



BETH SHALOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Handbook for parents, students and faculty

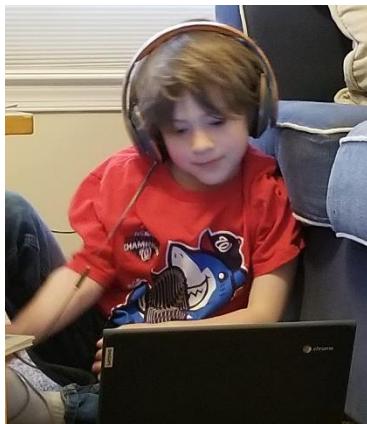
2020-2021



***Learn our values
Live our values
Love our values***

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Beth Shalom Religious School
8070 Harriet Tubman Lane,
Columbia, MD 21044-4015 Office: 410-531-5115 Fax: 410-531-5343

לֹא כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים תַּהֲיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Speak to all the assembled children of Israel, and say to them:
You shall be holy; for I Adonai your God am holy.

Parashat Kedoshim, Vayikra 19:2

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Beth Shalom Religious School community. We have created an educational environment that nurtures engagement in the life of our congregation for children and their families. Our goals are to develop a love and appreciation for the Jewish people's abundant contributions to humanity and create opportunities to participate in the ongoing story of our people. To those ends, we provide a well-rounded exploration of Jewish culture, cultivate a personally meaningful experience of Hebrew prayer, and facilitate opportunities to connect with the Jewish past and present with an eye toward our future.

Thanks to the active engagement of our students, parents, congregational leadership and professional staff, our program is ever evolving to best meet changing needs. Family education continues to be a strong part of our program, *tikkun olam* (social action) is integrated into our curriculum, and our explorations through cultural arts further enriches an already engaging experience of our school. Our *tefillah*-Hebrew program gets more effective every year thanks to a dedicated teacher corps that strives to present an ever improving program of studies. Social-emotional learning practices will continue to define our school culture with *Middot* (Interpersonal Ethics) underwriting that initiative. Many of our students continue into Hebrew High and participate in the extraordinary Howard County Teen Interfaith Initiative.

In this Religious School handbook you will find statements of the programmatic goals, policies, procedures, standards and expectations that guide our program. The success of this project will be the product of an effective, collaborative partnership between the children, families, faculty, synagogue staff and the wider congregational community.

The verse above comes from *Vayikra* (Leviticus), the third book of the Torah. It is the opening sentence of a *parsha* (Torah portion) referred to as the Holiness Code. The ethics that follow are an important guide to how we should interact with one another. As in this text, when the Jewish people are referred to as *B'nai Yisrael*, the Children of Israel, we are claiming a connection to a string of ancestors, traditions and a history that extends back to antiquity. Accepting the charge to "Be Holy" means to strive to live up to the highest standards of behavior as we make our way in the world. It is an audacious, empowering declaration.

I look forward to seeing you and your children as we begin the 2020-2021 school year. If you have any questions or concerns, feedback or insights in regard to the Religious School program, please do not hesitate to contact me.

B'Shalom,

Louis Nagel, PhD, CJE
Education Director

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על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמилות חסדים:

The world stands on three things: on the Torah, on service and on acts of lovingkindness.

Pirke Avot 1:2

Dear Parents,

It has been said, it takes a village to raise a child. Having raised my own son here at Beth Shalom, I can tell you that it is true. Synagogue life is one of the few places left in our society in which children can make friends in every age group, younger friends who will look up to them, older friends and adults who can help inspire them, and a dedicated group of clergy, staff, and volunteers who will treat them as part of their own extended family.

