from the extracurricular activities and warm social environment the Online School will provide for your children, our new students.

We are happy to have you join our close-knit online school family.

The word Chinuch means dedication. At the start of the new school year we are once again dedicating ourselves to educating your children, our students, to grow in the ways of Torah and Toras Hachassidus. Throughout the past year, and more so over the summer, we have taken giant steps to continue our growth as a school in many areas. You should notice changes with regard to davening class and learning of Chumash and Gemoro. You may also have recognized synchronization of class schedules and other general improvements; all part of our dedication to your children.

At the same time, dear parents, thank you for your dedication. We all know that every family must work as a team with the school in order for your children to reach their potential; how much more so in an online school. Outlined within this publication are many of the responsibilities for which we count on you. Together, we will succeed! In this handbook, you will find general information about our school, and important policies and guidelines. In addition, there are tips, professional letters, and more. Please familiarize yourself thoroughly with the contents of this handbook.

Wishing us all a year of great success,

Sincerely yours,

*Mrs. Malkie Gurkow*

Principal

Shluchim Online School





## A word from our principal



Dear Parents,

In the modern age, technology plays such a central role in practically all areas of our day-to-day lives. Indeed, the effectiveness of the amazing work of the Rebbe's tayere shluchim to reach out, guide and inspire those both near and far, has been revolutionized by harnessing technology for hafotzas hamayonois. The role that the online school plays thus mirrors and enhances this avodas hakodesh by using the best technology with dedicated mechanchim and mechanochos to reach unzere kinder and to provide them with an authentic chassidishe chinuch, in spite of geographic location, and a lack of "regular" facilities.

I am proud and excited to join the highly motivated and professional team at the Online School and I look forward to working together with you, the students and the teachers, to provide a quality chinuch that is imbued with life, vitality and a feeling of real hiskashrus to Rebbe. Having just come on board, I would like to thank Rabbi Shemtov, Mrs. Gurkow and all the dedicated staff of the online school for the tireless work they did over the summer to prepare for the current school year, and I look forward to a positive and productive future going forward, full of growth, accomplishments and nachas.

I encourage you to go through the handbook in order to be well acquainted with some important guidelines, policies and tips for a rewarding experience at the online school.

Please feel free to contact me should you need anything.

Wishing you brocho and hatzlocho, and of course, emesse yiddishe and chassidishe nachas!

*Rabbi Yaacov Ringo*

Principal - Boys older division  
Shluchim Online School



## A word from our Associate Director

Dear Parents,

It is with honor and pleasure that I greet you as associate director of the Shluchim Online School.

In the innocence and sincerity of children lies immeasurable potential for goodness, for kindness, and for leadership. "כי תהיו אתם לי ארץ חפץ" We strive to give every child the gift of an awareness of who they are and what they stand for, the tools with which to cultivate their unique talents, and the confidence to carry their accomplishments with pride.

All of us are eager and inspired to begin a year richly filled with joyful and meaningful learning experiences. We hope to empower a generation of proud junior Shluchim who will lead, inspire, and educate those around them, sharing their enduring love of learning with a fellow friend.

Through close partnerships with the parents, the Vaad Hanhalah, and the exceptional staff at the Shluchim Online School, I am confident that we will continue to grow and enhance our program; offering young Shluchim a superior chinuch, a dynamic learning experience that they will carry with them always. Together, we will continue to enjoy tremendous success as a beacon of educational excellence, the centerpiece in the chinuch of Yaldei HaShluchim throughout the world.

It is a great privilege and I am humbled and appreciative of the opportunity to become a part of this special family. I look forward to working together with you.

Wishing you a Ksiva Vchasima Tova and A Gut Gebentcht Yuhr!

*Devora Leah Notik*  
Associate Director  
Shluchim Online School



Hearing  
from the  
**Experts**






At the Nigri International Shluchim Online School we firmly believe that consultation with the specialists is a vital tool for the advancement of our precious students.

When encountered with a dilemma in any area we turn to the experts in the field and are assisted by their ideas and professional services. Their counsel is always helpful for our students, parents and teachers and with time, we have come to understand that their solutions produce the most effective results.

We have consulted with noted experts specializing in the fields of education, psychology and fitness, and asked them to share their perspective on helping students in an Online School environment achieve success.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a pen, positioned in the upper right corner. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm, golden-brown light. The text 'The Power of the Parent' is centered in the image. 'The Power of the' is written in a small, elegant cursive font, flanked by two short horizontal lines. Below it, the word 'Parent' is written in a large, bold, textured cursive font that resembles a halftone or stippled effect.

*The Power of the*  
**Parent**





**Rabbi Naftali Rot**  
**Veteran Chabad Educator**

I recently had the opportunity to view a portion of the curriculum from the Shluchim Online School and I was able to experience one of the livestreamed classes at the home of Harav Yosef Solomon, the shliach in Bulgaria.



I was amazed by the wonderful curriculum and by the professionalism accorded to its development and its delivery. I enjoyed the live class and I was impressed by what's being achieved there. It was really nice to have an opportunity to speak to the children as well.

I was especially moved while listening to the son of the shliach - an 11 or 12 year-old boy - as he delivered one of the Rebbe's sichos at the Friday night Shabbos meal, in front of tens of guests.

His delivery was clear, concise, impressive and

## Tips for Parents:

- **Follow** your child's curiosity. Provide them with answers and encourage their natural curiosity and desire to learn.
- **Invest** in providing a calm and peaceful family life.
- **Encourage** your child's personal development. Keep them busy with things that they love, not just with things that they "have to do".
- **Expand** the boundaries of learning beyond what's taught at school. Delve further!
- **Help** your children to achieve their goals.
- **Engage** your children with interesting challenges and prepare to be surprised by the results. Examples include riddles, hidden treasures, etc.





moving. This sentiment was shared by everyone sitting at the meal, as was obvious by the way they listened intently and applauded when he finished speaking.

It was an amazing experience to listen to him. But beyond that, it was a lesson for me as to the general role of chinuch and what we can achieve when a child is constantly in his parents' presence, where the parents can act as living role models.

It's important to recognize that parents are in a better position to teach their children than anyone else in the world: They know them, they understand them, they're always available and most importantly, they're constantly teaching their children through their own actions and words. Teachers might be well-trained for their jobs, but their training focuses more on the running of a classroom, not on supporting children throughout their day to day lives.

