

CHAPTER THREE

Safety, Security & Communication

Security

The staff of Mach Hach BaAretz is in constant contact throughout the summer with the Moked Teva, a branch of the Jewish Agency responsible for tourist groups. We are notified immediately if a security situation or alert arises anywhere in the country, and our staff is trained in dealing with all types of situations. All itineraries are approved by the Moked Teva before the summer and we reconfirm with the following day's schedule each night of the summer.

Heat

It is very hot in Israel during the summer! All campers are required to carry water with them at all times, and the staff reminds them to drink CONSISTENTLY AND CONSTANTLY. Everyone is required to wear hats and sunscreen on all hikes. On days of extreme heat, we receive heat-warnings from the Moked Teva and we cancel or modify our hikes according to their recommendations. All of our buses and hotels are air-conditioned.

Staff

The Director and other senior staff members of Mach Hach BaAretz live in Israel, spend very significant amounts of time with the groups and are in 24-hour-a-day contact with them. Each bus has a Rosh Bus (Head Counselor), a Logistics Coordinator, a tour guide and 3 additional counselors. There is also a Medic/Security Guard with them most of the time. In addition to the fact that they are all experienced madrichim (counselors), they undergo extensive training from Bnei Akiva prior to Mach Hach.

Leaving the Group

Leaving the group without permission from the Rosh Bus is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Friends and relatives are not permitted to take campers away from the group at any time. This is due to the fact that many participants have friends and family in Israel and we receive many such requests. Allowing participants to come and go would be detrimental to building the group dynamic and to the overall program. We appreciate your understanding in this matter. If there are special circumstances such as a family simcha or event, please contact us and we will evaluate whether it is feasible for the camper to attend. If friends or relatives want to meet a camper at the group's hostel during the camper's free time, they may do so with the prior consent of the Rosh Bus.

Communicating With the Staff

Senior-staff members will be happy to speak with parents at any time. A contact list will be sent out prior to the summer. While calls will be answered 24 hours a day, we respectfully request that you refrain from calling between midnight and 7:30 AM Israel time, unless there is an emergency. You may also call our New York office during business hours. E-mail is an excellent way to get in touch with us – mail sent to machhach@bneiakiva.org will always be answered within a short period of time. The Senior Staff will be happy to relay messages to the bus-based staff but the bus-based staff does not communicate directly with parents as this would encumber their ability to run the program efficiently.



Communicating With Campers

Campers are permitted to bring or rent cell phones and can use them during their free time. Campers are not permitted to use their phones during hikes, study sessions or other programming. A phone or SIM card rental plan can be purchased through our website. We recommend signing up for the group plan as it will allow for phone complications (technical difficulties, loss, theft, etc) to be fixed in a far quicker fashion. If you order a SIM card and bring your smart phone from home, please do not send an overly expensive one with your child. This is a travel program and it is all too easy to break or lose a phone.

Mail

Mail can be sent to staff members and campers. The address is: World Bnei Akiva, P.O. Box 7401, Jerusalem, 91073, Israel. The envelope should be clearly marked with the camper's name and Mach Hach BaAretz. **Food, medications and electronics should never be sent by mail or delivery services (UPS, Fedex, etc) as this can cause large fees and delays from Israeli Customs.**

Updates via Newsletters and Social Media

We are very excited that today's modern technology allows parents and friends to experience Mach Hach BaAretz vicariously. A weekly electronic newsletter will be sent out, containing highlights from the past week and important announcements about the coming weeks. Our Facebook page is updated constantly and is a fun way to see pictures and videos from all buses. Please "Like" our page, "Mach Hach BaAretz". Check YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat for additional footage throughout the summer.

