

Parent Handbook and Welcome Packet



1558 Wilmot Road, Deerfield, Illinois 60015

(847) 945-0470

About This Handbook and Welcome Packet

This handbook contains important information regarding the operation of The Religious School of B'nai Tikvah. Included here you will find our policies and procedures explained in detail. Please take time to read it completely. Some of our policies have changed this year. Please take special note of them. Keep this book as a reference resource and refer to it throughout the school year.

Additionally, you will find:

- The School Calendar
- Carpool Protocol
- Curriculum
- Teacher Biographies

We want to keep the lines of communication open and available between your home and our school. It is our hope that you will never hesitate to contact us for questions, updates, or concerns.

To reach us, call the office at: (847) 945-0470

Dear Parent,

Welcome to The Religious School of B'nai Tikvah!

The Religious School is meant to be welcoming, warm and nurturing, fostering a love for Judaism and encouraging intellectual curiosity. Blending the informal with the formal, our commitment is to provide high quality instruction in an environment that is conducive to Jewish practice. Feeling comfortable with their Judaism while gaining a positive Jewish self-identity, our students will obtain the tools with which they will be able to pass on our rich heritage.

Recognizing that within any given framework academic choices must be made, we have chosen a program that focuses on Jewish History, Bible, Life Cycle, Holidays, Jewish Values and Israel. Within our present time structure, it is not our goal to teach Hebrew as a spoken language. Instead, Hebrew will be taught for reading and tefillah (prayer) fluency to enable our students to understand the prayers and be comfortable and competent participating in synagogue services here at B'nai Tikvah as well as in the larger community. Our academic program reinforced by at home Hebrew reading practice and regular Shabbat Service attendance will provide your child with a well-rounded, top-notch education. Additionally it will afford our students the opportunity to reinforce and practice all they have learned.

We are very excited to welcome you and your children to The Religious School:

K-5th Grade Sunday, September 11, 9:00am

3rd and 5th Grade Tuesday, September 13, 4:30pm

4th and 6th Grade Wednesday, September 14, 4:30pm

6th Grade Saturday, September 17, 10:00am (More Information to Follow)

7th Grade Sunday, September 18, 10:00am

7th Grade Wednesday, September 21, 6:30pm

8th Grade Wednesday, September 21, 6:30pm

9th-12th Grade (More Information to Follow)

This will be an energized, rewarding, and fun year! B'shalom

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Appointments

Anyone desiring an appointment to meet with the Education Director, Esther Weiss, or any member of the teaching staff is asked to telephone the school office to make an appointment. Our number is (847) 945-0470. Appointments are important so that we can give you our full attention. *Please note that teachers will not be able to meet with you during those times when class is in session. Also, teachers are not free to engage in conversations with parents just before the beginning of the class session as they have preparation responsibilities.* For your convenience, telephone conferences can also be arranged. Let us know which you prefer.

Attendance

Regular attendance is considered one of the most important elements of any successful educational program. Unless we have agreed to a special arrangement, students are asked to be present for at least 75% of all class sessions. If you know that your child will be absent for a week or more, please contact the School Office and special arrangements will be made to help your child keep up with class.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Training

Your child will be assigned a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date approximately three years in advance. Formal training will begin approximately 10 to 12 months before the date with tefillah (prayer) and trope reading lessons. Lessons will be scheduled at the mutual convenience of both the student and Hazzan Hery, but may not take place during your child's school hours.

Behavior or Academic Problems

It is important that the time our students spend in the Religious School be both positive and productive. If your child is having problems, either academic or behavioral, the teacher will notify you directly by telephone or in writing. Should the problem continue, a conference will be arranged. *It is our school's policy that we will not allow a child to remain in the classroom displaying behavior that disrupts the class.* Should we need to call you to pick up your child early (because of class disruption) we appreciate your cooperation in picking them up promptly and helping us avoid a recurrence of this misbehavior.

