



Cheder
חינוך על טהרת הקודש



Annual Report

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Cheder Levi Yitzchok Inc.
ABN 63 423 263 810

From The Principal

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Cheder Levi Yitzchok's annual report is to provide our parent body, the broader community, and the state and federal governments with an overview of our school performance in accordance with the Australian Education Act 2013 as well as the Australian Education Regulations 2013. The annual report informs of updates, achievements, statistics and other relevant information.

In Calendar Year 2023 the school continued to be heavily engaged in **compliance** related matters, including reviews by the VRQA and CCYP which originated with child safety concerns raised about the school in 2022.

The school has spent considerable administrative time in the past year refining its **curriculum** and its **safety** compliance documentation and implementations, including amongst many other things, the provision of child abuse prevention training to students, staff, parents and leadership – an exercise which is to be repeated on an annual basis. We have also established a Child Safety working group, and appointed a preferred psychologist to work with students (and staff) on a range of matters including safety related concerns.

The educational sector is still hurting from **teacher shortages** which were keenly felt during the pandemic and continue in its aftermath. Cheder like so many other schools, navigates the challenges of casual teacher instability. I'd like, however, to thank our permanent teachers, our aides and our administrative staff for their dedication and care - which often stretches them, as they seek to compensate for the teacher resourcing challenges.

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During the course of the year, Rabbi Mendel Cohen and Rabbi Shua Laufer assumed **key leadership** roles – at first informally – culminating in the formalisation of their roles as Cheder Head of School and Head of Learning respectively, which was announced towards the end of year. Their contributions - including interesting and creative programs, and continuous improvements to the curriculum and classroom experience - have uplifted students and staff alike.

In Bnos Chana, Mrs Chaya Winner assumed the role as Bnos Chana **Head of School** for the girls' stream, which welcomed a fourth year level as it operated Prep to Grade 3 inclusive. Mrs Winner is also to be thanked for stable and happy students and staff.

In Term 4, a new **Student Services** Coordinator joined Cheder – working closely with teachers on student wellbeing, learning adjustments, and measures and resources to promote student learning.

In relation to **curriculum**, new initiatives in the school included:

- Introduction of the UFLI literacy program for Prep to Grade 2
- Review of the Maths scope and sequence in Upper Primary levels
- Continued mapping and creation of content and resources for Integrated Studies which combine several of the Key Learning Areas
- Introduction of new annualised standardised testing
- Introduction of Yiddish cultural learning for Upper primary levels.

And, in Bnos Chana:

- Provision of a social, emotional learning and middos program – dealing with conflict resolution, growth mindset, bullying prevention and communication.
- Introduction of movement and dance sessions which were enjoyed greatly by all the girls

The formal curriculum at Cheder was enhanced by:

- an ongoing program of joyous learning and celebratory events related to the Chabad calendar;
- continued use of the residential property at Emerald for student camps and excursions; and
- a considerable program of other excursions and incursions outlined elsewhere in this report.

Improvements in **facilities** were focused on the Bnos Chana building, where:

- new turf was installed, providing a dedicated play area for the girls
- a marquee was installed in the grounds of Bnos Chana, equipped with climate control and AV facilities. Happily, this marquee was used widely for assemblies and events and classroom learning.
- a new women's staff room was set up in the latter part of the year in the BC building.

We look forward to continuous improvements in all the school's endeavours, including happy students who enjoy their learning, and happy staff who consider Cheder a workplace of choice.

Sincerely,
Eliezer Kornhauser

VISION

Cheder Levi Yitzchok is an independent, private Jewish school, inspired and guided by the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The school forms part of a worldwide network of institutions affiliated with the Chabad Lubavitch movement. We are dedicated to providing '**Chinuch Al Taharas HaKodesh**' for every child. Through their learning, prayer and social interactions, the students are imbued with Jewish and Chassidic values and guided to a faithful lifestyle of Torah and Mitzvos, illuminated by the teachings of Chabad Chassidus, and to selfless community service.

'Chinuch Al Taharas HaKodesh' means education which promotes G-D consciousness, faith and a spirit of holiness in all aspects of the school's curriculum and pedagogy, including general or secular studies.

