



Congregation Shir Hadash  
Parent Handbook  
2018-2019/5779



Rabbi Melanie Aron  
Cantor Devorah Felder-Levy  
Rabbi PJ Schwartz

September 2018

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the entire Congregation Shir Hadash clergy team, staff, leadership, and faculty, we are excited to begin a new school year filled with learning, exploration, and fun. For those of you who are entering our school for the first time, we especially welcome you to our congregational family.

We are honored that you have chosen us to partner with your family in fostering a love for Judaism as a living, breathing tradition that is relevant and meaningful to our lives today.

The new and returning members of our dedicated faculty value creative teaching as well as cooperative, active learning. We believe that simply learning the material is not enough -- students must make Judaism their own. Through art, yoga, music, cooking, gardening, and more, our teachers strive to involve students actively in their learning and to inspire them to be invested in their Jewish education.

We also recognize that different students learn in different ways. Educational theory teaches us that each of us has our own intelligences – our own ways of learning and understanding. We endeavor to meet the needs of all types of learners – from those that learn best through hands-on activities, to those who learn best through discussion and creative writing.

Finally, our faculty understands that Jewish learning is about more than learning, it is about belonging. We strive to create together a community where families, students, and other members of our congregation feel a strong sense of belonging to our community and to the larger Jewish world.

The faculty and I are committed to you, our students and our families. We value your input and the trust you place in us to provide a quality Jewish education that instills a sense of pride in being Jewish.

Thank you for carefully reading this Parent Handbook, which contains pertinent information about our program. Even for those returning families to our school, **I encourage you to review this handbook as there are some new systems and procedures for this school year.**

With all good wishes for a sweet and successful year ahead,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P.J. Schwartz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the end.

Rabbi PJ Schwartz  
Rabbi Educator

September 2018

Dear Parents,

The beginning of a new school year is an exciting time with fresh starts and high hopes. It is also the beginning of the Jewish New Year with its optimistic message of the possibility of change and reconciliation.

At Congregation Shir Hadash, we aim for an integration of our religious school and Temple community. About a third of member families have children currently in our K-12 program, but many others have had students in our school or will have, as their children grow older. Our Temple board always includes representatives for our school and youth groups, but many board members, in particular this year, have students who are in our program.

We hope that our religious school families will feel welcome at all our services and programs but especially at our monthly family services, held the first Friday of the month at 7:00 pm, usually with a dinner beforehand. This year we will kick off the year with a special Back to School Shabbat on Friday September 7<sup>th</sup> with a potluck dinner beforehand at 6pm. Families are very welcome on Shabbat mornings as well either at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service or at our Shir Shabbat alternative service in the Chapel (where there are always cuddly Torah scrolls in the ark). Shir Shabbat, Jr., a service geared for pre-readers is held once a month.

Special holiday programs for families include our family services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Sukkot services on Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup> at which all our new religious school students are consecrated and welcomed with their families, and of course our very celebratory Simchat Torah on Sunday September 30<sup>th</sup> with Torah and Thai dinner preceding. Check out the Temple calendar for these and other special Sukkot events.

Finally, we hope you will consider being involved in our community in other ways as well. Join a Havurah and get to know other families or volunteer in our Social Action/Social Justice work. We welcome your participation whether with our Blood Drive, Mitzvah Day, Health Fair, or in supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugee Families. Adult Education is sponsoring an Instant Hebrew class perfect for Hebrew School parents who want to stay a step ahead, as well as interesting Sunday morning programs times for your convenience.

I look forward to greeting all of you as our year gets started, or call or email and we can set up a time to talk more formally.

Shannah Tovah,



Rabbi Melanie Aron

September 2018

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the Congregation Shir Hadash Board of Directors, I welcome you and your families (back) to our youth education programs: Religious School, Hebrew School, Kulanu (7th and 8th grade), Confirmation, and Jews Around the World! (Post Confirmation program)  
As Vice President, Religious School, I am very excited about the year ahead for our children. In addition, I wish to introduce you to some changes that are underway.

Our goal is to have our programs engage our students and their families in meaningful Jewish exploration in a variety of ways. In the past year, Rabbi Schwartz has been reaching out to our students, teachers, families and fellow congregants, seeking to understand how we can adapt to the changing needs of our youth and families while keeping what makes our education programs uniquely Shir Hadash.

Based on this initial investigation, we are beginning to implement some changes in both our Religious School and Hebrew school programs - detailed in our Parent Handbook and which will be elaborated upon during the first week of school.

Beginning in May, the Board and Clergy established a Youth and Family Engagement Taskforce, to work on a 3 to 5-year plan to guide us. The Youth and Family Engagement Taskforce is made up of board members, clergy, and community members including myself as Vice President Religious School, Ivy Chesser, Member at Large for Youth Groups, Meiko Bauchman, Member at Large for the Early Childhood Center, and Naomi Parker, Congregational President.

If you wish to learn more about the Task Force or have a particular area of interest or concern with Education, Youth Engagement, or Family Engagement please don't hesitate to come up to any of us to ask about the Task Force, whether you are here dropping your child off for Religious school, Hebrew School, at a Shir Hadash sponsored social event or at Friday night or Saturday morning Services.

