



Beth Chaverim
REFORM CONGREGATION

**Religious School Parent Handbook
2019-2020 / 5779 – 5780**



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*"We are building a House of Friends, one family at a time,
by creating a welcoming Jewish home for a diverse community."*

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2018-2019/5779 4-H Enrichment Program at Beth Chaverim! The four H's reflect our purpose as a religious and educational institution: Hebrew, Holidays, History and Horizons. We have what we hope will be an inspiring year of learning, growing and celebrating ahead of us.

Hebrew: Hebrew is the prayer language of the Jewish people and the modern language spoken in the state of Israel. In our Hebrew studies, we introduce and reinforce recognition of the consonants and vowels. Our older kids work to improve their Hebrew decoding and vocabulary skills and learn prayers and blessings. This year our sixth and tenth graders will have a taste of modern Hebrew through popular children's books or easy Hebrew Israeli newspapers.

Holidays: Our lives are busy and fast-paced. Preparing for and celebrating Jewish holidays can seem overwhelming, especially though not only if you don't have Jewish family in town. BCRC is your extended Jewish family. Our Sunday school holiday celebrations for Simchat Torah, Chanukah, Purim and Shavuot are meant for your entire family. Judaism is not for kids only! Make the holidays joyous and join with your children and their peers and families during these school-wide holiday celebrations.*

* Please note the High Holy Day schedule, which *is* celebrated on the actual dates on the Jewish calendar.

History: As Jewish people and those creating Jewish homes, we share a history. It is simultaneously inspirational and imperfect, full of genius and yet at times archaic, triumphant and painful, ground-breaking, multi-dimensional and ongoing. Our educational partners, the Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) www.isjl.org, has created a spiraling curriculum to help convey our content. This means that the Torah stories, history, Jewish values and culture that are presented in the early grades are later revisited in later grades to allow our constantly maturing youth address the same subjects with new insights.

Horizons: Our community is as much about the future as it is about the past. Our educational program aims to inculcate in the next generation the noble aspirations of peace and freedom, justice and compassion that our ancestors bequeathed us; help them make these values their own and make them real through the lives that they lead.

This year we introduce our new Education Coordinator, Janine Freeman! We are very excited to welcome Janine as a key player on our education team to facilitate the smooth running of our religious school. For the most part, Janine will be your first go-to should you have questions or issues related to your child's Jewish education. Janine will be supported by our administrator, Lisa Zimmerman, and by me. Any tuition related questions should be directed to Lisa.

Our year consists of 26 Sundays plus Shabbat service requirements (not counting the first day and picnic). To give some perspective, that's 78 hours per year for our 4th-7th graders and 52 hours per year for the rest. That amounts to just one week of full time work for some of you; two weeks of full time work for others! If the name "Sunday" school has you thinking that your every Sunday is spoken for, remember that it is not. Fewer than half the Sundays during the year have class sessions. So if you are ever hesitating about attending session one Sunday, remember that what we are offering our kids is special and limited.

Parents are welcome to participate in all of our classes. We welcome parent guest speakers and have had some interesting parent presentations.

We have scheduled class-led Shabbat services and B'nai Mitzvah programming. Please take note of your child's class Shabbat and know that they will have rehearsal the Sunday prior!

Please take a moment to review the information in the following updated Parent Handbook. If you have any questions, would like more information about our Education Committee, or have questions about helping in the classroom, please email Lisa at office@bcrcva.org.

With Warmest Regards/Shanah Tovah u'metukah (Have a good, sweet new year)!

Rabbi Amy Sapowith

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Beth Chaverim Religious School strives to create a learning environment for our students that will promote a positive Jewish identity and a warm sense of community for students in Pre-Kindergarten through 10th grade and beyond.

Our Judaics Studies program is a comprehensive introduction to a lifetime of Jewish learning. We study TaNaKh (the Jewish Bible including Torah, Prophets and Writings), our Jewish identity, Israel, Jewish holidays, the synagogue, God, life cycle, and Jewish ethics. Students are challenged to understand and apply Jewish concepts in their lives and in their community.

