

CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parents,

Thank you for the privilege of educating your child(ren) at Congregation Beth Tikvah. We hope that you will find the information included in our Religious School Handbook will be helpful to you.

Our Religious School is divided into three levels – primary (gan-mechinah bet), elementary (aleph-dalet) and high school (hey-het).

- The gan classes (kindergarten) meet on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
- The mechinah classes (first and second grade) meet on Wednesdays from 4:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.
- The elementary classes (third grade through sixth grade) meet on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. and on Wednesdays from 4:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
- The high school classes (seventh grade through tenth grade) meet on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. and on Thursday nights from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Please feel free to contact me in the School Office with any questions or concerns. I can be reached at (856) 983-8090 or office@btikvah.org

Sincerely,

Ann Nimberg
Principal

STUDENT REGISTRATION

A School Registration Form must be completed in its entirety every year for each student prior to the first day of school.

On the first day of school, each student must be escorted into the building. The parent(s) must update all contact information by that day.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

In order to ensure the safety of your child, the doors to the synagogue are locked on Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m. – 6:05 p.m. If you need to access the building between these times, please push the intercom button to the right of the front doors and the office staff will open the door.

Parents of mechinah and elementary grade students must come into the building at the end of school to pick up their children. On Sundays, parents of gan, mechinah and elementary students must come into the building to pick up their children.

Students not picked up on time are required to stay in the building with supervision until picked up. Please call the office as soon as you know that you may be arriving late to pick up your child(ren).

PARKING LOT PROCEDURES

Please enter the parking lot from the entrance, which is to your left when you face the building from the street, and pull into a marked parking space when picking up children. Do not pull up in front of the building and idle while waiting for children to exit the building.

ALTERNATE PICK UP

If someone other than you is picking up your child, her/his name and information must be on your child's Pick Up Permission Form. This form is included in the school packet mailed to each family at the beginning of the school year. Blank forms are available in the office as well. If the person(s) on your child's form is unable to pick up your child, you must call the school that day with the name of the person who will be picking up her/him.

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DISMISSAL

A parent of a student arriving late must sign in with the office before the student can go to class. High school students can sign themselves in.

An adult must come into the office and sign out any student who is leaving early. The sign-out sheet is directly under the window in the office. The adult receives an early dismissal pass that he/she presents to the teacher. The teacher cannot dismiss the child without a pass.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent, please call the school office (856) 983-8090 prior to the start of class. If you get the voice mail, leave a message. Please contact the school to find out what work your child missed.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones have proven to be disruptive in class. Cell phones cannot be on during class time.

BREAKS/SNACKS

All students have a scheduled 10-minute break. If you are sending snacks with your child, please make sure that all food products brought into the synagogue are kosher. Students can buy snacks and drinks at the snack cart. Snack is provided for the high school students on Sundays.

FIRE DRILLS

There are two fire drills scheduled per year. The first takes place in the fall and the second takes place in the spring.

PARENT VISITATION

Parents are always welcome and encouraged to visit their child's class. Please inform us ahead of time if you wish to visit the classroom. Any parent visiting a classroom is asked to sign in at the office prior to going to the class.

SNOW CLOSING

We announce the closing of school due to inclement weather as follows:

- KYW (school number is # 1305)
- Call the school (856) 983-8090. A message announces the closing.
- Check your email under the heading of Religious School Closings.

HEBREW SCHOOL TUTORS

The Religious School provides a Hebrew tutor on Sundays from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The role of the tutor is to:

- Work with students who have special learning needs. (Please submit your child's I.E.P. so that, whenever possible, we may be able to follow the plan already established.)
- Work with students who have started religious school late and need to catch up to their peers.
- Work with students who, due to illness, have missed school and require tutoring to catch up.
- Provide remedial instruction for those students who need tutoring to perform at grade level.

Please note: Tutoring does not replace home practice and class work. Tutoring acts as a supplement to these.

ART/MUSIC

Art and music are part of the curriculum in grades K-6.

FAMILY EDUCATION

Family programs are part of our elementary curriculum in grades 1-6. Your child's teacher sends home additional information prior to the program, so that you can plan to attend. Dates for the programs are also in the synagogue calendar and on our web site. You can also call the school office if you need additional information. The programs are as follows:

- Mechinah classes – The students in grades 1-2 have a Shabbat dinner on a Wednesday in May.
- Aleph classes – The students in grade 3 have a Kabbalat Siddur Program, a Friday night ceremony during Shabbat Services at which time each child receives her/his own Siddur. During a Sunday class prior to this program, parents help their children make Siddur covers.
- Bet classes – The students in grade 4 lead part of a Friday night service. During a Sunday class prior to this program, parents help their children make a challah cover or a challah tray for Shabbat.
- Gimmel classes – The students in grade 5 lead part of a Saturday morning service. The project for this program varies from year to year.
- Dalet classes – The students in grade 6 lead part of a Saturday morning service. Parents and their children participate in three family education programs throughout the school year. These programs are the beginning of preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Confirmation programs- Each confirmation student must give an oral presentation during the school year. Parents are encouraged to attend. Confirmation pictures are taken in the spring. A parent meeting is also held in the spring to discuss the confirmation service.

