



# קשר KESHER

Friday 24 July 2026  
"באב תשפ"ו"

פרשת ואתחנן

## Looking Back, and Looking Forward

**Chaim Cowen**, Deputy Principal, Head of Jewish Studies

There is a special energy being experienced at Yavneh at the moment. Over the past week we have had the opportunity to pause, reflect and learn together on Tisha B'Av, while at the same time looking ahead to a series of exciting initiatives that continue to enrich Jewish life across the College. It is a reminder that Jewish education calls on us both to remember where we have come from and to build confidently towards the future.

This week we marked Tisha B'Av with what was a deeply meaningful day across both our Primary and Secondary schools. Students came together for tefillah and kinnot, participated in a moving secondary school-wide tish, and engaged in a rich range of learning sessions led by our teaching staff and Jewish Life team. Secondary students explored different aspects of the day through a choice of workshops run by a range of staff together with the Jewish Life team and Israeli Tzevet and our Primary students experienced meaningful lessons designed by Jewish Life and the Jewish Studies staff. While Tisha B'Av commemorates our greatest national tragedies, it also reminds us of our shared responsibility to build a stronger Jewish future. There is something profoundly special about experiencing that message together as an entire school community.

This week has also been a bittersweet one as we farewelled our Tzevet, Neshamel, Daniel, Chedva and Orly, following Shaked's departure at the end of last term. Over the past year they have become an integral part of life at Yavneh. Whether through Torah sessions they have delivered, one-on-one learning, lunchtime initiatives or simply the countless informal conversations that have built connections with our students and staff, they have made a remarkable contribution to our school. We thank them for their dedication, warmth and commitment, and wish them every success and only brachot in the next stage of their journeys.

פרשת ואתחנן

Shabbat Times



Light candles 5:07pm

Shabbat ends 6:08pm

Goldschlager Family School of Jewish Studies  
Leopold and Isabella Abrahamovits  
Yavneh Primary School  
A.S. Leibler Secondary School  
P +61 3 9528 4911

Abeles Liberman Pre-School incorporating  
The Gillian and Colin Mandel Family  
Yavneh Creche  
81 Balaclava Road, Caulfield VIC 3161  
P +613 8317 2510



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YAVNEH  
COLLEGE**

## Looking Back, and Looking Forward, continued ...

That spirit of meaningful Jewish learning continues with tremendous excitement through our צמח (Tzamah) campaign. Almost one hundred students have signed on to the program, committing themselves to daily Chumash and Rashi study throughout the term. It has been inspiring to watch students enthusiastically working through each aliyah, submitting thoughtful responses to the daily questions and encouraging one another along the way. The opportunity to win a trip to Israel has certainly generated excitement, but even more encouraging has been seeing students discovering the satisfaction that comes from consistent Torah learning. We are enormously grateful to Josh and Robyn Goldhirsch whose sponsorship has made this initiative possible.

Next week we are delighted to welcome our Scholars in Residence, Rabbi Dr Levi Cooper and Mrs Sara Cooper. Rabbi Dr Cooper is an internationally respected Torah scholar, educator and legal academic whose teaching combines profound scholarship with warmth, humour and engaging storytelling. Mrs Cooper is a highly accomplished educational leader who has dedicated her career to Jewish education and school leadership in Israel.

Throughout the week they will be working with students across Years 6–12 enriching classrooms, leading special sessions and engaging with parents and the wider community through Yavneh Academy (for more information and to RSVP go to [www.tinyurl.com/YavnehSIR](http://www.tinyurl.com/YavnehSIR)). We are equally grateful to the generous anonymous donors whose support has enabled us to bring this outstanding educational opportunity to our community.

None of these opportunities happen by chance. They are only possible because of the partnership between our dedicated staff, enthusiastic students, supportive families and those in our community who so generously invest in Jewish education. Together, they help make Yavneh a place where our students can reflect deeply on our past, engage meaningfully with Torah in the present, and be inspired to shape the future.

Chaim Cowen

## Welcoming Our Scholars in Residence

Dear Families,

We are delighted to welcome Rabbi Dr Levi Cooper and Mrs Sara Cooper as Scholars in Residence at Leibler Yavneh College from 28 July to 3 August.

