

Congregation B'nai Tikvah
The Religious School Program- Dr. Shlomo Moskovits Education Center

Parent Handbook
5778/2017-2018



1558 Wilmot Rd.
Deerfield, IL
847-945-0470

<https://www.bnaitikvah.net/learn/religious-school/>



Dear Parents,

Bruchim Habaim! Welcome! We look forward to welcoming you and your family back to our school this fall. We are very excited to continue to provide our students with the highest quality education. This school year we will be emphasizing sacred community (Kehillah Kedosha) and parent participation within our school. As parents you are your child's best teacher and we believe in a strong link between synagogue, school and home. Families will be invited to participate in many school activities, such as services, field trips and speakers, family programs, Mitzvah projects and family programming; we hope all will take advantage of these opportunities for family participation throughout the year.

Congregation B'nai Tikvah's Religious School thrives on the partnership between teachers, parents, students, and professional staff and lay leaders. This year will be continuing to work on those partnerships in order to focus on growing our sacred community. Our vision of Jewish education is constantly evolving. We will continue to refine and reframe our educational goals and vision in order to meet the needs of our students. We want every child to have a personal connection to their Judaism. We are working as role models and teachers to inspire the next generation of young Jews. Our highly experienced faculty, as well as our new Education Director, Carly Valfer, Rabbi Alex, Hazzan Hery, Felicia Lev, Esther Weiss and Ariana Hershon will continue to work with all members of our educational community to help foster a love of Judaism, learning and community. Our community is committed to exploring Jewish life and observance to its fullest. We think of our congregation as an extended family, welcoming all- infants to seniors, longtime residents and new arrivals, singles, families and empty nesters. We will continue to work to make Congregation B'nai Tikvah Religious School the educational and spiritual home for your children.

We are eager to guide your children in their development as they deepen their understanding of Judaism through the study of Jewish History, Bible, Life Cycle Events, Holidays, Jewish Values and Israel. We believe that providing experiential mediums to provide academic enrichment (art, music, and library), field trips, speakers and community programming will help to provide a comprehensive program to your students. Hebrew will be taught for reading and *T'fillah* (prayer) fluency to enable our students to understand the prayers and be comfortable participating in synagogue services here at B'nai Tikvah as well as in the larger community. Our program is enhanced and reinforced by at home Hebrew reading practice and regular Shabbat Service attendance.

Our school provides a safe place for your children to develop friendships and a community of peers. Attending class regularly is therefore a good mechanism to ensure that children not only keep up with the academic portion of the program, but also continue to cultivate community and friendships. We are committed to educating children with special needs and different learning styles. Our teachers are trained and willing to make accommodations to the curriculum in order to ensure your child's success.

If you would like to discuss your child's educational needs, please contact Carly Valfer at 847-945-0470 x109 or cvalfer@bnaitikvah.net to set up an appointment before the school year begins.

Please mark your calendars: The Opening Sunday of Religious School is Sunday, September 10th from 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Parents and families are encouraged to attend.

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.

All of us at The Religious School look forward to an exciting and engaging year ahead!

B'Shalom,

Carly Valfer

Education Director

Table of Contents

About this Handbook and Welcome Packet	3
Welcome to The Religious School of B'nai Tikvah	3
Mission for The Religious School	5
School Administration and Contact Information	5
School Hours	6
Special Programs	6
• 6 th grade B'nai Mitzvah Workshop	
• 7 th Grade Sunday Workshop	
• Vav Shabbat	
• Ruach Shabbat	
• Simchat Shabbat	
School Calendar	7
What to Expect in each grade	8
Madrichim Program	14
<i>New</i> -Social Media Campaign	14
Bar and Bat Mitzvah Training	15
Tzedakah and Acts of Loving Kindness	15
Youth Groups	15
School Guidelines	16
• Attendance	
• Behavior and academic problems	
• Communication	
• Creating an Environment of Learning and Sacred Community	
• Dismissal Times and Procedures	
• Carpool	
• Inclement Weather/ School Closings	
• Allergies	
• Homework	
• Kippot	
• Parent Involvement	
• Progress Reports	
• Parent/Teacher Conference	
• Snacks	
• Field Trips	
• School supplies	
• Textbooks	

Mission for The Religious School

The Religious School at Congregation B'nai Tikvah partners with parents to help enrich students' connections to Jewish culture, teachings, and traditions. Students will develop skills and understandings that will prepare them to become active participants in Jewish family and communal life. The Religious School at Congregation B'nai Tikvah is a warm community that encourages ruach in all activities, while still meeting the needs of individual students.