That's why parents whose children learn in the Shluchim Online School need to realize the responsibility they bear - it's an extremely powerful one and it entails a deep commitment.

At the Shluchim Online School, children find themselves in an emotionally safe environment - their natural environment, in the presence of the people who have protected them since birth - as opposed to children who spend hours out of the house in emotionally stressful environments, enduring peer pressure, humiliation and external demands.





Add to this the natural motivation that parents have, borne from love, parental responsibility and the desire to enjoy their lives with their children – it makes for a powerful formula.

## A Deep Commitment

Teachers and parents share the mutual goal of helping the child to develop in all areas. Cooperation between parents and teachers helps to develop a joint sense of responsibility which contributes to educational success.

When there is no real partnership between teachers and parents and no shared sense of responsibility for results, children will fall short of the goals that were set for them. Parents are the ones who see their children's individual natures, strengths and challenges. They know their children better than any of the educational staff.

That's why parents must update and inform the educational team of any dilemma or emotional difficulty their child may be experiencing. Overall cooperation between teachers and parents will contribute to the success of educational goals.

## Pointers for Strengthening the Home-School Connection

**-Try to be as involved** as possible in your children's lives, at home and in





school.

**-Don't involve your children in your criticisms** of the school. If you have complaints about the curriculum, classroom management, etc., don't share it with your children. Children need to act respectfully towards the educational staff. They shouldn't have any predisposed negativity towards a specific subject or teacher.

**- When necessary, ask.** Comment, ask for explanations from the teacher or principal, but always remember the right way to go about it and be cognizant that you're setting an example for your children. Inappropriate outbursts on the part of the parents can also create social embarrassment for the child.

**-Show willingness to hear, not just to be heard.** Give teachers and administration a chance to look into things and to deal with them. Be





careful to engage in respectful conversations with them. Don't raise your voice or use a threatening tone.

**-Always keep the good of the child in mind** from an educational-social perspective. Listen to your child's teacher if they identify difficulties that are impeding their functioning. When necessary, turn to a professional who can help strengthen your child's belief in their own abilities.







# VIRTUAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Ilana Yisrael - Clinical Psychologist



As the month of Elul approaches and we engage in our spiritual and physical preparations for the holidays, the school year is also about to begin at the Shluchim Online School.

I was asked to discuss issues and challenges that crop up for parents whose children learn in virtual schools.

I'd like to respond to a few questions that parents brought up. It might also benefit parents to exchange ideas and solutions with other parents who are struggling with educating their children in far-flung places without a sense of community for their children.

## **As a parent, how will I know that my child is being given ample opportunity to participate in class?**

Even in traditional classrooms, children are given varied opportunity to participate. Teachers are often forced to discipline students who jump up and call out answers and at the same time they need to encourage students who are too shy to raise their hands.

But obviously the problem is compounded in a virtual classroom where only six children can be seen at a time and only one can 'hold' the microphone and speak. Obviously the teacher has a responsibility to regulate "air time" for





students, inviting more reticent students to speak up and giving fair turns to those students wishing to offer their opinions.

## **But what can parents do to help address this problem?**

I would suggest focusing on each child and making sure that they're comfortable in their classroom setting. Are they happy with the status quo or do they wish they had more opportunity to express themselves?

It could be that your child isn't the first to speak up and someone else always grabs the microphone before they have a chance. In such a situation, it would be prudent to speak to the teacher. Request that the teacher make a round of all the children before class ends, giving first dibs to those who haven't had a turn to speak yet and stopping the overzealous or competitive children from usurping these students turns.

But perhaps your son or daughter enjoys being the 'hidden' one. Don't pressure them – some personalities simply enjoy one-on-one interactions more than a public forum. Unless your child feels disappointed or inferior being in the background, I wouldn't suggest getting involved.

In the opposite case, if your child loves to participate and they're the one 'ruling' the microphone, check with the teacher that they aren't bothering other kids in the class. If this turns out to be the case, the child needs to





be taught to wait a few seconds before answering a question – giving other children a chance to speak up. Exercising restraint in the classroom will give your child tools that will serve them in good stead in every group setting they will encounter in the future.

Sometimes the family environment encourages competition, leading children to leap at the microphone when it's offered. If that sounds familiar to you, check to make sure that your child or your children isn't being left out, unable to keep up with the fast pace that's expected of them.

I treated a girl that suffered from feeling socially inferior. Her issue stemmed from the conversations that took place at home, where the banter was always witty, clever and quick. She couldn't keep up with them and believed that she held the downtrodden position of the dumb one in the family. Sometimes these competitive, whip-smart types don't develop deep and critical thinking skills. Their ability to be 'quick' can also lead to arrogance, which is the exact opposite of what we aim to achieve with our educational goals.

## How can my child make friends online?

Studies over the last decade evaluating teens and children who engage in various modes of screen-time have found that meaningful friendships can be forged through correspondence, without ever meeting face to face.

Sometimes, virtual friendships are conducive for sharing and opening







up. Unlike groups of neighborhood friends, since virtual friends aren't part of your day to day life, kids worry less about betrayal and abandonment. However, grooming a friendship through correspondence takes a fair amount of verbal skill. It's important to help your child to develop their expressive language - especially written - beginning at an early age. I would suggest using the written word as a method of communication at home.

Family members can write notes to each other expressing thanks or positive feelings, or simply making a request. The written word is also a great medium for having private conversations with a child when you can't seem to find the right moment or the privacy to have a spoken conversation.

You can also encourage your child to correspond with family members or friends that they've already met on visits or vacations. These correspondences are more likely to receive positive responses, leading your child to feel liked and wanted.

Correspondence friendships aren't immune to hurt and insults. It's worth pointing out to your child that gossip and badmouthing isn't allowed in





writing any more than it's permitted in speech. Explain to your child that messages they write about another child can easily be passed on, causing a chain of bruised feelings and pain.

If you discover that children are corresponding in a slanderous or teasing manner about another child in the class, it's important to let your child's teacher know so that they can deal with it appropriately.

When your children are young, it's easier to keep watch over your child's correspondence. Once they become teenagers, they'll want privacy and expect trust from you. Delving into their private connections with their friends will only alienate your teens. Give them the liberty to correspond freely with their friends. If, however, you have a well-founded suspicion that your child is looking at inappropriate content, it is the parent's responsibility to protect the child from negative influences.

