

# Temple B'nai Abraham Religious School

in  
The Louis and Emily Slater Youth and Education Center

## 2009–2010 Parent Handbook

Janet Resnick  
Religious School Director  
[jresnick@tbanj.org](mailto:jresnick@tbanj.org)

Barrie Halpern  
Assistant Religious School Director  
[bhalpern@tbanj.org](mailto:bhalpern@tbanj.org)

Elena Meinhardt  
Chair, Board of Education

Suzanne Weinick  
Vice Chair, Board of Education



TEMPLE  
B'NAI ABRAHAM  
FOUNDED 1853

P.O. Box 46, Livingston, NJ 07039  
Tel. (973) 994-3950 Fax (973) 994-7999

Dear Parents:

One of the first things we parents learn is that the cliché is right. Our children don't do what we say; they do what we do.

We learn this in many ways. Our children will not be inclined to read if they only see us in front of a computer or television screen. They will be averse to playing outside if we are confirmed couch potatoes. It will certainly be hard to get them to eat right if our own diets are heavy on fats, refined sugars and fast foods.

This principle also applies to us as Jews: we can tell our children as vigorously and as ardently as we want how important Hebrew school is and how important it is to us that they become knowledgeable Jews. However, unless we walk the walk, and not merely take the talk, that being Jewish is important, the message will not have the impact we want.

Every year, innumerable hours of family time are devoted to our children's Jewish education. Car pool, time in class, service attendance...the list goes on. We hope this investment of time and energy will reap great benefits, namely our children learning a lot and having their Jewish identities reinforced. Yet strange as it may seem, the most important aspect of Hebrew school is not what takes place in the classroom. It is what takes place at home.

Educating our children as Jews is a partnership between you at home and us at the synagogue. We provide the classroom learning, the committed caring teachers, the curriculum that conveys the information we want our children to absorb. But if they are to absorb that information, you have a role to play as well.

You should ensure that your children arrive on time and are prepared to learn. They must understand that good behavior and a proper attitude are important. The best way to create that proper attitude? Let your kids see that this is important to you.

If they see Jewish symbols in your home; if your family observes holidays and the occasional Shabbat; if you appear eager and interested in what they learn in Hebrew school and give lots of positive reinforcement...that's how we create a child who not only learns, but understands what is important. There is a lot more to it than carpool drop off. This is the way we create a new generation of Jews.

The entire staff of the synagogue is here to help you and to work with you. I hope you join with us actively in this sacred task, whether through the PTA, volunteering in the school, or simply as a concerned, responsive parent. We can't do it alone.

Please contact me directly if there is any way in which I can be of help. I would look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Clifford M. Kulwin

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

- **Arrival**: The Primary school meets on Wednesdays and Thursday 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
- **Curriculum**: The children learn and socialize through an integrated program of Jewish stories, games, drama, music, art, holiday celebrations and fun prayer services. At services, the children begin to learn prayers, and hear stories about the Bible and Jewish values.
- **Tzedakah**: Each week we encourage our Primary children to perform the mitzvah of helping those who are less fortunate by bringing in *tzedakah* money.
- **Communication**: E-mail is an important form of communication we utilize throughout the year.
- **Attendance**: Primary School attendance is flexible. We understand that there may be times when your child will need to leave early or be absent.

## HEBREW SCHOOL ALEPH – DALET GOOD ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- **Arrival**: Hebrew School sessions are Tuesday/Thursday and Monday/Wednesday 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM.
- **Curriculum**: Siddur reading skills, learning Jewish customs, history, ceremonies, holidays and ethics.
- **Tzedakah**: Each week we encourage our Primary children to perform the mitzvah of helping those who are less fortunate by bringing in *tzedakah* money.
- **Communication**: E-mail is our main form of communication with you. Please keep us updated.
- **Hebrew School Attendance for Good Academic Standing**

In order to be promoted to the next grade, a student will not have more than **10** absences and **6** early dismissals and/or late arrivals during the academic school year. Any student exceeding the absence/early Dismissal/late arrival maximum or missing concentrated or consecutive class time may be required to have private tutoring at the parent(s) expense. (See Private Tutoring Policy on pg. 6)

If your child will be absent more than 2 consecutive days, please call the school office to report his/her absence and inquire about make-up assignments.