The Religious School at Congregation B'nai Tikvah strives to instill a love of Judaism and a connection to Jewish life, passing the Jewish tradition from one generation to the next. Students learn through experiencing holiday traditions; engaging in creative exploration of Torah stories, Israel, and history, and by partaking in an active study of Hebrew. Our students participate in leading the Friday night service, helping students engage in the rituals of Shabbat.

School Administration and Leadership Contact Information

Carly Valfer
Education Director
cvalfer@bnaitikvah.net

Sue Brin
Religious School Administrative Assistant
sbrin@bnaitikvah.net

Ariana Hershon
Youth Director
ahershon@bnaitikvah.net

Suzi Siegel
Vice President of Education
1suzisiegel@comcast.net

Robyn Schwartz
School Committee Chair
rrschwar@gmail.com

Bonnie Block
School Committee Chair
bonnie.block2104@gmail.com

School Hours

Day of the Week	Time	Grade
Sunday	9:00 am-12:00 pm	Kindergarten-5 th grade
Tuesday	4:30 pm-6:30 pm	3 rd thru 6 th grade
Wednesday	4:30 pm-6:30 pm	3 rd thru 6 th grade
Wednesday	6:15 pm-7:30 pm	7 th -9 th grade

Special Programs

6th grade B'nai Mitzvah Workshop

Sunday Sessions – September 17 and 24; October 8, 15, 22 and 29 – 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

At least one parent should attend these sessions with their children; they include B'nai Mitzvah content that is important for families to learn and experience together. Classes are taught by Rabbi Alex and Carly Valfer.

7th Grade Sunday Workshop

Kita Zayin meets on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and Wednesdays from 6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sunday morning classes vary in subject matter; classes are taught by Rabbi Alex, Carly Valfer, and guest speakers who present timely content on Jewish issues such as medical ethics, treating others with kindness, lay leadership, Holocaust and Israel. Field trips and opportunities for Tikkun Olam are part of the Sunday morning program. Parents are asked to participate with their seventh grader on Sunday mornings.

Vav Shabbat

Vav Shabbat includes Parsha discussions, values clarification sessions, games and review of basic Jewish concepts, and most importantly, a student run Shabbat service where children gain fluency leading and participating in the prayers they have learned in religious school throughout the years. Children will have the opportunity occasionally of observing B'nai Mitzvah in the Main Sanctuary to help them understand the ceremony and service they will be conducting at their Simcha. Class ends with students joining the main congregation for concluding prayers. They then join in a Kiddush lunch with the Congregation.

Pick up time is noon; we hope parents will be attending the Shabbat morning service; parents are encouraged at any time to join their children for Vav Shabbat sessions. Vav Shabbat is led by Esther Weiss and Cary Valfer.

Saturday Vav Shabbat Sessions – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

November 4, 11, 18

December 2

January 6, 13, 20, 27

February 3, 17, 24

March 3, 17

April 21, 28

May 5

Ruach Shabbat

Beginning in Kita Gimmel each class is assigned 2 Saturday morning Ruach Shabbat services for their grade level. Ruach Shabbat features songs, games, parsha discussion and role playing in addition to a service geared to each grade level. Students participate in the prayers they study in class and each child has a chance to lead parts of the service. Parents are welcome to join Ruach Shabbat or the Main Sanctuary service if they prefer.

