



# Chinmaya Mission Austin

## 2024-2025 Handbook



**Chinmaya Sundaram**

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**Resident Spiritual Guides:**

Rahulji & Priyaji Maini



Hari Om!

A very warm welcome to Chinmaya Mission Austin!

Chinmaya Mission Austin offers a very well-established structured program for the growth of individuals from all backgrounds, as part of the larger Chinmaya Mission organization whose purpose is spreading the teachings contained in Vedas and Upanishads. All our activities have one focus: to reveal to people of all ages and from all walks of life, the timeless wisdom of Vedanta, which is the core of Hindu philosophy. Over the years, with Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's blessings, our center has been growing from strength to strength and reaching out to increasing numbers of people.

## Our Vision

Inner transformation of individuals through knowledge of Vedanta, spiritual practices and service to society, resulting in a happy world around them.

## Our Mission Statement

To provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society.

## Our Motto

To give the maximum amount to happiness to the maximum number of people for the maximum amount of time.

## Bala Vihar Motto: Keep Smiling

"To help children learn values with fun, to delight like the moon and shine like the sun!"

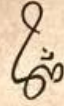
- Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

"Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit."

"The seed of spiritual values should be sown in young hearts, and the conditions made favorable for sprouting and steady growth through proper control and discipline. It must be cared for with the warmth of love and affection, and such a tree shall blossom forth flowers of brotherhood, universal love, peace, bliss, beauty, and Perfection."

- Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda





## Be a True Chinmaya Family Member

**Hari Om! Salutations!**

**Chinmaya Mission will never teach you anything, but it is an organization where all will come together to learn. The science of Reality and the path of God-realization are the main subjects that you will learn in the Chinmaya Mission.**

**There are subsidiary attempts such as sharpening your personality, blazing up your intellect, oiling your emotions, refitting your relationships, recharging your convictions, replenishing your values – in short, you will be completely changed to a new brilliant person.**

**God is all-pervading and the Mission's hope is to make our generation more conscious of the God Principle. Thus, all our friends who are sincerely practicing self-purification and mental purification are faithful Mission members.**

**Chinmaya Mission is a non-stop course in religion. Our Mission's work is to replace the beast in us with the best in us. So long as you are practicing – not outwardly only but mainly inwardly – you are a dearer member of the Chinmaya family than anybody else.**

**Mission workers' joy should be in receiving with grace 'Fire' from others, and convert it to 'Light', to guide all and to be of service to all.**

**Remember, members of the Chinmaya Mission today have an outstanding position in the society. They are being looked up to by an expectant part of the nation as perhaps the harbingers of a new hope into the chaotic conditions of the society.**

**So, think before you speak! Remember the Lord before you act! Let not an ugly action ever defile the face of the cherished hopes of the society! Let not even an unintended word from your mouth splash tears in the face of the community!**

**With Love**

**Swami Chinmayananda**

## ACTIVITIES AT CHINMAYA MISSION AUSTIN

### Bala Vihar

The Chinmaya Bala Vihar program offers weekly spiritual enrichment classes for school-age children in their formative years. The 90-minute classes are categorized by age groups and include chanting, bhajans, stories of devotion and morals, interactive discussions, and creative games. The classes are based on a dynamic curriculum aligned with the Bala Vihar rationale set by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda:

- To help children and youth grow up with a strong understanding and reverence for Hindu spiritual and cultural values.
- To instill self-confidence so that they are able to serve and act cheerfully.
- To generate personal discipline, dynamic leadership, and true affection in all relationships.
- To enable children and youth to achieve success and balance as they grow up and face the challenges of life.
- To foster an atmosphere of growth and curiosity that is filled with noble ideals, healthy emotions, and physical discipline.

### Shishu Vihar

Shishu Vihar is Chinmaya Mission's newest creative device to "*catch them young*" - a forum for our youngest children aged below 4 years and their parents. Shishu Vihar provides an early introduction to spiritual education to infants, toddlers and their parents. This parent-in-class program follows the paradigm of "play groups" where children learn through songs, stories and arts and crafts facilitated by teachers and parents. For effective learning, props, music and an extensive array of colors, shapes and forms are all utilized to relay information in a fun and engaging format. For additional information about the Shishu Vihar program, please email [shishuvihar@chinmayaustin.org](mailto:shishuvihar@chinmayaustin.org).