Every Sabbath we sing these words from Ethics of the Fathers (*Pirke Avot 1:2*):*Al sheloshah devarim haolam omed: al haTorah, al haAvodah, v'al Gemilut Hasadim*, “**The world stands on three things: on Torah, on Service, and on Deeds of Loving Kindness.**” Our ancient Rabbis believed that the world (not just the Jewish People) depends for its very existence upon us Jews engaging in these three activities: the study, teaching and practice of Torah; service to God and the community through prayer and mindful behavior; and deeds of loving kindness to members of our Beth Shalom family, the Jewish People, and the larger community here and around the world. In other words, we do not seek to educate our children only for the purpose of transmitting our Jewish values and traditions, as important as that is. We educate our children to fulfill our eternal mission as Jews: to become *mentsches*, thoughtful, educated, and committed Jews who can help build a better, kinder, more just world. We do that not only during school hours but throughout the many services, programs, and other opportunities available at Beth Shalom. The more you take advantage of these opportunities, the richer the experience you and your family will enjoy.

Thank you for choosing Beth Shalom as the “village” within which to raise your children. Feel free to contact me to discuss how you can enrich your own family’s experience here. In the meantime, I look forward to celebrating many milestones together and getting to know you and your family even better in the coming year,

With blessings and warmest wishes for a wonderful year together,

Rabbi Susan Grossman

MISSION STATEMENT

The Beth Shalom Congregation Religious School community will educate and inspire our students through exceptional learning opportunities. Our Religious School aims to cultivate life-long Jewish identification, community participation, and Hebrew and Judaic knowledge in a loving, caring, nurturing, and fun learning environment that includes spiritual, ethical, and social experiences.

Student learning, growth and achievement are our top priorities. To accomplish these we envision:

- *A true partnership that includes parents, students, staff, clergy, religious school board members, and the community*
- *A well-equipped, trained and qualified staff that puts students first, exhibits strong leadership, has a passion for teaching and learning, and is committed to the success of every child.*
- *A curriculum based on experience, research and contemporary practices that allow students to develop and demonstrate understanding through a variety of activities*

OUR GOALS

Values: Students will explore Jewish teachings for guidance on moral and ethical decisions.

Bible: Students will be able to outline the major narrative episodes of the Hebrew Bible and relate them to modern life and religion and conducting oneself based on ethical principles.

Culture: Students will have a repertoire of Jewish songs, dances, and creative arts experiences in order to participate in the full range of Jewish cultural achievement and communal life.

Language: Students will be able to:

- engage with sacred texts
- read and lead prayers
- understand simple Modern Hebrew
- understand basic prayer themes

Prayer: Students will:

- Appreciate prayer as a resource for spiritual expression, connecting to God and bonding with the Jewish community in America, abroad and in Israel.
- Understand prayer as a record of our people's history, a source of Jewish values, Hebrew poetic imagination, and a language for the individual to express his or her place in the world.

Services: Students will be able to participate comfortably in Shabbat evening and morning services, holiday services, and to summarize the major themes of the Shabbat prayers.

Observance and rituals: Students will be able to describe the principal observances and celebrations of the Jewish year and Jewish life-cycle events and to carry out the home rituals associated with them.

Literature: Students will have an overview of the major forms of Jewish literature (Bible, Talmud, codes, commentary, prayer, poetry), and an understanding of content (Bible characters, traditional Jewish law, etc.).

CONTACT US

Beth Shalom Religious School Education & Administrative Staff
Phone: 410-531-5115 Fax 410-531-5343

Education Director: Dr. Louis Nagel
louis.nagel@beth-shalom.net; Extension 322

Administrative Assistant: Robyn Walling
ReligiousSchool@beth-shalom.net; Extension 320

Youth Director and Family Programmer: TBD
Extension 304

Clergy & Administrative Staff

Office Phone: 410-531-5115 Office Fax: 410-531-5343
Office Hours: Monday - Thursdays 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.; Fridays 9:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.

Rabbi: Susan Grossman
RabbiG@beth-shalom.net; Extension 306

Cantor: Rebecca Apt
Cantor.apt@beth-shalom.net; Extension 336

Office Manager: Jessica Schultz
jessica.schultz@beth-shalom.net; Extension 301

Executive Assistant: Sari Wisch
rabbi.assistant@beth-shalom.net; Extension 300

Accounting/Billing: Ruthann Klem
ruthann.klem@beth-shalom.net; Extension 313



Weekly Schedule and Special Events

**We look forward to the day we will return to in-person class sessions.
Our virtual Religious School schedule will be publicized as we approach the start of the school year.**

K-1 (Sundays only):

9:00 Arrival

9:05-9:25 "Boker Tov" in Jerusalem (together, parents are invited to remain)

9:30-10:00 Enrichment – Music, yoga, rikudei am (Israeli folk dancing) on a rotating basis. Other specialties will be added in on an occasional basis as available.