During their visit, students in Years 6–12 will participate in a range of engaging learning opportunities, shiurim and discussions designed to inspire deeper Torah learning, thoughtful reflection and meaningful connection.

Rabbi Dr Levi Cooper is a Professor of Law at Bar-Ilan University and a sought-after Torah teacher and author. Mrs Sara Cooper is the principal of a girls' school in Beit Shemesh that she founded and built.

In partnership with Mizrahi and Blake St Shul, we are delighted to warmly invite parents, alumni and members of the wider community to learn with Rabbi Dr Cooper at two special Yavneh Academy sessions.

**YAVNEH ACADEMY**  
TORAH. IDEAS. INSPIRATION.

**PRESENTS**

**RABBI DR LEVI COOPER**  
Scholar in Residence at Yavneh

We are delighted to welcome Rabbi Dr Levi Cooper as our Scholar in Residence.

These are special opportunities for alumni, parents and the wider community to meet with him and learn from his profound insights.

**TWO EXCLUSIVE SESSIONS**

|                                                       |                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SESSION 1</b><br>The Jewish Ideal of Government    | <b>WEDNESDAY 29 JULY</b><br>7.30PM<br>PERFORMING ARTS SPACE AT YAVNEH (ELSTERNWICK CAMPUS) |
| <b>SESSION 2</b><br>The Spiritual Price of a Just War | <b>FRIDAY 31 JULY</b><br>8.20 – 9.00AM<br>VCE STUDY CENTRE AT YAVNEH (ELSTERNWICK CAMPUS)  |

Open to alumni, parents and the wider community.

**RSVP BY MONDAY 27 JULY**  
AT [TINYURL.COM/YAVNEHSIR](http://TINYURL.COM/YAVNEHSIR)

**LEIBLER YAVNEH COLLEGE**

*Welcomes our*  
**SCHOLARS IN RESIDENCE**  
*Inspiration. Learning. Torah. Impact.*

**Rabbi Professor LEVI COOPER**  
Professor of Law  
Bar Ilan University

**Mrs SARA COOPER**  
Principal  
of a girls school in  
Beit Shemesh that she built

**28 JULY – 3 AUGUST**  
*One week. Lasting impact.*

Engaging programs and learning for

YEAR 6 – YEAR 12 STUDENTS | INSPIRING TALKS AND DISCUSSIONS | TORAH, HASHKAFAH AND REAL-WORLD INSIGHT

*We look forward to learning and growing together! ♥*

**Chaim Cowen**, Deputy Principal, Head of Jewish Studies

## Shabbat Nachamu: Giving Suffering Its Proper Place

There is something profoundly wise about the way Judaism approaches suffering.

Throughout the year we remember countless tragedies: the destruction of both Batei Mikdash, exile, persecution, expulsions, the Holocaust and, in our own time, the pain of October 7 and the resurgence of antisemitism across the world. Yet rather than allowing these experiences to dominate every day of our lives, Judaism gathers them into a single day: Tisha B'Av.

Viktor Frankl, the renowned psychiatrist and Auschwitz survivor, once compared suffering to a gas. Just as gas expands to fill whatever space it is given, so too suffering expands to fill the space we allow it to occupy in our lives. Frankl also taught that none of us escapes what he called the "tragic triad" of human existence: suffering, guilt and death. We cannot always choose whether we will suffer, but we can choose how much room we allow suffering to take.

Perhaps this is one of the great insights of Tisha B'Av. Out of approximately 354 days in the Jewish year, Judaism asks us to dedicate just one day to fully confronting our national pain. We do not deny tragedy or minimise it. We mourn deeply, honestly and collectively. But then we rise.

That is why Tisha B'Av is immediately followed by Shabbat Nachamu, the "Shabbat of Comfort." The Jewish response to suffering is never to remain trapped within it. We acknowledge our pain, but we refuse to let it define us. The overwhelming majority of the year is devoted to building, celebrating, learning, giving, growing and rejoicing.

