

In accordance with Article XV, Section B(2) of the Constitution of Neve Shalom,¹ the following Mission and Goals and Policies and Procedures for the Neve Shalom Religious School and Hebrew High School were adopted by the Parent Committee(formerly the Education Committee) on September 27, 2015.

¹ As approved in January, 1999 and amended through October 1, 2002

NEVE SHALOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
AND HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL
MISSION AND GOALS

The primary mission of Neve Shalom's Religious School is to develop a positive attitude about being Jewish and to teach a fundamental understanding of our religion, our people, our Hebrew language, our culture, our history, our prayers, our holidays, Israel and ourselves as Jews.

The goals of our school are designed to offer students the opportunity to:

- Develop the reading and writing skills necessary for understanding basic Hebrew and synagogue participation
- Gain a sense of spiritual and cultural kinship with Israel and the Jewish people
- Expand their skills and foster the desire to participate in services, holiday celebrations and rituals at home with their families and in the synagogue with the larger community
- Encourage a sense of involvement in Jewish community life through curricular and extra-curricular activities, as well as, opportunities to perform "acts of kindness" (G'milut Chasadim), contribute to "righteous causes" (Tzedakah) and follow "God's commandments" (Mitzvot)
- Have parents participate in their children's Jewish educational development as partners in learning
- Learn through creative approaches which excite, enrich and engage our students and their families through their participation in experiential learning

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL – HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

A swipe card (which is available from the temple office) must be used to enter the building for Religious School arrival and dismissal.

Our parking lot is a busy place, especially during drop-off and pick-up times. Please exercise extreme caution driving through our parking lot and walking with your child to and from the building. Children get excited when they see their parents or their carpool at the end of the school day. They want to go and they are not always mindful of rules or safety.

Keep your car away from the dismissal area. **Do not drive your car, stop, stand or park in the lane closest to the rear door of the building.** It is too dangerous to have moving vehicles in this area during drop off and pick up times.

Parents of students in grades K-4 MUST go to their child's classroom to pick up their child! Students in these grades will not be released without an adult.

When picking up, parents should park their cars in a marked parking space, go into the building and escort their children back to the car. Please do not encourage children to run across the parking lot by having them come to your car in the parking lot. As you leave the parking lot, please leave through the exit driveway only.

ATTENDANCE

Regular on-time attendance is vital to the success of your child's Jewish education. If your child will be absent due to illness please contact the Religious School office at 732-548-2238 ext.13 or via email ateducation@neveshalom.net. If your child will be absent for an extended period of time for a family vacation or other reason please contact the Religious School office in advance. This notification will allow your child's teacher(s) to prepare effective lessons and classroom activities. **If a student's absences are excessive, the student and parent(s) will be required to meet with the Religious School Director.**

In order for a student to be eligible for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student is required to have completed five (5) years (Gimmel - Zayin, Grades 3-7) of Religious School or currently be enrolled in the 5th year (Zayin) of Religious School AND a student must have maintained a 75% attendance rate during this five (5) year period. Any exceptions to this policy must be made in writing and approved by the Religious School Director, the Vice-President of Education and the Parent Committee. Some special situations which would require a written exception to this policy include, but are not limited to, starting Religious School after 3rd grade (Gimmel) or extended absences due to sports participation or activity conflicts or extended illnesses.

Accommodations in the enforcement of the attendance policy stated above will be made for students with special needs. A specialized education program will be developed by the parent(s),

the Religious School Director and the Rabbi which will enable the special needs student to prepare them for becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students should come to class with a note from their parent. Parents/designated adults are required to notify the student's teacher and Religious School Director before leaving the building with the student. The parent must sign their child out in the Director's office. Students are to remain in class until they are picked up.

