



# Temple Israel Religious School Parents' Handbook

## 5780/2019-20

When we teach our children who they are and where they belong, we perform the deed of Jewish parenting.

### **Important Contact Information:**

TIRS Director: Rabbi Helene Kornsgold 704-944-6786 / [hkornsgold@templeisraelnc.org](mailto:hkornsgold@templeisraelnc.org)  
Education & Youth Assistant: Melissa Lefko 704-944-6785 / [mlefko@templeisraelnc.org](mailto:mlefko@templeisraelnc.org)  
TIRS Advisory Committee Chairperson: Nicole Levine 704-577-1601 / [levinefamily44@gmail.com](mailto:levinefamily44@gmail.com)  
TIRS PTO President: Ilana Esposito 704-905-1813 / [ptotirs@gmail.com](mailto:ptotirs@gmail.com)  
TIRS Website: [www.templeisraelnc.org/religious-school](http://www.templeisraelnc.org/religious-school)  
Facebook: "Like" us on Facebook to receive TIRS updates: [Temple Israel Religious School - TIRS](https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Israel-Religious-School-TIRS)

### **VISION**

We seek to nurture our children to celebrate their Jewish identity in the context of our modern American lives, to forge life-long bonds with *Adonai* (God), *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish people) and *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel), and to commit to a life of Jewish values and learning.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Temple Israel Religious School (TIRS) provides Jewish children with a quality Jewish education focusing on basic Hebrew and ritual skills and competencies, as well as understanding of foundational texts, values and practices, while at the same time encouraging a joyous attitude toward Judaism and Jewish learning. TIRS is committed to providing our students with a caring and responsive learning environment to foster a strong Jewish identity and the foundation of a meaningful Jewish life. At the same time, we recognize that the breadth and depth of our rich tradition cannot be conveyed in a few hours a week, or fully grasped by still-developing young minds. Becoming an educated Jew is a life-long process which we acknowledge has barely begun when a student reaches the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

At TIRS, we strive to enhance the Jewish experiences of our families by bringing parents and children together for fun, interesting and meaningful activities in our synagogue and school. Each grade offers at least one Sunday, and one or two Shabbat family education programs (see calendar).

### **GUIDING VALUES**

**Mishpacha:** We recognize the centrality of the *family* to the Jewish experience. Parents bear the responsibility for a child's Jewish education through deed and example, but the school also bears a responsibility to create compelling educational opportunities that foster family learning, teaching both parents and children. We recognize the diversity of family structures that comprise our Religious School community and strive to partner with our families to create the kind of educational climate which enriches their home environments and enables all to deepen their Jewish connections.

**Kehillah:** We are also part of a wider family - the *community* of families, friends and fellow congregants who form our school and our Temple, and our local, national and international Jewish communities. By participating in our local Jewish *kehillah* we strengthen our bonds of belonging.

**Mitzvot:** Our expression of Judaism has historically been the Mitzvot, *the commandments of God*. We strive to instill in our children a sense that Mitzvot are more than good deeds. Mitzvot express our *connection* with God and with the Jewish people. Mitzvot imply obligations, moral responsibility, ethical precepts, a sense of justice and commitment to social action.

**B'tzelem Elohim:** We affirm that humans are created *in the image of God*. We wish to instill in our children an abiding sense of self, founded on the notion that there is a spark of the Divine in every individual. Thus, self-respect and respect for others cannot be separated. As we acknowledge the Divinity in every individual, so too do we acknowledge that God is the Creator of all things. We must strive to affirm the dignity of all God's creations.

**La'asok b'divrei Torah:** The on-going *study of Torah* is inextricably linked to the creating of a strong sense of Jewish identity. We wish to instill in our children a love for the study of Torah, including Bible, Tradition, culture, rituals, life cycle, holidays, Jewish history, and Hebrew language. We hope to expose our children to the full richness of Jewish life.

**Kol Yisrael arevim zeh ba-zeh:** We, as Jews, are the People of Israel. We affirm that the People of Israel are diverse: we are a people of many races, cultures, languages, and practices. Though our faces may be different, *each member of the Jewish People is uniquely responsible for the other*. We strive to instill in our children a love for **Eretz Yisrael - The Land of Israel**, a respect for Jews around the world, knowledge of Jewish practices and customs, and an understanding of that which we have in common.

