

B'nai Israel Community Day School



Parent Handbook 2023-24

PARENT HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

B'nai Israel Community Day School's mission is to provide a community where safe and secure learning for children and families can flourish, experiencing the beginning of a lifelong love of both Jewish and secular education.

PHILOSOPHY

Develop well-integrated children who are:

- Moral, ethical, and humane
- Stimulated to learn for their lifetimes and endowed with pre-academic skills and personal qualities to fully realize their potential
- Observant of their religion and culture
- Committed to Jewish survival and Israel's well being
- Conscious of other responsibilities to the United States

BELIEFS

*Al shloscha d'varim ha-olam omed: Al he-Torah v'al
ha-avoda v'al g'milut chasadim*

The world stands on three things: "On the Torah, on work and service,
and on deeds of loving kindness."

We are an integrated Jewish school that fosters children's spiritual growth. We are committed to the disciplines and values of America and its democracy and Judaism as a religion and culture.

We want each student to achieve his/her highest potential. We stimulate the child's curiosity to develop inquiring and critical minds. Since each child is unique, we provide students with opportunities for individualized challenges. Students should not only learn, but live their education as well. They should become lifelong learners and productive member of society. Such a pursuit of educational excellence can only be achieved in a safe, caring, disciplined and ordered environment.

We teach children skills to follow their dreams and become critical thinkers, self-disciplined, problem solvers and leaders. Our goal is to teach students to have strength of character to think and act independently, to feel free to make and learn from mistakes, and take responsibility for themselves.

The community, the home and the school together encourage intellectual, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, social and cultural development. We seek to attain a sense of

‘menschlikheit’ in each of our children, i.e., to attain the highest standards in attitude, behavior, moral sensitivity and decency. We teach social justice, “Tikun Olam, Repair the World” and an understanding of cultural diversity.

We seek to foster a sense of Jewish communal involvement. Likewise, cooperative community involvement and financial support are essential for success.

The school encourages effective communication with parents and recognizes the role of parents as contributors to the child’s education.

We seek to impart knowledge of the United States as well as Israel and its peoples, history and future.

We highly value our staff, providing opportunities for personal growths and professional development. We seek to recruit and retain the highest quality faculty.

Well-maintained, comfortable, and attractive physical facilities are conducive to learning.

A WORD ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The B’nai Israel Community Day School Committee is comprised of a majority of community members who have taken on the mission of assisting the Board of Trustees in perpetuating and setting the course for our school. Committee meetings are held each month. Their responsibilities and duties include providing recommendations to the board on setting policy and budget planning. Much is accomplished by our committee, who serve as dedicated volunteers. Please address any questions about membership to the current Day School Committee Chair.

GENERAL POLICY

The B’nai Israel Board of Trustees sets all policies and fees. The Head of Educational Programs is responsible for day-to-day administration of the school program and teacher supervision.

DAY SCHOOL STAFF

Head of Educational Programs

The Director oversees affairs of the Day School. The Head of Educational Programs works closely with the Executive Director of B’nai Israel to ensure that all files are up-to-date, that regulations are met, and that the School Office runs smoothly. The Head of Educational Programs is responsible for sending out parent information, setting up appointments for parent/teacher conferences, representing the school to congregation members and to the community, and serving as a liaison for parents and other Day School staff members.

Day School Committee Chair

The Day School Committee Chair is a volunteer who oversees affairs of the Day School Committee and works closely with the Head of Educational Programs. This person is a liaison for parents, Day School Committee members, and the Day School.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to have up to date Immunization records.

Infant Class

The child should be ready to be under the guardianship of a loving caregiver and must be at least three months of age. Children who turn one and walking by December may be moved into the Ones class to be with peers more developmentally appropriate, space permitting.

Ones Class

Children in this class must be one year old and walking. This is also a transitional class for children who turn two after the September 1st cut off. Due to lack of refrigeration, milk/breastmilk may not be given past the morning snack time. *Please note: potty training does not actively begin until children are in the Twos class due to logistical issues with our building.*

Two year-old Class

Children must be 2 years old by September 1st before entering the class. Prior toilet training is not necessary.

Three year-old Class

Children must be 3 years old by September 1st before entering the class. Children in this class do not need to be toilet trained but should be working towards becoming potty trained.

Pre-K (4 years old)

Children must be 4 years old by September 1st of the school year. Child must be potty trained.