### Bala Vihar & Shishu Vihar Class Timings

Bala Vihar and Shishu Vihar classes are held **every Sunday** from mid-August through mid-May in alignment with the school academic calendar - session timings are below:

## CMA SUNDAY CLASS TIMINGS

FROM	TO	DETAILS
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Session 1 Assembly, Bala Vihar & Adult Satsang
10:15 AM	11:15 AM	Language & Enrichment Classes See CMA website for up-to-date class offerings
11:15 AM	12:00 PM	Shishu Vihar (one session only)
11:30 AM	1:00 PM	Session 2 Assembly, Bala Vihar & Adult Satsang

Bala Vihar classes are offered for Pre-K through 12th grade and taught in English by specially trained volunteer Sevaks under the guidance of our spiritual guides, PriyaJi and RahulJi. The 2024-25 Bala Vihar curriculum topics are as below. For more information, please email [balavihar@chinmayaaustrin.org](mailto:balavihar@chinmayaaustrin.org)

## BALA VIHAR CURRICULUM 2024-2025

GRADE	SYLLABUS
<b>Pre-K</b>	Hindu Gods & Goddesses, Festivals
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Alphabet Safari
<b>Grade 1</b>	Bala Ramayana
<b>Grade 2</b>	Hanuman: Superman
<b>Grade 3</b>	Bala Bhagavatam
<b>Grade 4</b>	My 24 Teachers
<b>Grade 5</b>	Symbolism in Hinduism
<b>Grade 6</b>	India the Sacred Land + Saints of India Life of Swami Chinmayananda
<b>Grade 7</b>	Key to Success (Vibhishana Gita) P.O. Box Mr. God (Ram Charit Manas)
<b>Grade 8</b>	Yato Dharmah Tatoh Jayah Mahabharata Characters   Gita for Me
<b>Grades 9 &amp; 10</b>	Storm to Perform Life Mgmt. Techniques
<b>Grades 11 &amp; 12</b>	Self-Unfoldment Say Cheese



## Chinmaya Mission Austin 2024-2025 Bala Vihar Calendar

<b>Aug 18</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class (BV Opening Day)</b>
<b>Aug 25</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Sept 1</b>	<b>No Class (Labor Day)</b>
<b>Sept 8</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class (BV Ganesh Chaturthi Celebration)</b>
<b>Sept 15</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class (BV Parent/Teacher Meet)</b>
<b>Sept 22, 29</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Oct 6, 13, 20, 27</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Nov 3</b>	<b>No Class (CMA Diwali Celebration)</b>
<b>Nov 10, 17</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Nov 24</b>	<b>No Class (Thanksgiving Break)</b>
<b>Dec 1</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Dec 8</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Dec 15</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Dec 22, 29</b>	<b>No Class (Winter Break)</b>
<b>Jan 5</b>	<b>No Class (Winter Break)</b>
<b>Jan 12, 19, 26</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Feb 2, 9</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Feb 16</b>	<b>No Class (Presidents Day)</b>
<b>Feb 23</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Mar 2, 9</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Mar 16</b>	<b>No Class (Spring Break)</b>
<b>Mar 23</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>Mar 30</b>	<b>No Class (BV Holi/Spring Celebration)</b>
<b>Apr 6, 13, 20, 27</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class</b>
<b>May 4</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class (Gurudev Jayanti Celebration)</b>
<b>May 11</b>	<b>Mother's Day Event</b>
<b>May 18</b>	<b>Bala Vihar Class of 2025 Graduation</b>

## **Bala Vihar/Shishu Vihar Enrollment Guidelines**

Building character and instilling values takes sustained effort over time. As such, Bala Vihar should be considered as a long-term engagement and children are to be enrolled in the Bala Vihar grade consistent with their school grade. This ensures that they get to interact with peers of the same age-group and build close friendships and a social/support network with their classmates over the years - which will motivate them to stay committed to Bala Vihar through high school.

Enrollment guidelines for 2024-25 Bala Vihar / Shishu Vihar are as follows:

<b>Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Enrollment Guidelines 2024-25</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>
5 years on or before Sept 1, 2024	Kinder
4 years on or before Sept 1, 2024	Pre-K
Less than 4 years on Sept 1, 2024	Shishu Vihar

**Note:** Children can advance to Kinder only when they start Kindergarten in elementary school.

## **Sri Soma Sundareswara Temple**

The Sri Soma Sundareswara Temple at Chinmaya Mission Austin is open to all and holds regular Abhishekams, special Pujas and observance of special events and festivals. Please refer to the CMA website or email [temple@chinmayaaustrin.org](mailto:temple@chinmayaaustrin.org) for up-to-date Temple timings, Puja schedules, special events and priest services.

## **Bhagavad Gita Chanting Classes**

Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda worked tirelessly for 40 years to propagate the message of the Bhagavad Gita, which he referred to as the “handbook for everyday living”. *Chant. Study. Know. Live.* This is the scheme propounded by Pujya Gurudev for us to grow and evolve.

The Bhagavad Gita Chanting program aims to bring this philosophy into the lives of both children and adults by teaching authentic pronunciation of all 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita with emphasis on pronunciation and memorization. Please email [info@chinmayaaustrin.org](mailto:info@chinmayaaustrin.org) for more details.

## **Language Classes**

The language classes promote language skills in various Indian languages. The classes familiarize students with the alphabet and numbers through reading and writing, and introduce them to common words and phrases that will enable the understanding of simple conversation. The students are encouraged to speak the language and to improve their comprehension through songs, stories and games. Please refer to the CMA website or email [info@chinmayaaustrin.org](mailto:info@chinmayaaustrin.org) for more details on language class offerings.

