



Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim

Reform Jewish Congregation of Charleston

Religious School Handbook
2010 - 2011
5771



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Elul 5770
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Dear Religious School Families,

It is a pleasure to welcome you and your children to the Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Religious School. The faculty and I are looking forward to an exciting year.

The success of a religious school depends on its faculty, and I am very pleased to report that our faculty this year is nothing short of outstanding. Many of our teachers from previous years are returning, and they are not only experienced, but enthusiastic and dedicated. We are happy to welcome several new faculty members, who are bringing a great deal of talent and energy to our school. This includes Rabbi Stephanie Alexander, who will teach our confirmation class on Wednesday evenings. You can expect to see Rabbi Alexander regularly on Sunday mornings, in our classrooms and offering special opportunities for parents, too, as she shares her passion for Jewish education with us. Additionally, we are fortunate to have an extremely hardworking and involved Religious School committee, chaired by Carrie Langsam. I am looking forward to working with our Rabbi, our teachers, our Religious School committee members and you to provide an outstanding Jewish education for our students.

This manual will give you information regarding our school and its policies. Some of our policies have been updated since last year, so please read through the Handbook and go over it with your child, and keep it handy for reference throughout the school year. As the Handbook is now online, teacher contact information is not included and is available separately. This year's calendar is available separately (online as well) for ease of use.

As we approach the High Holy Days and a new Jewish year, the faculty and I look forward to sharing a positive and exciting year of learning with your child. Thank you for inviting us to participate in your child's Jewish education.

Shalom,

Amy Horner

Amy I. W. Horner, M.A.
Temple Educator

General Information

School Schedule

Our faculty plans so many exciting activities that our morning is busy from beginning to end! Please help your child to arrive at school on time so that he or she does not miss anything.

Hebrew program classes precede Religious School classes on Sunday, and meet from 9:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. Religious School classes begin promptly at 10:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.

We have a music specialist in the school full-time, who works with all classes each week. This year, based on the success of our periodic cooking sessions, we are introducing a regular cooking class. Art projects also figure prominently in our program.

Attendance

Your child's Jewish education is important to us. Consistent attendance is vital to your child's learning. Students are expected to attend a minimum of 80% of the time (24 classes) in the Religious School. Students enrolled in the Hebrew program are required to attend 24 Hebrew classes; they will be given make-up work if a class is missed so that they do not fall behind. Students in the Hebrew program are also expected to attend a minimum of 10 Shabbat or holiday services (at any synagogue) during the course of the school year. Bar/bat mitzvah candidates are required to attend services more frequently in the year prior to their ceremony, as described in the B'nei Mitzvah Handbook.

Transportation

The safety of our students is our primary concern during arrival and dismissal. In addition to our own faculty, we will have police officers present on Sunday mornings. To avoid traffic congestion, please carefully follow their directions during arrival and dismissal. Additionally, please be aware that our procedures are subject to change to ensure the safety of our students and faculty.

Arrival: Students are to be dropped off at the 86 Hasell Street driveway, and enter the building near the kitchen. This allows them to go up the stairway in the annex and access our classrooms easily. Students in grades K-2 should proceed directly to the sanctuary for morning assembly, and parents are invited to accompany their children for this approximately 30 minute program. Students in grades 3-9 should go directly to their classrooms.

Dismissal: Dismissal begins at 12:30 p.m. Students remain in their classrooms until their names are called, indicating that their parent/guardian or carpool has arrived to pick them up.

Students leaving by car exit through the rear door near the library and Freudenberg board room. Parents are asked to pull up along Wentworth Street in order to meet their children. The faculty member on duty will give the names of your children to the faculty inside the building via radio, and your children will exit the building to meet you. Please follow the directions of the police officer who will be directing traffic and assisting our students on Wentworth Street.

If you prefer to park your car and meet your child in the building, please come in through the main lobby and cross the social hall to the sign-out table at the base of the annex stairs, near the kitchen. Please follow the directions of the faculty member at the sign-out table.

Students will be called from their classrooms only when their parent or carpool arrives. Please do not contact your child by cell phone to ask him or her to leave the classroom to meet you.

If you, the parent or guardian, will not be picking up your child yourself, please notify us in writing. This can be a one-time event, perhaps if your child leaves with a friend's family, or you may wish to give permission for another person, perhaps a grandparent, to pick your child up anytime during the year.

If you need to pick up your child early, please send a note to your child's teacher, if possible, and come into the school to meet your child. Even with a note, we cannot allow your child to leave the building to wait for you outside.