This is an especially important message in today's climate. With antisemitism once again so visible, there is a temptation to immerse ourselves in every hateful post, every offensive comment and every act of hostility. While we must remain vigilant and stand up against hatred, we should not allow it to consume our emotional or spiritual lives.

Our greatest response is not to become experts in antisemitism; it is to become experts in Judaism.

Let our attention be drawn instead to the beauty of Shabbat, the joy of our festivals, the wisdom of Torah, the warmth of our communities, the power of our mitzvot and the privilege of belonging to an extraordinary people with an extraordinary mission.

Shabbat Nachamu reminds us that comfort is not found by forgetting the past, but by refusing to let it overshadow the future. We honour our suffering by giving it its proper place – and then we choose life, hope and joy.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Chaim

## Year 11 Students Represent Yavneh at Mikolot

**Chaim Cowen**, Deputy Principal, Head of Jewish Studies

Congratulations to Year 11 students Josh B and Michaela N, who proudly represented Yavneh at the domestic final of the Mikolot Public Speaking Competition, a national event bringing together students from Jewish schools across Australia.

In the prepared speech section, both students delivered thoughtful addresses on the Mishnah's teaching, Hevei Dan et Kol Adam L'Chaf Zechut, exploring the importance of judging others favourably. They then rose to the challenge of the impromptu round, responding to the prompt, "I am Jewish because..."

Michaela drew on Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' interpretation of the Midrash of the palace in flames, speaking about our responsibility to respond to the brokenness and injustice in the world. Josh reflected on Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's distinction between a person of fate and a person of destiny, describing how Judaism calls us to live lives of purpose and responsibility.

Both students represented Yavneh with confidence, insight and maturity, and we are immensely proud of the way they shared their ideas and embodied our school's values.

A special thank you to Ilan Davis from our Jewish Life team for overseeing and supporting the initiative, and for helping prepare our students for this wonderful opportunity.

Kol hakavod to Josh and Michaela on their outstanding efforts.



## Discovering Our School in Hebrew – Year 3

**Michal Avitan**, *Primary Hebrew Teacher*

This term, Year 3 students have been exploring places around the school while building their Hebrew vocabulary. They learned the names of different locations, including the classroom, library, toilets, garden, hall, corridor, and synagogue, and practised using these new words through a variety of engaging activities.

As part of their learning, students enjoyed a guided tour around the school, where they identified different places and applied their new Hebrew vocabulary in real-life situations. This hands-on experience made learning meaningful, interactive, and fun.

Students also developed their speaking, reading, and writing skills through conversations about themselves, their families, friends, and interests. In addition, they practised important grammar concepts such as masculine and feminine nouns and singular and plural forms.

The photos attached show our Year 3 students enthusiastically taking part in the school tour and bringing their Hebrew learning to life. We are proud of their effort, enthusiasm, and growing confidence in using Hebrew.

Kol Hakavod, Year 3!



## Forces in Action: Year 1 Gets Hands-On with Science

**Megan McKenzie**, *Primary Teacher*

Last term, Year 1 dove into an exciting unit of inquiry all about forces — specifically the pushes and pulls that make our world move! Throughout the term, students explored these ideas in the classroom, building their own model ramps and testing how push and pull forces affect speed and distance when sending cars down them. They experimented with different angles and materials, discovering firsthand how forces work together (or against each other!).

To bring it all together, we welcomed Hands On Science for an unforgettable incursion. Students got to make their own parachutes and test them out, exploring how air resistance slows a falling object down, a perfect hands-on example of pull in action. They also propelled cars across the floor, feeling the push force needed to get something moving, and investigated what would sink and what would float, connecting these ideas to the bigger picture of how forces shape the world around us. It was a fantastic, hands-on way to bring our forces unit to life, and the excitement in the room was contagious!

Now that we're into Term 3, Year 1 has shifted focus to geography, exploring the natural and man-made features that make up the environments around us.



## Year 5 Vonnies Speech Competition Preparation

**Lina Robertson, Primary General Studies**

Year 5 students are currently hard at work researching, planning and writing their speeches for this year's Vonnies Competition. For many Year 5 students, this will be their first experience delivering a speech to an audience, making it both an exciting opportunity and a significant milestone in their learning. Throughout the process, students are developing their confidence, refining their writing skills and learning how to communicate their ideas in a clear and engaging way.