Requirements for School Records

- A physical examination for all students upon admission. Documentation must be provided and is available from your doctor.
- A complete series of immunizations as required by state law prior to starting school. Documentation must be provided and is available from your doctor. The Day School requires current immunizations for all current and incoming students except where prohibited by law. ***Religious exemptions are not accepted at our school.***
- A completed Child Care Application (available in the School Office).

Introductory Meetings

Before enrolling, all parents and children are invited to visit the school and meet the teachers and other students. We want to ensure that our program fits the temperament and needs of your child.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE

Attendance

The Dayschool hours are 7:30a.m.-5:30p.m. Monday-Thursdays and 7:30a.m.-4:30p.m. on Fridays. It is understood that upon enrolling your child you are making a commitment to have your child attend school regularly and punctually. This is to ensure continuity of the learning process and a strong sense of integration within the classroom. Tardiness is disruptive for both the child and the class.

We ask that children not be dropped off or picked up between 1-3pm, as children in the school are napping/resting. If you need to pick up during this time, please let the office or your teacher know in advance.

Absences

We would consider it a courtesy if you would notify us before 10:00a.m. if your child is going to be absent, and the absence has not been previously arranged. This is intended for your child's protection.

Late pick up fees

Each family is given a ten-minute grace period to pick up their child after their program ends. Each family is allowed one time a year to be late (beyond the ten-minute grace period). Late fees are paid per child not per family. A child is considered late when they are picked up after your ten-minute grace period. Late Fee charges per child are as follows: after 10 minutes the fee is \$15 and then every 5 minutes after that the fee increases by \$5 based on the clock in the front office.

TRANSPORTATION

Arrival

Children **MUST** be signed in upon arrival regardless of what time they arrive. Children and Parents should use the Day School Office Wing door (Northeast entrance).

Pick-up

Children MUST be signed out when they are picked up regardless of the time.

Instructions regarding which adults are permitted to remove children from the school

should be provided by the custodial parents/guardians on their child's Emergency Contact form to be kept in the school office as well as in the teacher's possession.

Parents are responsible for updating this information as needed.

We understand that families enjoy social conversations at pick-up time. If you plan to have a prolonged conversation with another parent, please do not park in the car line lane. This impedes traffic flow.

Change in Transportation Arrangements

If you plan to send a relative or friend to pick up your child, you **MUST** notify the office or teacher. **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THEIR REGULAR CAR POOL UNLESS THEY ARE LISTED ON THE DCF APPROVED PICK UP LIST.**

Visiting the School

Visitors to the school are welcome. To arrange a visit, please call the Day School Office to ensure that a staff member or volunteer is available to give you a tour.

TUITION

Payment Methods

Tuition may be paid in one full payment or in 9 monthly installments for the 2, 3, and 4-year old classes; 11 monthly installments for the Infants and Ones classes. Differing payment schedules can be arranged with the Financial Administrator at the start of the school year.

Registration Fees

Upon registration, parents are responsible to pay an applicable registration fee (\$275). We cannot guarantee a space for your child unless this fee is paid.

Un-paid Tuition

Any family that is more than fifteen days late in payment will need to set up a conference with either the Head of Educational Programs or the Executive Director. A payment plan must be set up if payment is more than one month in arrears. After the second month, if the payment plan is not being adhered to or the balance has not been paid, the child will not be allowed to attend class. Families with a balance from the previous year will not be allowed to register for the following year unless the balance has been cleared up.

Changes in Schedule

If you seek to change your child's schedule, you must speak with the Head of Educational Programs to verify this change can be made and then with the Financial Administrator to adjust the payment/contract schedule.

FOOD

In accordance with the religious policy and practices of the Synagogue, only dairy or non-meat lunches may be served. A list of acceptable meals can be provided to you upon request. In addition to the Jewish dietary restrictions, the Day School follows the standards set by the Alachua County Health Department to minimize the spread of Hepatitis A and other diseases in the school setting. Teachers emphasize the importance of personal hygiene (particularly hand-washing after using the restroom and before and after handling or eating food). In addition, there is NO sharing of individual food and beverage items at school. Children need to bring a morning snack and a lunch (also an afternoon snack if they are staying all day). Families are asked to please feed their children breakfast before they arrive at school.

Note: All fish that have fins and scales are considered dairy. Shellfish such as oysters, crab, shrimp, or lobster cannot be eaten on school grounds.