If you are interested in setting up a carpool and would like your name, telephone number, and subdivision listed in a flyer to be distributed to Religious School families, please give that information to your child's teacher.

Dismissal is a very busy time. Please keep in mind that our faculty must balance our desire for a prompt dismissal with our need to ensure the safety of every one of our students. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Safety and Security

While we have no reason to be concerned about the safety of those at KKBE in particular, unfortunately, our modern world demands that we exercise caution. As noted above, you will see police officers at Religious School routinely. Over the course of this school year, you will also note security procedures designed to ensure the safety of our students, our faculty, and others visiting our building. These will include routine fire drills that include evacuation of the building.

Please be assured that we will do everything possible to minimize inconvenience while maximizing safety.

Discipline

Our intent is for Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Religious School to be a place where all students and faculty are safe, both physically and psychologically. We will not tolerate cruelty.

A student who is physically or emotionally cruel, or who is threatening another student or faculty member, will be removed from the classroom at once. Parents will be notified immediately and asked to meet with the teacher, educator, and/or rabbi.

If a student's behavior is disrupting the classroom, the teacher and/or educator will discuss this with the student as appropriate. If the behavior continues or is severe, parents will be notified and may be asked to meet with the teacher and/or educator.

Medical Emergencies

In the event a student feels sick during class, we will contact his or her parent and decide if the child can remain until the end of class or needs to leave school early. Please be aware that we do not keep medications on hand and do not dispense medication to students unless specific arrangements have been made in advance.

In the event the child is to be picked up early, the parent must come into the building to meet him or her and notify the teacher or the educator that the child is leaving.

If there is an emergency situation, first aid will be administered and, if necessary, the child will be taken to the nearest medical facility. Every effort will be made to contact a parent before any further action is taken. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person and/or physician listed on your child's registration form will be contacted.

Allergies

A number of our students have severe food allergies. Therefore, we do not serve nut products at school. If your child has food allergies, please notify his or her teacher and the Temple Educator. If your child has a treatment plan in case of an allergic reaction, please share that with us. KKBE is not a nut-free building, and we will work with you to ensure your child's safety. Please do not send any snacks with your child without discussing it with the teacher in advance, and if your child eats in the car before school, please have him or her wipe hands with a baby wipe or similar wipe before entering the building.

Dress code

Students are asked to dress as comfortably but appropriately for class on Sunday as they do for school during the week. In particular, students are not permitted to wear T-shirts with inappropriate slogans on them, short shorts, skirts with hems shorter than fingertip-length when the student stands with arms at sides, or bare midriff outfits. Since we use the Sanctuary each week, we advise against tank tops and spaghetti straps unless a wrap is brought to school, too.

For service attendance, students are asked to dress as they would when attending any other religious service. In addition to the restrictions noted above, we ask that students not wear casual jeans or sneakers to services. "Dressing up" for services sets a special mood that adds to the worship experience. Please help your child make appropriate clothing choices.

Electronics

All mobile phones, music players, video games, and other electronic devices must be turned off and put away during Hebrew and Religious School classes and dismissal. Students using electronic devices during those times will have them confiscated by a Religious School staff member for the duration of the school day.

Some students report that their parents will call or send a text message during the morning. Please do not ask your child to leave a phone on to receive a message, as that is distracting and disruptive to learning. You may call the Temple Educator during the morning if you need to get a message to your child (723-1090 x103; mobile phone 324-7808.)

Field Trip Policy

From time to time students in our Religious School will have the opportunity to go on field trips off-campus. Parents will be notified of these trips and will be sent trip information and a permission slip for their signature, electronically and/or by hard copy, no later than the Monday prior to the trip.

For classes that go off-site regularly, such as the ninth grade class, a general permission slip requiring parent signature will be given to parents at the start of the school year and will cover routine trips (i.e., within walking distance) for the entire year. Trips involving transportation by means other than the student's own parent or his/her designee will require a separate permission slip. Parents will be notified of any trips other than routine visits to local coffee/breakfast establishments, such as trips to local houses of worship, electronically, by phone or by hard copy, no later than the Monday prior to the trip.

Tzedakah

We encourage students to give tzedakah every Sunday. We do not encourage large sums, but rather a small amount on a regular basis. The students determine which charitable organization will receive the tzedakah funds.

Snacks and Beverages

Students are not permitted to bring snacks, breakfast foods, coffee drinks or other beverages to class. In addition to potential allergy problems for some of our students, eating and drinking during study time is distracting to the entire class. Students will be required to discard snacks and beverages before class begins.

Our Religious School classes will have challah each week. No other snacks, especially snacks that may contain nuts, should be sent to school without prior approval of the teacher or educator, as noted in the earlier section regarding allergies.