The Vonnies Competition will be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August and will feature students from Years 5, 6, 7 and 8. As students prepare for the event, they are practising their presentation skills, learning to use effective speaking techniques and challenging themselves to step outside their comfort zones. We are looking forward to hearing a wide range of thoughtful and creative speeches and celebrating the effort, courage and achievements of all participants.



## Year 6/7 boys tefillah partnership



**Samuel Brygel, Head Of Humanities and Social Sciences**

With the beginning of Semester Two and the boys beginning to approach their Bar Mitzvah year, we have started a new initiative for our Year 6 boys tefillah. On Friday mornings in Semester Two, our Year 6 students will be joining the Year 7 boys minyan lead by Noah Epstein where they have the opportunity to actualise the "minyan skills" we have been practising, partaking in a real minyan with a chazzan, Kaddish and kedusha. We look forward to seeing our new partnership go from strength to strength!

## Prep B Jewish Studies

**Chavi Grossman**, Co-ordinator of Jewish Studies (Primary)

As we welcomed Term 3, our Prep students immersed themselves in meaningful and engaging learning about Tisha B'Av. Through stories, discussions and hands-on activities, they explored the significance of this important day in Jewish history and made thoughtful connections to the Land of Israel and its enduring place in the Jewish people's story.

It has been truly heartwarming to see the students' curiosity, enthusiasm and genuine engagement. Watching our youngest learners develop a deeper appreciation for their heritage and express such pride in their Yiddishkeit has been a wonderful way to begin the term.



## Secondary PE

**Aaron Fetter**, Head of Sports – Secondary

### Regionals, here we come!

Mazal Tov to our Year 7 Interschool Footy team who were crowned Beachside champions in Term 2 and have qualified for next month's Regional Finals. Weeks of preparation paid off with Yavneh claiming a hard-fought 13-point win over the perennially strong Albert Park in the opening match, before holding Elwood goalless in an 83-point victory. In team sports there are always hard-luck stories, and Ariel S who could not play due to injury focused on ways he could contribute to the team. He put his passion for photography to good use, snapping these brilliant action shots, bringing Yavneh's triumph to life!



### LYC Y12 vs KDS

Yavneh's VCE Girls Soccer and Boys Footy winning streak was snapped in the annual fixture against King David on the last day of Semester 1, in a spirited afternoon of Jewish Interschool Sport at Princes Park. Yavneh brought trademark dedication, teamwork and 'LUV YAV' spirit in both matches but were outplayed by a well-drilled KDS. Thanks to Head of Arts Mr. Daskalou for these awesome action shots.



## Secondary Arts Department

**Michael Daskalou**, Head of Arts and Secondary Teacher

Term 3 is well underway, which means our VCE Visual Communication Design, Art Making and Exhibiting, and Media students are now deep into folio season.

The folio is a major year-long assessment task that brings together months of planning, experimentation, development and refinement. Students are currently working hard to complete their final productions and document the creative process behind their ideas.

Their outstanding work will be showcased at the College's annual Folio Night in October. This special evening provides students with the opportunity to share their creativity, dedication and achievements with families, staff and the wider College community. More details about Folio Night will be shared soon.

Leibler Yavneh College also congratulates Gilad Lowinger on receiving a Premier's VCE Award for Drama, recognising his outstanding achievement and exceptional results in VCE Drama in 2025.

Throughout his years at Yavneh, Gilad became a leading figure in the College's Performing Arts program. He starred as George Banks in Mary Poppins and Prince Hans in Frozen, taking on two major roles, while also serving as the lead vocalist in the Yavneh Hebrew Band. His passion, creativity and commitment to performance made him a respected role model for younger students.

VCE Drama teacher Lyndy Clarke said, "Gilad had an exceptional ability to think outside the obvious. He was curious, creative and dedicated to working very hard on his solo. He also received a Top Class invitation but was already in Israel. Gilad has a great sense of humour and a real flair for comedy."

Keep an eye out for more exciting Performing Arts and Visual Arts events coming up at Yavneh throughout Term 3 and beyond.