MISSION

In a child-safe environment, Cheder Levi Yitzchok aims to offer education which:

- provides uncompromised holistic instruction (Chinuch) with a particular emphasis on Talmud, Halacha (Jewish law) and the teachings of Chabad;
- facilitates character development, Yiras Shomayim (reverence of G-d) and a passion for lifelong learning;
- addresses the spiritual, moral, cognitive, vocational, physical, social and communal dimensions of students;
- fosters a lifestyle of selfless devotion to others;
- assists each student to discover and develop his own unique strengths;
- supports a happy, safe, inclusive and personally validating learning environment;
- operates in partnership with the parents and members of the CLY community;
- emphasises the role of teachers, who through role modelling reflect the values and ethos of Chabad philosophy;
- provides a wholesome environment shielded from the potentially harmful influences of some aspects of current society;
- upholds important Australian values and adheres to Australian curriculum requirements; and
- prepares our students to continue the cherished tradition of Jews as valuable and law-abiding contributors to Australian society.

Underpinning this, we aspire to contribute to, and accelerate, Moshiach (the coming of the Messianic Age), described by Maimonides as an era in which the sole occupation of mankind will be to know G-d, and a time when "we will grasp the knowledge of the Creator according to the full extent of human potential."

OBJECTIVES

Cheder Levi Yitzchok's goals are to be:

- focused on a clear identity associated with the Rebbe's wishes;
- a provider of excellent education: academic and life skills;
- a safe environment within a warm and dynamic community;
- a place which nurtures communal contributors;
- professional and systematic; and
- an employer of choice to attract and retain suitably qualified and skilled staff.

VALUES

- Ahavas Yisroel (love of our fellow and compassionate treatment of him, such as we would wish ourselves treated).
- Yiras Shamayim (reverence of the Almighty in all that we do).
- Selfless community service.
- Lifelong learning.



Cheder Levi Yitzchok Staff

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, REGISTRATIONS

All teaching staff are qualified to the standards required by the VIT. Many of our teaching team hold additional qualifications in related areas such as Jewish Studies, psychology, and learning disorders.

COMPOSITION OF STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE SCHOOL

	Full-Time		Part-Time			
	Male Head Count	Female HeadCount	Male Head Count	FTE	Female Head Count	FTE
Teaching Staff						
Principal	1	0	0	0	0	0
Teaching Staff	2	2	1	0.7	5	2.6
Non-Teaching Staff						
Specialist Support	0	0	0		0	
Administrative and Clerical	1	3	1	0.7	3	1.9
Building Operations, Maintenance and Other Staff	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL STAFFING	5	5	2	1.4	8	4.5

Note: Cheder does not currently employ any staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The Cheder staff group comprises a remarkable team of educators, support staff and administrative staff committed to creating meaningful learning opportunities for our students.

The school has an induction program for staff who are unfamiliar with the Cheder community culture, its protocols, and practices.

Regardless of individual background or previous knowledge of the culture which underlies the school's mission, all staff play a part in bringing the Cheder mission and values to life for the students.

In 2023 ongoing effort was invested in our integrated studies program, which fuses government curriculum requirements with the school's mission for awareness of the Divine in all learning, collectively created and delivered by Rabbis and registered teachers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At Cheder, we believe in creating an environment that fosters continuous growth and development for our staff members. Our philosophy for identifying opportunities and supporting staff in their professional development is rooted in a commitment to individualised and holistic growth. We understand that each staff member has unique strengths, interests, and areas for improvement, so we strive to provide a range of opportunities that cater to diverse needs.

Our identification process involves regular assessments, feedback sessions, and open communication channels to identify staff members' aspirations and areas where they can enhance their skills. We then offer a variety of professional development opportunities, including workshops, conferences, mentoring programs, and online courses, tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, we encourage collaboration and peer learning, providing platforms for sharing best practices and encouraging staff members to learn from one another. Our goal is to create a supportive and empowering environment that enables our staff to reach their full potential and positively impact the educational experiences of our students.