Extenuating circumstances regarding attendance should be discussed with the Religious School Directors as soon as possible.

- **Shabbat/Holiday Attendance**

Each student must attend **at least 8** Shabbat/ Holiday services during the year, not including Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. If the minimum requirement is not met before the end of the Hebrew School year, the student will not be in Good Academic Standing for the following year. The student will be required to make up the missed Shabbat/Holiday attendance by November 1 of the following year.

The student is responsible for signing the attendance book on the table outside of the coat room. The sign-in book will be removed ten minutes after services begin on any Friday or holiday service, and fifteen minutes after Shabbat morning services begin. If the student does not sign in, credit will not be given. We strongly encourage families to attend one service a month. Please sit with your child as a family and encourage them to follow along in the Siddur and to participate in the service.

- **Shabbat/Holiday Dress Code**: Students are expected to come to all services on time and dressed in a respectable and appropriate manner. Please do not wear jeans, tee shirts, sweat suits and other informal attire. The taking of photographs or videos during services is prohibited.

- **Shabbat Code of Conduct:** Cell phones must be turned off during services and put away. Children should sit with their parents. Gum chewing and leaving the Sanctuary during a standing prayer are not appropriate.
- **Shabbat/Holiday Notification:** All students will receive notice of their compliance with the class and Shabbat/Holiday attendance requirement periodically throughout the year. Parents will be notified when a student's absences, early dismissals, and/or late arrivals exceed the limits allowed.
- **Failure to be in Good Academic Standing:** If a student fails to meet the above requirements by the beginning of the following school year, the student will **not** be in Good Academic Standing. Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates will not be given to students who are not in Good Academic Standing and students will not be scheduled to begin their Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons. In addition, students who are not in Good Academic Standing will not graduate from the Temple B'nai Abraham Religious School. Good Academic Standing can be regained by private tutoring and make up assignments. (See Tutoring Policy below)

### **HEY CLASS GOOD ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

- **Arrival Time:** Class starts promptly at 6:25 pm and ends at 8:00 pm. Hey students may arrive at 6:00 pm to accommodate families picking up Religious School students.
- **Curriculum:** The Hey curriculum includes Hebrew, Holocaust and Jewish Ethics and Literacy. Students will have the opportunity to hear testimonies from Holocaust survivors in addition to other Holocaust media presentations. The curriculum alternates weekly; Holocaust and Hebrew classes one week, followed by Jewish Literacy and Jewish Ethics classes the next week. class.
- **Tzedakah:** Each week we encourage our Primary children to perform the mitzvah of helping those who are less fortunate by bringing in *tzedakah* money.
- **Communication:** E-mail is our main form of communication with you. Please keep us updated.
- **Volunteer Hours:** 15 total volunteer hours are required for the year as follows:
  - 5 synagogue volunteer hours
  - 5 community service volunteer hours
  - 3 hours of student's choice (community service or synagogue)
  - 2 hours working at the Purim Carnival on Wednesday, February 24, 2010.
  - 7+ hours should be completed by Tuesday, January 12, 2010.
  - A minimum of 15 hours will be completed by Tuesday, May 4, 2010 in order for the student to be eligible for graduation.
- **Attendance:** Hey Class students are allowed up to 6 absences during the year in order to remain in Good Academic Standing. Any additional absences may require make-up assignments and/or private tutoring at the parent(s) expense. Please reference the Parent Handbook located on our website for complete details on Good Academic Standing and Private Tutoring Policy. Please contact the Religious School Director(s) if there will be any consecutive absences during the school year, e.g. athletics, drama, music, competitions etc., preventing regular attendance.
- **Shabbat/Holiday Attendance:** Hey Class students are required to attend **4 services** as follows; **two Saturday morning services** other than their B'nai Mitzvah service and **two additional services** either on Friday night or a holiday service not including *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.
- **Shabbat/Holiday Dress Code:** Students are expected to come to all services on time and dressed in a respectable and appropriate manner. Please do not wear jeans, tee shirts, sweat suits and other informal attire. The taking of photographs or videos during services is prohibited.