I am always available to answer questions about our Religious School programs, volunteering opportunities, or to hear suggestions for our school. The most effective way to reach me is via email at [board-vpreliousschool@shirhadash.org](mailto:board-vpreliousschool@shirhadash.org).

Thank you,



Sara Solon Ellman  
Vice-President, Religious School

## CONTENTS

Mission, Vision, and Values	1
Procedures and Expectations	2-7
Bullying Policy	8-11
Social Media Policy	12-13
Curriculum Overview	14-20

### Mission

The Congregation Shir Hadash Religious School engages students and their families in Reform Jewish life, learning, and values.

### Vision

The Congregation Shir Hadash Religious School strives to foster lifelong Jewish learning and commitment to a thriving Jewish community.

### Core Values

- Community (Kehillah and k'lal yisrael)-We create an environment that fosters lifelong bonds to the Jewish community and a sense of shared purpose with Jews here, in Israel, and around the world.
- Respect (Kavod) – We will create a religious school climate that fosters respect for all. We believe Shir Hadash must be a safe place physically, emotionally, and spiritually for students, teachers and parents.
- Relationships (Yechasim) –We value a creative and nurturing environment in which students can develop relationships with other children and adults.
- Knowledge (Ye'da) – As Reform Jews, we value transmission of knowledge of Judaism and the Hebrew language to our children in an environment that encourages discovery and questioning.
- Service (Tikkun Olam and Tzedakah) –We believe that it is through Tikkun Olam that Judaism becomes relevant. Community service and Tzedakah are integral components of the educational program.
- Partnership (Shutafut) – We believe that our success is dependent on a committed partnership between the family, the religious school, the greater Jewish community, and Israel.
- Quality (Aichut) –We strive for the highest quality educational program with continuous evaluation and improvement.
- Responsibility (Achri'ut) – We expect decision making and meaningful responsibility of parents, students and the school.
- Prayer (Tefilah) – We value the participation in and understanding of personal and communal Tefilah.
- Inclusion (Tzelem Elohim-near image of God) –We recognize the value of all students and constantly strive to accommodate different learning styles.

## PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

### Student Attendance

Regular attendance fosters a warm and cohesive classroom environment. Children must maintain a minimum class attendance to fully benefit from the program. Students *must attend at least half of the sessions of each of Sunday and Hebrew school by the time date selections for B'nai Mitzvah are made. This is in order for your family to be eligible to participate in the date selection process. Students must achieve a minimum attendance of 66% over the course of each school year to receive and maintain a B'nai Mitzvah date.* We encourage you to make every effort to avoid absences.

For Hebrew School, private tutoring is required if a child misses three classes in a row. The school will provide a list of tutors, who will be paid directly by the child's family. For sporadic absences, please contact the teacher to receive make-up assignments.

If a child's absences exceed the minimum standard in Sunday School, Hebrew School or Hebrew High School, the child no longer benefits from being enrolled in the program. After consultation with the parents, and discussion of the individual situation, the child may be dropped from the class roll, unless other arrangements can be worked out to accommodate a specific situation. **In either case, fees will not be refunded.**

### Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Please use our front parking lot on Cherry Blossom Lane. The side doors that lead to the Early Childhood Center are kept locked during Religious School and Hebrew School for your child's safety. When dropping off or picking up your child, pull through the drive-through lane and drive out after dropping off or picking up your child. Pull as far forward as possible to allow the cars behind you to get in to the parking lot.

Instruct your child not to run to your car, and to wait until you have stopped at the far end of the drive-through lane. Do not leave your car unattended in the drive-through lane for any length of time. Students may not walk out to Cherry Blossom Lane to meet their parents.

#### For Religious School (Sundays):

**Sesame Shul, kindergarten, first and second grade** students should be accompanied by parents to the sanctuary for *tefillah*, which begins at 9:30am. **Third grade** should be dropped off in front of the sanctuary building for *tefillah*. Sesame Shul through third grade parents, of course, are welcome to begin the school day with us at *tefillah* as well.

Students in **fourth grade and above** should be dropped off and picked up in the carpool line that is formed directly outside our main building. Parents may also choose to park and drop-off or pick-up their children in the lobby of our main building.

### For Hebrew School and Hebrew High School (Mondays and Tuesdays)

Students in **third grade and above** should be dropped off and picked up in the carpool line that is formed directly outside our main building. Parents may also choose to park and drop-off or pick-up their children in the lobby of our main building.

### Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

While we discourage late arrival and early dismissal, we also understand that there are circumstances that may arise. All students in Sesame Shul through third grade and arrive before 10:50 must be accompanied by their parent to the sanctuary for *tefillah*. All students in fourth grade and above who arrive late to school must be checked in at the front office before going to class.

If a student needs to leave a class early, it would be helpful to know ahead of time. We encourage parents to e-mail their child's teacher, as well as our Youth and Family Programs/Office Assistant Samantha Meister, or provide a hand-written note, to inform them of your child's early dismissal.