Simchat Shabbat

Simchat Shabbat is a musical welcoming of the Sabbath beginning at 6:30 p.m. Friday night. Students prepare to lead selected prayers in class, and they enjoy sitting together as a group, participating in the spirited Shabbat hymns, and leading the congregation in the prayers they have mastered in class. A social Oneg Shabbat follows the service. Classes are assigned Simchat Shabbat dates and attendance is required. Parents accompany their children to Simchat Shabbat services.

School Calendar

Please see the school calendar on the B'nai Tikvah website for the most updated information on school events. Additionally, important dates for each grade are listed under What You Can Expect in each grade. Regular communication will be sent out regularly about important dates and events. You can also sync the synagogue calendar to your device from our website.

What to Expect for Each Grade for the 2017-2018 School Year

WHAT TO EXPECT IN KINDERGARTEN AT B'NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.....

Kindergarten meets Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Room 202.

Kindergarten is a time for establishing a comfort level with the synagogue, Torah and prayers. Children are encouraged to share questions and ideas, explore their Jewish identities, and enjoy activities and projects that help internalize joy and pride in their Jewish heritage.

Each Sunday children learn basic prayers, Jewish Mitzvot and practices, and Bible stories. Tzedakah is collected each Sunday. Boys may bring a Kipah from home or wear one provided by the synagogue. There is a weekly music session where Kindergartners learn Jewish folk songs and are exposed to Jewish music. Prepare to hear them humming prayers and songs in the bathtub by mid-year.

Children should bring a kosher snack from home each week.

Mark Your Calendar NOW for this Year's Important Kindergarten Events:

Opening Day and Family Picnic – Sunday, September 10 - for Parents and Children
Sukkot Party and Open House – Sunday, October 8 – for Parents and Children
Simchat Torah Special – Thursday, October 12 – for Parents and Children
Young Family Shabbat – Saturday, November 18 and March 10 – for Parents and Children
Grandparents' Havdalah – Saturday, December 9
All School Chanukah Program – Sunday, December 10 – for Parents and Children
Young Family Havdalah Program – Saturday, February 10 –for Parents and Children
Kindergarten Consecration – Friday, February 23 – Milestone event; families and friends invited

WHAT TO EXPECT IN FIRST GRADE – KITA ALEF - AT B'NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.....

First Grade meets Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Room 201. First graders begin class with prayer and song, then enjoy discussion of the weekly Torah portion. The stories in Genesis from creation to Joseph are given special focus. Children enjoy weekly art projects, classroom dramatics and role playing, and spirited games to enhance their learning of Torah, Mitzvot and Holidays. There is a weekly music session where First Graders learn Jewish folk songs and are exposed to Jewish music. Prepare to hear them humming prayers and songs in the bathtub by mid-year. One of the Jewish values taught in First Grade is the affixing of the Mezuzah in Jewish homes. Parents and children enjoy a special Mezuzah Workshop Day with Rabbi Alex during the year.

Tzedakah is collected each Sunday. Boys may bring a Kipah from home or wear one provided by the synagogue. Children should bring a kosher snack from home each week.

Mark Your Calendar NOW for this Year's Important First Grade Events:

Opening Day and Family Picnic – Sunday, September 10 - for Parents and Children
Sukkot Party and Open House – Sunday, October 8 – for Parents and Children
Simchat Torah Special – Thursday, October 12 – for Parents and Children
Young Family Shabbat – Saturday, November 18 and March 10 – for Parents and Children
First Grade Mezuzah Workshop – Sunday, December 3 – for Parents and Children
Grandparents' Havdalah – Saturday, December 9
All School Chanukah Program – Sunday, December 10 – for Parents and Children
Young Family Simchat Shabbat – January 12 -for Parents and Children
Young Family Havdalah Program – Saturday, February 10 –for Parents and Children

WHAT TO EXPECT IN SECOND GRADE – KITA BET - AT B'NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.....

Second Grade meets Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Room 102.