SERVICE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Jr. Congregation

In order for CBT to maintain its Framework for Excellence status, and for students in grades 3-6 to move on to their next grade, they are required to attend a specified amount of synagogue services (primarily Shabbat services) within the school year. Jr. Congregation leaders give attendance to the Principal after each session. If your child attends a service other than a Jr. Congregation, you must send a note in with your child or call or e-mail the school office with the date. Other services may be a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, Simhat Torah, Sukkot or Pesach. Students can fulfill their requirements for an "other" service at any synagogue. You will receive periodic updates on your child's attendance during the year.

Pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah students have different requirements which begin 13 months prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These requirements are explained below, and in the CBT Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook.

JR. CONGREGATION REQUIREMENTS:

- ALEPH CLASSES - 4 FRIDAYS, 3 SATURDAYS, 3 OTHERS
- BET CLASSES - 6 FRIDAYS, 4 SATURDAYS, 2 OTHERS
- GIMMEL CLASSES - 8 FRIDAYS, 5 SATURDAYS, 2 OTHERS
- DALET CLASSES - 9 FRIDAYS, 6 SATURDAYS, 2 OTHERS
- BAR/BAT MITZVAH YEAR - 12 FRIDAYS, 12 SATURDAYS

(Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirements begin 13 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If your child is in Dalet during this period, the Dalet Class requirements of 9, 6 and 2 must be fulfilled. This can be achieved by attending "adult services." The Dalet requirements as well as the Shabbatonim requirements (see below) count toward the Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirements of 12 and 12, if your child is in Dalet during the 13 month period leading up the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Shabbatonim

There are five shabbatonim during the school year for our students in grades 3-6. There are two planned shabbatonim for grades three and four (aleph and bet) and two planned shabbatonim for grades five and six (gimmel and dalet). The last shabbaton is for all grades 3-6. Students in grades 3-6 are required to attend two shabbatonim per year.

The dates for Jr. Congregation and the Shabbatonim are included in the school packets mailed home during the summer and listed on the synagogue calendar.

Attire

Children are requested to dress in respectful, modest attire.

GRADUATION SHABBAT SERVICES

Please see the synagogue calendar or call the school office for specific dates.

- Mechinah Bet (grade 2) – During the Mechinah Bet Graduation students sing Shabbat songs. This program takes place during a Friday evening service.
- Aleph (grade 3) – At the Kabbalat Siddur Program each aleph student receives a Siddur. This program takes place during a Friday evening service.
- Bet (grade 4) – The Bet Service allows bet students to participate and lead part of the Friday evening service.
- Gimmel (grade 5) - The Gimmel Service allows the gimmel students to participate and lead part of the Saturday morning service.
- Dalet (grade 6) – The Dalet Service and Graduation allows the students to participate and lead part of the Saturday morning service as well as graduate from the elementary program.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation takes place on a Saturday morning close to Shavuot. Rabbi Gans works with the students to prepare for this milestone. The students participate in the service as well as prepare a speech on their Religious School experience.

In December, Rabbi Gans takes the Confirmation class on a trip to Israel together with other area Rabbis and their Confirmation students. Rabbi Gans meets with parents and students on a continuing basis to discuss details of this trip.

TRIPS

Parents are notified in advance of any trips taken out of the building. Parents must sign a permission slip before any student is permitted to leave the building. Parent chaperones are welcome on trips.

STUDENT PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

Teachers privately assess each student's Hebrew reading and comprehension progress during the month of November. Parents are notified of the assessment. The parent(s) of any child not meeting the standards is contacted within two weeks to discuss an educational plan. A second assessment occurs in April.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Chanukah Assembly – The entire school joins together with parents, other family members and synagogue members in the Social Hall on a Sunday during Chanukah. They sing songs that they prepare for several weeks leading up to Chanukah and enjoy a performance by CBT's band.

Purim Carnival – Classes are dismissed early to give all students an opportunity to participate in the Purim Carnival. Supervision of children during the Purim Carnival is the responsibility of the parents.