COMMUNICATION AND CONCERNS

Conferences may be set up between teachers and parents at any time during the school year. Please call the School Office to set up these conferences. If a parent is dissatisfied with his/her interaction with the child's teacher over a given issue or Day School policy, the following procedure should be followed:

- 1) If the problem involves a specific teacher, first discuss it with the Lead Teacher. If the issue is regarding school policy, they should contact the Head of Educational Programs. You may stop by the front office to speak to the Director in person, send an email, or call their office phone. The Director's phone number is 352-376-1508 ext. 101.
- 2) If the parent feels that the problem re. staff is not being dealt with satisfactorily after speaking to the Lead Teacher, they should next see the Head of Educational Programs.
- 3) If the parent still has concerns over staff or policy, the Day School Chair should be contacted. Elana Edwards is the current Day School Chair. Her email is elana.rb.edwards@gmail.com. Ask the front office if you require her phone number.
- 4) If a parent still has concerns, the Executive Director of the synagogue should be contacted. Jenifer Petrescu is the Executive Director. Her email is jenifer@bnaigainesville.com. Her phone number is 352-376-1508 ext. 103.
- 5) Admission and expulsion of all students will be at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

TOYS

Please leave toys at home. We have many wonderful toys and games at the Day School. Bringing toys from home causes issues with sharing and safety. Children can bring a transition object for nap time or for when they first arrive but it is not meant to be a toy that will be played with throughout the day.

DISCIPLINE

We believe that an interesting, developmentally appropriate curriculum, along with love, affection and understanding is the best way to deter discipline problems. When a child does have a problem following school guidelines, it is very important for him/her to take responsibility for his/her own behavior. Therefore, when a child's behavior becomes an on-going problem for someone else, he/she, with the help of the teacher, will create an action-plan that will resolve the problem, without causing further disturbance. On occasion, if positive reinforcement and redirection is not effective, he/she will be given a calm down period to cool off. Our primary philosophy is reinforcement of positive behavior.

The time-out period will not exceed one minute per each year of the child's age. The progression of meetings for managing inappropriate behavior is as follows:

- 1) Teacher-student conversation.
- 2) Teacher-parent conference.
- 3) Teacher-parent-director conference.

BITING

If a child bites, an accident report will be written to both the biter and the child that was bitten. After a child bites two times, a teacher is assigned to shadow that child only. If biting continues for more than three weeks, with a teacher shadow, further action will be at the discretion of the director which may include dismissal.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

We use a comprehensive skills-based assessment to keep you informed of your child's progress. We send home written evaluations twice a year in Preschool.

We also have conference opportunities in the Winter. There will also be an opportunity for a conference in the Spring on an as-needed basis.

ILLNESS

Colds and Other Illnesses

Parents are requested to please keep their children at home if they show signs of illness. Parent will be notified when children need to be sent home because of illness. Please let us know if your child is exhibiting any symptoms of which we should be aware.

To protect all children enrolled, your child must stay at home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 101 or higher degrees.
- Diarrhea (after the third loose stool within 24 hr. period).
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Any undiagnosed rash.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- Pediculosis (head lice).

- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound.
- Rapid or difficult breathing.
- Exposed, open skin lesions. Must be scabbed over and covered with a bandage.
- Unusual dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
- Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness.

If your child develops any of the above symptoms while at school, we will isolate him/her and contact you and it is **MANDATORY** for your child to be picked up as soon as possible. Once you are contacted by the school, you will be expected to follow the proper protocols for the symptoms your child displays. This may include not returning the next school day or bringing in a doctor's note.

****If your child wakes up with a fever or is sent home with a fever they may not return to school the following day (ex. Sent home Monday, can return on Wednesday) and until they are symptom free without the use of fever reducing medicine.**

Contagious Diseases

If a child contracts a contagious disease, the School Office must be notified immediately. After any serious or communicative illness, parents are required to bring a re-admittance note from the child's physician indicating that the child is ready for normal activity. **Children with bacterial infections must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.** No child may be given any medication at school unless the parent gives written permission. Medication must be sent from home.

Injuries

Precautions are taken to avoid accidents, and safety measures are in place. It is the policy of the school to notify parents of any injury, except for minor scrapes and bruises. We will adhere to the procedure outlines on your child's Emergency Contact form; therefore, it is your responsibility to update this form as required.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

To better enable the school to contact a child's parents, it is required that the school be notified of any change of address, phone number, job information, etc. Please make every effort to see that our school has up-to-date EMERGENCY CONTACT FORMS on file for your child in the office always.