Skype is a wonderful tool which enables far-away-friends to feel like they're meeting face to face. Of course, it isn't a substitute for real life contact. If you have a desktop, Skype forces you to sit in one place, not to mention how disappointing it is when technical problems cut the conversation off midway. If you have a laptop or tablet or phone, your child can maneuver all over the house with their friend on the screen beside them. They'll be able to share their lives, introducing their friend to their siblings and showing them the favorite corners of their home.





If your child is shy, help them set up Skype study sessions with a friend. If necessary, speak to the other child's parents and arrange for them to play interactive games together online. Try to find any means you can to encourage personal connection through whatever communication outlets you have.

Especially when your children become teenagers, pay attention to how much time they're spending with their devices. Addiction to various modes of technology is a common problem. This issue can be offset by using parental controls, codes or holding on to your teen's device and giving it to them for allotted periods of time.



If your child seems tired or irritable, consider whether they might be staying up all night with their computer or device. If you find that your child uses their device excessively, contacting friends at all hours of the day or night, speak to their teacher and to other parents to get a better sense of what's going on.

Wishing you much success and Nachas from your children!



DEALING WITH PROBLEMS  
WHILE THEY'RE

*SMALL*

SO THEY DON'T BECOME

**BIGGER**

Dr. Reli Abel - Nutritionist and Dietician

Obesity and excessive fat are considered a disease  
and a growing epidemic nowadays.

Today's "modern" lifestyle—which includes  
unscheduled eating, skipping breakfast, feasting on  
readily accessible junk food, chips and candy and  
eating processed and canned foods—all combine to









cause weight gain and loss of ingredients that are vital for our children's development.

Throw in reduced physical activity on top of all that due to lack of awareness, like taking the elevator instead of the staircase or getting minimal physical education (PE) or gym—and you get more kids getting fatter faster.

The Rebbe's shlichim all over the world in places with no Jewish school may be well set up with the Shlichim Online School—sitting and learning for hours each day on end. But a sedentary lifestyle with minimal physical activity can alone bring on excessive weight gain, obesity and loss of effectiveness.



Excess weight is not only a common phenomenon among today's kids, but also one that is detrimental to their progressive growth, physical and mental development, concentration, attentiveness and so much more. Along with not getting vital ingredients in food like vitamins and minerals, obesity and





excess weight have a negative influence on the body's several systems. Obesity in childhood increases the risk of developing a variety of diseases in adulthood, and also causes low self-esteem.

Although treating childhood weight problems is complex and difficult, it's considered highly important to tackle the problem at as young an age as possible.

An obese or overweight child has seven times more risk of becoming an obese or overweight adult than does a healthy-weight child—and successfully treating excess weight in children can prevent a lifetime of numerous conditions.

### Health tip:

**Shluchim's kids who are home a lot can do 20 to 30 minutes of exercise at home each day. March in place to rhythmic Chasidische music while holding canned foods as weights in each hand.**

It's important to note that excess weight can cause many health complications, including orthopedic problems (like knee pain), sleep apnea (which can be life-threatening), hormonal disruptions, diabetes, high blood cholesterol and lipid levels, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

Damage to a child's self-image, body image, and social ties that are related to obesity and excess fat are no less significant.









## Treating childhood weight gain

Treatment focuses on several areas:

- Changes to nutrition—food ingredients, eating habits, meal times and so on
- Cognitive behavioral changes
- Meaningful increase of physical activity
- Including parents as critical partners and supporters in child weight loss

The goal of nutritional change is to teach your child how to eat right—to lower the quantity of fat in food intake, to limit intake of high-calorie sugary items like candy and cake, and, most importantly, to teach your child to feel when he or she is truly hungry, and to always associate that feeling with mealtime—to no longer treat food as a response to an emotion but rather, to connect it to physical hunger.

It must be well remembered that when we're talking about kids and proper diet, weight loss isn't the only goal here. In some cases, if your child's excess weight is not much, the desired change can be brought about by means of simply growing taller with time—while maintaining the current weight. It's also important to remember that your child is in his or her growth and development





phase now—at some ages, your child can grow .75 to 1 centimeters (.3 to .4 inches) a month—and it’s important to limit damage during this growth phase. That’s why the goal here should be growth in height, and to ensure that your child gets all the vital nutritional ingredients that he or she needs. Rapid weight loss can cause stunted growth.

## **In short, there are six important rules for promoting healthy weight in kids:**

1. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables—offer them to your child in an appetizing way, and offer them repeatedly. Repeated exposure will increase your child’s interest.

Don’t forget to lead by example! Also, drink lots of water, or herbal tea in its many types, and limit sugary drinks or fruit juices as regular hydration. The ideal fluid intake is 8 cups of fluids a day.

2. Reduce fats: pastries, chips, fatty meats and fatty cheeses. Use more olive oil, tehina and avocado, and choose steamed foods over fried foods.
3. Limit sugar-rich foods. For example, keep it to one sweet or candy a day (better yet, give your kids dates or dried fruits instead).








4. Insist on scheduled meals and at least one family meal a day!
5. Incorporate physical activities into your child's daily schedule—walking, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, a 45-minute walk with his or her parents, etc.
6. Boost your child's body image—praise them for new clothing, presentable appearance, choosing healthy foods and so on.

Best wishes for success and great results!

Reli

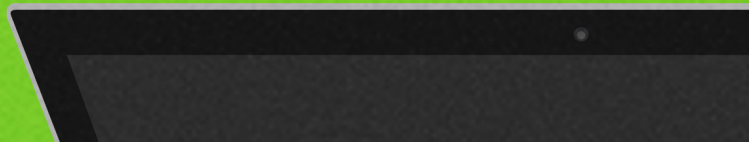







# COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME

Based on an article from [aoa.com](http://aoa.com) and other sources







Viewing a computer or digital screen often makes the eyes work harder and as a result, can make many individuals susceptible to the development of vision-related symptoms.

This can lead to a condition known as Computer Vision Syndrome, also referred to as Digital Eye Strain. Solutions to digital screen-related vision problems are varied. However, they can usually be alleviated by obtaining regular eye care and making changes in how you view the screen.





The average Online School student spends several hours a day in front of the computer and, because our children's health and well-being are our utmost priority, we should take a moment to examine these risks and how they can be reduced and prevented.