Model Seder – All students participate in the Model Seder. A hands-on program begins at 9:30 am. Our Mechinah students are invited to come to school on that day. At 10:30 am, Rabbi Gans leads a mock Passover Seder complete with haggadot and specialty foods.

REPORT CARDS

Report Cards are issued two times a year for the gan, mechina and elementary students. The objective of the report card is to keep parents informed about the progress their child is making, and to note any areas of concern. Parents are asked to sign and return the report card to the teacher to signify that they have received and reviewed it. High School students receive an interim report only if deemed necessary by the teacher.

BRING YOUR PARENT TO CLASS DAY

Three dates will be scheduled in the year for parents to select from to visit and participate in their child's class.

ADVANCEMENT POLICY

1. All students must receive a satisfactory in all subjects.
2. Elementary students in grades 3-6 must complete their synagogue service requirements by the end of the current school year.
3. If a student does not meet the minimum requirements, he/she is expected to do remedial work over the summer to be prepared for the next grade.
4. Parents are notified if a student is in jeopardy of not moving to the next grade level.
5. Please see the absentee policy in the next section for the allotted absences per year.
6. It is expected that the school and family will work closely together to insure success!

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The students attending Congregation Beth Tikvah Religious School are expected to adhere to the following policies:

Preparation

1. Students are to attend class with all necessary materials, texts and any other supplies required by the teacher.
2. Homework is to be completed and is to be submitted by the assigned due date.

Absentee Policy

1. It is the responsibility of the student to make up any work missed due to absences and/or early dismissals.
2. It is the responsibility of the student/parent to contact the teacher for the assignments.
3. With excessive absences and a lack of work completion, any student is at risk of not moving to the next grade level.
4. A letter is sent home to the parent(s) when the student has been absent 6 times. THE MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE FOR ABSENCES DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR IS 9 TIMES. PLEASE INFORM THE PRINCIPAL OF ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Behavior

1. Students are expected to demonstrate a positive attitude and respect toward the teacher, fellow students, the synagogue, its activities, facilities and membership.
2. Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior when in the building.

Respect for Physical Building

1. Student must not deface any surface in the building.
2. Lavatories are to be used with proper respect. Flush toilets, use trash receptacles, do not clog toilets intentionally.
3. During break, cups and plates should be placed in the containers provided and any food dropped should be picked and disposed of properly.
4. Food must not be removed from the room where it is being served.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

1. If a child is sent to the office, the teacher will notify the parent.
2. After the third office visit, a parent conference is required with the principal, teacher, parent(s) and student.
3. If inappropriate behavior persists, a parent must attend class with the child.
4. Severe, inappropriate behavior may result in suspension.

THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE IS GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS. THE STUDENTS SIGN THE FORM AND A COPY IS GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS TO TAKE HOME TO THE PARENT(S). SEE ATTACHED SAMPLE.

GUIDE FOR SUPPORTIVE PARENTS

1. Show your support and enthusiasm for your child's Jewish education. This can be done not only by a positive verbal attitude, but also by making sure your child has all the necessary materials when attending class.
2. Convey to your child that you have confidence in and respect for the teaching staff, principal, and religious leaders at CBT.
3. If there is a classroom concern, always go to the classroom teacher first. If it cannot be resolved, speak to the Principal. Avoid airing your complaints to friends as this just escalates the problem, and does not resolve with a constructive solution.
4. Show interest in what is being taught at school. Do not ask the open-ended question, "What did you do in Hebrew/Religious school today?" Rather ask specific questions about the art project brought home, which songs did you sing today, any new prayers being learned, etc.
5. Visit your child's class and attend school activities, such as family education programs, grade level services, Purim Carnival, Model Seder, Shabbat services while your child is in Jr. Congregation, etc.
6. Go together to the library and check out Jewish books of interest. Use a Jewish theme book from time to time as a bedtime story for the younger children.
7. Make sure you understand the school's rules, discipline policy and guidelines.
8. Discuss Jewish issues at home.
9. Listen to the evaluations of your child's teacher. More often than not, a child acts differently at school than at home.
10. Involve yourself in the school as a volunteer or room parent. Offer to visit the class and share any special talents, chaperone a trip, volunteer to work at the Model Seder or Purim Carnival, and join the School Committee.
11. Purchase a Hebrew & English dictionary for your home. Speak with the Principal and/or the Rabbi for suggestions of literature and guides to help your children at home.

It is probably truer of religion than anything else that the majority of children learn by example. The more a parent actively demonstrates commitment to Jewish values and practices, the more the child is likely to adopt a similar observance pattern.