Visitors

Parents or guardians are welcome to visit their child's class at anytime. Advance notice is appreciated, but not required.

Students' friends may attend class only with advance notice and teacher approval. You or the friend's parent must be reachable that morning in case of emergency. Please keep in mind that a friend who is not interested in learning the topics discussed may not enjoy your child's class.

Communication

You will receive regular written notices and e-mail reminders from the school and from your children's teachers. Please keep us informed of your correct e-mail address so that you do not miss these messages. Be sure to check your child's book bag each Sunday for written materials.

Progress reports are sent home twice per year for Religious School classes, and three times per year for Hebrew classes. If you have questions about your child's progress, please contact his or her teacher.

If your child has special learning needs, please let the teacher know so that we can work with you and your child to provide the most appropriate environment possible. The information you share with us about your child is extremely valuable in helping us teach him or her.

Inclement Weather Preparation

Although we have rarely had to cancel or close school due to inclement weather, given our location, we are aware that this is a possibility. Should we need to cancel or close the school, we will contact parents via e-mail and if possible, by phone. If the weather is threatening, please check your e-mail. You may also call the synagogue and check the Temple Educator's outgoing message to hear if school is closed. The telephone number is 723-1090, ext. 103.

Books and materials

Workbooks and materials are included in the supply/snack fee. If your child loses his or her book, you will be asked to purchase a replacement. If your child attends Hebrew classes and divides his or her week between households, you may wish to consider purchasing a second Hebrew textbook so that one is available in each home. Some books are kept at school and used from year to year, and we ask that students treat those books as respectfully as library books.

All students are required to have a book bag for Religious School. Each new student receives a KKBE tote bag. Students may use their own tote or backpack if they prefer; we ask that they select

a bag that can be reserved for Religious School use. Hebrew program students in particular will find this useful for keeping track of their textbooks, and all of our students will find it useful for transporting written materials from school. Please help your child to keep track of his or her bag and books. We have a limited number of KKBE tote bags available for purchase for \$10.00.

Homework

We know that our students have substantial homework loads during the week! Our Religious School homework assignments are modest.

Because of the nature of learning a language, Hebrew students will be asked to study during the week. In most cases, they will be asked to practice reading for 10-15 minutes several times during the week.

If you shop at Harris Teeter, please remember the religious school. Get a VIC (very important customer) card and ask that number 3351 be linked to it. Please re-link your card at the beginning of the school year, even if you have linked it in the past.

Curriculum

"Our mission is to serve the religious needs of families and individuals through programs of lifelong Jewish education (Torah), inclusive communal worship and ritual (Avodah), and the ongoing quest for greater justice, peace, and acts of loving kindness (G'milut Chasadim.)"

The Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Mission Statement

Our Religious School uses the CHAI curriculum, published by URJ Press. Using CHAI as our core allows our Religious School curriculum to echo and support the Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim mission as described in our mission statement. CHAI provides our students with opportunities to study Torah, participate in worship (Avodah), and perform acts of G'milut Chasadim. The kindergarten curriculum provides a joyful introduction to Judaism for our students, and is structured to lead into CHAI. The curricula for grades 8 and 9 are designed to follow CHAI smoothly and allow plenty of time for discussion of timely topics.

All grades participate in holiday celebrations, including review of holiday prayers and songs during weekly service and music sessions. All grades will participate in the collection of tzedakah, as noted earlier in this handbook, and will participate in the annual KKBE mitzvah day, a congregation-wide event, with relevant material discussed in class throughout the year.