Cheder values empowerment of our staff through professional development, which included the following during 2023:

- Child Protection Training 2023 – CompliLearn
- Child Safety Training - SECASA
- Creating and Maintaining the Connection
- First Aid & Anaphylaxis Training – Hatzola
- Foundation Certificate in Specific Learning Disorders - Learning Difficulties Australia
- Literacy Impact – Introduction to the Science of Reading
- Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations – Dept of Education
- Smart Spelling
- Soundality
- Student Wellbeing
- Think Strategic
- UFLI Literacy Instruction
- Various ISV Professional Development Sessions
 - HR Conference
 - New Business Managers Program

- New Child Safe Standards including Ministerial Order 1359
- Privacy Law – Implications for schools
- Record Keeping Best Practice
- VRQA Minimum Standards

Student Outcomes

At Cheder we strive for each student to grow and thrive spiritually, emotionally, and academically. Through their learning, prayer and social interactions, the students are imbued with Jewish and Chassidic values and guided to a faithful lifestyle of Torah and Mitzvos.

The school continues its focus on an integrated program of learning, which fuses Torah learning with the Victorian curriculum requirements.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Total student enrolments across the school in 2023 were 143 students in years Foundation to Year 8.

In 2023 Cheder consisted of a girls' program operating from Foundation to Year 3 totalling 52 students, and a boys' program that operated across Foundation to Year 8 with 91 students.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is administered by the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) for students in all states of Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 to provide a measure of student numeracy and literacy on an annual basis.

The percentage of Cheder's students who achieved at or above the National Minimum Standards, i.e., performing at or higher than expected standards for that year level, in the NAPLAN testing in 2023 is represented below.

	Reading	Persuasive Writing	Spelling	Grammar / Punctuation	Numeracy
2023					
Year 3	87	88	87	93	88
Year 5	83	75	83	75	93
Year 7	89	89	100	90	90

Note: Cheder did not operate a Year 9 in 2023

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Our school takes a comprehensive approach to managing student absence, leveraging technology to streamline the process. All attendance is diligently tracked in our school management system, ensuring accurate records. Absences predominantly arise due to illness, injury and family commitments. In the case of extended absences, we proactively query parents to gain insight into the reason for the absence and as necessary, to provide support. Additionally, we emphasise the importance of proactive communication from parents by reminding them to notify us in advance via email for any planned trips or absences.

By maintaining open lines of communication, we aim to maintain accurate attendance records, address prolonged absences, and ensure that parents are actively engaged in their child's attendance management. This approach fosters a collaborative partnership between the school and parents, promoting a positive and consistent learning environment for all students.

Grade	Attendance
Foundation	96%
Year 1	96%
Year 2	93%
Year 3	94%
Year 5	93%
Year 6	93%
Year 8	87%
Average	94%

EXTRA-CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

Cheder Levi Yitzchok believes in providing a well-rounded education that extends beyond the traditional classroom setting. Our philosophy for identifying opportunities for culturally aligned extracurricular activities, including events, programs, incursions, and excursions, is centred around fostering exploration, creativity, and personal growth. We actively seek out a diverse range of opportunities that cater to the varied interests and talents of our students. Our dedicated team collaborates with teachers, students, and parents to identify and evaluate potential activities, ensuring they align with our educational objectives and promote character development, social interaction, and experiential learning.

These opportunities are carefully selected to inspire curiosity, expand horizons, and provide students with valuable life experiences outside the classroom. By embracing a holistic approach to education, we strive to empower our

students to discover their passions, build resilience, and develop a well-rounded skill set that will serve them throughout their lives.

Program offerings during 2023 included the following:

- Emerald overnight camps
- Emerald Shabbaton
- Twisted Science
- Royal Flying Doctors
- Hanging Rock
- Alma Park mapping excursion
- St Kilda Shule
- Melbourne Airport
- Rainbow Trout Farm
- Kew Traffic School
- Fire Education Incursion
- Grove Park walking tour
- Zone Bowling
- Bounce Trampoline
- Collingwood Childrens' Farm



Health And Wellbeing

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Cheder has a commitment to Child Safety that disseminates from the School Advisory Board and throughout the organisation. This is supported by Cheder's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:

*Cheder Levi Yitzchok is committed to the **safety and wellbeing** of all children. The primary focus of our care and decision-making will be to protect every child from harm including all forms of abuse. Cheder Levi Yitzchok has a zero tolerance for child abuse. Cheder Levi Yitzchok is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard.*

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Cheder Levi Yitzchok prioritises the health and well-being of students and staff. We provide comprehensive support to students, addressing their social, emotional, and academic needs. Regular communication is maintained to keep staff, parents and students updated on policies and important information. We organize student wellbeing sessions, creating a safe space for students to express their concerns and seek guidance. Additionally, we actively encourage and value feedback from both students and staff, providing opportunities to recommend enhancements to our programs. By fostering a caring and inclusive environment, we aim to ensure the holistic wellbeing of our school community.