BEHAVIOR

- Students are expected to demonstrate a positive attitude and respect toward the teacher, fellow students, the synagogue, its activities, facilities and membership.
- Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior when in the building.
- All Religious School (grades K-7) and Hebrew High School students (grades 8-12) are not permitted to use electronics (*e.g.* cell phone, tablets, laptops) during class time, unless the teacher consents to said usage.
- Accommodations in the enforcement of the discipline policy stated below will be made for students with special needs, IF the Religious School Director is informed of a student's special needs. An IEP (Individualized Education Program) is not required in determining if a student has special needs. However, if a student has an IEP then it should be provided to the Religious School Director. These matters will be handled discretely.

RESPECT FOR PHYSICAL BUILDING

- Students must not deface any surface in the building.
- Lavatories are to be used with proper respect. Flush toilets, use trash receptacles, do not clog toilets intentionally.
- Any food dropped should be picked up and disposed of properly.
- Food must not be removed from the room where it is being served.

NOTE: Unsafe behaviors include, but are not limited to, bullying, harassment, physically aggressive behaviors or verbally abusive behaviors. The discipline steps stated below may be omitted and the student dismissed from the Religious School, if the Religious School Director deems that the student's behavior is physically or emotionally harmful to self or others.

DISCIPLINE

When the expectations regarding behavior or respect for the physical building listed above are not met, the following discipline policy will be implemented:

- A verbal or non-verbal reminder will be given in the classroom by the teacher, with minimal interruption of the flow of the lesson. (Teacher will make the effort to remind and redirect students if they begin to get off track.)
- The first time a child is sent out of the classroom, he or she will receive a warning from the Religious School Director.
- The second time a child is sent out of the classroom, the Religious School Director will call the parent(s).
- The third time a child is sent out of the classroom, a conference will be arranged for the parent(s), child, Religious School Director and teacher to discuss solutions.
- The fourth time there will be a meeting with the parent(s), student, teacher, Religious School Director and Rabbi, and a course of action will be arranged.
- If it is determined that the student's behavior is egregious enough to result in dismissal from the Religious School then the school will endeavor to assist the parent(s) to locate a tutor to be paid for at the parents' expense.
- **EXCEPTION:** Any incident between or among students which involves unwanted physical contact, including but not limited to, hitting, punching, pinching, kicking, spitting and biting, will be reported by the Religious School Director to the parents via telephone or in person before the end of Religious School on the day of the incident. Furthermore, the conference described in "the third time a child is sent out of the classroom," will be conducted within 7 days of the incident.

Note: The word "classroom" includes, but is not limited to, all places where the students are gathered as a class, including the gym, the sanctuary, the beit midrash or locations of class trips.

FOOD POLICY

All food and drinks brought into classrooms, or utilized or consumed during Religious School programs within the building must comply with the Kashrut Policy of Neve Shalom which is posted on the Congregation Neve Shalom website. Rules for food and drinks consumed on Religious School trips will be provided by the Religious School Director, prior to each trip.

Food and drinks are not permitted to be consumed in sanctuary or beit midrash.

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

Congregation Neve Shalom recognizes that food allergies can cause serious life threatening conditions for some students. To keep all of our students safe, the Parent Committee and Religious School Director will strive to provide a food allergy sensitive environment in the areas of the building utilized by the Religious School.

Since many other activities and programs occur on the temple premises, we cannot guarantee a nut or other allergen-free environment within the building. In a classroom where there is a student with a life-threatening food allergy, there must be NO food containing that allergen in the classroom. Furthermore, we request that individual students, families, faculty and staff consider those students with food allergies (even non-life-threatening food allergies) in the individual class when providing food or drinks for that particular class.

Each student with a diagnosed food allergy will have medication, provided by his/her family, within the building to be administered immediately to help counteract any possible reactions to food allergies, but these medications can only do so much. Your help and participation is vital to make this policy work.

FOOD ALLERGY PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FAMILY OF A STUDENT WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

- Ensuring that the Religious School's records on food allergies and other important medical issues are updated by notifying the Religious School Director of the student's allergies on the health form at the beginning of each year or if the allergy is diagnosed during the academic year, notify the Religious School Director in writing as soon as possible.
- Provide to the Religious School Director all written medical documentation, medications and dosing instructions as directed by a physician. Medications to be provided include but are not limited to EpiPens and/or Benadryl.
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or at the beginning of each school year.