- **Shabbat Code of Conduct:** Cell phones must be turned off during services and put away. Children should sit with their parents. Gum chewing and leaving the Sanctuary during a standing prayer are not appropriate.
- **Shabbat/Holiday Notification:** All students will receive notice of their compliance with the class and Shabbat/Holiday attendance requirement periodically throughout the year. Parents will be notified when a student's absences, early dismissals, and/or late arrivals exceed the limits allowed.
- **Failure to be in Good Academic Standing:** If a student fails to meet the above requirements by the beginning of the following school year, the student will not be in Good Academic Standing. Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates will not be given to students who are not in Good Academic Standing and students will not be scheduled to begin their Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons. In addition, students who are not in Good Academic Standing will not graduate from the Temple B'nai Abraham Religious School. Good Academic Standing can be regained by private tutoring and make up assignments. (See Tutoring Policy below)

### **TUTORING POLICY**

- **Hebrew Center Tutoring:** When teachers identify children experiencing difficulty in Hebrew reading, the students will receive extra help during school hours in the Hebrew Center. In addition, students will be expected to practice Hebrew lessons at home using their CD. If, after attending the Hebrew Center and practicing at home, a student still has difficulty in achieving the Hebrew reading goals, a tutor from the Temple B'nai Abraham teaching staff will be recommended for private tutoring at the parent's expense.
- **Private Tutoring Arrangements:** The goals for students needing private tutoring outside the Hebrew Center is determined by the child's classroom teacher in conjunction with the Religious School Directors. The family is responsible for the specific arrangements with the tutor concerning the cost and his/her available days and times. The tutor fills out reports after each tutoring session and submits them to the Assistant Religious School Director. The Religious School Director will determine when tutoring is no longer required. In general, the formula followed is one hour of tutoring for every two hours of class time missed.

### **SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS**

- If a student has documented special learning needs, a conference will be held with the parents and, if appropriate, a modified set of requirements will be established for that child.

### **TRANSFER POLICY FOR NEW HEBREW SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- Perspective students must have their Hebrew reading ability evaluated before they are placed in a Hebrew class. Temple B'nai Abraham reserves the right to contact the previous Religious School in order to help in the evaluation process. If the student's Hebrew reading is at grade level, he or she will be placed in the appropriate age and grade level class. If the student is not reading at grade level, Temple B'nai Abraham reserves the right to place the student in the appropriate Hebrew class, regardless of age and grade in secular school. If the family prefers that the transfer student be placed in a class with children of the same age and grade level, and the Director feels this goal is attainable, private tutoring will be required. (See Private Tutoring Arrangements above) Once the student has caught up to his/her grade level, according to an evaluation by the Religious School Director, tutoring sessions may be discontinued.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT SHABBAT SERVICES**

- It has become a tradition for our students to celebrate their birthdays with Rabbi Kulwin and the Congregation at Friday evening services. All children who attend the service and are celebrating a birthday will be invited up to the Bema to receive a special birthday blessing and gift. (Please Note: For complete information including all dates of Birthday Shabbat celebrations refer to the Temple B'nai Abraham Monthly Bulletin or visit [www.tbanj.org](http://www.tbanj.org) to view the monthly calendar.)

## **JUNIOR CONGREGATION SERVICES**

- Dates: Saturdays 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. in the Brody Youth Lounge

September	12*	January	09
October	24*	February	06
November	14	March	06
December	05	April	17
<b>*Required for Aleph Students</b>		May	01

- Arrival: Students must arrive for Junior Congregation Services on Saturdays no later than 9:30 a.m., highlight their name on the attendance sheet and not leave services before 11:00 a.m. to receive credit for attendance. Please record your child(ren)'s Shabbat attendance for your records. However, if your child does not sign in, credit will not be given.

## **HEBREW SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE**

- On Monday, November 9 and Tuesday, November 10, all parents are invited to visit their child's class during the 4:00-6:00 p.m. time period. We encourage every parent to visit their child's class and see for themselves the lessons and skills being taught. This is a great opportunity to meet your child's Hebrew School teachers.

