

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

Parent Handbook
5780/2019-2020



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, 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 we 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 strive to enable 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 Education Director, Carly Valfer, Rabbi Alex, Hazzan Hery, Felicia Lev, and Ariana Hershon, our Director of Youth and Family Engagement, 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 strive 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 offering experiential mediums that provide academic enrichment (art, music, library), field trips, speakers, and community programming will help to contribute to our comprehensive program.. Hebrew will be taught through Conversational Hebrew as well as for reading and *T'fillah* (prayer) fluency to enable our students to understand the prayers and be comfortable participating in synagogue services here 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 8th, 2019, from 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Parents and families are encouraged to attend. We look forward to being together!

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Family Programs● Jr Congregation● Simchat Shabbat	
School Calendar	7
Curriculum Information by Grade	8
Madrichim Program	14
Follow Us!	14
Bar and Bat Mitzvah Training	15
Tzedakah and Acts of Loving Kindness	15
Youth Groups	15
School Guidelines For All Students	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Attendance● Behavior and academic problems● Communication● Creating an Environment of Learning and Sacred Community● Dismissal Times and Procedures● Carpool● Late Drop off/ Early Pick Up Procedures-● 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 understanding 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.

Whole Person Learning will be our approach in order to help our students grow and learn to be knowledgeable, spiritual and engaged young Jews.

Our Whole Person Learning approach seeks to engage students by:

- Developing a spirit of Klal Yisrael
- Developing a sense of belonging as part of a caring and engaged member of the Jewish Community
- Creating a core sense of beliefs and values so that our students will be able to articulate and explore their own ideas and perspectives about Judaism
- Creating a meaningful and relevant Jewish experience in which our students can actively participate in
- Developing essential knowledge and skills so that they can participate in Judaism as they grow and become adults
- Cultivating a sense of joy and love for being Jewish

School Administration and Leadership Contact Information

Carly Valfer
Education Director
cvalfer@bnaitikvah.net

Ariana Hershon
Director of Youth and Family Engagement
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Laura Schaffer
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Andrea Berlow
Vice President of Education and Youth
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Bonnie Block
School Committee Chair
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School Hours

Day of the Week	Time	Grade
Sunday	9:00 am-11:00 am 9:00 am-10:00 am 9:00 am-12:00 pm	Pre-K Family Programming (assigned by grade) Kindergarten-7th Grade
Tuesday	4:30 pm-6:30 pm	3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th Grade
Tuesday	6:30 pm-8:00 pm	8th and 9th Grade
Wednesday	4:30-6:30 pm	3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th Grade

Special Programs

Family Education Programs

Students and their parents will come together several times during the year to learn as a family. Half of the sessions will be based on their grade level curriculum and the other half will be social action based. Dates for Family Education Programs are on the school calendar and the google calendar. Parents will also receive a reminder ahead of time.

Junior Congregation

Students in Kindergarten through 6th grade will engage in the Shabbat Morning experience several times during the year from 10:30-12:00 pm. Students will be divided into appropriate age groupings and will create a Shabbat experience with their peers that is age and developmentally appropriate. This Saturday morning experience will provide an engaging and meaningful Shabbat experience for our students.

Simchat Shabbat

Simchat Shabbat is a musical welcoming of the Sabbath, one Friday a month, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Friday night. In class, students prepare to lead selected prayers during Shabbat, 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, a color coded calendar will be sent to all parents before the school year begins. Regular communication will be sent out about important dates and events. You can also sync the synagogue calendar to your device from our [website](#).

Curriculum Information by Grade 5780/2019-2020

Pre- K- Sunday, 9:00 am- 11:00 am

Students in Pre- K will engage in an exploration of Jewish learning. This interactive class will meet on Sunday mornings. Children will be introduced to rituals, symbols, Jewish holidays, Hebrew language, basic blessings and Mitzvot through songs, movement, stories, art, music, dramatic play and cooking.

All other grades- K-7 - Sunday 9:00 am-12:00 pm

Kindergarten

Students in kindergarten will continue their introduction to the Jewish holidays, Shabbat, Israel, Mitzvot, Tefillot, Torah stories and Hebrew language. Kindergarten will provide a strong sense of community and reinforcement of basic Jewish concepts through singing, movement, stories, art, music, drama and cooking. Students will begin to acquire basic Hebrew vocabulary, sing Hebrew songs and learn oral Hebrew expressions through storytelling and dramatic play.

1st Grade

Students in 1st grade will deepen their knowledge of the Jewish home, synagogue, and the holidays through storytelling, exploration of Jewish symbols, music and art projects. Students will begin to recognize the Hebrew letters. Students will engage in the weekly Torah portion through dramatic play. They will explore the synagogue based holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Purim and Shavuot as well as the experience of these holidays in their Jewish home. Students will engage in doing Mitzvot as a class throughout the year. Students will also continue their exploration of Tefillot.