Where age appropriate (as determined by the parents and the Religious School Director), parents should educate the student in the self-management of the food allergy which includes:

- Safe and unsafe foods.
- Symptoms of allergic reactions.
- Review policies/procedures with the school staff and the student's physician after a reaction has occurred.
- Provide current emergency contact information, and update all contact information throughout the school year if there are changes in phone numbers or address.
- If a student carries his/her own EpiPen and can self-administer said EpiPen, then the Religious School Director must be notified in writing of the specific location of the EpiPen (*i.e.* front pocket of backpack) and that the student is trained to self-administer the EpiPen.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

- The administrative staff, including the Religious School Director and classroom teacher will review the health records and medications submitted by parents and physicians.
- The teachers will review all packaged foods and drinks brought into the classrooms to ensure that they comply with the Religious School's food allergy policy.
- The Religious School Director will keep the student's properly labeled medication, along with dosing instructions, in an easily accessible secure location hanging on back of the door of the Printing Room. There will always be a staff member in the building during regular Religious School hours who can access these medications.
- Substitute teachers will be provided with records of student allergy plans and other relevant student medical information.
- Following an allergic reaction, the Religious School Director and classroom staff will review the incident with the student's parent(s) and implement additional plans, if necessary.
- The Religious School will notify parents in writing of allergy information (both life-threatening and non-life-threatening) for each classroom.

LIFE-THREATENING MEDICAL CONDITION OR NON-FOOD ALLERGY PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

Congregation Neve Shalom recognizes that some medical conditions or non-food allergies can cause serious life threatening consequences for some students. Each student diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition or non-food allergy will have medication or a medical plan, provided by his/her family, within the building to be administered immediately to help counteract any possible reactions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FAMILY OF A STUDENT WITH A LIFE-THREATENING MEDICAL CONDITION OR NON-FOOD ALLERGY

- Ensuring that the Religious School's records on a life-threatening medical condition or non-food allergy are updated by notifying the Religious School Director of the student's life-threatening medical condition or non-food allergy on the health form at the beginning of each year or if the life-threatening medical condition or non-food allergy is diagnosed during the academic year, notify the Religious School Director in writing as soon as possible.
- Provide to the Religious School Director all written medical documentation, medications and dosing instructions as directed by a physician. Medications to be provided include but are not limited to EpiPens and/or Benadryl.
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or at the beginning of each school year.

Where age appropriate (as determined by the parents and the Religious School Director), parents should educate the student in the self-management of the life-threatening medical condition or non-food allergy which includes:

- Symptoms of a reaction.
- Review policies/procedures with the school staff and the student's physician after a reaction has occurred.
- Provide current emergency contact information, and update all contact information throughout the school year if there are changes in phone numbers or address.
- For a life-threatening non-food allergy, if a student carries his/her own EpiPen and can self-administer said EpiPen, then the Religious School Director must be notified in writing of the specific location of the EpiPen (*i.e.*, front pocket of backpack) and that the student is trained to self-administer the EpiPen.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

- The administrative staff, including the Educational Director and classroom teacher will review the health records and medications submitted by parents and physicians.
- The Educational Director will keep the student's properly labeled medication, along with dosing instructions, in an easily accessible secure location Hanging on back of the Printing Room door. There will always be a staff member in the building during regular Religious School hours who can access these medications.
- Substitute teachers will be provided with records of student allergy plans and other relevant student medical information.
- Following an allergic reaction or other medical incident, the Religious School Director and classroom staff will review the incident with the student's parent(s) and implement additional plans, if necessary.

CURRICULUM

A review of the Curriculum on the Neve Shalom website (neveshalom.net) will demonstrate how our well-designed program introduces new material each year and reviews items from previous years.

MATERIALS

Students should come to class prepared with books, notebooks and a pencil. The school will supply all texts and other materials. Workbooks will be sent home with the students at the end of the school year. We collect and reuse all of the textbooks.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued two times yearly, once at the end of winter recess and at the end of the academic year for Kindergarten (Gan) through 7th grade (Zayin).