Second graders begin class with prayer and song, then enjoy discussion of the weekly Torah portion. Children are encouraged to demonstrate their knowledge of Genesis stories that they studied in First Grade while increasing their level of understanding and analytic skills. They move into the study of stories from the Book of Exodus coinciding with the Pesach season. Weekly art projects, classroom dramatics and role playing, and spirited games enhance their learning of Torah, Mitzvot and Holidays. There is a weekly music session where Second Graders review the songs they have learned and add new Jewish folk songs to their repertoire.

An important learning focus in Second Grade is Hebrew letter recognition. By the end of the year many Second Graders will be able to name and recognize all the letters in the Hebrew alphabet, paving the way for learning to read in Kita Gimmel next year. The children sing, play games and learn the letters through dance and motion so that they internalize the skills with joy and excitement.

Tzedakah is collected each Sunday. Boys may bring a Kipah from home or wear one provided by the synagogue. Children should bring a kosher snack from home each week.

Mark Your Calendar NOW for this Year's Important Second Grade Events:

Opening Day and Family Picnic – Sunday, September 10 - for Parents and Children

Sukkot Party and Open House – Sunday, October 8 – for Parents and Children

Simchat Torah Special – Thursday, October 12 – for Parents and Children

Young Family Shabbat – Saturday, November 18 and March 10 – for Parents and Children

Grandparents' Havdalah – Saturday, December 9

All School Chanukah Program – Sunday, December 10 – for Parents and Children

Young Family Simchat Shabbat – Friday, January 12 - for parents and Children

Young Family Havdalah Program – Saturday, February 10 – for Parents and Children

WHAT TO EXPECT IN KITA GIMMEL - THIRD GRADE - AT B'NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.....

Kita Gimmel meets Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Tuesday or Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The Gimmel year focuses intensely on mastering Hebrew decoding skills. Children complete the Hebrew primer and learn beginning Hebrew classroom vocabulary. They learn prayers largely by rote but begin by the middle and end of the year to read some prayer content. Holidays, Israel and the Torah Portion of the Week are blended into the curriculum; the classes merge and teachers team teach frequently, creating a warm community of Third Grade learners. There is a spirited weekly music session

where Third Graders review the songs they have learned and add new Jewish folk songs to their repertoire.

Tzedakah is collected each Sunday. Boys may bring a Kipah from home or wear one provided by the synagogue. Children should bring a kosher snack from home each school day.

Important this year is attendance at 2 Friday night **Simchat Shabbat Services** and 2 Saturday morning **Ruach Shabbat Services**. These Shabbat experiences extend the curriculum from teaching about Shabbat to experiencing it within our B'nai Tikvah community. Children learn prayers in class that they will be leading during the services. The dates listed below are important to mark and parents should plan to attend Simchat Shabbat and bring children for Ruach Shabbat.

Mark Your Calendar NOW for this Year's Important Kita Gimmel Events:

Opening Day and Family Picnic – Sunday, September 10 - for Parents and Children

Sukkot Party and Open House – Sunday, October 8 – for Parents and Children

Simchat Torah Special – Thursday, October 12 – for Parents and Children

Third Grade Ruach Shabbat – Saturday, October 21 and December 2 – for Children; Parents welcome

Grandparents' Havdalah – Saturday, December 9

All School Chanukah Program – Sunday, December 10 – for Parents and Children

Third Grade Simchat Shabbat -Friday, January 12 and March 9 – For Parents and Children

Gimmel Consecration Ceremony – Friday, February 23 – Milestone Event; Families and friends invited

WHAT TO EXPECT IN KITA DALED - FOURTH GRADE – AND KITA HEY – FIFTH GRADE - AT B'NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.....

Kita Daled meets Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Kita Hey meets Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

A major focus of the Daled and Hey years is Prayer and Hebrew reading fluency. The students gain proficiency in the Shacharit prayers, the Shabbat morning service, and Shabbat and daily prayers and blessings. Kita Daled begins studying Prophets and Writings and Kita Hey studies Genesis and Exodus from a historical perspective. An in-depth study of Israel begins in Kita Daled and carries into Kita Hey. Sunday mornings, Daled and Hey students enjoy a spirited music class where they review songs they have learned and add to their repertoire of favorite Jewish camp songs and music.

