



Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

***The Mike Weiner School of
Jewish Learning***
Parent/Guardian Manual

5776
2015– 2016

WELCOME TO OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Our school thrives on the involvement of our families. Through this handbook, we ask you to familiarize yourself with the policies and structure of our Religious School.

The main goals of our curriculum are:

1. To impart to our students the ethics and values of Judaism through Torah study and everyday living.
2. To teach our students customs, ceremonies, music and rituals regarding Shabbat and holiday observances.
3. To instill the value of *tzedakah* as a way of giving and living.
4. To teach the Hebrew language for prayer.
5. To develop a love for Jewish learning and pride in Jewish identity.
6. To build a bridge between our students and the State of Israel, and to forge solidarity with Jews throughout the world.
7. To teach the skills of community-building, both via the classroom experience and also via their experience at Shabbat worship services.

We provide a warm and friendly learning environment for our children. We believe that children who are raised to be good Jews will by definition become good human beings. While our school is designed to fulfill these goals, the Religious School is not the sole educator of our children. Your family also plays a major role in creating the right feeling towards learning. How successful we are depends upon your support. It is critical that you reinforce through consistent practice at home what the children are learning in school.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CO-OP:

The school has always been co-operative, because we rely fully on volunteers to run the school and its activities. Parent participation is essential to the success of the school. To continue our success, we have renamed the Religious School a “Co-op”. We will utilize an online “Pot-Luck” type set up for the school events to easier facilitate the sign ups.

SHABBAT SERVICE:

Friday night and Saturday Shabbat Services are an integral part of the regular religious school. It is important for your family to attend these services so that they may become familiar with the prayer service. **All students are expected to attend services throughout the year.** Services that include a child’s becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah are open to the entire congregation. Everyone is welcome.

CLASS TIMES & DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

Religious School classes meet every Sunday from 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon, except where noted differently on the calendar. We ask parents to join us for the opening program (roughly 20 minutes), during which the week's Judaic theme is introduced by Rabbi Dubin.

Confirmation class meets once a month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, except where noted differently on the calendar. The confirmation curriculum includes a yearly required retreat, to be announced at a later date.

Please be prompt for drop-off and pick-up. The building closes immediately after school concludes. Thank you.

SNACKS:

Please send your child to school with their own snack and drink, preferably something without too much sugar.

ABSENTEEISM AND MISSED WORK:

Attendance is an essential component of a successful Jewish education. If you know in advance that your child will be absent, please inform the teacher at least a week ahead of time. Your child's teacher can provide you with material and planned lessons to keep your child up to date.

We cannot stress enough the importance of regular attendance to the success of your child's religious education. Since we have limited time to teach your child, consistency and continuity are essential to helping your child advance. If your child falls behind due to excessive absenteeism, we will contact you to discuss ways in which your child can complete his or her work and advance in education.

HOMEWORK:

Like any new skill, the learning of Hebrew requires regular practice. Additionally, a Reform education emphasizes and assumes family involvement in a student's learning. In order to maximize the students' religious school experience, we encourage parents to discuss religious school activities with their children and work with them on any home assignments.

All students taking Hebrew will be expected to spend at least an additional 10-15 minutes several times a week reading Hebrew at home. This is absolutely necessary for fluency in Hebrew reading.

For parents with little or no Hebrew background, many resources are available, such as a tutor, Hebrew software, books and tapes. Please contact your child's teacher for assistance.

B'NAI MITZVAH:

Requirements for B'nai Mitzvah preparation include the following three components:

1. Regular **attendance** at Shabbat services on Friday nights and on Saturday mornings. This helps to familiarize students and their families with the service. Coming to services also builds a sense of community among the classmates and with other temple members.
2. **Completion** of at least two years in our Religious School. If the student has a fall *simcha* and is in his or her second year of our school, he or she may celebrate during the year, with the clear understanding that religious school attendance will continue at least through the end of the year. Students who have not already completed at least one year of Religious School prior to their expected *simcha* date are asked to wait until they have satisfied the requirement above before a public celebration will take place.
3. **Preparation** for the bar or bat mitzvah service with an approved tutor should begin about a year prior to the *simcha*.

TZEDAKAH:

Tzedakah is an integral part of our curriculum and is collected throughout the school year. Students decide together, with the aid of school staff, where the money will be donated.

EMERGENCY CLOSING:

In the event that the school has to be cancelled due to weather or some other unforeseen circumstance, we will notify you through e-mail. Please check your e-mail before leaving the house if the weather looks bad. A message will also be left on the Temple answering machine.

BEHAVIOR:

Student Expectations:

- Be prepared for class with books, pencils and required assignments.
- Show respect for teachers and classmates.
- Behave appropriately in the classroom.
- No gum chewing or eating any food, except at snack time.

Should a student be consistently disruptive in the classroom, parents will be notified by the teacher. If necessary, a conference will be arranged. The religious school reserves the right to suspend and, if necessary, remove any student who does not conform to acceptable behavior standards.

TEACHERS:

Our religious school teachers are also members of our congregation. They are dedicated to educating your children in a warm and caring environment. With great love and dedication, they will challenge your children and bring the traditions and rituals of Judaism into their classroom.