10:00-11:00 Grade specific content

11:00 Dismissal/Enrichment hour for those registered

12:00 Dismissal of Enrichment Hour

2nd-7th Grades:

Sundays

9:00 Arrival - go to classrooms, (2nd grade participates in "Boker Tov" with K-1 in Jerusalem and enrichment classes)

10:00-10:30 3rd-5th grades in Sanctuary for "Birkot HaShachar" (Morning Minyan)

10:30-10:45 3rd-5th grades Hafsaka (break)-

10:30-11:00 6th-7th Grades Morning Minyan in the ARK. 7th graders will arrive 5 minutes early and be encouraged to wear Tefilin.

10:45-11:15 3rd-5th grades Enrichment - Music, yoga, rikudei am (Israeli folk dancing) on a rotating basis. Other specialties will be added in on an occasional basis as available.

11:15-12:00 3rd-7th grades Judaics

12:00 Dismissal

Wednesdays (3rd-7th Grades):

4:30 – 5:15 Arrival, go to classes, 3rd-5th Grade Hebrew Workshop

5:15-5:30 Tefillah (Mincha or Ma'ariv depending on season)

5:30-5:45 Each class will be given a 15 minute "Hafsaka" (break) at this time.

5:45-6:45 Judaic Studies (3rd-5th grades – Jewish Experiential Wednesdays)

6:45 Dismissal

Calendar Highlights*

Wed. Sept. 9 Faculty Meeting

Sun. Sept. 13 Opening Day K-7

Hebrew High (6:30-8:30 pm – classes)

Wed. Sept. 16 Opening (Mid-week) Day – Wednesday Classes (3rd-7th grades)

Fri. Sept. 18 NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL – Erev Rosh Hashanna

Sat. Sept 19 Rosh HaShanna – Day 1

Sun. Sept. 20 Rosh Hashanna – Day 2 – NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sun. Sept 27 NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL – Erev Yom Kippur

Sun. Oct. 4 NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL – Sukkot

Sun. Oct. 11 NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL – Simchat Torah

Sun. Nov. 22 NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL - Teacher in-service day

Wed. Nov. 25 NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL – Thanksgiving Weekend

Shabbat Dec 12 Hanukat HaTalmidim (Kindergarten Consecration)

Wed. Dec. 16 Hanukkah @ Harmony Hall (3rd-5th grades)

Sat. Jan. 30 3rd-5th Grade Havdalah Service & Game Night (7:00 pm)

Fri/Sat. Apr. 16-17 – 6th/7th Grade Shabbaton

Sun. Feb. 21 Purimpalooza (Community Purim Event) @ River Hill High

Th. Feb. 25	Purim – Silly Symphony (Megilla Reading)
Sun. May 23	7 th grade Holocaust Museum trip
Sat. May 15	Hebrew High Shabbat and 10 th grade Confirmation
Sun. May 16	7 th Grade Torah on Trial presentation
Fri. June 4	3 rd -5 th Grade Kabbalat Shabbat and 3 rd Grade Siddur Ceremony
Sun. June 6	Last day of Religious School, Events & Activities!

*** Please refer to B'nai Mitzvah guide for Rabbi's sessions with 6th and 7th grade families)**

Family Education and Parents' Judaism and Java (Coffee with the Rabbi; 9:10-9:55 am, Dates/Times TBA); Watch your e-mail for exact starting times, students should still arrive at 9:00 on days with these special programs

Kindergarten/1 st grade	Family Ed, October 25 th
1 st Grade:	Family Ed, November 17 th
2 nd Grade:	Family Ed – May 3 rd
3 rd , 4 th and 5 th Grades	Family Ed, November 10 th and April 19 th ;

Derekh Eretz (Common Courtesy): Behavior Expectations

Beth Shalom Religious School strives to create a nurturing environment where all can safely explore what it means to be a member of a Jewish learning community. Derekh Eretz (common courtesy) calls on us to respect one another's physical space, personal integrity, and efforts to grapple with Jewish teachings. Following these *middot* (values) will enable everyone the best opportunity to experience an encouraging, supportive environment and an opportunity to grow spiritually and intellectually.