Carpools

Carpools are a very effective time saving convenience. Parents are responsible for creating their own carpools. It is imperative that all carpool

drivers make every effort to get the students to class on time and pick them up on time.

Additionally, we request that all drivers exercise special caution in the parking lot at arrival and dismissal time. *The speed limit in the parking lot is 5 M.P.H.* Should you need to come into the building at dismissal, please park your car in our lot.

Dismissal Time

We will make every effort to dismiss all of our students at the same time. We understand that at evening pick up, everyone is anxious to get home. However, we must insist that you not send messengers to knock on classroom doors to "call for" other members of your carpool. Our teachers have been asked not to keep students after school and will remind your children to move quickly to their respective carpools at dismissal time.

Early Dismissal Request Policy

Early dismissal requests have the potential to create educational distractions in the classroom as well as disruption in the School Office. Should you find that early dismissal is required, please understand that parents must come into the School Office to sign the student out.

School Committee

School policies, curriculum and programming are discussed at the School Committee meetings. The meetings begin after minyan at 8:00 pm. Any member of our congregation is eligible to attend. Lori Gross is our VP of Education and Youth; Amy Katz is our School Committee Chair. Their emails are: lorigross@gmail.com; amykkatz@gmail.com, respectively. Agenda items should be emailed in before the meetings.

Field Trips

Some of our classes will be taking field trips to places relevant to class study. You will be notified in advance of any field trip plans and you will be asked to return a permission slip for the activity. Please pay careful attention to the times listed on the permission slip since they might occasionally differ from customary school arrival or dismissal times.

Flyers

Flyers will be sent home with students outlining various activities and programs throughout the year. Please check your child's bags regularly since these flyers have time value.

Food

If your child brings a snack from home, it must be packaged, either dairy or parve and have a hecksher (a kosher seal) on it. **We are a peanut and tree nut free school.** Children will not be permitted to eat during classes, only before class begins and during the break.

Allergies

A child with a serious allergy can suffer a life-threatening, anaphylactic reaction by ingesting a food containing ingredients to which they are allergic. Accordingly, food may only be brought into our classrooms or other Religious School space for snack, and holiday celebrations. The contents of such foods must comply with the limitations set out in this Policy and the individualized instructions for safe practice in each classroom, which will be disseminated by the Director of Lifelong Learning to all staff members.

Parents must be sensitive to and respectful of the needs of all of the children in their child's class. We are a peanut and tree nut free school. We appreciate all Religious School parents' understanding and compliance with these critically important guidelines.

Please do not send any foods to school that contain peanuts or tree nuts including, but not limited to: peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, baked goods containing peanuts or tree nuts, and foods containing nut sauces or flavoring to be eaten in the classroom, or snacks anywhere else in the building—either before or after school. Please check granola and similar snack bars. Many include peanuts or tree nuts as ingredients. While we make every effort to ensure no such nuts are present in the school, we remain a multi-use facility and cannot guarantee that children will not come in contact with peanut or tree nut residue inside the building.

Allergies to other foods (including but not limited to eggs, dairy products, soy, seeds, fruits, honey, or gluten) will be handled on a case-by-case basis in that child's classroom. Certain restrictions may be placed on all the children in that classroom (in addition to the prohibition on peanuts and tree nuts described above). **Due to severe allergies, our first grade class is a honey-free classroom.**

If your child has a serious allergy, please confirm you included the description in your digital registration.

Handicap Access

Our school building is equipped for handicap access. We have elevator access for students who become injured and require special arrangements to get them to and from their classrooms.

Homework

Teachers have been asked to be sensitive to the student's time outside of Religious School and to the work demands in secular school.

Inclement Weather

If Deerfield Schools are closed, B'nai Tikvah will automatically be closed. Please do not call the school or the synagogue office, since we may be snowed in and at home. You will be notified by email. The decision to close school due to inclement weather will be made based on our teachers' abilities to get to school.