STAFF

Cheder Levi Yitzchok places great importance on the health and wellbeing of our staff. We understand that their wellbeing directly impacts their ability to support our students effectively. To support our staff, we are developing a robust induction process, and schedule regular team meetings, providing a platform for collaboration, sharing ideas, and addressing any concerns. We also hold appreciation days to recognize and celebrate their hard work and dedication. Moreover, we prioritise their wellbeing by providing avenues for seeking support, such as access to therapy services and resources.

Additionally, we offer professional development opportunities that focus on balancing the role of an educator, promoting work-life balance, and self-care strategies. By investing in the wellbeing and professional growth of our staff, we ensure a supportive and thriving learning environment for both our educators and students.



Feedback From Key Stakeholders

Cheder is committed to continuous improvement and understands and appreciates the importance of feedback from our key stakeholders in our development. The feedback and views of our stakeholder groups are regularly sought through a range of mechanisms.



PARENT/STUDENT FEEDBACK

Feedback from parents is obtained through regular email communication between teachers and parents, Bi-annual Parent-Teacher interviews, information nights, and many extracurricular programs and events that allow parents to interact with school staff on a regular basis.

Our permission forms for events and excursions offer opportunity for comment, and our families often include mention of the warmth and care of our staff and our approach to caring for the individual needs of every student.

As a small school, the principal and his team are accessible to families, providing opportunities for ad-hoc communication and feedback.

Students have opportunities to provide feedback during their school sessions, in individual student and teacher meetings, and when engaging with our leadership team.

*“Dedication of the school to **follow the Rebbe's teachings** and give this passion to the students.”*

*“Devotion of teachers for **each child's** emotional and academic growth.”*

TEACHER FEEDBACK

Regular whole school and departmental meetings are held, providing avenues for staff to provide feedback on curriculum, student management and processes across the school. The Cheder has an open, warm, and cooperative culture which supports staff in providing constructive feedback to help achieve improvement.

*".. **support for each** other is wonderful. Nothing is too much to help each other out. Feedback is given kindly with clear expectations for improvement."*



Throughout the year staff are invited to meetings with their direct manager and are provided with opportunity to discuss issues relating to their role and experiences. This includes what is important to them, how supported they feel in their roles, their job satisfaction and whether they would recommend Cheder to their friends as an employer of choice. Staff have identified self-fulfilment and a healthy atmosphere to be essential characteristics for job satisfaction, with recognition and acknowledgement being good to have, but less important. The vast majority of staff feel very satisfied working for Cheder.

Exit interviews provide staff who are leaving the school with the opportunity to provide feedback on the reasons for their departure and to share observations about their time on staff. Feedback is shared with the Principal and the Executive Committee for consideration as to how potential improvements could be made.

*"Common goal amongst everyone.
Kodesh and Chol staff working together. One team."*

Facilities Upgrade

In 2023, renovations commenced on the property adjoining the boys' building, comprising the first phase of the relocation of Bnos Chana, girls' classes, into that property.

Grades 2 and 3 moved in, and enjoyed their new classrooms, along with a multi purpose breakout space, and areas for literacy learning and other tuition activities.