All parents must sign their children out at the front office before leaving campus. To ensure your child's safety, we ask that parents do not pick their children up from their classrooms. Samantha Meister or our office *madrich* (aide) will call your child's classroom and ask them to be escorted by their class's *madrich* or *madricha* to the front office.

### Emergency Drills

Students regularly practice earthquake and fire drills. Teachers are instructed in intruder awareness. First aid supplies and emergency water for all students are kept at the synagogue and renewed as needed.

### Homework

When homework is assigned in Religious School, it is usually family-oriented with material relating to the curriculum.

Homework in Hebrew School is an essential component of the program. Hebrew School is skills-oriented, and, in order to learn to read and understand Hebrew, it is necessary to practice at home on a regular basis. We encourage students to practice Hebrew for at least 10 minutes, 3 times a week.

### **Classroom Observation and Visitors**

Parents are always welcome to observe their child's class. Please call or speak with the teacher and Rabbi Schwartz the week prior to see if a visit is convenient.

Students may bring a guest to class if the teacher and front office are notified by a parent in advance and approve the visit. The visitor must bring a written note with an emergency contact and his/her telephone number. Guests are expected to observe all school rules. Students whose guests are disruptive will not be permitted to bring a guest again. No guest will be allowed more than twice.

### **Snacks**

We are asking each family to contribute \$40 per child, per classroom to cover the costs of snacks during the school year. With these contributions, we are committed to providing a health-conscious snack for all students on Sunday mornings.

Additionally, we are aware that many students come directly to our Hebrew program from their weekday school. We suggest that students bring a snack to eat before class begins. Students will be asked to discard or put away any snacks at the beginning of class.

We are a nut-conscious school, meaning we will only provide snacks without peanuts, tree nuts, or walnut products. If a student has an additional or severe food allergy, we recommend that the child's parent provides an individual snack for his/her child labeled accordingly in order to avoid confusion.

If there are circumstances that require your child to eat throughout the school day, please contact Rabbi Schwartz so that he may do his best to accommodate your child's needs.

### **High School Dinners**

For an additional cost, we will provide dinners for students who attend our Tuesday evening program. Dinner will be served between 6:00pm-6:30pm. A minimum number of 10 students must be registered in order for us to provide dinners each week.

### **Tzedakah**

The prophetic ideal of Reform Judaism is preached as well as practiced at Congregation Shir Hadash. The mitzvah of *tzedakah* (just and righteous actions) encourages and enables children in our school to contribute towards Jewish and general philanthropic causes in a purposeful and educational manner. In this process, they learn the art of participation in organized Jewish community life.

Students are encouraged to bring *tzedakah* (loose change or cash) weekly to class. Towards the end of the school year, each class will select a Jewish and general philanthropic cause to donate their total earnings to.

### **Special Needs**

School-parent partnerships play an important role in developing the optimal learning program for each student. Parents of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or other learning differences are encouraged to meet with Rabbi Schwartz to assess your child's individual needs. We want to do our best in creating an inclusive environment where all students can participate in our school programs.

We also are engaging Jewish Learning Works, a bureau of Jewish education based in San Francisco, to work with us in identifying opportunities for us to further support all of our students with special needs. Members of the Jewish Learning Works team are available, on a case-by-case basis, to work with you and Rabbi Schwartz in ensuring a valuable education for your child.

### **Electronic Devices**

All students will be asked to turn off all electronic devices during our school program. We have found that the use of devices such as cell phones, game consoles, and I-Pads can prove to be distracting both in class and during recess. In addition, we want to foster opportunities for our students to socialize and build friendships.

Unless there is an extraordinary circumstance that requires your child to have access to an electronic device, **there is no exceptions to this policy**. If a child is found using an electronic device, we will confiscate it from him/her for the duration of the school day.

During certain programs or activities, teachers may allow students to use their phone or other electronic device but parents would always be notified before an activity like this occurs. Students and parents who need to contact each other during the school session may do so through the phone in the Religious School office.

### **Behavior**

An important concern of our school is the behavior of children and their attitude towards their Jewish education. Everything and action that occurs in our program, from the posters on the walls to the way in which a problem is addressed, is part of our children's Jewish education. Thus, when a child behaves inappropriately, we deal with situations such as these in a manner that is in keeping with Jewish values.

Every teacher in our Religious School has developed a classroom management plan, a *brit*, or covenant, which includes guidelines and expectations for both students and their teachers.

Students play an integral role in developing this plan. Teachers will provide you a copy of your child's classroom *brit* within the first few weeks of school.

If, after a teacher has implemented his or her management plan and a student's behavior is still not acceptable:

1. The student will be removed from the classrooms and sent to main office.
2. The Rabbi Educator will discuss the situation with the student and determine effective ways to resolve it.
3. We will make every effort to have our students return to class after meeting with the Rabbi Educator.
4. At the end of the school day, the teacher and Rabbi Educator will discuss the situation and follow up on an action plan if necessary.
5. The Rabbi Educator will contact the student's parents to inform them of the situation.