Important during the Daled and Hey years is attendance at 2 Friday night **Simchat Shabbat Services** and 2 Saturday morning **Ruach Shabbat Services**. These Shabbat experiences extend the curriculum from teaching *about* Shabbat to *experiencing it* within our B'nai Tikvah community and participating and leading the prayers they are learning in class. The dates listed below are important to mark; parents should plan to attend Simchat Shabbat and bring children for Ruach Shabbat.

Mark Your Calendar NOW for this Year's Important Kita Gimmel Events:

Opening Day and Family Picnic – Sunday, September 10 - for Parents and Children

Sukkot Party and Open House – Sunday, October 8 – for Parents and Children

Simchat Torah Special – Thursday, October 12 – for Parents and Children

All School Chanukah Program – Sunday, December 10 – for Parents and Children

Daled Class Ruach Shabbat Dates: Saturday, October 28 and February 3

Daled Class Simchat Shabbat Dates: Friday, December 8 and April 13

Hey Class Ruach Shabbat Dates: Saturday, January 13 and March 3

Hey Class Simchat Shabbat Dates: November 10 and February 9

WHAT TO EXPECT IN KITA VAV- SIXTH GRADE - AT B'NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.....

Kita Vav meets Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. throughout the school year; first day of class is Wednesday, September 13. Kita Vav also will meet on Sunday mornings in September and October. Vav Shabbat Saturday morning classes begin in November. Several times during the year Friday evening **Simchat Shabbat services** substitute for the Saturday morning sessions. A calendar of the year's schedule follows:

Sunday Sessions – September 17 and 24; October 8, 15, 22 and 29 – 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

At least one parent should attend these sessions with their children; they include B'nai Mitzvah content that is important for families to learn and experience together. Classes are taught by Rabbi Alex and Carly Valfer.

Saturday Vav Shabbat Sessions – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

November 4, 11, 18

December 2

January 6, 13, 20, 27

February 3, 17, 24

March 3, 17

April 21, 28

May 5

Vav Shabbat includes Parsha discussions, values clarification sessions, games and review of basic Jewish concepts, and most importantly, a student run Shabbat service where children gain fluency leading and participating in the prayers they have learned in religious school throughout the years. Children will have the opportunity occasionally of observing B'nai Mitzvah in the Main Sanctuary to help them understand the ceremony and service they will be conducting at their Simcha. Class ends with students joining the Main Congregation for concluding prayers. They then join in a Kiddush lunch with the

congregation. Pick up time is noon; we hope parents will be attending the Shabbat morning service; parents are encouraged at any time to join their children for Vav Shabbat sessions. Vav Shabbat is led by Esther Weiss and Cary Valfer.

Friday Evening Simchat Shabbat Services: December 8; February 9; March 9; April 13

Vav students will be preparing to lead parts of the Simchat Shabbat service and parents and children are required to attend. These services are musical, enjoyable and culminate in a delicious Oneg Shabbat everyone will enjoy.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 7TH GRADE – KITA ZAYIN – AT B’NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL....

Kita Zayin meets on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and Wednesdays from 6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sunday morning classes vary in subject matter; classes are taught by Rabbi Alex, Carly Valfer, and guest speakers who present timely content on Jewish issues such as medical ethics, treating others with kindness, lay leadership, Holocaust and Israel. Field trips and opportunities for Tikkun Olam are part of the Sunday morning program. Parents are asked to participate with their seventh grader on Sunday mornings. Wednesday classes are taught by Matt Rissien, new to B’nai Tikvah this year, but very familiar with pre-teen and teen Jewish education. Matt will present monthly topics for discussion including Being Jewish in a Non-Jewish World, Why Be Good, Jewish Women, and many more. A complete calendar of the year’s classes and topics will be presented during the first weeks of class.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 8TH GRADE -ETZ CHAIM – AT B’NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL....