Teachers and students will discuss these *middot* at the beginning of the year. Students will be asked to demonstrate *kavod* (respect) toward everyone; follow school and classroom expectations, help others, respect school property and the property of others and dress in an appropriate manner. These standards apply at school and in the synagogue; when participating in or attending school-sponsored events, representing our program, or traveling on behalf of the school and our community.

Students will have the opportunity to discuss in detail this Derekh Eretz - Code of Conduct and its expectations with their teachers.

Individual Student Discipline Policy

Each student brings a unique personal make-up to the school environment. With this in mind, each child will be treated as an individual when discipline issues arise. Recognizing the special circumstances of each situation, the general policy for turning negative behavior into positive behavior will be as follows:

First incident: There will be a conversation between the student and teacher to discuss what happened, how it happened, and ways to prevent it from happening again. The teacher will also discuss the situation with the Education Director and/or Special Needs Resource Teacher.

Second incident: There will be a conversation between the student, teacher, and Education Director to discuss what happened and what triggered the event. They will also discuss setting up an individual behavior contract and plan. The teacher will also contact the student's parents at this time.

Third incident: The parents, student, teacher, Education Director, and Special Needs Resource Teacher (if needed), will meet to discuss the student's behavior. The parents may be asked to attend each class session and sit either in the lobby or with their child until the behavior is under control.

If the above steps do not work to improve the student's behavior and the behavior is disruptive to the learning of the other students, the Education Director and Special Needs Resource Teacher, in conjunction with the Rabbi of the Congregation, will discuss alternative arrangements for the student until such time that the student is able to behave in a proper manner.

In any case that involves a significant physical altercation the parents of all students involved will be contacted immediately.

School-Home Communication

General school communications and class communications will be made primarily via e-mail. Please make sure the school has an updated e-mail address that you check frequently. Student specific communication should be made by way of telephone call, unless it is simply a question of logistics (i.e. early departure/late arrival, missed class etc....). Dr. Nagel is regularly available by phone Tuesday through Friday at the office, in the evenings by mobile phone or text (please identify yourself on the text), and at any time by e-mail. Please do not ever hesitate to call if there is an issue.

A full school directory with staff, office and family phone numbers, home addresses and email addresses will be prepared and distributed in late Fall. **Those who do not wish this information to be included should contact the office by October 15th.**



While we do not have formally scheduled parent-teacher conferences, if at any time you feel it necessary, please be in touch with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will also be in touch if he or she deems it important to have a conference with you as well.

Additionally you will hear from your child's teacher at the approximate mid-point of each semester by phone and receive a written progress report for your child at the end of each semester (please note, the fall semester ends in mid-January).

The School Day: Policies and Expectations

Attendance: In order to gain the greatest amount of benefit from the Beth Shalom Religious School, students and parents should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences.

Absences: If you know of an upcoming absence, please notify the teacher and request any work or handouts for your child. If you anticipate a long-term absence, please notify the Education Director.

Excessive Absences: When a large number of absences (more than 20% of all sessions) are unavoidable, parents are requested to discuss the situation and reason for the absences with the Education Director in order that he may work with the teacher to develop some alternative individual activities so that the student may keep up with the class. Students who fall below class level due to excessive absences may be required to obtain private tutoring at the parents' expense.

Tzedakah: The giving of tzedakah is one of the greatest *Mitzvot* (good deeds or commandments) that we can observe. Children should be encouraged to bring tzedakah money every class. At the end of each semester, students participate in deciding beneficiaries of their tzedakah money.

Homework: Homework may be assigned by your child's teacher. The policy of the school is that any homework given is to be a meaningful assignment that will further the work in class or is assigned for the purpose of Hebrew review. Please be sure all assignments are completed in a timely manner.