2nd Grade

Students in 2nd grade will begin learning about Israel as the Jewish Homeland. They will also explore our responsibility to do G'milut Chasadim (acts of loving kindness). A class Mitzvah project will deepen this experience. Students will also continue to work on their acquisition of Hebrew language and literacy skills. Students will continue to identify letters and sounds, names of letters, vowels and will continue to learn to write their Hebrew letters. Students will continue to work on symbols, food, blessing and songs for each holiday in Hebrew. Students will begin to learn selected prayers of the Kabbalat Shabbat service. Students will study Parshat Hashavua. Students will focus on home based holidays during second grade including Shabbat, Chanukah, and Pesach. While studying these holidays students will begin to examine the Jewish calendar. Music, art, dramatic play, cooking and storytelling continue to add depth to the 2nd grade experience.

Weekday sessions for 3rd-7th grade will either Tuesday or Wednesday from 4:30-6:30.

3rd Grade

During the 3rd grade year students will focus on menschliskit and Middot. Students will study biblical heroes and what they can teach us about being a good person. They will explore the meaning of their Hebrew and English names as part of learning what it means to be a mensch. Their Torah component will be the Book of Bereshit. They will begin Hebrew reading, writing Hebrew script, as well as continue their Hebrew listening and speaking skills. Students will also learn a variety of blessings: which includes kiddush, the four questions, the Chanukah blessings, and Shehecheyanu. Ivrit b'Ivrit will begin.

4th Grade- Tuesday only for 2019-2020 school year

Students in 4th grade will continue to focus on what it means to be a mensch by branching out into the greater community including: home, school, clubs, etc. Students will participate in a social action project. They will return to Israel as the Jewish homeland and will learn what it means to live in Israel by studying how their peers in Israel live. Students will focus on Shemot as their Torah study for the year. They will also study key Shabbat Shacharit Tefillot: Barchu, Shema, Vahavta and Mi Chamocha, as well as Havdallah and will search for lessons and repeated themes in the words of the prayers they read. Students will also begin to explore their relationship with God as part of building their Jewish identity. Music, art, dramatic play, storytelling and cooking will continue to deepen their understanding. Ivrit B'Ivrit will continue.

5th Grade

Students in 5th grade will explore what it means to live a Jewish life by studying Jewish life cycle rituals including: naming ceremonies, Bar/bat Mitzvah and marriage. Students will study Kashrut and how that relates to living Jewishly. Students will engage in a survey of Vayikra through Devarim as their Torah Study. They will use Pirkei Avot and The Prophets as a base of what it means to live with Jewish values. Students will continue to learn Shabbat Morning Tefillah with a focus on: Baruch Sheamar, Ashrei, the Amidah and the Kaddish Shalem.

Students will continue with Ivrit B'Ivrit. Music, drama and art will deepen and enrich their experience.

6th Grade

Students in 6th grade will spend the year engaging in B'nai Mitzvah preparation and what it means to become a Jewish adult and the responsibilities that they will take on. Students will focus on Mincha, Maariv, the Torah Blessings and Haftorah Blessings as their study of Tefillah. Students will explore the structure and content of their Torah and Haftorah portions. Students will explore Torah with commentary of key Torah stories from Bereshit through Devarim. Students will study a survey of Jewish history post Biblical history to the Expulsion of Jews from Spain. Ivrit B'Ivrit will continue.

During 6th grade, families will come together once a month on Sunday morning for the Family Education Program. They will study the process of becoming B'nai Mitzvah as a family and will explore Jewish texts, what it means to participate in social action and social justice, and the overall significance of becoming B'nai Mitzvah.

7th Grade

Students in 7th grade will focus on their responsibilities, rights and obligations in becoming a Jewish adult. Students will address issues regarding: what does it mean to be good, becoming a powerful leader, being a hero, etc. Students will study different thinkers, Jewish personalities, contemporary Jewish thinkers, rabbis and teachers to help them address these value oriented issues. Topics will change from month to month. Students will explore Torah with commentary of key Torah stories from Bereshit through Devarim. Students will continue their study of a survey of Jewish history from the Expulsion of Jews from Spain to the creation of the State of Israel. Students will explore their personal Jewish identity. Students will also begin to explore what it means to be a Jewish teen in today's world. Ivrit B'Ivrit will continue.

8th and 9th Grade will take place on Tuesdays from 6:30-8:00 pm

8th Grade

Students in 8th grade will focus on "Hot Topics" regarding being a Jewish teen in today's world. Students will explore their place as leaders in their different communities. Students will also spend time being mentored as they begin their work as Madrichim (teachers aides and leaders). Students will continue their study of Jewish history from the creation of the State of Israel to present day. Students will also spend several sessions preparing for their Ta'am Yisrael Trip.