### **Bullying**

In order to foster a safe and caring community where Jewish learning and engagement takes place, Congregation Shir Hadash **does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind by any person**. Please refer to the Congregation Shir Hadash Religious School Bullying Policy for specific details about reporting protocols, supporting the target student(s) and their family, addressing the bully, and strategies to strengthen the community. Attached to the end of this document is our full bullying policy.

### **Health Concerns**

Please let Rabbi Schwartz and/or Samantha Meister, our Youth and Family Programs/Office Assistant know if your child has any special health needs or medical concerns of which we should be aware.

### **Illness**

If your child has been ill, please be sure that he/she has been free of a fever for 24 hours or on antibiotics for 24 hours before s/he returns to class.

If a child becomes ill during school, we will notify the child's parent(s) and ask that you come take your child home. In case of a major health emergency, we will notify parents immediately. If a parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, we will transport your child to the nearest hospital.

### **Medications**

We are unable to dispense medication without a parent's written permission. Epi pens can be left with our Youth and Family Programs/Office Assistant, Samantha Meister. in the front office

with your child's name on them. **Included with the pen should be a written note authorizing Congregation Shir Hadash staff to use it in case of an allergic reaction.** Please be sure the Epi pen is up to date.

### **Communication**

We believe that open communication can ensure a successful school year for you and your children. As such, we will be sending a regular weekly e-newsletter on Wednesdays with upcoming programs and school news.

In addition, teachers will be expected to communicate with you on a weekly basis via email. We hope that this will allow for a better understanding of what takes place during school. Please see these e-mails as more than just information, but rather tools to be used in order to better strengthen the Jewish education of your children. New words, topics of discussion, and special projects will be shared so that they can be utilized in discussion with your family throughout the week and in between sessions.

### **Questions and Concerns**

If there are any questions or concerns, we invite you to speak with, or e-mail your child's teacher. We want to hear from you because you are an important part of the communication chain.

Alternatively, you can call, speak with, or e-mail Rabbi Schwartz if you have been unable to resolve your concern in your contact with your child's teacher and/or are seeking other information. For general inquiries, please contact Youth and Family Programs/Office Assistant Samantha Meister.

### **Progress Reports**

Student progress reports will be sent to families in December and May. Reports are for Religious School students in kindergarten through sixth grade, and Hebrew School students in third through fifth grade. Progress reports allow our teachers to share with you your child's contributions to their class and any opportunities for growth. For Hebrew School in particular, progress reports provide a sense of your child's strengths and areas in which he or she may need additional support.

### **Worship Service Attendance**

To enhance understanding and comfort with Jewish liturgy, we strongly encourage all of our students to regularly attend services and participate in community worship. There are a variety of family-friendly worship opportunities throughout the year, including our monthly Family Service on Friday evenings from 7:00pm-8:00pm.

## Congregation Shir Hadash Religious School Bullying Policy

Approved May 24 2012

### A. Seven Jewish Values: Guidelines for Inclusive Jewish Community

*Developed by Keshet and endorsed by the Shir Hadash Board of Directors*

**כבוד** 1. Kavod: RESPECT - Judaism teaches us to treat ourselves and others with respect; even the stranger is to be treated with respect. Kavod is a feeling of regard for the rights, dignity, feelings, wishes, and abilities of others. Teasing and name-calling disrespect and hurt everyone, so learn to respect people's differences.

**שלום בית** 2. Shalom Bayit: PEACE IN THE HOME - Our community centers, synagogues, youth groups, and camps are often our second homes. Everyone needs to feel comfortable, safe, welcome, and respected at home. Don't ostracize those who seem different. Strive to settle disagreements in peaceful and respectful ways that allow all community members to maintain their dignity.

**בצלם אלהים** 3. B'tzelem Elohim: IN GOD'S IMAGE - The Torah tells us that we are all created "b'tzelem Elohim" (Bereshit 1:26), in the image of God. This is a simple and profound idea that should guide our interactions with all people. We do not know the "image of God" except as it is reflected in the different types of people we encounter in the world. If we can remember that each of us, no matter how different, is created in God's image, this idea can lead us to find the connection we have with one another and help create truly inclusive communities.

**כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה** 4. Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh: COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY - The Jewish principle that "All Israel is responsible for one another" (Shavuot 39a) means that it is our responsibility to stand up for each other, especially for those who are vulnerable and cannot speak up for themselves.

**שמירת הלשון** 5. Shmirat Halashon: GUARDING ONE'S USE OF LANGUAGE - The Talmud warns us that we must take care in how we use language. Talking about others behind their backs, even if what we are saying is true, is prohibited. The guidelines for "shmirat halashon" remind us that what we say about others affects them in ways we can never predict. Words can hurt or heal depending on how we use them.

**ואהבת לרעך כמוך** 6. V'ahavtah L'Reiecha Kamocha: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF - Commenting on Leviticus 19:18, Rabbi Hillel once stated that this was the foundational value of the Torah. It begins with loving ourselves. We must love and accept our whole selves, and in doing so create the capacity for extending that love and acceptance to others.