Hebrew Assessments (2nd-5th grades): Early in the year and toward the end, students may be assessed on Hebrew skills and progress. This exercise is part of the work of assessing the efficacy of our program as well as organizing Tefillah-Hebrew study groups based on ability level and attainments. These assessments are a way for teachers to determine the best course of study for their classes as a whole and for individual students. Students return to their grade level groups for all other school activities.

What to Bring, What not to Bring:

Textbooks: Students are responsible for the textbooks issued to them. If a textbook is lost, a fee will be assessed for its replacement.

Head Covering: The Synagogue requires males, and encourages females to wear a *kippah*. *Kippot* are available at the synagogue. All individuals leading prayer (even for practice) or ascending the bima are required to wear a *kippah*.

Because students may be picked at random or as a class to lead certain prayers, all students 2nd grade and above will be required to wear a kippah during tefillah times.



Cell phones and Electronic Devices: Students are not allowed to speak or text message on their cell phones during class or during break time. Please make sure your child understands that their cell phones must be turned off during class. Any cell phone that is on during class will be collected by the teacher and returned at the end of class. In case of emergency, you may reach your child at any time, by calling the school office **410-531-5115 ext: 320** or you may call Dr. Nagel's cell phone, **410-707-1841**. Unless it is to leave a message for after school, please do not call Dr. Nagel's extension (322) during religious school hours, as he will not be in his office most of the time. Please use the above numbers in case of emergency.

School Supplies: Your tuition included a supply fee that covers all ordinary supplies for the school year. Should specific, out of the ordinary, supplies be needed for a class project, the teacher will be in touch by e-mail and/or a note sent home with the students.

Snacks:

Please note that Beth Shalom is nut and peanut free. For the protection of students with allergies, we ask that you do not send snacks that include nuts or peanuts.

If you wish your child to have a snack, you may send one with your child from the following approved snack list by the School Committee in consultation with Rabbi Grossman. Students will be discouraged from "sharing" their snack with friends and classmates. All packaged food must be certified kosher and have a kosher symbol.

- Fruits and Vegetables (all must be whole and uncut which do not require kosher certification).
- Other snacks to eat that must have kosher certification:
 - Pretzels (in their original packaging, such as a small snack bag)

- Vegetable chips: corn/potato or other vegetables
- Kosher cheese sticks, and crackers, all in their original small snack bag
- Fruit juice box or bottled water
- Raisins and dried fruits

***** No nuts, meat and or fish.**

Acceptable Kosher symbols:



These are only some of the selected acceptable symbols. Please be advised that "K" by itself is not sufficient. For the complete list, please visit the following website:

<http://www.mazornet.com/jewishcl/Kosher/kosherorgs.htm>.



Break:

Break time is an important part of the educational process; allowing students to release built up energy and take care of personal needs. Break time will be determined by the teacher as it fits into the daily schedule (3rd-5th Grade on Wednesdays will have break from 5:30-5:45). On Sundays there will be a 10 minute break for Kindergarten and 1st grade and 15 minutes of total break time for 2nd-7th grades. On Wednesdays, each class will have a 15 minute break.

During break time the students may go outside only under the supervision of a teacher or assistant.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedure: When you arrive at Beth-Shalom to **drop off** your children, you may park your car and walk your children into the Beth Shalom building or drop him/her off at the curb.

During pick up time, please **park your car in a parking space** and walk to the Beth Shalom building to pick up your children. Please do not ask them to step out of the building during dismissal without adult supervision.

If the child's parents are not the only people picking up a child (older sibling, grandparents, au pair, carpool), please inform the school office who else may pick up your child.

Dismissal: Student pick-up must be prompt, as there is no provision for supervision after class has ended. Parents should wait for their child(ren) in the lobby until their child's class has been dismissed. If you are running late for pick up, please inform the office (410-531-5115 X320) or call or text Dr. Nagel (410-707-1841) at the earliest possible opportunity.

Early Dismissal Procedure

The safety of our students is important to us and is a priority. If you are picking up early:

- Please send a message via email to your child's teacher as well as to Dr. Nagel (louis.nagel@beth-shalom.net) or call us at 410-531-5115 ext. 320. You may also send a written note to school with your child.