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## SCHEDULE

- **Gan-Bet (Grades K-2):** Sunday, 9:30am-12:05pm
- **Gimel-Zayin (Grades 3-7):** Sunday, 9:30am-12:05pm **AND** attend either on Tuesday, 4:45-6:15pm or Wednesday, 5:15-6:45pm
- **Junior Congregation: Gimel-Zayin (Grades 3-7):** A dynamic, interactive and fun Shabbat service that meets on Saturdays (twice a month, check the website) 10:30am-11:45am, followed by kiddush, in the chapel. Students learn the major prayers and can practice leading them. They also review the weekly *parashah* (Torah portion) through discussion and storytelling.

## **OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM**

**Comprehensive Jewish Education** including holidays and Jewish traditions, values, stories of the Bible and the Jewish people, Israel and Jewish issues in today's world, featuring:

- **Interactive, Hands-on Learning**, for all grades.
- **Experiential Family Education** for each grade.
- **Hebrew Education** focusing on reading competency, Hebrew vocabulary and *tefillah* (prayer)
- **Shira/Tefillah** with Cantor Lissek every Sunday.
- **Building Kehillah (Community)** through fun, interactive and creative engagement.
- **Family Education Program** - during the year each class has a special learning session and project with their parents. This program is led by the teachers of each grade.
- **Gemilut Chasadim** - "Deeds of Loving Kindness" service projects to be incorporated into the Sunday program.

### **A Note about our teachers - They make it all possible**

All our teachers possess three common traits (in no particular order): love of children, love of Judaism and love of teaching. Each one of our teachers work very hard to ensure your child and family have positive Jewish experiences. Yet, in many communities, teachers are regularly overlooked. Consider ways that you, and your fellow parents in class, can honor and thank our teachers whenever possible. Please also consult Ilana Esposito, our TIRS PTO President, for ways to honor our teachers.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### **What should my child bring?**

Please send the following items:

- 2 *kippot* labelled with the child's name, in a Ziploc bag (please see the kippah policy below)
- A school bag (All school days except Shabbat)
- Sharpened pencils (2) (All school days except Shabbat)
- Required text or papers (All school days except Shabbat)
- Tzedakah (Sunday only)

### **Kippah Policy: Our Jewish "Uniform"**

Boys and girls are required to cover their heads at Temple Israel Religious School. A kippah denotes respect for and love of God. We honor God and show our respect when we cover our heads. Since Temple Israel is an egalitarian Conservative synagogue—in which both males and females are treated equally—boys, girls, men and women are encouraged to show their respect in the same manner. Therefore, Temple Israel and Rabbi Siegel ask that all students, teachers and *madrichim* wear a kippah every time they come to Religious School or are in the synagogue building.

For health reasons, *kippot* cannot be shared and/or used by different people. For this reason, parents are asked to provide their children with a couple of *kippot* at the beginning of the school year and to label them with their child's first and last names.

### **Attendance**

Class Attendance - In order to attain a complete Jewish education, maximize opportunities for interacting with classmates, and facilitate continuity for optimal learning, students are expected to attend a minimum of 75% of TIRS classes. Regular attendance is also critical for students to remain on track for their B'nai Mitzvah (and to work as a madrich/a).

Notification of Absences - If you know in advance your child will be absent, please inform the teacher so s/he may provide you with homework or make-up work, and also email Melissa Lefko in the Religious School office at [mlefk@templeisraelnc.org](mailto:mlefk@templeisraelnc.org).

Shabbat Attendance - In addition to Religious School, TIRS students and parents are encouraged to attend Shabbat services as often as possible. The more frequently students participate in services, the more familiar and comfortable they become with the prayers, and the better prepared they are for their B'nai Mitzvah.

### **Shabbat Attendance Requirement**

**Kitah Gimel and Kitah Dalet (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>)** Students are *required* to attend at least 8 Shabbat morning services during the school year September 8, 2019 - May 17, 2020 (though you may begin earning attendance credit beginning as of September 1). Students may attend either the main service with at least 1 parent or Junior Congregation. Students can also get credit for attending Friday night services in lieu of attending Shabbat morning (up to 4 Friday night services can be counted towards fulfilling this requirement).