## Preventing and Minimizing CVS

The most common symptoms associated with Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) include eyestrain, neck and shoulder pain, fatigue, headaches, blurred vision and dry eyes.

Prevention or reduction of the vision problems associated with Computer Vision Syndrome begins with minimizing the amount of time your child spends on the computer outside of class. This includes reducing the use of other digital screens, tablets and cell phones. In addition, your child should spend as much of his free time as possible outdoors and exposed to natural sunlight.

## Viewing the Computer

How your child uses his/her computer is critical. This includes lighting conditions, chair comfort, position of the monitor, and the use of rest breaks.

**LOCATION OF COMPUTER SCREEN** - Most people find it more comfortable to view a computer when the eyes are looking downward. Optimally, the





HOW TO SIT IN FRONT OF COMPUTER ☑



computer screen should be 15 to 20 degrees below eye level (about 4 or 5 inches) as measured from the center of the screen and 20 to 28 inches from the eyes.

**LIGHTING** - Position the computer screen to avoid glare, particularly from overhead lighting or windows. Use blinds or drapes on windows and replace the light bulbs in desk lamps with bulbs of lower wattage.

**ANTI-GLARE SCREENS** - If there is no way to minimize glare from light sources, consider using a screen glare filter. These filters decrease the amount of light reflected from the screen.

**SEATING POSITION** - Chairs should be comfortably padded and conform to the body. Chair height should be adjusted so your feet rest flat on the floor. If your chair has arms, they should be adjusted to provide arm support while you are typing. Your wrists shouldn't rest on the keyboard when typing.

**REST BREAKS** - To prevent eyestrain, try to rest your eyes when using the computer for long periods. Rest your eyes for 15 minutes after two hours of continuous computer use. Also, for every 20 minutes of computer viewing, look into the distance for 20 seconds to allow your eyes a chance to refocus.

**BLINKING** - To minimize your chances of developing dry eye when





using a computer, make an effort to blink frequently. Blinking keeps the front surface of your eye moist.

Regular eye examinations and proper viewing habits go a long way in helping to prevent or reduce the development of the symptoms associated with Computer Vision Syndrome.





## PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Rabbi Yitzchok Rivkin - Educational consultant



The beginning of the school year is often characterized by a feeling of freedom on the part of the parents; a release from the constant commitments that rest on their shoulders during vacation time. Undoubtedly, when children return to their school routine, it makes things significantly easier for the parents. But in actuality, parents need to be more involved in their children's school day than one might think.

Parenting is a job with a definite starting point, but it is also a job that never ends. A parent's job is so multi-faceted that if one had to go through official job training, even years of study wouldn't suffice.

Every child, according to his own nature and the way in which Hashem created him, is equipped with fine-tuned sensors which pick up on any change in their immediate environment. Children understand when they're being criticized because they aren't valued, just as they can feel when they're being addressed honestly, albeit respectfully.

There are so many components that make up our children's education, but the most important element is that of imitation. Children absorb so many behaviors through their informal education by watching the world around them. Since parents are the most obvious figures in their children's world, it behooves us to pay close attention to our own day to day behaviors.



A parent is the best person to observe their child's situation – there is no substitute for a parent's intuition. It would be wise for parents to share whatever information they possess about their child with the staff of their child's virtual school. That way parents and schools can work together to most effectively improve the child's situation.

Even when children are separated by large distances, parents should emphasize the importance of socializing. Friendships are an important foundation for building a child with a healthy personality. Healthy socialization will continue to help a child throughout his life, wherever he is.

Another aspect of schooling that contributes to a child's success is the physical learning environment. Due to the specific circumstances and constraints present when children attend a virtual school, it may be difficult to create an ideal learning environment.

It's important to invest thought and creativity into finding a place for your child to learn. Try to set them up in a relatively quiet location where the basic conditions will be conducive for learning.



**Our Participants:**

**Rabbi and  
Mrs. Bukiet  
(Bradenton, FL)**



**Mrs. Goldie  
Grossbaum  
(Folsom, CA)**



**Mrs. Sarah  
Cunin  
(Reno, NV)**



**Mrs. Rivka  
Slonim  
(Binghamton,  
NY)**



**Rabbi  
and Mrs.  
Feldman  
(Bend, OR)**



**Rabbi Mendel  
Wolvovsky  
(Santa  
Rosa, CA)**





# ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

## THE PROVEN PARENT

As dedicated parents we are most concerned with ensuring that our children receive the very best. When it comes to the Online School experience we are at times unsure as to how best to provide them with a warm, stable and supportive learning atmosphere.



How can we, as parents assist and contribute to our children's healthy social development despite the vast physical distance separating them from their classmates? How do we maintain healthy communication with their teachers? How do we set up their surroundings to minimize distractions and keep them focused and attentive?

There is no one wiser than the tried and tested. We have therefore chosen a group of Shluchim, long-time parents in the Online School, to share their valuable knowledge which will surely enrich your Online School experience.

### 1) What is the role of a parent in the Online School and why is it so uniquely important?

**Rabbi Bukiet:** As parents, we view ourselves as facilitators in the background. We lay the initial groundwork for our children's success, but really leave it up to them to make proper choices. We want them to have the experience of choosing to do the right thing as opposed to being coerced.

As a rule, we rarely look in on them. However, they know that every evening we will review with them what they learned in school and they are accountable to us for it. For the most part it works but there are some exceptions. This year one of our children had a harder time focusing in class so we moved him to our office for a few months where he was under constant supervision and he thrived. Every child is a different story.