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents should not wait for a formal conference to ask about their child's progress.

Our teachers are asked to be in regular telephone or written communication with parents about students. There is no reason why parents should not seek contact with teachers regularly to inquire about their children and to discuss issues that pertain to the classroom.

Please be advised that the teacher's contract time does not extend beyond dismissal so you need to arrange an appointment in advance so the teacher can set aside time for your meeting.

YOUTH SERVICES

Attendance at Youth Services, Family and Holiday Services is a vital and important aspect of our school program. Points, stars and other incentives will be awarded to attendees to encourage participation in this positive and joyous experience. The Youth Shabbat Services committee oversees these services.

Students in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade (Gan – Bet) are required to attend at least 5 services each year. Students in 3rd – 6th grade (Gimmel – Vav) are required to attend at least 10 services each year. Students in 7th grade (Zayin) are expected to attend services in the Sanctuary or complete a comparison form to receive credit for attending other synagogues.

Students may fulfill the service requirement by attending Shabbat Morning Youth Services, Friday Night Family Services, or Congregation services on Shabbat or Holidays. Credit will be awarded for attending services at another synagogue after written notification to the Religious School Director. Students will be responsible for putting stickers in the Mitzvah Points Book, which will be located in the Sanctuary.

POINT SYSTEM

Attendance at Religious School is a minimal expectation of each of our children. We would like to encourage them, in positive ways, to make service attendance, mitzvah projects, Jewish cultural events, holiday celebrations, Shabbat dinners and other wonderful Jewish programming an on-going part of their lives.

Religious School students (K-7) will be given stars (points) in a book for approximately every hour of Jewish activity he/she participates in outside of the classroom. A parent, teachers or students will place these stars next to the child's name as soon as possible after each event. If a student attends a program outside of our temple, please email the Religious School Director with that information, so that the student can receive credit for the Jewish activity.

Points can be earned throughout the year, including attendance at a Jewish summer camp or a trip to Israel. Points earned after mid-May will be put toward the following school year.

Points awarded for activities at summer camp.

- Day Camp – 2 points per week
- Jewish Sleep Away Camp – 3 points per week
- Trip to Israel – 10 points

At the end of the school year every student reaching the required amount of points for their grade level, will receive a gift for their accomplishments. Hershey's miniatures will be given to those students earning less than the minimum required for his/her grade.

Minimum Number of Points Required:

- Kindergarten to 2nd Grade – 10 points
- 3rd Grade to 7th Grade – 18 points

CLASS SERVICES

Some grades may have special services in the Sanctuary which will be led mainly by the students in the designated grade. For example, the 4th graders (Daled) will lead a Havdalah service in the winter. The Confirmation class (10th grade) will lead the Shavuot Festival service. 3rd (Gimmel) and 4th (Daled) grades will learn Shabbat evening prayers, 5th (Hai) and 6th (Vav) grades learn Shabbat morning prayers, 7th grade (Zayin) class learns weekday and Shabbat evening and morning services. There may be a family dinner, dessert, or luncheon associated with the class service. Parents are also encouraged to participate with Torah readings, honors, English readings, and other parts.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The Religious School Director, in collaboration with the Education Vice-President will determine if Religious School will be closed, have a delayed opening or an early dismissal in the event of inclement weather. School closing information will be available by (1) calling the Religious School Message Line at 732-548-2238, ext. 3, (2) placing a notice on Neve Shalom Religious School Facebook Page, (3) sending a text message through Remind and (4) an email from the Religious School Director.

MADRICHIM PROGRAM

In Hebrew, the word *Madrich* means "guide" or "leader" and is often used to refer to counselors at summer camps. Our Religious School has a special leadership training program called Madrichim to assist our students and teachers and to provide our teens with valuable Jewish leadership experience. This program is open to our 9th – 12th grade students who make a commitment for the school year and are matched up with a particular class to assist the teacher in class projects and day-to-day activities.