**Kitah Hey and Kitah Vav (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>)** Students are *required* to attend at least 10 Shabbat morning services during the school year September 8, 2019 - May 17, 2020 (though you may begin earning attendance credit beginning as of September 1). Students may attend either the main service with at least 1 parent or Junior Congregation. Students can also get credit for attending Friday night services in lieu of attending Shabbat morning (up to 5 Friday night services can be counted towards fulfilling this requirement).

**Kitah Zayin (7<sup>th</sup>)** During the year leading up to a child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah the requirement is to attend at least 12 Shabbat morning services during the school year September 8, 2019 - May 17, 2020 (though you may begin earning attendance credit beginning as of September 1). This provides the students with repeated exposure to the service which helps them as they prepare to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students also get credit for attending Friday night services in lieu of attending Shabbat morning (up to 6 Friday night services will be counted towards fulfilling this requirement).

The *Kavannah* award will be presented to students who attend more than the required number of services. There will also be a special award given to the student who attends the most Shabbat services throughout the school year.

### **Arrival Time, Punctuality & Location**

Classes will begin promptly at the times listed above. Please drop your children off at the TIRS building (Gorelick Family Education Building E). On Sundays, please do not drop your child off before 9:15am. The school doors do not open until 9:15am.

Every TIRS family will be given an **access code** that allows entry to the building during drop off and pick up times. The access codes are unique and assigned to each family. Please be on the lookout for an email from Melissa Lefko with your family's unique access code.

### **Early Dismissal**

We understand there may be times when your child or family has pressing commitments, but we ask for your cooperation in minimizing disruptions to TIRS classes. On occasions when early pickup is unavoidable, parents are requested to come to the school office and sign their child(ren) out (students will not be sent outside to meet their parents before the school day ends). Please note, students will not be sent down for early dismissal after 11:50am.

### **Evaluation and Communication with Families**

Evaluation is an on-going process throughout the school year. Teachers will be communicating information about the topics and activities covered in the previous Sunday class (and for students in Kitah Gimel- Kitah Zayin, 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades, updates from the weekday class) in addition to information about upcoming class events such as Shabbat services, School Wide Shabbat services, holiday programs and other school related gatherings, etc..

### **Weekly e-blast from Rabbi Kornsgold**

At the end of every week parents receive an email from Rabbi Kornsgold. The email contains general information about the school regarding upcoming programs such as: School Wide Shabbat Services, Junior Congregation, Dessert Onegs, holiday celebrations and more. Please read the entire e-blast. It contains important information for all families.

### **Learning Assistance/Tikvah Charlotte**

If there is an issue related to a student having learning challenges, then the Education Director will call parents and develop a plan to address the issue with them. There is a program, Tikvah Charlotte, which was established to help students learn Hebrew in a way that meets their needs, (which takes place during school hours on Sunday). Please contact Rabbi Kornsgold if you would like more information about this program.

At the end of each semester the school will send home progress reports noting the attendance for each student at Friday night and/or Saturday morning services; as well as a tally of school attendance for that semester.

## **Snacks and Food**

### **Kashrut**

Our school building is kosher/dairy. Please do not send any non-kosher food to school. This includes food from fast food franchises. Parents may send in a snack that is dairy or 100% vegetarian which has

been prepared for their child only. If they would like to send in food to be shared with the entire class, it must be in its original packaging, the package must bear a recognized *hechsher* (kashrut symbol) and be pareve (e.g. containing neither milk nor meat products) or dairy. Foods purchased from local vendors who have been approved by Rabbi Siegel are also acceptable.

### Food Allergies

Please do not send in anything containing tree nuts or peanuts, even if it is only for your child. If you would like to send in a snack to share with the entire class, please consult with the teacher first to find out if there are any students in the class with other food allergies.

### Sunday Snacks

The PTO will collect money from all parents at the beginning of the school year so the school can provide snacks to all students during the school day each Sunday. Snack time will be used as an opportunity for teaching appropriate *b'rachot* (blessings) related to food as well as providing the students 10 minutes of time to re-energize.

### **Carpool**

#### Drop-off and Pickup Procedures

- Our first priority is your child's safety and we will take every measure to ensure carpool is safe.
- Please drive slowly, carefully, and alertly during carpool. Parents are asked **NOT** to be on cell phones during carpool.
- Please do not pass any cars once in the carpool line. Children often enter and exit their vehicle on the driver's side, so please wait patiently.