**אל תפרוש מן הציבור** 7. Al Tifrosh Min Hatsibur: SOLIDARITY - "Don't separate yourself from the community" (Pirke Avot 2:5). When you feel different from others in your community, don't isolate yourself. Find allies and supporters who you can talk to. If you know someone who is feeling isolated, reach out; be an ally and a friend.

and two additional values:

**לא תעמד על דם רעך** 8. Lo Ta'amod Al Dam Reiecha: DON'T STAND IDLY BY- "Don't stand on the blood of your neighbor" (Lev. 19:16). Jewish tradition does not believe in the role of an "innocent" bystander. When someone is being hurt, the whole community has a responsibility to take action.

**תוכחה** 9. Tochacha: REBUKE-"You must surely rebuke your friend" (Lev. 19:17). When we see our friends doing things that are wrong, we have a Jewish obligation to caringly remind them to do the right thing.

A. Definitions. In order to foster a safe and caring community where Jewish learning and engagement takes place, Congregation Shir Hadash does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind by any person, including students, teachers, parents, or other members of the community. Bullying based on race; religion; color; national origin; disability; age; physical appearance; learning or behavioral difference; family structure; financial status; sex; real or perceived sexual orientation; real or perceived gender identity; or any other category is prohibited.

Not all conflicts or inappropriate behaviors are bullying. Specifically, bullying is unwanted, aggressive, usually repeated behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

There are three types of bullying: verbal, social or relational bullying, and physical bullying.

1. Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things, and may include teasing; name-calling; inappropriate sexual or body comments; taunting; and threats.
2. Social or relational bullying involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships, and may include leaving someone out on purpose; telling other people not to be friends with someone; spreading rumors about someone; or embarrassing someone in public.
3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or belongings, and may include hitting; kicking; pushing; or taking or breaking someone's things.

B. Reporting Protocols.

- All members of the community, including teachers, parents, and students, have an ethical obligation to report bullying. Teachers also have a contractual obligation to do so. Students and parents can report bullying to any teacher or directly to the Rabbi-Educator.
- The teacher may interview all involved parties to gain more information and/or hold a class meeting as appropriate.

- Teachers must report known or suspected bullying in writing (email preferred) to the Rabbi-Educator immediately, preferably on the same day. Even if the situation was addressed or resolved with the teacher's help, it must be reported. In addition to the actual behavior, other details such as the time, date, location, and other people present should be included. *The teacher does not need to have witnessed the bullying. Most bullying occurs out of the range of teachers or other adults.*
- The Rabbi-Educator will gain more information from the students and/or parents to help determine whether the situation falls under these guidelines. Because this policy focuses on a healthy learning environment rather than on punishing an alleged offender, a bullying situation can be addressed even if a case cannot be "proved."
- If the bully is a teacher, the student or the parent should report directly to the Rabbi-Educator. If a teacher is being bullied, he or she should also report directly to the Rabbi-Educator. Reporters will be protected from retaliation.

C. Supporting the Victim. The school will use the following strategies to support the targeted student and the family:

- Listen and focus on the student.
- Assure the student that bullying is not their fault.
- As appropriate, provide advice or role-play how to react if bullying occurs again.
- Notify the parent(s).
- Ask the student what is needed to have a safe learning environment.
- Make changes as needed to make the student feel safe, without singling out that student.
- Follow up with the student and the family.

Addressing the Bully. The school will take the following steps in addressing bullying behavior:

- Make sure the student knows what the problem behavior is.
- Firmly and respectfully inform the student that bullying is not tolerated.
- Notify the parent(s).
- Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied and provide supportive resources to the student and/or family as needed.
- Use consequences that involve learning or building empathy.
- Involve the student in making amends or repairing the situation.
- Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences.
- Follow up with the student and the family.

D. Strengthening the Community. Shir Hadash believes in the power of community to create a sacred learning space. Administrators, teachers, and parents share responsibility for modeling the values stated above.

E.

- Teachers study these values as part of staff development and are expected to commit to this policy in their terms of employment.
- Families will be asked to read and sign this statement each year.
- School-wide programming, classroom lessons, and passive formats such as bulletin boards around these values, procedures, and policies will all be utilized to nurture a kind and respectful community.

i. Keshet is a national grassroots organization that works for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) Jews in Jewish life, [keshetonline.org](http://keshetonline.org). These seven values were part of a national anti-bullying pledge campaign endorsed by the Shir Hadash Board of Directors in October 2010.

ii. [Stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov), a federal interagency effort led by the Department of Education that works to coordinate policy, research, and communications on bullying topics.

iii. *ibid.*

## **Social Media Policy**

As an evolving, vibrant, growing Reform Jewish congregation, we view the use of blogs and social networks as a wonderful opportunity to connect with members of our diverse community. We also understand that many members of our staff use social media in their personal lives.

The following guidelines are designed to help synagogue staff members use social media mindfully and responsibly. Please keep in mind that your best guideline is common sense and respect. Your use of social media should only add to a positive sense of community within our synagogue and the world at large.

### **Guidelines**

#### **Protect Others' Privacy**

Posting pictures and videos from events is a great way to keep the community aware of the opportunities for fun and learning provided by our synagogue.