FIELD TRIPS

Each field trip requires a specific permission slip. No child will be allowed to participate without a signed permission slip. Parents' assistance with transportation and chaperoning is welcomed and greatly appreciated.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We recognize that birthdays are special days for children. However, the school has some very important procedures regarding birthday parties with which we request all parents to comply.

- Party invitations may not be distributed during school hours, unless all students in class are invited.
- We suggest not scheduling parties on Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday until dark) or Jewish festivals. Such events, even if they are inadvertently planned, are awkward for those who have been invited but who will not violate Shabbat or the holidays.
- In-school celebrations must be cleared with the teacher as to day and time. All food brought to the school for the parties should meet with the dietary requirements.

There are many kosher products marked with a U or K available at any supermarket.

Please help to ensure that the traditions of our school are maintained and meet the "Dairy Kosher" standards. Ask if you are unsure. We look forward to celebrating your child's special day. Thank you for your cooperation.

VOLUNTEERS

It is vital that all of our parents become active at B'nai Israel and in the school life of the children. There are many opportunities through assisting in classrooms, room parenting, and the Day School Parent subcommittee, which every parent is eligible to join.

TELEPHONE

Incoming Calls

Please direct all calls to the Day School Office phone: (352) 376-1508 ext. 110.

Teachers will contact you as soon as possible. Messages that are urgent will be hand-delivered promptly. Class email is available if you have an emergency and need to contact a teacher after school hours. Teachers are NOT allowed to communicate with parents through their personal phones. This includes calling and texting during or after school hours.

LOST AND FOUND

Please mark each student's clothing and articles to avoid confusion over lost articles. The office maintains a collection of lost articles turned in by others. Please check this frequently for misplaced items. Clothing will be donated to a charity if not claimed.

POTTY TRAINING

Due to the layout of our building, we can work with our children on potty training once they are in the Two's class. When they are in the Two's class and a parent expresses they are ready to be potty training at home, we will begin to work with the child at school. We usually do not begin potty training the first month of school as it is a big transition for everyone starting a new class and we want to be focused once we begin. We work with ~4 children at a time as it is a very time intensive process in the beginning and to try and train 8-12 children at one time would be highly ineffective. When we begin potty training, there will be many potty accidents!! We need lots of extra shorts, shoes, socks and underwear to keep handy. Please try and be patient with this process. If we have worked with your child for a month and they are showing little progress, we will probably suggest taking a break for a month or two and then trying again. Also, there is a guideline set by DCF for group care in homes or facilities that says children that cannot potty themselves should be assisted whenever they need to be. It also states that when a child can potty themselves, workers are to provide assistance when asked by the child. It is our goal to have everyone potty trained when they are ready to do so but it is a process and works best when everyone is patient and working together.

BABYSITTING

Parents often request to use school staff to babysit outside of school. ***School policy states that parents may not use the current Teacher or Co teacher of their child as a private babysitter. They also may not use any administrative staff.***

Arrangements for babysitting needs to be arranged outside of school and after school hours. At no time will the school get involved in issues that occur during private babysitting.

BREAST FEEDING

Breast feeding is a deeply personal experience between you and your child. Please do not interact with other adults or children during your child's feeding time.

A private space is available for you to breast feed if desired. Please discuss with your child's teacher what times you will need to feed your child so a plan can be put into place that works best for everyone.

CLOTHING FOR SCHOOL

All walking children must wear closed toed shoes with a back strap or full closed back. Walkers in the Infant room will wear shoes outdoors only. During summer, children may wear flip flops or pool shoes during water time but otherwise must have closed toe shoes with the back strap for the rest of the day.

All children need to have a full change of clothes always at school. If your child needs a change of clothes for whatever reason (potty accident, lunch mishap) and they do not

have a change of clothes at school, we will provide them with a shirt and shorts from the Spirit Shop and families will be charged for these items.

BNAI ISRAEL COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are expected to support the school's discipline plan to protect the learning environment.

Parents are expected to show interest in their child's progress and work as a team with the school to solve any behavioral or academic problems.

Parents are expected to follow the Dayschool's protocols when children are reported with symptoms of a contagious illness.

BNAI ISRAEL COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

B'nai Israel Community Day School is expected to provide a safe environment for children to work and learn.

B'nai Israel Community Day School is expected to provide programs to meet the needs of their students.