## Year 8 Kryal Castle HASS Excursion

**Samuel Brygel**, Head Of Humanities and Social Sciences

As part of their HASS unit on Medieval Europe, our Year 8 students on Tuesday enjoyed a memorable day of interactive and engaging learning at Kryal Castle. With activities ranging from the Manorial court, crime and punishment methods in Medieval Europe, the armoury of Knights, archery and even a falcon bird show with lunch, it was a fantastic day for all!

Thank you as well to our wonderful staff members, Ms Swiatlo, Ms Allen and R' Gomo for accompanying and leading our students.





## Upcoming Dates 2026

### August:

Monday 17 - ZFA Conference - Student Free Day

### Mazal Tov

Mazel Tov to **Ariel New** and family on his Barmitzva

**Melbourne Jewish Book Week '26**  
August 1-4

**Connections**

Melbourne Jewish Book Week 2026 brings together an extraordinary gathering of Australian and international writers across four days of interviews, panels, poetry, performance, and a schools incursion program.

This year's theme, 'Connections', threads through every session: untold family histories, genre fiction from romance to satire, standing up for truth in a post-truth era, the AI conundrum, and the full spectrum of Jewish literary life today.

Discover the full program  
Browse the program and book sessions at [mjbw.com.au](http://mjbw.com.au)

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Maccabi Junior Sports Carnival is one huge week of sport, social events and new friendships, bringing together Jewish teens in Years 7-10 from across Australia and Israel for an experience like no other.

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The RCV proudly presents  
**RABBI YONA REISS, ESQ.**  
**REBBETZIN MINDY REISS**

for an extraordinary week of Torah Learning and inspiration

**31 JULY - 5 AUGUST 2026**  
17 - 22 AV 5786

**PRIVATE EVENTS**

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Reiss will address Staff and Students at: Leiblir Yavneh College, Yeshiva - Beth Rivkah College, Vesodel HaTorah College.

Melave Malka with Rebbetzin Mindy Reiss for RCV Rebbetzins, Kallah and Conversion Teachers, Mivvot Attendees & Shadchan.

Rabbi Reiss to serve as Scholar in Residence at the Rabbinical Council of Victoria's Annual Rabbinic Conference.

Rabbi Reiss to meet with the Dayanim of the Melbourne Beth Din.

Rabbi Reiss to meet with members of the Jewish Lawyers Group.

**OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY**

**RABBI REISS TO GIVE DRASHAS IN THE FOLLOWING SHULES:**

Friday 31 July Shaarei Tefilla Kabbalat Shabbat

Shabbat 1 August Daminyan Before Mussaf

Shabbat 1 August Mitzrahi Seudat Shlichut

Wednesday 5 August Rebbetzin Mindy Reiss will present a shiur for the Melbourne Nach Yomi group and women.

**RABBI REISS' KEYNOTE COMMUNITY LECTURE**

**WEDNESDAY 5 AUGUST - 22 AV**  
7:55PM FOR A 7:30PM START

**From Torah to Today: The Beth Din's Role in Resolving Modern Disputes**

Rabbi Yona and Rebbetzin Mindy Reiss are internationally acclaimed leaders, educators and speakers, bringing decades of experience in Jewish law, teaching and communal service.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: [EXECUTIVE@RCVVIC.AU](mailto:EXECUTIVE@RCVVIC.AU)

**EMUNAH AUSTRALIA** *Bayline Bakery* *FAREVE*

**Rosh Hashana Boxes 5787/2026**

**What's in the box?**

3D Table Decoration, Choc Chip Biscuits, 5 Apple Shaped Honey Biscuits, Honey Bunch Cake with Yellow Icing and a Chocolate Bee, 100gm Rocky Road, 100gm Chocolate Dipped Honeycomb, 5 Chocolate Dipped Dates with Coconut, 5 Rosh Hashana Fondant Biscuits.

Emunah provides a range of life-changing programs that support Israel's most vulnerable children, women and families helping them break cycles of dysfunction and build stable, fulfilling lives.

Please share your Mazal Tovs with us! - [marketing@yavneh.vic.edu.au](mailto:marketing@yavneh.vic.edu.au)