- Proceed to the Religious School office to notify staff. Our Administrative Assistant, Dr. Nagel or another staff member will bring your child from class. PLEASE DO NOT GO TO THE CLASSROOM TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD.
- Sign your child(ren) out using the Religious School Early Dismissal Sign Out Sheet found on the desk in the office.

More than Just School

Synagogue Attendance: We encourage parents to enhance the religious education experience by attending Shabbat and Holiday services as a family. The school calendar highlights services that would be especially engaging for children of various ages. These services include our youth/family services and special services in the main sanctuary. Children are always welcome in the main sanctuary for any service.

In order to gain the most possible benefit from the Religious School program, the Religious School Board in conjunction with the Religious Committee of the Congregation has created the following policy for how often students should attend a service at Beth Shalom:

Kindergarten-2nd Grade: 15 services per school year.

3rd-5th Grade: 18 services per school year.

6th and 7th Grade: Once per week (absences due to illness or Family simchas are excused).

Services are not limited to Shabbat morning. Friday night, holiday and other services are also accepted.

The school year is defined as September through June.



Golden and Silver Kippah program: A simplified version of the Gold and Silver Kippah program was introduced for the 2014-15 school year. Those who meet the standard for Gold or Silver Kippah will receive a special reward at the end of the year. More information will be sent home via e-mail and in students' backpacks.

Youth Service Options

Shorashim Shabbat: On the fourth Shabbat of most months at 10:30 a.m. families with children age 8 and younger are invited to a fun, interactive prayer and learning experience. Older siblings are welcome. Parent participation is encouraged.

Ruach (Spirit) Shabbat: On the second and fourth Shabbatot of the month (excepting holiday weekends) at 10:30, 3rd-6th grade children gather for Ruach Shabbat, a lively, youth oriented, participatory service designed to give our students the opportunity to connect to the spiritual aspect of Judaism. Students will be encouraged to actively engage in this service, leading prayers, exploring the liturgy, experiencing tefillah (prayer) in unique ways, and creating community. Parent participation is encouraged.

Yachad (Together) Shabbat On select Friday evenings the widest age range of congregants come together around a theme for adult-youth Shabbat programs. For our youth community, it is an opportunity to explore prayer through the lens of a compelling concept built into the structure of a Friday evening Junior Congregation service.

Torah Encounters: We also offer an occasional program called Torah Encounters. Dr. Nagel (and occasionally a guest leader) will lead a family friendly Torah study that is open to all adults and children in the congregation during the Torah reading in the main service.

Health and Safety Information

Sickness: If a student is absent from Public/Day School on a Wednesday due to illness, that student should remain home from Religious School as well. If a student is sick over a weekend, we ask that students not come to class unless any fever has been gone for at least 24 hours. If your child needs to miss class due to illness, please call the school office and we will arrange for the student to make up any missed work.

Please make sure we have your updated emergency contact information.

Parents will be contacted if their child becomes ill or is injured at school. Please make sure that you or someone who is authorized by you can pick up your child. If there is a serious injury, staff are instructed to immediately call 911 and then parents. We will document all accidents on an accident report form.

Please contact the religious school office if your child contracts a contagious disease (i.e. chicken pox, strep throat, head lice, flu or seasonal virus). DO NOT allow your child to return to school until the condition is completely resolved.

A medical release form signed by the parents and the family's doctor is required for the school personnel to administer both prescription and over-the-counter medications. The parents must give both the written orders and the medication to school staff. All prescription medication should be in their original package with your child's name on it.

Please keep us informed of any special medical or health problems or special learning needs that the students may have. This information should be noted on the registration form.

Fire Drills and Emergencies: We will conduct fire drills periodically according to fire department regulations. Fire alarms are located throughout the building and should only be pulled in the event that a student or staff member sees a fire in progress or detects smoke.

Inclement Weather School Closing/Delay Plan

On Sundays, cancellation or delay will be announced by 8:00 AM based upon the best information available on weather conditions at the time the decision must be made. We will announce the closing via SMS and email to all families. However, if a determination can be made on Saturday after dark, an SMS and an email will be sent out Saturday night. Please check for notifications or call the Beth Shalom Religious School at 410-531-5115 X322 for a recorded message regarding the closing.