- Protect those who may be concerned about having their image posted online. If possible, let adults know whether you plan on posting photos or videos of them on social media. Refrain from associating their photo with their full name or other personal information, and don't "tag" them unless instructed to do so.
- Our children need additional protection. Therefore, we ask that you post pictures of children from behind so that their faces are not identifiable. If you would like to post an identifiable picture of a child under 18, make sure you get permission from a parent first. Don't post their name, location, or any other personal information about them.

#### **Be Sensitive**

As a religious organization, our staff has the honor of supporting our members in many different circumstances, some of which are very sensitive in nature. Please be mindful of others' expectations and refrain from posting about them online.

#### **Be a Positive Representative**

The members of our congregation visit Shir Hadash on social media to receive information that reflects our values.

If you are posting on behalf of Shir Hadash, make sure your tone and your choice of posts reflects the positive, inclusive atmosphere we have created together. Your personal social media account is a more appropriate place to share your personal opinions and interests.

## **Be Respectful**

Our synagogue respects the individuality of our members and their ability to express themselves through social media. That said, we expect your posts to reflect the respectful atmosphere we have created together for our congregation.

If you're posting about the synagogue or its members on your personal account, please be mindful that your statements will be public and will remain that way for a very long time. If you work with children from our congregation, don't post pictures of them on your personal account, and if you're relating stories about or conversations with them, don't include their names or other identifiable information.

### **A Few Quick Dos and Don'ts:**

- Do post insightful and engaging content about Judaism and Congregation Shir Hadash
- Do post pictures and video that make congregation members aware of the opportunities for fun and learning Shir Hadash provides, with permission
- Don't post pictures of children without a parent's permission
- Don't post personal information about congregation members
- Do use a tone that reflects the positive, respectful, and inclusive atmosphere we have created together at Shir Hadash

Contact the Communications Board Member with any questions at [board-communications@shirhadash.org](mailto:board-communications@shirhadash.org).

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### Sesame Shul

Geared for our students about to transition into kindergarten, Sesame Shul meets monthly and introduces Jewish values, holidays, and traditions in a developmentally appropriate way through stories, crafts, and participation in school-wide religious school programs. Students will begin to become comfortable in the sanctuary during *tefillah* (services) and have meaningful Jewish learning experiences through music, yoga, cooking, and gardening. Families will have opportunities to learn with their child and bring Judaism home to reinforce concepts taught in the classroom.

### Kindergarten

The main focus of our kindergarten curriculum is **Jewish values**. Children's literature is an important vehicle for transmitting thoughts and values, challenging ideas, and offering insights into human nature and perspectives. While Jewish-themed books can help teach Judaic values and tradition, history and holidays, quality secular books are another outstanding resource to generate an understanding of Judaic thought and heritage and transmit core Judaic values and ideals. In addition, students will begin a formal introduction to the Jewish holidays, exploring **what** we do on each respective holiday.

Students will further their comfort in the sanctuary during *tefillah* (services) and have meaningful Jewish learning experiences through music, yoga, cooking, and gardening.

### First Grade

The core theme of our first grade curriculum is **Discovering Myself in the Jewish Story**. First graders will study the stories of the book of Genesis, which include stories about our origins and creation, as well as our patriarchs and matriarchs. Students will identify how they connect with the people in the book of Genesis and their role in the ongoing story of Torah and the Jewish people. Jewish values are lifted up through the lens of these stories, followed by an exploration of how those values can be practiced today.

In addition, students will continue to learn about the Jewish holidays, exploring **why** we celebrate each respective holiday.

Students will further their comfort in the sanctuary during *tefillah* (services) and have meaningful Jewish learning experiences through music, yoga, cooking, and gardening.

### Second Grade

The core theme of our second grade curriculum is **Discovering Myself as Part of the Jewish People**. Second graders will study the stories of the book of Exodus, which include stories

about our ancestor's time as slaves in Egypt, miracles and our ancestor's redemption from Egypt, and the giving of the 10 commandments. Students will identify how these stories can guide our understanding of what it means to be part of a sacred community. Jewish values are lifted up through the lens of these stories, followed by an exploration of how those values can be practiced today.

In addition, students will continue to learn about the Jewish holidays, exploring **how we** celebrate each respective holiday.

Students will further their comfort in the sanctuary during *tefillah* (services) and have meaningful Jewish learning experiences through music, yoga, cooking, and gardening.

### **Third Grade**

The core theme of our third grade curriculum is **Exploring my Relationship with God**. Students will explore ideas of God and holiness and discover a Jewish vocabulary for thinking and talking about God. Amongst what students will learn: We cannot know what God looks like, but we can see the things God creates. We are all made in God's image. Life is a miracle, and all life is holy. We are connected to each other and to God. Students will gain a personal sense of holiness and a life rooted in Jewish spirituality.

In addition, students will continue to learn about the Jewish holidays, focusing on our **personal connections** to each respective holiday. These personal connections will aid what they learn in Hebrew school in relation to prayers and blessings.

Students will be active participants during *tefillah* (services) and have meaningful Jewish learning experiences through music, yoga, cooking, and gardening.