Some of the administrative tasks include setting up the classroom, passing out papers, preparing supplies for activities, collecting tzedakah and providing technical (AV) support. Some of the interactive tasks include greeting students as they enter the building and classroom, accompanying students to the office, escorting younger students to the bathroom, helping students with art projects and class work and tutoring students in Hebrew.

The Madrichim must be responsible and good role models for the students. They are required to follow the school dress code and the Religious School Director must be advised in advance of all absences. Interested students are required (1) to attend Hebrew High School or a Jewish Day School and (2) to file a Letter of Intent which is submitted to the Religious School Director by the last day of Religious School.

The Madrichim work on Sundays and/or Tuesdays during Religious School hours. In August, the Religious School Director will send a letter to each Madrich indicating his/her assigned day, hours and job description. A meeting of the Madrichim will be held with the Religious School Director at 12 PM on the first day of Religious School to discuss assignments, responsibilities and how this can be a wonderful experience for both the Madrichim and the students of our school.

Madrichim who are 14 years old or older and in High School (with working papers) will be paid. These Madrichim will be paid on an hourly basis and they will be paid every three months.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students should not bring any items from home to Religious School unless requested to do so by a staff member. Congregation Neve Shalom is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal items brought to Religious School by students.

DRESS CODE

We follow the basic dress code of the area public schools. The Jewish concept of “*s’niyut*” (dressing with modesty) is very important for our students, teachers and *madrichim* (teen assistants) to follow:

- All men and boys are required to wear *kippot* in the temple building. *Kippot* are optional for women and girls. A baseball hat or other secular hat is not a substitute for a *Kippah*. The Religious School office can supply a *kippah* for any student who does not bring a *kippah* from home. Everyone (boys and girls, men and women) who comes to the front of the sanctuary or *beit midrash* during a service, (Jr. Congregation, Family Services and all other services) is required to wear a head covering. Exceptions to this requirement will be granted upon written request to the Religious School Director.
- T-shirts or jackets with offensive language or off-color remarks are not permitted.
- Low-cut tank tops, mesh shirts or shirts which show bare midriffs are not permitted. Students may wear a T-shirt under a tank top if they wish. Straps must be wider than three fingers.
- Shorts must be a reasonable length. While standing, the bottom hem of the shorts should not be shorter than your fingertips with your hands at your sides.
- Sagging/baggy pants are acceptable as long as they are fastened at the waist and do not present a personal safety issue. Additionally, undergarments or bare skin should not be revealed above the pants.
- Athletic shoes with cleats are not allowed inside the building.

MACCABIYAH

The final few weeks of the classes in the Spring, will feature a series of exciting and fun learning activities for the 3rd through 7th grade classes (Gimmel – Zayin). Teams will be selected and points will be awarded for contests using Ivrit, Hebrew words and Torah, Bible information, singing and creative activities, posters and outdoor (weather permitting) events for *Lag B’Omer*. The winning team will be announced on the last day of school and prizes may be given. This “color-war” like program brings a lot of enthusiasm and energy to the students and the school overall.

TRIPS AND EVENTS

Several fun and educational trips and events are conducted every year. Parents will be asked to chaperone these trips. Parents are required to sign permission slips for students to participate in any trip or program that leaves the building, including those conducted by the temple’s youth groups.

TZEDAKAH

Our school invites students to participate in the mitzvah of giving *tzedakah*. The donation amount is left to the parents’ discretion, but a few coins is enough. *Tzedakah* will be collected by the teacher in the student’s classroom. All *tzedakah* money will be donated to the charitable causes chosen by the students.

YOUTH GROUPS

In addition to our school programs, Neve Shalom provides our students in Grade 4 to 12 with the opportunity to participate in informal Jewish activities. Hanoar for 4th to 5th graders (Daled – Hai), Kadima for 6th (Vav) to 8th graders and USY for High School students. Youth group members participate in synagogue and regional social, religious, mitzvah, sports and fun programs. The Youth Committee oversees these groups