Closings will be communicated by SMS and email. When weather is questionable, please keep a close watch for notifications.

Please keep in mind, weather conditions do change sometimes, for better or for worse, but our intent is to determine that it is reasonably safe for students and staff to attend school. Our teachers come from a broader geographic range than our school population.

In general, we will consider one of the following options depending on the weather conditions:

1. School will open at the normal time and no announcement will be made
2. School will be closed
3. School opening will be delayed one hour. In the case of a 1-hour delay, Kindergarten – 1st grade classes will be cancelled for the day.

Wednesdays: We will follow the Howard County Public School System regarding closings and cancellations of after school activities (i.e. if they are closed, so are we). The Howard County Emergency School Closing Information announcements can be accessed at <http://www.eschoolnewsletter.com/emergency.aspx>. You may also call the Beth Shalom Religious School for more information.

*** *If school opens at the normal time, an announcement will not be made.*

Additional Items

Birthday parties: Birthday parties are a great opportunity for students to interact and bond with their classmates from Religious School. However, out of respect and sanctity of Holidays and Shabbat and the religious sensitivity of your child's classmates, we request that you please refrain from scheduling your child's party on Shabbat or Holidays and during Religious School hours.

Class Parents: Class Parents are occasionally needed by the teacher to help with projects and on field trips in addition to encouraging class participation for synagogue events. If you are willing to serve in this capacity, please contact your child's teacher or Dr. Nagel.

Donations: Our school graciously and appreciatively accepts donations and/or sponsorship of special school events. An appropriate time to make a donation would be in honor of your child's birthday, or other special events in your family's life.

Field Trips: Trips are a vital part of the Religious School curriculum. Students will have the opportunity to visit places that offer a sense of reality about what they have learned in class. Please make an effort to assure that your child not miss the opportunity to attend any field trip. Dates of trips will be available as early as possible prior to the trip. When a date is announced for your child's class, please consider serving as a chaperone. Parents must fill out a permission slip to allow their child to participate.

Lost and Found: A lost and found box will be placed in the lobby outside of the school office. Please label all outer clothing, books, etc. to facilitate the return of misplaced items. Anything not claimed by the end of the fall semester or end of the school year will be donated to a local organization.

Progress Reports: Formal progress reports will be sent home twice a year – at the end of January and at the end of the school year. These reports include academic evaluation as well as an assessment of the student's work habits, attitudes, and behavior. In addition, teachers will contact parents in the middle of each semester (early November and mid-March). Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers for individual conferences as necessary. If there is need to address a situation prior to sending out progress reports the teacher will contact the parents directly.



Special Needs Learners: Our Congregation can take pride in a commitment to *Kavod Habriyoat*, the *middah* (ethical value) of demonstrating respect for humanity in all its diversity. In the Religious School, we teach and reinforce this *middah* in the classroom. We also hold ourselves to this standard by striving toward providing an inclusive environment accommodating to the wide range of students' unique skills, traits, and capabilities. Teachers are also supported by our Special Needs Resource teacher and madrichim (teacher's aides) who provide assistance to facilitate our special needs learners' participation in our program.

Teacher Aides: *Madrichim* Program 8th grade and High School students are selected and assigned to specific teachers on Sunday mornings and during mid-week sessions. The *madrichim* (guides or assistants) work with students individually, in small groups and assist their assigned teacher.

Visitors: We welcome and encourage parents to visit our school. Please call the office to schedule your visit in advance. Visitors, including friends and similar age relatives of your child, are welcome in our classes with advance notice and written permission (for young visitors). We request that the host family inform our young visitor about expectations of appropriate behavior.