### **Fourth and Fifth Grade**

The main focus of our fourth and fifth grade curriculum is **Israel**. Students will be introduced to Israel's history and geography, as well as its political, commercial, and cultural life. Israel's struggle to coexist peacefully with its neighbors is presented in a thoughtful and age-appropriate way. Students will learn about Israelis their own age: what they do for fun, their favorite sports and foods, and what their schools are like.

Beginning in fourth grade, students will have the opportunity to select various electives according to their own interests. In addition to popular electives such as cooking and gardening, students may select between classes on art and music appreciation, Jewish values through sports, and others. Electives will be in four to five-week sessions throughout the school year.

## Sixth Grade

The core focus of our sixth grade curriculum is **The Prophets: Speaking out for Justice**. An ideal course of study before students undertake b'nai mitzvah preparation, students will explore the lives of the prophets and the Jewish values they exemplify. Stories based on biblical texts bring each prophet vividly to life, while narrative provides historical context for considering the challenges faced by the prophets in their own day. Connections to modern-day events and people are explored as well, helping students discover the relevance for today in the ancient messages of our biblical ancestors.

Students will also have the opportunity to select various electives according to their own interests. In addition to popular electives such as cooking and gardening, students may select between classes on art appreciation, Jewish values through sports, and others. Electives will be in four to five-week sessions throughout the school year.

## Kulanu (Seventh and Eighth Grade)

The main theme of our Kulanu curriculum is **My Judaism**. Through engaging lessons about responsibility, community, integrity, and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), students will begin to identify how Judaism connects with them today. A special focus on the Reform Jewish value of informed choice will be explored, the idea that our personal Jewish practices begin with making informed decisions and understandings of those practices.

Students will also have the opportunity to select various electives according to their own interests. In addition to popular electives such as cooking and gardening, students may select between classes on drama, Jewish values through sports, and Judaism and science, yearbook, and others. Electives will be in four to five-week sessions throughout the school year.

Beginning in seventh grade, students may also participate in the madrichim (teacher's aide) workshops with Rabbi Schwartz and serve as a madrich or madricha in the classroom.

## Chai School (Ninth Grade)

The core focus of our Chai School curriculum is **Sacred Choices, Sacred Voices**. Students will begin the year exploring issues of sex, body image, drugs, and peer-pressure through a Jewish lens and in a developmentally appropriate way. This first semester will be taught by Rabbi Schwartz. The second half of the school year will transition to the topic of the Holocaust. Guided by the work of *Facing History and Ourselves*, the Holocaust will be approached in a way that heightens students' understanding of racism, religious intolerance, and prejudice. Students' ability to relate history to their own lives and a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities in a democracy will be increased.

### **Confirmation (Tenth Grade)**

Taught by Rabbi Aron and David Spodick, students in the tenth grade meet to explore Jewish issues and formulate their own individual perspectives on ethics and theology. They work with mentors from our congregational community and create their own Confirmation service. The Confirmation class will take a trip to Sacramento with confirmands from Temple Emanuel to discover the relationship between Judaism and civic engagement. Confirmation students also will participate in Jewish experiences at Shir Hadash as well as in the broader Jewish community, including the Jewish Film Festival.

### **Jews Around the World (Eleventh and Twelfth Grade)**

There are many ethnic and religious subgroups within the *Jewish community*. *Jews* from different parts of the *world* have developed distinct cultures and customs. Students will have the opportunity to have a glimpse of Judaism's diversity in the world and meet with individuals from these communities. A highlight of the year is a six-day trip to Costa Rica, where students will have the opportunity to meet with members of the Costa Rican Jewish community and participate in service learning projects.



**Hebrew School at Congregation Shir Hadash  
2018-2019/5779**

**Hebrew School**

Our formal Hebrew school program meets on Mondays or Tuesdays, from 4:00pm-6:00pm, beginning in third grade and concluding in sixth grade. Students are divided into *kitot* (classes) based on their mastery of individual curricula for each *kitah* (class). While *kitot* generally correspond to its students' grade level, there are instances in which a student may begin the school year in a lower *kitah* or progress to a higher *kitah* than their secular school grade.

**Individualized Tutoring Program**

We also provide an individualized tutoring program for those students who need to learn at their own pace and whose schedule prevents them from attending on Mondays or Tuesdays. Tutors meet with students weekly for 30-45 minutes at Congregation Shir Hadash for a total of 30 sessions (equivalent to the total number of sessions of the Hebrew School year), at a time that is most convenient for the student.

There are also instances when students are unable to attend class on Mondays or Tuesdays for an extended period of time, but intend on returning to class when able. In these cases, we encourage the student to enroll in the individualized tutoring program for the length of time they are unable to attend class, at a prorated rate.

Please note that students in this program enroll separately from our traditional Hebrew school program.

**Private Tutoring**

For those students who are able to attend on Mondays or Tuesdays and need additional help, we will refer you to experienced tutors who are familiar with our curriculum. Please note that tutoring for this purpose is an additional cost for you and is not included within tuition.