#### Drop-Off

1. Enter Shalom Park at the main drive off Providence Rd.
2. At the first stop sign, turn RIGHT (towards Temple Beth El and the Levine JCC outdoor pool).
3. Proceed through the top level of the Levine JCC parking lot and past the entrance to the library.
4. Drop your child off in front of one of the numbered signs (1, 2, 3 or 4) in front of the Gorelick Education Building (Building E). **PLEASE, do not let your child exit from the car until you are in front of the numbered signs.**

#### Pick-up

- To maximize safety and efficiency the school will have two designated pick-up areas: one in the front of the school for carpool only, and one in the back for walk-up parents only.
- You must commit to being either a "walk-up parent" or a "carpool parent," so that your child will be brought to the correct designated spot.
- Parents are to provide the school with the names of all students riding in their carpool, and the names of all authorized adult drivers, in writing, **at least one week before school starts.**
- Parents are responsible to keep the school informed of any court orders, changes in custody arrangements, or anything else affecting the list of authorized adults.

### **Front Dismissal/Carpool:**

To pick up in the carpool lane at the front, please follow these steps:

1. Follow driving instructions from Drop-off procedures. Continue to proceed to the TIRS building, moving forward as cars in front of you move up.

2. Students will wait with their teachers by class in the lobby area. A TIRS staff person will collect carpool names and share them with the teacher dismissing students.
3. Carpools are to stay in line and pull up to the farthest numbered sign (starting with 1) in front of the school.
4. Students will be called and come out to meet their carpool as it pulls up.

#### **Back Door/Walk Up:**

To pick up at the playground, please follow these steps:

1. Park in the Levine JCC's parking lot. Please do not park along the curb or in the maintenance driveway.
2. Go into the playground and sign out your child(ren) with the staffer holding the clipboard at the back door.
3. Once your child(ren) have been signed out, they will be immediately brought to you.
4. Students will wait in the cafeteria with a teacher until their name is called for pick-up. The students will then be escorted to the back door where they will be released to their carpool driver. **Parents or carpool drivers are then responsible for the children in their charge.**

**IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, PLEASE INFORM TIRS OF THE NAMES OF THOSE AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP YOUR CHILDREN.**

#### **Security: Keeping our Children Safe**

The building has a high-quality security system. All the doors are secured and locked throughout the week. TIRS Families have an access code to enter the TIRS building during school hours on Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Your access is determined by your child's TIRS schedule. If your child is enrolled for Sundays only, then you only have Sunday access. If your child is enrolled for Midweek Hebrew (either Tuesday or Wednesdays), then you have Sunday AND midweek access. You will enter your code on the keypad (bottom box) located at the front door to Building E. If you need to access the building at other times, you can use the call box (top box labeled with the word, CALL) to contact the office to be granted access.

#### **School Cancellation**

The Education Director, in consultation with the Temple, will determine if inclement weather or other hazardous conditions warrant the closing of school. Religious School closings will be announced on our website [www.templeisrael.org](http://www.templeisrael.org); on WSOC TV and TV64, and on their website: [www.WSOCTV.com](http://www.WSOCTV.com). We will also send out an email to all TIRS families, and if possible, change the voice mail on the school and/or Temple Israel office phones. Please note: The decision to close or to keep TIRS open does not always follow what CMS decides.

#### **Behavior Policy**

At Temple Israel, we seek to create a warm, secure, and joyful learning environment for our students. This is essential in helping our students develop a sense of love for and identification with Judaism as well as the Temple Israel congregation. In order to maintain a positive atmosphere in our Religious School, there must be mutual respect and understanding among teachers, students, and families - each is a partner in creating this environment. Our teachers and students will treat each other with dignity and respect. Expectations for classroom behavior will be clearly defined by the classroom teacher.

It is important for teachers, students, and parents to understand that there are consequences for disruptive and disrespectful behavior. Those consequences include an opportunity for doing *t'shuvah* (correcting one's behavior). Jewish tradition describes a process of four steps to be performed by the student - who may be assisted by parents and the teacher. It should be understood that doing these

four steps is not simple. The student will:

1. Recognize the reason the behavior was inappropriate.
2. Admit verbally that the behavior was inappropriate.
3. Make amends for the behavior to whoever was hurt because of it.
4. Resolve firmly not to repeat the behavior.