A GUIDE FOR SUPPORTIVE PARENTS

Know that you are the most important Role Model for your children

1. Show your support and enthusiasm for your child's Jewish education. Your children will follow your example. Positive, encouraging language, motivating participation and regular attendance in religious school, demonstrating interest in what they learned and attending Shabbat and holiday services and adult education programs communicate Jewish life and learning as being a worthy, lifelong pursuit.
2. Try to convey to your child that you have confidence in, and respect for, the teaching staff, school administrators, and religious leaders. If you have young children, it is important that they know that you trust their new teacher, and that they are entering a safe environment.
3. Show interest in what is being taught at school. If the question: "What did you do in school today?" doesn't work, try asking more specific questions such as about the art project brought home, which songs were sung today, or what was a favorite activity.
4. Attend your child's class activities as well as school-wide activities.
5. Discuss Jewish issues at home, such as news stories concerning the local Jewish community, Israel, anti-Semitism, making ethical choices, and working for a better world.
6. Go together to the library and check out books of Jewish interest. Use a Jewish themed book from time to time as a bedtime story, or ask an older child to review a Jewish book during dinner one evening for the family.
7. Make sure you help your child understand all rules, discipline policies and guidelines of the school.
8. Take note of the evaluations of your child's teacher. Remember, that sometimes a child acts differently at home than at school.
9. Involve yourself in the school as a volunteer or room parent. Make a donation or sponsor a school program. Offer to visit the class and share any special talents, chaperone a field trip, and/or help out at a holiday celebration.
10. Establish Shabbat traditions at home and attend services as a family.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is more than an academic program. It includes the social-emotional skills of creating Jewish community.

All aspects of the curriculum are intended to be inclusive. We focus on the elements that are central to all streams of Judaism: Hebrew language, Bible, rituals, philosophy, history, ethics, holidays, music, art, prayer, and Israel. While each grade will have some exposure to all aspects of Judaism there will be areas of focus for each of the grades with certain topics repeating, reflecting the ability of students to learn the material at a higher level as they mature:

Kindergarten:

Synagogue Basics, Holidays and Celebrations, Traditions and rituals, Hebrew Letters and Lexicon

1st Grade:

Tales from the Torah, Middot (Values), Hebrew Letters and Lexicon (continued)

2nd Grade:

Israel, *Menschlichkeit/Derekh Eretz* (Common Courtesy), Brachot, Israel, Hebrew Letters and Lexicon (continued)

3rd, 4th and 5th Grades:

The curriculum for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades is split into three components. The Tefillah-Hebrew program, Jewish Experiential Wednesdays (J.E.W.) and grade specific Sunday morning Judaics - Torah (3rd grade), Prophets (4th grade) and The Jewish Life Cycle (5th grade).



Tefillah-Hebrew:

We begin with a course aimed toward mastery of the Aleph-Bet (vowels, letters and whole words). This is followed by: Continued advancement on decoding skills; learning the structure and prayers of the Friday night, Shabbat morning and Havdalah services; meanings of key words and phrases in prayers in addition to common prefixes and suffixes; exploring individual prayers to understand the meaning of the text as an independent unit and within the context of the service.

J.E.W. (Jewish Experiential Wednesdays)

This experiential curriculum has a different topic of focus for each semester. This year we present the first year of the three-year cycle. Planned topics for 2020-21 are Fall: God, Mitzvot, and Me; Spring: Our Sacred Story (Jewish History). The full three year cycle topics are: 1) God, Mitzvot and Me; Jewish History; 2) Famous Figures (Biographies), Israel; 3) Middot (Jewish Ethical Values), Sacred Time (Holidays). Future topics are subject to change.

6th Grade:

Parashat Hashavuah, Prophets, Torah and Synagogue Skills, and Kabbalat Shabbat and Shabbat morning liturgy

7th Grade:

Israel, Shoah (Holocaust), Jewish Literacy, Special Studies and Projects: God and Spirituality, Advanced Liturgy (Musaf, holidays liturgy & home), Torah on Trial and more.

All grades will also continually build Hebrew vocabulary, explore Jewish ethics and values and learn about holidays as they come.

Upper School (8th-10th grades):

Core course topics include: How the Amidah Speaks to Me, Finding God, The Real Jewish Life Cycle, Mitzvot in the Real World, Derekh Eretz (Jewish Civics) and Tikkun Olam. A series of electives will be offered including: Step Up for Israel, Jewish Communities Around the World, God in the Movies, Peace Studies and All The News (current events).