9th Grade

Students in 9th grade will focus on their relationship with Israel. Students will explore what it means to be a Jew living in America as opposed to their Jewish peers living in Israel. Students will have the opportunity to study Midrash as their text study. Students will also continue their mentoring program as Madrichim and what it means to be a role model in our community. Students in 9th grade will engage in a several week curriculum around the Holocaust.

Madrichim Program

All 8th-12th grade students have the opportunity to be *madrichim* (*teacher's assistant*) in our religious school. Madrichim can work on Sundays for Kindergarten through 6th grade from 9:00 am- 12:00 pm and for 3rd-6th Grade on Tuesday and or Wednesday afternoons from 4:30-6:30 pm. 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 they will begin being paid as of January 2019.

What are madrichim? They are our “teachers 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 and to get the chance to grow as leaders in the B’nai Tikvah community.

Madrichim training days will be: Tuesday August 27th and Wednesday, August 28th from 4:30-6:30. It is imperative that our madrichim attend these training sessions. Madrichim will be paid to attend the training sessions.

Follow Us!

Please follow the B’nai Tikvah Religious School on a variety of social media outlets. Posts will be made regularly by Carly, Matt 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: Congregation B’nai Tikvah Facebook page and please remember to join our Congregation B’nai Tikvah Religious School Group

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

Twitter: [@CongregationBTS](https://twitter.com/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 a responsibility to the larger community. Tzedakah in the form of small change is collected in class daily. At the end of the year, 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 consider directing the funds to the School Enrichment Fund. The School Enrichment Fund enables us to do special programs and events.

Youth Groups and Family Programs

B'nai Tikvah is committed to quality youth programming by blending the formal with the informal in Jewish Education. Students in all grades Pre-K through 12th grade will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of youth programs. In addition to our youth programming, families will have an opportunity to come together to enjoy social activities several times throughout the year.

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 work. Additionally, if your child is ill, please call the school office at 847-945-0470 to let us know your child will be absent.

Behavior and academic difficulties

It is important that the time our students spend in the Religious School be both positive and productive. If your child is having difficulties, either academic or behavioral, the teacher will notify you directly by telephone or in writing. Should the problem continue, a conference will be arranged. If there are issues of disruptive behaviors, it is our school's policy that we will not allow a child to remain in the classroom. Should we need to call you to pick up your child early (because of class disruption) we appreciate your cooperation in arriving promptly, and working together to 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 at home that could disrupt learning. If your child bring a cell phone, smart watch or other electronic devices to school, that device must be turned off during school hours unless the teacher tells him/her otherwise. The child may use the office phone if needed. If a cell phone or smart watch is used for any reason, 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, are also disruptive to learning and must be turned off. The Religious School is not responsible for your broken or lost items.

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.

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 child. 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
- Kindness for one another
- 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, in particular, everyone is anxious to get home. However, we must insist that you not send other students 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.

Late Drop Off and Early Pick Up

We recognize that there may be times when students are dropped off late or need to be picked up early. For the safety of our students, parents or guardians who drop off late or pick up early will need to park their cars in our lot and bring the student(s) into the office. If you are dropping off late, or picking up early, you will need to sign your child in/out. Students will NOT be sent outside. We ask that you do NOT text or call your student to come outside. The main office will call up to the child's classroom and they will come downstairs to meet their parent(s) or guardian in the main office.

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, as we may not be there. Instead, 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 the classroom. **We are a peanut and tree nut free school.**

We appreciate your understanding and compliance with these critically important guidelines.

Peanuts and tree nuts are NOT allowed in the building. Please do NOT send any foods to school that contain peanuts or tree nuts including, but not limited to: peanuts, tree nuts, peanut or any kind of nut butter, baked goods containing peanuts or tree nuts, and foods containing nut sauces or flavoring. 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 alert 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 the school. It is our hope that you will never hesitate to contact us with questions, for updates, or concerns. Are we doing something especially well? Please let us know this, too!

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, Laura Schaffer and Bonnie Block, the Vice President of Education and Youth, Andrea Berlow 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. Please find below the dates for the School Committee meetings. They are also on the synagogue calendar. We hope to see you there!

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 child(s) strengths and/or challenges throughout the year. Additionally, 3rd-7th grade parents will be encouraged to attend **Parent/Teacher Conferences on January 7th and 8th**. School will not be in session during the two conference days. There also will be regular and informative school updates on the school blog and on social media.

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.

Field Trips

Some of our classes will be taking field trips to places relevant to class study. You will be notified in advance 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, notebooks, pen/pencil, and kippah for each class.

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.