**Rabbi Feldman:** Parents need to recognize that being an Online School





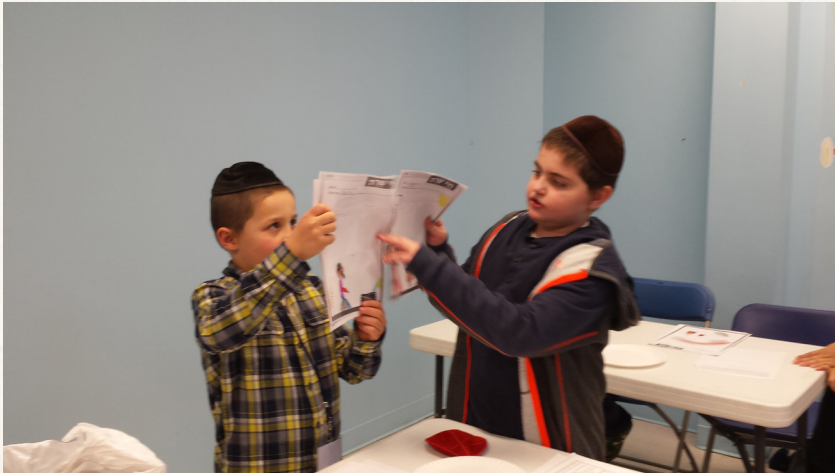
parent is a full time job, especially if you have a few kids in school. There's a lot to stay on top of in addition to the technical glitches that crop up, such

as getting your kids signed on and settled, making sure they have everything they need for class, printing worksheets and sending them back to the teachers and being in constant communication with the teachers.

Recognizing what the job is and setting aside the right amount of time and effort for it will help ensure a successful experience for your children.

**Mrs. Grossbaum:** There is no question that being a parent in the Online School means playing a greater and more active role as a school parent. We must be more cognizant and involved in the goings-on of the school and your child's particular class; you can't ever assume anything.

Whether it's the parents themselves or a hired supervisor, there must be someone popping in on the student to make sure that they are in class when they are supposed to be. While in a regular class a parent can naively assume that the students are looked after, in a computer based virtual classroom the parent has to be proactive.





**Mrs. Slonim:** Online School is a tremendous service but it does necessitate a higher level of parental involvement. Your child will not have a teacher constantly in the room looking over their shoulder.

These children all become extremely tech savvy and can often run circles around their parents in this regard so it takes extra attentiveness to make sure they are



actually doing what they are supposed to do at any given time.

Like in any school, keeping up with the teacher and doing homework with your child is important but in the Online School you also have to give thought to the environment you set up for them during the hours they are online. Setting rules about when they eat and what they eat and drink at their desks can also be important.





## 2) How can a comfortable and supportive learning environment be created for a student in the Online School? Is it better to have your children studying in separate rooms or all together?

**Rabbi Bukiet:** Our children go to the Chabad House for school every day with their lunch and snacks just like regular school. They each have their own classrooms and are expected to log in on their own and in general manage themselves. We make sure our children have all their supplies, laptops, and books handy, and the room is bright and clean. Our children study in separate rooms as it eliminates distractions.

**Mrs. Cunin:** While it is nice for every child to have their own room to mitigate distractions, it is not always realistic due to space constraints. We decided that our children should not learn in their bedrooms and have always tried to create a space that felt like a classroom, like they were actually going to school. So this meant that several kids would be in the same room.

**Mrs. Feldman:** One advantage of having your kids in online school is being able to tailor the learning environment according to the needs of the specific child. One of my kids needs to be moving while he's learning as it's very hard for him to focus if he's sitting still in front of the computer. He recently became interested in riding a unicycle and he actually sometimes sits on his unicycle instead of a chair at his desk. Obviously in a brick and mortar school this would not fly and would be disruptive to the other students.

A tip that has proved extremely helpful: use a wireless headset. For the kid that needs to be moving around while they're learning - they are not attached







to the computer and can move freely while learning. Also, they keep it on during the breaks and can hear when the bell rings signaling the start of the next period.

Also - if possible, add an extra few dollars and get insurance on your headsets. They are prone to break and with insurance you can get it replaced without charge.

Our children are given their own desks and baskets and are responsible for the cleanliness and orderliness of their own personal spaces. If possible, we would try to have an adult overseeing them or checking in on them at various times throughout the day.

**Mrs. Grossbaum:** First of all, a student needs enough space on and around his table. In addition, a bright-colored room with plenty of sunlight and a comfortable chair go a long way in helping our children focus on their studies.





**Rabbi Wolvovsky:** Every situation is different. However, for the supervision aspect, one room is ideal so long as each student has ample room not only for their supplies but also so that when one child is on mic, it doesn't disturb the rest of the children in the room. We found that each student having their own table is very helpful.

### 3) What is the importance of proper communication between the parent and teacher and what can parents do to enhance effective parent-teacher communication?

**Mrs. Grossbaum:** Effective communication starts with hitting reply when you get an email from a teacher on what was taught in class and writing a quick thank you. Any response, be it brief or extensive, goes toward building a relationship with a teacher and lets a teacher know you appreciate them.

When a student is running late or when there's a disruption at home (a simcha, etc.) that momentarily pulls the child away from school, always inform the teacher right away. It shows the teacher you care and respect them.

**Mrs. Cunin:** Parent-teacher communication is super important in an online school setting. Reaching out to the teachers in the first few weeks of school will help them better understand your child and his/her specific needs as well as give you a better understanding of the teacher's expectations.

Attending Open House and other school related online meetings is crucial as usually these are times when important information is shared.





Throughout the year, the parents should be in contact with their child's teacher to optimize their child's learning. Questions like "is my child participating in class," "are the assignments being sent in on time," "is my child performing at grade level" are all very important to ask.

**Rabbi Bukiet:** In our busy Shlichus lives, communication is one of our bigger challenges. Overall, it's important to touch base with the teachers periodically to see how the children are doing. We try to make a point of communicating with the teachers in the beginning of the year to tell them a little about our children. We ask them to be in touch with us if there are any issues.

Communicating effectively on a regular basis even just to thank a teacher for their assistance, also helps so that if and when issues come up, they can be resolved in a more satisfactory fashion.

**Mrs. Slonim:** I cannot underscore the importance of this. Our most positive experience has been with a teacher who sent us frequent notes, often every day, always posted homework and even let us know during class how our son was doing or when he was not in line.

Be advised - although it may seem reasonable for the teacher to reach out to the parents first, for your child's sake, if necessary, make the extra effort and take initiative to be in touch with your child's teacher.

**4) How can we provide our children maximal protection from the dangers of the internet? What can be done to minimize the dangers as much as possible?**





**Rabbi Wolvovsky:** First of all there is the security system provided by the school which is extremely important to install. Even taking that into consideration, supervising your children during school hours is helpful for this as well. I would also advise keeping the computers closed after school hours.