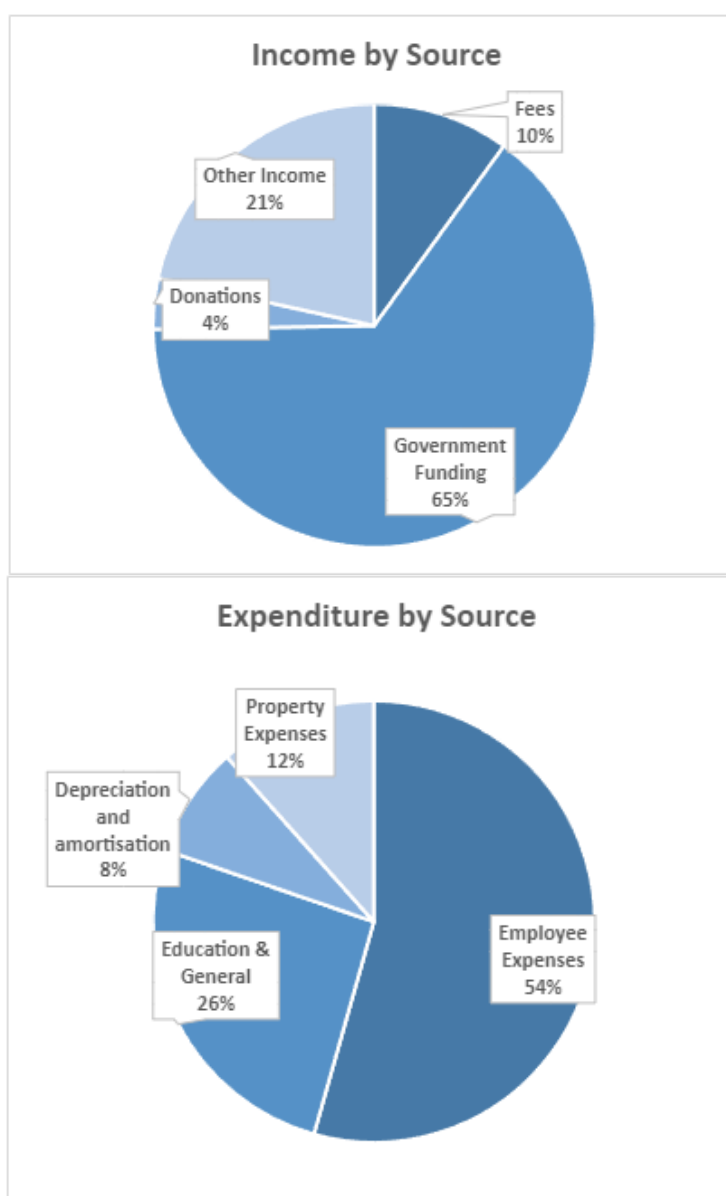
Later in the year, new turf was installed to create a play and sports area for the girls. A marquee with climate control and audio visual capability was erected on the rear of the property and use of this space commenced in the later part of the year. Finally, for 2023, a female staff room was renovated and staff began their use in Semester 2.



Finance

Cheder Levi Yitzchok Inc is a not-for profit organisation and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC). The School Advisory Board and Leadership team adhere to relevant commercial business practices to manage the finances of the organisation in an effective and compliant manner. The school undergoes an independent annual audit to ensure the financial management and governance of the school are maintained in accordance with the ACNC requirements. Any end of year surplus is applied to facility development and improvements to the educational offering.

These charts indicate sources of income and expenditure for the 2023 calendar year.



Cheder Charitable Funding

The Cheder seeks philanthropic funds from the community to enable the provision to the Chabad community of the best possible learning environment and facilities. The Cheder oversees the operation of the following Deductible Gift Recipient Funds and is grateful for any and all donations received.



Cheder Scholarship Fund

Established to award scholarships to students (or future students) of Cheder for the purpose of promoting the education of the recipients, on the basis of merit and equity. Donations can be made to:

Account Name:	Cheder Scholarship Fund
Bank:	ANZ Banking Group
BSB:	013-606
Account No.:	2344-50987

Cheder School Building Fund

Established and maintained to provide financial support for the acquisition, construction, and maintenance of Cheder's school buildings. Donations can be made to:

Account Name:	Cheder School Building Fund
Bank:	ANZ Banking Group
BSB:	013-606
Account No.:	2252-41446

Cheder Public Library Fund

Established to operate the Cheder Public Library. Donations can be made to:

Account Name:	Cheder Public Library Fund
Bank:	ANZ Banking Group
BSB:	013-606
Account No.:	3071-15814