Kippot

All boys are required to wear a kippah (headcovering) at all times in Religious School. Since we are an egalitarian congregation, we encourage our girls to also cover their heads during class.

Parental Involvement

The purpose of our school is to educate your child. To do this we need your input, feedback, and cooperation. We encourage parents to attend our Open House, accompany children on field trips, join at special performances, attend family education workshops, assemblies and activities. Your children want to know that you feel that their time spent in Religious School is important. Please check your child's bag after every school day for flyers, "ask me about cards," and any other important information.

Progress Reports

A report on your child's progress is scheduled to be issued once this year. The purpose of these reports is to inform parents of their children's strengths and challenges. Additionally, 3rd-6th grade parents will be offered a Parent Teacher Conference time during the last two weeks of January. There will also be periodic "all school updates" which are most informative.

School Schedule

Kindergarten:

Sundays 9:00am-12:00pm; optional early pick-up at 10:40am

1st Grade and 2nd Grade

Sundays 9:00am-12:00pm

3rd and 5th Grades:

Sundays 9:00am-12:00pm

Tuesdays 4:30pm-6:30pm

4th Grade:

Sundays 9:00am-12:00pm

Wednesdays 4:30pm-6:30pm

6th Grade:

Saturdays 10:00am-12:00pm (More Information to Follow)

Wednesdays 4:30pm-6:30pm

7th Grade:

Sunday mornings - our 7th grade program, titled *Nishmah v'Na'aseh*, features a unique schedule on Sundays to accommodate for multiple guest teachers and regular field trips. Please follow the curriculum distributed at the beginning of the year and watch for update emails in case of scheduling changes. **On Sundays, parents attend with students.** The sessions will always begin at 10:00am, but will end either at 11:00am or 12:00pm. There are three categories of sessions:

1. Rabbi Alex leads a *Learner's Minyan* with students and their parents, followed by a group discussion (10:00am-11:00am).
2. Field trips to contribute to local non-profits and/or visit Jewish institutions (10:00am-12:00pm).
3. Guest speakers (10:00am-11:00am).

Wednesday evenings: 6:30pm-8:00pm.

8th Grade:

Wednesdays 6:30pm-7:30pm.

9th-12th Grade:

More information to follow

Shabbat Services

We cannot teach about Shabbat in a vacuum. Our educational program is enhanced and reinforced through Shabbat Service attendance.

A Shabbat requirement is an important part of our academic program. **Students in 3rd through 5th grades are required to attend a minimum of 6 Shabbat services for the academic year.** They may attend the *Simchat Shabbat* services or the monthly 3rd thru 5th grade Shabbat Services. We will be counting Friday evening services and Shabbat morning services at B'nai Tikvah to fulfill this requirement. An alphabetical card system will be in place each Shabbat. Students are to find their card and move it to the front of the card box. We will be keeping a weekly record of all services attended. Periodic updates will be given to each student as reminders.

6th grade students will attend *Vav (6th Grade) Shabbat*, on Saturday mornings from 10:00am-12:00 pm.

To assist in making this attendance policy more accessible and to encourage service attendance, we have assigned each grade (K-5th) two Friday night *Simchat Shabbat* services and 3rd-5th grades an additional three Saturday morning *Ruach Shabbat* services. They are listed on the following page.

Assigned Shabbat Services

Kindergarten:

Saturday night, December 10th (4:30-6:30)
Friday night, January 13th (6:30-8:00)
Friday night, February 10th (6:30-8:00)
Friday night, May 5th (6:30-8:00) Consecration

1st Grade:

Saturday night, December 10th (4:30-6:30)
Friday night, February 10th (6:30-8:00)
Friday night, May 12th (6:30-8:00)

2nd Grade:

Saturday night, December 10th (4:30-6:30)
Friday night, January 13th (6:30-8:00)
Friday night, May 12th (6:30-8:00)

3rd Grade:

Friday night, November 11th (6:30-8:00)
Friday night, March 10th (6:30-8:00)
Friday night, May 5th (6:30-8:00) Consecration
Attend four of the following Saturday Shabbat Services:
 Saturday morning, November 12th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, December 10th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, January 14th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, February 11th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, March 11th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, April 8th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, May 13th (10:00-12:00)

4th Grade:

Friday night, November 11th (6:30-8:00)
Friday night, April 7th (6:30-8:00)
Attend four of the following Saturday Shabbat Services:
 Saturday morning, November 12th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, December 10th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, January 14th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, February 11th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, March 11th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, April 8th (10:00-12:00)
 Saturday morning, May 13th (10:00-12:00)

5th Grade:

Friday night, January 13th (6:30-8:00)

Friday night, March 10th (6:30-8:00)

Attend four of the following Saturday Shabbat Services:

Saturday morning, November 12th (10:00-12:00)

Saturday morning, December 10th (10:00-12:00)

Saturday morning, January 14th (10:00-12:00)

Saturday morning, February 11th (10:00-12:00)

Saturday morning, March 11th (10:00-12:00)

Saturday morning, April 8th (10:00-12:00)

Saturday morning, May 13th (10:00-12:00)

Snacks

Our school runs a snack sale before school starts on Sundays and at break time during the weekdays. We still strongly recommend that students have breakfast before coming to religious school. Snack prices are all \$1.00, which goes to our School Enrichment Fund to bring in special guests. All snacks are nut free.

Supplies

Students are expected to come to school consistently equipped to do their work. This means that they are to have books, notebook for class work, pen, pencil, and kippah for each class. Extra-sharpened pencils are very helpful.

Talk

Communicate with your child as much as possible. Usually a question such as "How was school today?" will result in a "Boring!" reply. Rather, a question like, "What did you learn today?" or "Did anything special happen in class?" or "What topic did the teacher cover today?" will serve you best. These kinds of questions are more likely to elicit the information that you really want to know. Your child really does want to know that you are interested in what they are learning.

To assist in this process, we will be sending your child home each week with "Ask Me" cards on which there are interesting and probing questions. Please remind your child to present you with these cards when you see them after school.

Teachers

The teachers in our Religious School were selected from the very best educators available in our area. Our teachers are caring and dedicated, totally committed to working in partnership with you. On the occasion that a problem does occur in the classroom, please contact the school office and we will reach out to the teacher. You may leave a message in the school office and the teacher will return your call in a timely fashion. Please see attached document for biographies of our stellar teaching staff.

Textbooks

Certain textbooks will be given out and others will remain in the classroom. Please remind your children to put their names in their books. Lost books with names in them will be returned. Children need all of their books each day of class.

Tzedakah and Acts of Loving Kindness

One of our objectives is to have our students feel and act upon their responsibility to the larger Jewish community. Tzedakah in the form of small change is collected in class daily. At the end of every semester, each class selects where their funds will go. Acts of Gemilut Hasadim (Loving-Kindness), a giving of yourself and of your time, is encouraged in our program through many special projects.

Youth Groups

B'nai Tikvah continues its commitment to quality, award-winning youth programming, blending the formal with the informal in Jewish Education. Presently, there are three youth programs, administered under the watchful eye and creative hand of Ariana Hershon.

Makor	3rd through 5th grades
Kadima	6th through 8th grades
USY	9th through 12th grades

A youth group registration form is available on the B'nai Tikvah website: www.bnaitikvah.net. Ariana can be reached at ahershon@bnaitikvah.net.

From Strength to Strength

You are your child's first Jewish educator. We thank you for trusting us to be your partner. At The Religious School, we strive to provide the best Jewish education possible for your children. We want to keep the lines of communication open and available between your home and our school. It is our hope that you will never hesitate to contact us with questions, updates or concerns. And when we are doing something great, please do not hesitate to share that with us as well.

To reach us, please call: 847-945-0470

My direct email is: eweiss@bnaitikvah.net

Working together, may we go from strength to strength.