**Mrs Grossbaum:** This is a risk every parent should be fully aware of but as parents of children spending hours a day in an online setting, it is most important to take the necessary steps to minimize these risks. There are three basic steps that we take in this regard:



1. Although the security system provide by the school is a great service, it is highly advisable to download and/or purchase additional internet security and web filters.
2. Your child should know that someone is walking in and out of the room to periodically check on him/her.
3. Position the computer screen to be facing the door so that it's immediately visible to anyone entering the room.





**5) Technical interruptions are inevitable but surely there are ways to keep them to a minimum. In light of your experience, can you share some tips and solutions?**

**Mrs. Bukiet:** For the most part, our children know how to fix the technical issues better than we do! If it's something that will take a while to resolve, we make sure they are learning or reviewing the material on their own or with their brothers in the meantime. We want to teach them how to utilize every moment properly.



Most importantly, save the number to Tech Support (718-705-4475) in your cell phones and have it printed and taped to each student's table.

**Rabbi Wolvovsky:** Generally speaking, as long as you have decent computers and internet connections there should not be an





issue from the students' end. It is therefore highly recommended to properly invest in this regard.

However disruptions from the school side are beyond the parent's control, yet it is important to be prepared for such events and encourage the student to do school work while the connection is down. Of course, the phone number to SOLS Tech Support should be readily available and if an issue arises, the call should be made immediately.

**6) There are certain responsibilities unique to an Online School parent such as printing specific material and ensuring your child is equipped with the necessary tools. What are your suggestions for remaining on top of these ongoing and frequent tasks?**

**Rabbi Bukiet:** Initially it was quite challenging but since we taught our children to be responsible for printing, this has made it much easier on both of us. They can print whenever necessary, eliminating the need to wait for us if we are in the middle of something.

**Mrs. Slonim:** It is extremely important to stay on top of the incoming emails. Checking your mail from teachers and what they have posted on your child's dashboard each night is most helpful in keeping your child up to date in his/her schoolwork, classroom and studies.

**Rabbi Wolvovsky:** Indeed this can seem overwhelming at times. We found it very beneficial to request from the teachers to send files as email attachments





as well since for some that is significantly more convenient than logging in many times and searching for the necessary document. When a file arrives, printing it immediately is helpful.

**Mrs. Cunin:** We like to print and file new worksheets on Mondays so that we know our children are prepared for the week. On Fridays, I check emails and print the Dvar Torahs and Parsha questions to be shared at the Shabbos table. Having a set time to do these tasks ensures that they happen consistently.

**7) Sometimes the children are more interested in remaining in front of their computer to chat with their friends during break. How do you balance the necessary social experience with proper health and fitness?**

**Mrs. Grossbaum:** Doing an activity together with your child during breaks is a great way to get him/her away from the computer and provide some exercise as well. Taking a walk or a jog with your child or something else that requires a partner is great, even if only for a few minutes.

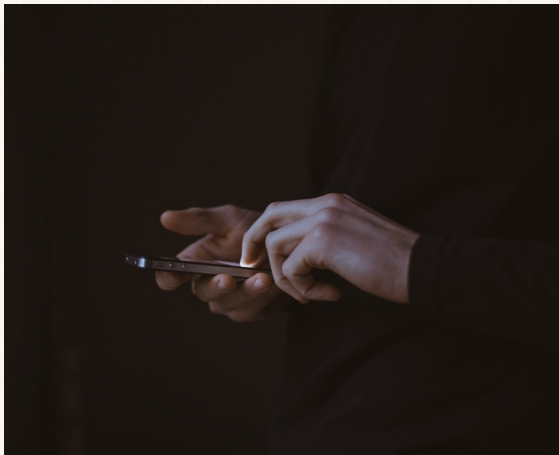
**Mrs. Bukiet:** An important element in our situation is that we don't have internet or computers at home so we do allow the children to talk with their friends during class breaks because we feel they need the maximum social experience they can get. We do try to encourage them to play outside as much as possible. It helps when it works out that the children's breaks are together. We also have various "fitness" equipment that the children use





indoors such as plasma cars, pogo sticks, ripsticks, and roller blades.

**Mrs. Cunin:** We need to remember that the Online School friends are very important to your child and their social development. Allowing a child to chat online or on the phone encourages those relationships.



However, Online School children, like all children, also need to be healthy, active kids. Making sure the snacks available to them during their online school hours are healthy as well as planning times for physical activity throughout the

week, whether it is a scheduled activity or just running around at a park, is also important.

**Rabbi Wolvovsky:** We found that encouraging our kids to speak to their friends over the phone during breaks allowed them to leave their desks while still using the time to socialize with their peers. In this way they have the chance to move around away from their computers but not at the expense of maintaining healthy social activity.



WHAT  
YOU  
NEED TO  
KNOW





## The Student Body

The Shluchim Online School caters to Chabad Shluchim from all over the world, from Shanghai, China to Caracas, Venezuela to Stonybrook, NY. Children living in isolated areas with limited Jewish social interaction now have the opportunity to benefit from being in a social atmosphere and sharing their experiences with other children they can relate to, all within the comfort of their homes. Our students flourish under the care of our dedicated, professional and creative teachers, benefiting from this innovative learning environment designed specifically to meet their needs.

## Structure: The World in Four Divisions

The Nigri International Shluchim Online School is comprised of four divisions, each custom tailored for a specific demographic and offering separate boys and girls classes:

- **The Americas Division** – English/Yiddish speaking  
(Serving children in North, South and Central America)
- **The European Division** – English/Yiddish speaking  
(Serving children in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia)
- **The Hebrew Division** – Hebrew speaking  
(Serving children in Israel, Europe and the Former Soviet Union)
- **The Asian Division** – Hebrew speaking  
(Serving children in Asia)

# TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

## Internet Connection

Please make sure to have the required internet connection based on the number of children that you will have in one location. See the table below for the minimum internet speed required.

Please note that a **wireless** internet connection is not advisable because at times it can supply a weak connection and cuts the student off of class including audio delays.

NO. OF STUDENTS	DOWNLOAD SPEED (MB/S)	UPLOAD SPEED (MB/S)
1	1	1
2	2	1.5
3	3	2
4	4	2.5
5	5	3



## Materials and Equipment

Our online classroom makes long distance learning a stimulating and interesting adventure. In order to ensure proper connection, your child will need the following equipment:

- A computer, not more than 3 years old. Computers should be configured for Hebrew typing.
- High speed wired internet connection (See chart above)
- A webcam
- A headset and a microphone (preferably one piece in order to avoid an echo when talking)
- Access to a printer and scanner

For more information on technical requirements visit the school website and click on the “Hardware and Software” tab in the Parents portal.