## **BAR/BAT MITZVAH REQUIREMENTS**

- In order to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students must be in good academic and attendance standing. Excessive absences, late and early dismissals may necessitate private tutoring at the parents' expense. Approximately six months before the student becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and all Temple requirements and Good Academic Standards are being met, he/she will begin preparation with the Cantor or the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor. The Cantor or Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor will contact you to begin your lessons.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

- For safety reasons, children cannot meet their parents outside the Synagogue. Parents only (no siblings) must come into the school office and sign the early dismissal book. Please do not remove an entire carpool of children if only one child has an appointment or conflict. Too many early dismissals/late arrivals will require make-up work and/or private tutoring at the parents' expense. (Please refer to the School Attendance Policy.)

## **HEBREW HOMEWORK POLICY**

- Hebrew homework is a necessary tool to ensure learning Hebrew and prayers in a timely manner. Reviewing and listening to the CD and working on Hebrew websites are essential to achieving success in Hebrew.

## **REPORT CARDS**

- Report cards are issued at the end of December and at the closing of the year.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION**

- In the event that the Livingston Township Public Schools close dismiss early, or after school activities are cancelled, the Religious School will be closed. We call the Livingston and Short Hills Schools to announce a school cancellation. If you attend a private or public school in a different town, calls will be made to your home or office. If you are in doubt, call the school office (973) 994-3950 ext: 295 to find out if school is in session. The Religious School voice mail message will indicate the latest information regarding school closings.

## **JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP**

- The formal educational program of our Hebrew School is supplemented by the students' involvement in our Junior Youth Group called Kidz Connect led by Barrie Halpern. This program is for children in grades three through six. The group meets one Wednesday and one Thursday directly following Hebrew School with an occasional weekend or mid-week event.

## **EXECUTIVE STAFF**

Clifford M. Kulwin, Rabbi  
Barry R. Friedman, D.D., Rabbi Emeritus  
Jessica F. Epstein, Cantor  
Lee Coopersmith, Cantor  
Gail A. Milchman, Executive Director  
Janet A. Resnick, Religious School Director  
Deborah Aronson Ziering, Early School Director, Early School  
  
Ed Meinhardt, Temple President

## **SCHOOL FACULTY 2009 - 2010**

### **PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Dawn Abraham  
Rena Casser  
Linda Feldman  
Lisa O'Kyle

### **Special Education**

Michele Littman

### **HEBREW SCHOOL**

Alyssa Campbell	Fariba Mahgerefteh
Ronit Davidson	Esther Parnes
Terri Friedman	Miriam Peled
Barrie Halpern	Florence Goldberg
Goldie Jacoby	Gina Rossell
Debra Jast-Cirkus	Karen Weiss
Nancy Lichtenberg	Edit Yarkoni

Bonnie McCarthy, Administrative Assistant  
bmccarthy@tbanj.org

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Elena Meinhardt, Chair  
Suzanne Weinick, Vice Chair, Board of Education  
  
Julie Sibermann, Temple Officer Liaison to the Religious School

Janet A. Resnick, Religious School Director  
Barrie Halpern, Assistant Religious School Director  
Debbie Aronson Ziering, Early School Director  
Sheila Grossman, Early School Founding Director

## **PTA OFFICERS**

President: Sandra Kantor  
Treasurer: Wendy Wiseberg  
Corresponding Secretary: Donna Shahrabani  
Passover Model Seders: Suzy Allen, Micheline Abelson  
Shabbat Dinner Coordinator: Kimberly Schwartz  
Sukkathon: Tracy Friedman, Tracy Duberman  
Children's Holiday Celebrations: Wendy Steiner, Debbie Gertler, Amy Darrow, Robin Kollin  
Purim Carnival: Kara Maser, Melissa Simon  
Bagel Sales: Amy Zamore

## **NOTE**

All policies of Temple B'nai Abraham's Religious School have been formulated by the Directors and Board of Education to uphold the standards and prerequisites that have been approved and authorized by the Temple Board of Trustees. We will be pleased to furnish additional information upon request. Please call the school office at (973) 994-3950 if you need our assistance.