Eighth graders meet weekly on Wednesday evenings from 6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Social Hall for a discussion of Jewish Hot Topics with their teacher Lawrence Levine. Lawrence taught Hot Topics last year; he is a master teacher who encourages students to express themselves on a variety of levels. He presents challenging Jewish dilemmas and helps 8th graders with important values clarification which will serve them in good stead as they enter their high school years.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 9TH GRADE- ETZ CHAIM AT B’NAI TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL....

Ninth Grade meets weekly on Wednesday evenings from 6:15p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The class alternates weekly between Israel study with Ariana Hershon and Hot Topics (2) with Lawrence Levine. Teachers will present engaging and relevant content that will stimulate and interest 9th grade teens. Ninth Graders will combine with 8th grade students for Lawrence’s Hot Topics class every other week.

Mark Your Calendars Now for this Year’s Important Events:

First Day of 7th Grade – Kita Zayin – Sunday, September 17 -10 a.m.

Sukkot Party – October 8

First Day of 8th Grade and 9th Grade - Wednesday, October 18 – 6:15 p.m.

All School Chanukah Program – Sunday, December 10

Purim Carnival – Sunday, March 4

Madrichim Program

All 8th-12th graders have the opportunity to be *madrichim* (*teacher's assistant*) in our religious school on Sundays for Kindergarten through 5th grade from 9:00 am- 12:00 pm, Tuesday and/or Wednesday afternoons from 4:30-6:30 pm for 3rd-5th grade. Salaries range from \$5-\$7 per hour, depending on grade level. Those students who are in 8th grade will serve as interns during the fall semester and will begin being paid as of January 2018.

What are madrichim? They are our “teacher’s assistants”. We offer a training program to prepare our madrichim to be leaders. Our program provides the madrichim with training and experience that often leads to rewarding part time work after they leave B’nai Tikvah. Participation in this program gives you an opportunity to serve your school community. One of our goals is for our madrichim to get the chance to grow as leaders of the B’nai Tikvah community.

Madrichim training days will be: Tuesday September 5th and Wednesday September 6th from 4:30-6:30. It is imperative that our madrichim attend these training sessions. Madrichim will be paid to attend the training sessions.

Social Media Campaign 2017-2018

B’nai Tikvah Religious School Social Media Campaign!

Please follow the B’nai Tikvah Religious School on a variety of social media outlets. Posts will be made regularly by Carly, Ariana and the school faculty. Please find the links below to our social media platforms, we look forward to you following us!

School Blog: Follow us on the Congregation B’nai Tikvah School Blog:
congregationbnaitikvahreligiousschool.wordpress.com

Facebook: Follow us on the Congregation B’nai Tikvah Facebook page and please join our Congregation B’nai Tikvah Religious School Group

Instagram: Find us at [congregation_bnaitikvahschool](https://www.instagram.com/congregation_bnaitikvahschool)

Twitter: Find us @CongregationBTS

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.

Tzedakah and Acts of Loving Kindness

One of our objectives is to have our students feel and act upon their responsibility to the larger 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 your time, is encouraged in our program through many special projects. Additionally, if you would like to make a donation to the school, please put the funds in the School Enrichment Fund. This would allow us to do special programs and other different and special events for the school.

Youth Groups

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

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

Please encourage your students to participate. If you have any questions please reach out to Ariana, ahershon@bnaitikvah.net

School Guidelines

Attendance

The nature of Jewish education requires group interactions, in which students learn to become part of the community. 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 Carly Valfer and special arrangements will be made to help your child keep up with class. Additionally, if your student is ill please call the school office at 847-945-0470 to let us know your student will be absent.

Behavior and 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.

Cell Phones and other devices

The time we spend together at religious school should be meaningful and community oriented. Leave objects that could disrupt learning at home. If you bring a cell phone, smart watch or another electronic device to school, that device must be turned off during school hours unless the teacher tells you otherwise. You may use the office phone if needed. If a cell phone or smart watch is used for any reasons, including text messaging or making phone calls during class, the phone will be confiscated by the teacher and held until the school day is over. Other devices such as Game Boys, tablets, ipads, laptops, etc., also can be disruptive to learning and please refrain from bringing them to religious school. We are not responsible for your device if it is broken or lost.