## **Swaranjali Classes**

Several cultural classes including violin, tabla, dance, bhajans etc. are offered for both children and adults under the Swaranjali program. More information on these classes can be obtained by emailing [swaranjali@chinmayaaustrin.org](mailto:swaranjali@chinmayaaustrin.org).

## **Festivals and Special Events**

Several Hindu festivals such as Krishna Janmashtami, Ganesha Chaturthi, Navaratri, Diwali, Mahashivaratri, Rama Navami, Gurudev's Jayanti and Guru Purnima are celebrated at Chinmaya Mission. The significance of each festival is beautifully explained to the Bala Vihar students by the teachers, Swami ShivatmanandaJi and Brni. ShuchitaJi.

We also have other special fun-filled activities such as the Holi and Kite flying carnival, day and summer camps, service projects, college seminars, movie nights, and lock-ins that are organized throughout the year. These activities boost the enthusiasm and interest of the children and provide them opportunities to bond with one another.

## **Adult Classes and Study Groups**

Our Spiritual Guides, RahulJi and PriyaJi, and visiting Spiritual teachers give



discourses and lectures to adults on Upanishadic texts during the Sunday Bala Vihar sessions as well as during the week. Please email [satsang@chinmayaaustin.org](mailto:satsang@chinmayaaustin.org) for information about ongoing adult classes.

Adult study groups meet every Wednesday to study and discuss Vedantic texts under the guidance of Dr. Meena Patel. For information about study group, please email [studygroup@chinmayaaustin.org](mailto:studygroup@chinmayaaustin.org).

## **Registration and Fees**

Instructions on how to register for Bala Vihar, Shishu Vihar, language and other programs can be found on the CMA website.

- **Bala Vihar:** Bala Vihar fees are due annually and are for the whole family regardless of the number of children.
- **Language Classes:** Sanskrit and Hindi language classes are offered only to students enrolled in Bala Vihar. Language fees are charged per child and separate from Bala Vihar fees.
- **Refund Policy:** No credits or refunds will be issued for any reason. Please consider your payment as a donation for the growth and welfare of our community.
- For up-to-date information on class availability, schedule and registration, please check the [CMA website](#).

## **Bala Vihar Discipline and Etiquette Guidelines**

- All Bala Vihar participants and parents are requested to dress respectfully in appropriate attire.
- All children should be seated in the hall 5 minutes before start of assembly. Doors will close **promptly** at the start of each session.
- Children who arrive after start of the session should go to the designated overflow area until permitted to enter the Bala Vihar hall at an appropriate time.
- It is **mandatory** for at least one parent to be present at all times while Bala Vihar session is in progress.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to attend regularly and participate actively in the Adult Satsang held in the Temple Hall.

- Parents should not socialize outside the Bala Vihar hall while Assembly is in progress.
- Parents with infants are requested to ensure that sessions in progress are not disturbed.
- Parents of Pre-K through 4th grade are required to pick up their children from the classrooms within ten minutes after the session ends.
- Switch off cell phones and maintain silence during assembly.

## **Parent Expectations**

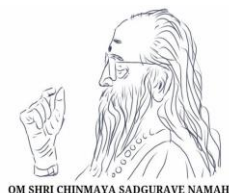
- Please review and discuss Bala Vihar Discipline and Etiquette Policies with your child. Be sure to address the importance of maintaining discipline and demonstrating respect for teachers and fellow students.
- Be an engaged parent - take an active interest in your children's classes and encourage their participation in events.
- Please support your child's teachers by reading email updates regularly, by responding to requests for help and volunteering in the classroom as needed.
- If a child will be absent, the parent must inform the teacher ahead of time. Attendance in High school grades is monitored closely and will be used as a criterion for Bala Vihar graduation.
- Discuss any concerns or suggested improvements to the program with your child's teachers or the Bala Vihar coordinators.
- Please sign up on the CMA website for the weekly newsletter so that you can stay up-to-date with upcoming events and announcements.
- Make every effort to participate in CMA events with the children whenever possible.
- Set an example for the children by actively volunteering and engaging with the CMA and local communities. Contact our volunteer lead or Bala Vihar coordinators for volunteer opportunities.

## Sundaram House Rules

- Maintain cleanliness and sanctity of our Chinmaya Sundaram premises.
- Shoes must be removed and placed neatly on shelves in the shoe rack.
- Serving and eating food should be done only in designated areas. **No food and drink** (other than water) is permitted in the Bala Vihar Hall or classrooms.
- Only authorized persons are allowed in the office area.
- Only designated members are permitted to handle thermostats and/or operate A/V equipment.
- Any items you use (chairs, tables etc) must be returned to their designated storage areas.
- No flyers should be displayed in Sundaram without proper authorization
- Parking within Sundaram is reserved for Bala Vihar Sevaks and Sevikas on Sundays.
- Drive slow – speed limit within Sundara is 10 mph.
- Parking is strictly prohibited in the fire lanes.

*"What you have is all His gift to you; what you do with  
What you have is Your gift to Him."*

*-Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda*





**UNTO HIM OUR BEST**

| HARI OM | SRI GURUBHYO NAMAHA | HARI OM |