If disruptive or disrespectful behaviors occur, they will be handled in the classroom whenever possible. Parents will be notified if student's behavior becomes inappropriate. Should it become necessary for a student to be removed from the classroom, the following procedures will be used to maintain a positive learning environment:

1. If a student is referred to the office for inappropriate behavior, the Education Director will discuss the issue and the consequences of the disruptive behavior. The student will be asked to write (or draw, if appropriate) the reasons they were sent to the office and what they intend to do about it. This paper will be sent home to be signed by the parent and will be returned the next school day.
2. If a student is referred to the office a second time, a Parent- Teacher- Education Director conference will be set up.
3. Should the student be sent to the office a third time; the parent will be advised to pick up the student immediately. He or she may not be readmitted to the classroom until a conference has been held with the parent, teacher, Education Director and the synagogue Rabbi.
4. Continued behavior problems will result in a meeting with the parent, the Education Director, the synagogue Rabbi and a representative of the TIRS Advisory Committee, and may lead to a student being required to do community service, to be suspended or to being expelled from Temple Israel Religious School.

### **Cell Phones, iPods and Electronic Devices**

Cell phones, iPods and other electronic devices may **NOT** be used at TIRS while school is in session without explicit teacher permission. **Unless a teacher has instructed the class to use their phones as part of a lesson, all such devices must be completely powered off and stored in the students' school bag or in the holders provided in each room.** Any cell phone or electronic device being used in class without permission will result in the phone/device being confiscated by the teacher.

**NOTE:** NO cell phones or electronic devices are allowed to be used in the synagogue on Shabbat.

### **Dress**

Students should dress comfortably enough to participate in a range of activities, but clothing should be respectful - e.g. neither too revealing nor containing words or images that may be considered offensive.

When attending Shabbat services, students and parents should dress appropriately to show respect for the sanctity of Shabbat. Appropriate dress means neat and clean shirts, blouses, skirts and/or slacks. No jeans, shorts, sneakers, revealing clothing or mini skirts.

### **How can I support my child's Jewish education?**

1. Coming prepared to Religious School makes a tremendous difference. Please make sure your child comes with all the items listed on page 3.
2. We have found a direct correlation between a student's attendance and their achievement, interest and attitude. Please help your child maintain regular attendance and to arrive at school on time for classes.
3. We can best help your child if we are aware of his/her needs. If your child is experiencing difficulties in public school, s/he will most likely experience similar challenges in Religious School. Please inform the school of any physical, social or learning challenges your child may be experiencing.
4. Many of our students are involved in various extracurricular activities. Sports, music, scouting, etc. are all important, but please place priority on your child's Jewish education.



5. Parent involvement is one of the best predictors of future Jewish engagement. Please come to your child's Family Education programs and try to attend Shabbat and Holiday services with your child as often as possible.

## **RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

### **Tikvah Charlotte Program: Jewish Education for Children with Special Learning Needs**

Jewish education should be available to all Jewish children. We are proud to be a sponsor of **Tikvah Charlotte**, a joint program of Temple Israel and Temple Beth El. Classes are held Sunday mornings for one hour, between the hours of 9:30am and 11:00am in the JCC Blumenthal Education Building. Please contact Deborah Hitt, Tikvah Director, at [debhitt18@gmail.com](mailto:debhitt18@gmail.com) for further details.

### **TIRS Advisory Committee**

Our Advisory Committee oversees all activities of the school, creating policy, evaluating curriculum, reviewing procedures, spearheading innovations, and supporting all school related activities. If you're interested in serving on the committee, please contact Melissa Lefko and she will reach out to the Advisory Committee Chairperson **Nicole Levine**.

### **P.T.O (Parent/Teacher Organization)**

Please support the PTO!!! The funds collected in each class at the beginning of the school year pay for **student snacks, extra activities for all grade levels, holiday celebrations, creative materials for students, teacher appreciation**, and much more! Volunteers are always needed as class ambassadors, committee members and event planners. There are several ways for you to support our school throughout the year including:

- Collecting **Box Tops for Education**
- Linking your **Harris Teeter VIC Card** to TIRS via code **4647**
- Designate TIRS as your school of choice on your **Target Red Card** via code **153638**

Please contact PTO President **Ilana Esposito** if you're interested in helping or have questions or suggestions: 704-905-1813 or [ptotirs@gmail.com](mailto:ptotirs@gmail.com).