| | Torah | Avodah | G'milut Chasadim | Hebrew |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| Kindergarten | Introduction (text, A Child's Garden of Torah); weekly service. | Songs, basic blessings (brachot) and home rituals (text, BJL Beginnings) | Incorporated in Torah lessons; key concepts introduced (text, BJL Beginnings) | Introduction to alef-bet (text, The Alef to Tav Activity Book) |
| Grade 1 | <p>The CHAI curriculum focuses on Enduring Understandings, the "big ideas" that are the concepts that serve as the foundation for lifelong Jewish learning and living. The enduring understandings (below) are presented throughout the curriculum in age-appropriate ways. The enduring understandings are quoted from the Union for Reform Judaism, www.urj.org.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Torah is an ongoing dialogue between the text and its students. -Torah is real in our daily lives; it is with us wherever we are. -Developing the skills to study Torah is essential to integrating Torah into our lives. -Avodah is the work we do to find sacred connections to God, community, and self. -Engaging in the work of avodah can bring order, beauty, meaning and insight to our lives. -We have a responsibility to perform acts of g'milut chasadim to make the world a better, holier place. <p>More detailed information about each level of CHAI is available from the Union for Reform Judaism website, www.urj.org, as well as from your child's teacher and the temple educator.</p> | | | Introduction to Hebrew letters and vocabulary (text, Now I Know My Alef-Bet) |
| Grade 2 | | | | Continued exposure to Hebrew letters and vocabulary (text, Marilyn Price & Friends Present the Alphabet from Alef to Tav) |
| Grade 3 | | | | Continued exposure to Hebrew letters and vocabulary (text, Journey through the Alef-Bet) |
| Grade 4 | | | | Students in grades 4-7 participate in weekly services and music. Most of our students also enroll in Hebrew classes during these grades. |
| Grade 5 | | | | |
| Grade 6 | | | | |
| Grade 7 | | | | |
| Grade 8 | Jewish history in pre-World War II and Holocaust era (texts include The Holocaust, the World and the Jews, 1933-1945) | Participation in weekly service, music, and holiday celebrations. Discussion of worship pre- and post-Holocaust. | Ethical and non-ethical behavior during the Holocaust era and in modern times. | Incorporated in Avodah and Torah study. |

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| Grade 9 | Overview of Jewish history: broad timeline. Introduction to Jewish life during the time of early Christianity. | Participation in weekly service, music, and holiday celebrations. Comparison of different Jewish practices, i.e., differences and similarities among Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform prayer and practice. | Discussions of ways young Reform Jews can practice Tikkun Olam – healing the world. | Incorporated in Avodah and Torah study. |
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Hebrew Program Curriculum

At the end of our Hebrew program, students should be able to participate in services fully and comfortably, and should be able to read any standard Hebrew printed material that includes vowels. Although the program is not solely a bar/bat mitzvah preparation program, students who complete our Hebrew program successfully are prepared to participate fully in the service marking their becoming a bar or bat mitzvah. Progress is evaluated during and at the end of each year to ensure that each student is ready to move up to the next level. Our goal is for each student to master the Hebrew material successfully and move up from year to year. Due to the nature of learning a language, however, it is important that a student not be moved up if he or she has not mastered the material from the previous year.

Our promotion policy is as follows: Students must complete each level's goals, specified on the next page, for promotion to the next level. Parents are urged to follow along with their child's work and to contact the teacher if they have questions or concerns.

| | Letter recognition | Oral/prayer reading | Vocabulary | Enrichment material |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Alef (text, <u>Ot la-Ba'ot</u>) | Identify letters by name and sound with 90% accuracy. Identify vowels by sound with 90% accuracy. Write letters and vowels with 90% accuracy. | Read all words on vocabulary list and in specified brachot; measured by ability to read oral final exam (textbook based) with 75% accuracy. Brachot to include: Candle bracha, Kiddush, Hamotzi Sh'ma (2 lines) | Able to translate vocabulary list; measured by ability to complete vocabulary portion of final exam (textbook based) with 75% accuracy. | Holiday brachot and songs; Chanukah brachot. |
| Bet (text, <u>Journeys Through the Siddur: Shabbat Morning</u>) | Identify prefixes, suffixes, root words. | Read prayers in textbook, including: Bar'chu Sh'ma V'ahavta Mi Chamocha; achieve a score of 75% or better on the oral portion of the final exam. | Able to translate textbook-based vocabulary list; total combined final exam score must be 75% or better. | Holiday brachot and songs; Ma Nishtana (four questions.) |
| Gimel (text, <u>Journeys Through the Siddur: Torah Service and Concluding Prayers</u>) | Review of prefixes, suffixes, root words. | Read prayers/blessings in textbook, including: Torah brachot Haftarah brachot Aleinu; achieve a score of 75% or better on the oral portion of the final exam. | Able to translate textbook-based vocabulary list; total combined final exam score must be 75% or better. | Holiday brachot and songs; bar/bat mitzvah Torah portion assigned upon completion of gimel requirements. |
| Dalet (text, current siddur; Torah portions in bar/bat mitzvah parsha booklets and in Torah; CD prepared by Shula Holtz.) | Assumes mastery. | Review of Shabbat morning service, including Torah and Haftarah brachot. Demonstrate mastery of Shabbat morning service by reading and/or chanting sections each week during class. Read and/or chant sections from Torah, to include students' own portions in preparation for bar/bat mitzvah ceremony | Able to compare different services and identify the themes of key prayers; conversational Hebrew included as time permits. | Conversational Hebrew as class time permits. |