Communication

Both parents and teachers share the significant responsibility of teaching children. Our educational program relies on your commitment to help make our programming strong and successful. At The Religious School we encourage parental participation in a variety of school events: family programs, class Shabbat Services, holiday celebrations, field trips, classroom visits, etc.

The school will send out regular announcements via email on school happenings, as well as regular updates from your child's teacher. These updates will also be posted on the Congregation Religious School Blog (see social media section) as well as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Please follow us on these outlets so you can be up to date on what is going on in religious school.

It is also important that you communicate regularly with your child. Asking questions such as: "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 posting regularly on social media and the school blog to let you know what is happening.

It is important to us that we communicate regularly about your student: if you have any questions or concerns please contact Carly Valfer at any time.

Creating an Environment of Learning and Sacred Community

Every student has the right to participate in and contribute to class discussions. However, he/she must also give the same right to fellow students and teachers. Every student is a part of our sacred community and helps to build those relationships by being here. At The Religious School we emphasize the following:

- Mutual respect and consideration
- Cooperative learning
- Respectful expression of disagreement
- Respect for individual differences
- Social integration through classroom dynamics and social functions
- Respect for B'nai Tikvah as a place of worship and the building must be treated as such.

Dismissal Times

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.

Carpool

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 times. The speed limit in the parking lot is 5 MPH. Should you need to come into the building at dismissal, please park your car in our lot.

Inclement Weather/ School Closings

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. You can also check our Facebook page for updates on school closings. The decision to close school due to inclement weather will be made based on our teachers’ abilities to get to school.

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 Education Director 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).

If your child has a serious allergy, please confirm you included the description in your digital registration. Also please be sure to speak to Carly Valfer about your child's allergies.

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. However, practicing Hebrew at home is an important way to help students progress their reading skills. We ask that if homework is sent home that students do their best to practice a few minutes each day.

Kippot

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

Parent Involvement

The partnership between home and school is a crucial one. You are your child's first Jewish educator. We thank you for trusting us to be your partner. At The Religious School, we will continually work to provide your student with the best Jewish Education possible. We want to keep the lines of communication open and available between your home and school. It is our hope that you will never hesitate to contact us for questions, updates, or concerns. Are we doing something especially well? Please don't hesitate to share that with us either.

One of the ways that you can share your thoughts with us would be to attend the School Committee Meetings. These meetings are an important opportunity to sit together as parents with the school committee chairs, Robyn Schwartz and Bonnie Block, the Vice President of Education and Youth, Suzi Siegel and the Education Director, Carly Valfer. We encourage you to come to as many of the meetings as possible and to be an active player in your child's Jewish education here at B'nai Tikvah. We would love to see you there! Please find below the dates for the School Committee meetings. They are also on the synagogue calendar.

School Committee Meeting Dates 2017-2018 School Year
All meetings will begin at 8 pm

Tuesday August 22nd
Tuesday September 19th
Tuesday October 17th
Tuesday November 14th
Tuesday December 5th
Tuesday January 9th
Tuesday February 20th
Tuesday March 20th
Tuesday April 17th
Tuesday May 15th
Tuesday June 19th

Progress Reports and Parent/ Teacher Conferences

Progress reports will be sent out in January and in May. The purpose of these reports is to inform parents of their children's strengths and challenges throughout the year. Additionally, 3rd-7th grade parents will be encourage to attend **Parent/Teacher Conferences on January 16th and 17th**. School will not be in session during the two conference days. There will also be regular school updates on the school blog and on social media which will be most informative.

Snacks

Students may bring a kosher, nut free snack to religious school. Students will be allowed to eat their snack during break time. We strongly recommend that students have breakfast before coming to religious school on Sunday and try to eat a snack before coming to school during the week. **Snacks are not being sold at B'nai Tikvah during the 2017-2018 school year.**

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.

School 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.

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.