**Goals for our Students**

....to identify Hebrew letters and vowels, decode multi-syllable words, and understand special rules.

....to fluently read prayers associated with the weekly and Shabbat evening and morning services.-129

....to develop an awareness of key vocabulary and roots associated with the prayers found in the weekly and Shabbat evening and morning services.

....to have a greater sense of understanding of the weekly and Shabbat evening and morning service structure.

....to effectively describe personal meaning associated with the prayers found in the weekly and Shabbat evening and morning services.

....to identify the symbols and melodies of Torah trope, in preparation for chanting from Torah

....to be confident prayer leaders and have comfort when attending services at other congregations.

....to gain a sense of Jewish pride and connection to past generations.

....to familiarize students with a Hebrew vocabulary encompassing words associating with Jewish life.

### **Kitah Aleph (Third Grade)**

In Kitah Aleph, students will learn basic Hebrew decoding skills, which include identifying Hebrew letters and vowels, reading multi-syllable words, and learning Jewish life vocabulary. In addition, students will begin to understand the purpose of prayer and become proficient readers in select Hebrew prayers. Students will also participate in a Family Shabbat Service with the clergy on **Friday, February 2, 2019 at 7:00pm**. Services will be preceded with a class dinner at **6:00pm**.

Regularly reviewing material and practicing reading at home will help students hone the Hebrew decoding skills and vocabulary they learn in class. As such, students will complete weekly homework via a supplemental online component associated with our student's textbook, *Alef-Bet Quest*. Students will print out an online lesson summary when they have completed all the activities in a lesson and submit it to their teacher.

Upon completion of this textbook, weekly homework assignments will reinforce prayer-based Hebrew reading. Students will be asked to submit a weekly assignment form signed by their parents.

### **Kitah Bet (Fourth Grade)**

In Kitah Bet, students apply the decoding skills acquired in Kitah Aleph and formally begin study of key prayers and blessings in Jewish tradition. Particular attention will be placed on understanding the prayers and structure of the *Maariv* (Evening) service on Shabbat. In addition to becoming proficient readers, students will begin to develop a personal connection to the prayers themselves. Vocabulary exercises, hands-on activities, and discussions strengthen prayer knowledge and acquisition. Kitah Bet students also participate in weekly tefillah, where they will be exposed to the prayers and blessings associated with the *Mincha* (Afternoon) and *Maariv* (Evening) service and develop a connection with the weekly Torah portion. Students will also lead a Shabbat Service with the clergy on **Friday, March 29, 2019 at 7:00pm**. Services will be preceded with a class dinner at **6:00pm**.

Regularly reviewing material and practicing reading at home will help students hone the Hebrew decoding skills and vocabulary they learn in class. As such, students will be assigned weekly homework. To help parents work with their children, transliterations of prayers will be provided for their use only recordings of the prayers will be provided to ensure accuracy.

### **Kitah Gimmel (Fifth Grade)**

In Kitah Gimmel, particular attention will be placed on understanding the prayers and structure of the *Shacharit* (Morning) service on Shabbat. In addition to becoming proficient readers, students will begin to develop a personal connection to the prayers themselves. Vocabulary exercises, hands-on activities, and discussions strengthen prayer knowledge and acquisition. Kitah Gimmel students also participate in weekly tefillah, where they will be exposed to the prayers and blessings associated with the *Mincha* (Afternoon) and *Maariv* (Evening) service and develop a connection with the weekly Torah portion. Students will also lead a Shabbat Service with the clergy on **Saturday, May 4, 2019 at 10:30am**. A potluck Shabbat luncheon will follow services.

Regularly reviewing material and practicing reading at home will help students hone the Hebrew decoding skills and vocabulary they learn in class. As such, students will be assigned weekly homework. To help parents work with their children, transliterations of prayers will be provided for their use only and recordings of the prayers will be provided to ensure accuracy.

### **Kitah Dalet (Sixth Grade)**

In Kitah Dalet, students will further their understanding of the prayers and structure of the *Shacharit* (Morning) service on Shabbat. Attention will also be placed on the Torah service, Haftarah blessings, and trope (cantillation). In addition to becoming proficient readers, students will begin to develop a personal connection to the prayers themselves. Vocabulary exercises, hands-on activities, and discussions strengthen prayer knowledge and acquisition. Kitah Dalet students also participate in weekly tefillah, where they will be exposed to the prayers and blessings associated with the *Mincha* (Afternoon) and *Maariv* (Evening) service and develop a connection with the weekly Torah portion. Students will also lead a Shabbat Service with the clergy on **Saturday, May 18, 2019 at 10:30am**. A potluck Shabbat luncheon will follow services.

Regularly reviewing material and practicing reading at home will help students hone the Hebrew decoding skills and vocabulary they learn in class. As such, students will be assigned weekly homework consisting of submitting recordings of their reading to their teachers.

# Congregation Shir Hadash Religious School

## 2018-2019/5779

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the Parent Handbook and understand the policies and procedures for which I am responsible. By signing this form, I accept the responsibilities contained within this Parent Handbook. I understand that I will be advised of any changes in responsibility or policy in a written addendum to this manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date