No student will be allowed to attend class without a headset/mic and webcam. Please make sure to have it ready for orientation on August 31, 2016.

Our online classrooms enable the lessons to be very interactive. As a visual aid, the whiteboard is utilized in many ways. The teacher can post sheets, draw, write and highlight text, present multimedia and pull up a website.





The students have the ability, by permission from the teacher, to be involved in the class through texting, speaking and using the whiteboard. Webcams greatly enhance the learning environment of the class by helping the student to be more fully present in the lesson, and enabling

the teacher to connect more personally with each child.

Please be aware that webcams give those in the class full view of the room in which the student is sitting. Pay attention to the orderliness of the room and limit other distracting activity while classes are in session.

Tutorial videos with details of how the classroom works can be viewed at

<http://www.nigrijewishschool.com/parent-tutorial>

## Safety Precautions

It is absolutely essential that parents install the online security program onto all computers that the children will be using. This program limits access to



other websites and applications during class time and is specifically designed to run only when the online school program is running without causing any limitations on the computer. In addition, please be advised that this program is only a deterrent and it's ultimately the parent's responsibility to make sure the student is properly protected at all times while using the computer.

The security can be installed with the following link:

<http://www.nigrijewishschool.com/security>

Please make sure your child is not on other internet sites during class if the security system is not yet installed. In addition, please be aware that students often forward e-mail forwards along to their friends. Please monitor these e-mails to ensure that they do not contain pictures or links to questionable websites.

## Tech Support

If you ever have technical difficulties during the year please contact our technical support department at 718-705-4475.





# SCHOOL RULES AND POLICIES

## Punctuality

Please make every effort to have your children log onto class five minutes before class begins. This will allow ample time to manage any unforeseen technical difficulties and enable the students to be completely ready when class begins. Encourage and help your children prepare all school supplies before class.

## Lateness and Absences

Lateness is disruptive to the lesson and distracts the students and the teacher. This year we are implementing a new policy. Students who are late will be asked by the teacher to wait in an adjoining breakout room until a suitable time that they can be brought in to join the rest of the class. Students who come excessively late may not be able to join the class for that period.

Parents are expected to inform the office of any planned lateness. All late





comings are recorded. In the event of internet problems in your area causing trouble when students attempt to log on, please inform the office and their tardiness will be excused.



It is required that your child be present at each class in order to keep up with the daily lesson and master the material and skills being taught. All appointments should be scheduled for before or after school hours. Planned absences (i.e. due to an appointment or a

family Simcha) should be discussed with the office and teachers in advance. Students with excessive unexcused absence may be asked to leave the school.

Due to the nature of the Online School, every student is essential for maximum success of the class. Teachers prepare for the class and the lessons are not nearly as effective without the presence of the entire class. In the event that only 1 student is present for class the teacher has the right to cancel class for the day and will email the parents to let them know.

All correspondence regarding lateness and absences should be communicated





to [attendance@shluchim.org](mailto:attendance@shluchim.org) after first notifying your child's teacher.

Please be advised that at the end of each week you will receive an automatic email of your child (ren)'s absences unless we were notified in advance.

## Tuition

Tuition is a yearly fee divided into ten monthly installments, charged at the beginning of each month (from August - May). In the event that your child leaves the school mid-year, you must provide notice, in writing, at least two weeks prior to the intended last day, and you must receive a written response back from the office that the notification was received. Notification should be sent to [osadmin@shluchim.org](mailto:osadmin@shluchim.org).



In the event that the above conditions are not met you will continue to be charged the tuition payments which are not refundable.

In the event that a student leaves after Pesach, there will be continued monthly charges. If a student should leave school and return, 50% of the missed payments will be charged for the time the student was absent.





All changes are only registered into the system at the end of each month. If your child leaves before the month is over, you will be charged the full monthly installment regardless.

## Discipline

Students are expected to behave appropriately and respectfully during class. There will be a no tolerance policy for students' behavior resulting in causing a disruption of learning of any sort. While we hope never to deal with this, such instances will be treated with strong disciplinary measures. The teacher will stop the class while the office is called and the issue is resolved.

## Tests and Assignments

All tests are to be taken on the scheduled day, and all assignments are to be sent in on the day which they are due. If the student is aware that they will miss a test due to an unavoidable absence, the student should speak with the teacher prior to the test day to arrange a makeup date.

All students/parents should have access to a scanner & printer so they can always be up to date with printing and returning homework, quizzes and tests to the teachers. Younger students often need parents' help to use this equipment.





# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

## **Communication is an integral part of your child's Chinuch.**

Most of the school's communication is done via e-mail. It is of utmost importance that you read all e-mails you receive from the administration, the principal, and the teachers and that you respond accordingly. Your response lets the sender know that you have read the information. A response can be short (such as a thank-you) or a quick comment or answer.

## **Teacher contact information will be provided to all parents at the start of the school year.**

It is imperative for parents and teachers to maintain close regular contact with one another. We will be organizing a yearly parent-teacher conference session. There will also be an additional opportunity for a parent-teacher meeting at the end second semester.



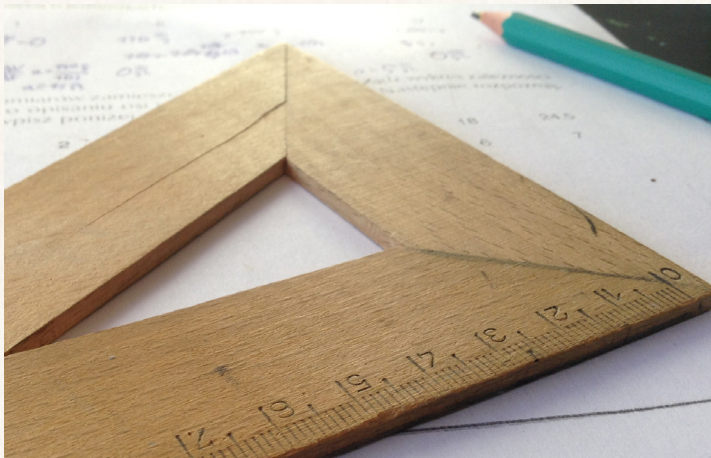


Please check your account to make sure that the school has your correct email address on file.

## Homework

Homework assignments are a regular part of the classroom learning.

Individual teachers will inform parents and students regarding homework expectations.



Parents supervision is helpful and in some cases necessary. Please make sure your child's homework is sent in to the teacher on time.

Independent Kriah practice is essential in the younger grades.

Teachers will provide the reading material with specific assignments, and parents must sit beside and listen to their child's reading.

## Homework Assistance

To assist students with their homework we offer: Homework Helpers for Girls G1-G8.





High school students volunteer as “Homework Helpers,” connecting with students by telephone to help with homework. Arrangements can be made with your child’s teacher.

## Reports Cards

Report cards are posted online twice yearly at the end of the first and second semesters. At the completion of the school year, parents will receive one



p r i n t e d copy that includes all 3 semesters. The students will be evaluated for scholastic achievement, e f f o r t , participation, and behavior.

Report cards are issued for students in

3rd grade and up. Younger grades will receive progress reports periodically.





## Recess and Lunch Breaks

There will be no teacher supervision during recess and lunch break. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor their children during break times. Should an issue arise, please be in touch with the office so we can work together to resolve it promptly. We encourage students to spend their recess/lunch breaks outdoors or in the largest indoor space available, running and playing etc.

## School Supplies and Organization

There is a booklist available on the website specifying which books are required for each grade. Please see the booklist - <http://www.nigrijewishschool.com/booklist> - for further details.

Before the start of the school year, each teacher will communicate the specific supplies for each class. Each student is expected to come prepared with all books and supplies on the first day of school. Please check throughout the year that your child is properly equipped for class.

Organization is vital for your child's learning success. It is helpful when each child has his/her own individual learning area and a designated spot to keep books, folders and supplies right near his/her computer.

## Uniform

A school uniform creates a sense of belonging and community within the school. Because visibility is limited in our online school environment, our





dress code applies to shirts and blouses only. The chart below illustrates these specific requirements.

BOYS (K-B4)	BOYS (B5-B8)	GIRLS (K - G8)
Polo shirt with collar or button down with collar	Button down shirt with collar	Long sleeve polo shirt with collar or button down shirt with collar
Color: White Light Blue Navy	Color: White Light Blue Navy	Color: Pink White Light Blue Navy

These shirts can be conveniently purchased at any local store such as the Gap, Old Navy, Children's Place, Target, Walmart etc.

Online School sweater/vests are optional and may be worn on top other shirts. They are available for purchase at [store.shluchim.org](http://store.shluchim.org).

We also offer an Online School sweatshirt available to order on [landsend.com](http://landsend.com) using the school number 900130169. For more information on how to order the sweatshirt please see instructions on the website.

## Rewards

Throughout the year students receive points for good behavior and



outstanding achievement during class. The points are accumulated and can be used to buy prizes at the online store. The store will be open during the following periods:

- one week before and during the men's Kinus
- one week before and during the women's Kinus
- one week before Pesach break
- one week before the end of the school year

Prizes are for vouchers to be used at stores on Kingston Ave., and for raffle tickets. Vouchers can be collected from the office and raffle prizes will be shipped directly to your child. (Vouchers not collected within 2 weeks of being ordered will be mailed to the address we have on file.)





Please note, the points will expire at the end of the year; please makes sure your children spend their points to avoid disappointment.

## Special School Events

Special school events are held throughout the year, both virtually and in person. Web rallies, Rosh Chodesh assemblies etc., will be held during school hours, and various clubs will be organized for after school hours. We encourage parents to arrange get-togethers for their children.

A highlight of the year is the much anticipated Day of Celebration where students have a chance to meet their classmates, friends and teachers in person, often for the very first time. It will take place before each Kinus and we strongly encourage all students and parents to make every effort to participate.

## Eighth Grade Girls Graduating Class

The 8th Grade girl's graduation trip is held at the time of the women's Kinus. At the end of the year a yearbook is printed. The girls are encouraged to sell ads and the funds are used towards their yearbook and graduation trip.

## Daylight Savings

All posted times on the schedule apply throughout the year. When the clock is changed, times remain the same (ex: an 8:45am class will be held at 8:45am). All times posted on the schedule always follow New York time.









# CONTACT PAGE

DEPARTMENT	EMAIL	DIRECT EXT
Central School Office	onlineschool@shluchim.org	718-713-3060
Mrs. Malkie Gurkow Girls Principal	principal@shluchim.org	718-713-3060x4x1
Rabbi Yaacov Ringo Boys Principal	yringo@shluchim.org	718-713-3060x4x2
Ms. Devorah Leah Notik Associate Director	dlnotik@shluchim.org	718-713-3073
Ms. Devorah Leah Soblick Administrator	osadmin@shluchim.org	718-713-3057
Rabbi Yossi Goodman Technological Development	ygoodman@shluchim.org	718-713-3067
Tech Support	techsupport@shluchim.org	718-705-4475





# SHLUCHIM ONLINE SCHOOL

## VAAD HANHOLA



**RABBI LEVI AZIMOV**

Paris, France



**RABBI BEREL GOLDMAN**

Gainesville, FL



**RABBI YOSEF GREENBERG**

Anchorage, AK



**RABBI YOSEF GRONER**

Director of Charlotte Jewish Day School - Charlotte, NC







**RABBI YOSEF GUREVITCH**

Rosh Yeshiva and Mechanech - Migdal Haemek, Israel



**RABBI DOVID HAZDAN**

Dean of Torah Academy School - Johannesburg, South Africa



**RABBI SHMUEL LEW**

Head of Education of Lubavitch Schools - London, England



**RABBI ELI WOLFF**

Kfar Chabad, Israel



**RABBI YITZCHOK WOLF**

Dean of Cheder Lubavitch Hebrew Day School - Chicago, IL







A DIVISION OF THE  
THE SHLUCHIM OFFICE

816 EASTERN PARKWAY  
BROOKLYN, NY 11213

TEL: 718-713-3060

FAX: 718-221-0984

EMAIL: [ONLINESCHOOL@SHLUCHIM.ORG](mailto:ONLINESCHOOL@SHLUCHIM.ORG)

WEB: [WWW.NIGRIJEWISHSCHOOL.COM](http://WWW.NIGRIJEWISHSCHOOL.COM)