Our Hebrew studies program is designed to develop students' abilities to read and understand Jewish prayer, and supports them in their understanding of the Torah in preparation for becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

We also feature a joyous music curriculum to reinforce melodies and prayers heard in worship services along with holiday songs. In addition to music, we encourage art projects designed to help students with Jewish self-expression. Through our curriculum from the Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) we aim to promote creative, dynamic, and interactive classroom lessons to keep our students involved and focused. Traditional textbooks, as well as guest speakers support the classroom study.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Pre-Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

3rd – 7th Grades

8th – 10th Grades

Sundays, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Sundays, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sundays, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Please make sure students arrive on time. Parents are expected to accompany their children to join their teacher at the beginning of the day and come to the classroom to sign out their children for pick-up when class ends. Anyone picking up a child and not listed on the registration form must have a written note signed by a parent/guardian.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Immunization Policy -- Students are required to be up to date on their immunizations in order to attend class at Beth Chaverim.

Attendance—Students need to attend regularly in order to benefit fully from religious school opportunities. Frequent absences cause interruptions to study and can hinder bonding with the community. Students are expected to attend at least 75% of class sessions in order to be promoted to the next grade. Please discuss circumstances that will prevent regular attendance with the Education VP in order to determine if an exception will be allowed or whether a supplementary program needs to be put into place.

Absenteeism - Parents may be contacted if students miss three consecutive classes. Students are responsible for all work missed and may be expected to make up work in order to keep up with the class. We understand that our students get busy especially as they get older. With that in mind, we ask for a minimum of a seventy-five percent attendance rate for our 6th, 7th and 10th graders. If more than seven classes are missed, we will ask our student to complete an independent study the parameters of which to be determined in conjunction with the parents, teacher and rabbi.

EARLY DISMISSAL REQUEST

Please give all requests for early dismissal in writing to the teacher. Students will not be permitted to leave class early without a note. Parents should not ask children to meet them outside. **Parents must pick up their child at their class and sign them out.**

Courtesy--Students need to be respectful of their teachers, peers and their classrooms. Further, students are expected to display *kavod* (respect) to the Rabbi, Education Coordinator, Administrator, Music and Art Specialists, and Madrichim.

All students, including Pre-K students must be at least 3 years old and potty-trained before being admitted to class.

TZEDAKAH

Giving is an important *mitzvah* (commandment) of Jewish life. *Tzedakah* means ‘righteousness’. Caring for others less fortunate than ourselves is a fundamental principle of Judaism. In each class, money for *tzedakah* is collected from the students. Please take time to discuss this *mitzvah* with your child. You may elect to encourage your child to give a portion of his/her own money towards *tzedakah*.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

Sunday Morning Music: We will be having music at least once per month, some classes will have Mr. Phil stop by their classroom each session to teach a song, as well as other holiday school events. Our aim is to promote positive Jewish identity through music and arts.

Family programs: Besides the school-wide holiday celebrations presented earlier, there will be a:

2 nd and 3 rd grade family program	December 8 th
4 th and 5 th grade family program	TBD
Three required b’nai mitzvah workshops for 6 th graders and their families	November 24 th , January 12 th , March 22 nd
Mitzvah Day	March 8 th
Hebrew Games Day	May 3 rd

PRAYER

Students learn the meaning and importance of prayer and are supported in developing individual spirituality and a relationship with God.

CLASS ADVANCEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Service Requirements

Throughout the year, students are encouraged to attend as many Services as possible. Services provide a unique and warm environment for Jewish learning and connecting to community.

Each grade is assigned a minimum number of services to attend (please see chart attached and online). The last service to be counted for the 2017-2018 school year is two weeks before the end of the school year. Any services attended after this deadline will count toward the following year. In addition, summer services and services attended at a Jewish summer camp will also count toward the following school year. Service attendance at another synagogue will also count. Have an official (rabbi, cantor, board member) sign that your student was in attendance.

Students fill out a service attendance form, available outside the sanctuary, and hand them to the Rabbi (or service leader) after the service. A member of the Education Committee will track services attended. At the end of the year, students who have completed their service requirement will be acknowledged with a certificate and gift card. Bnai mitzvah students will have to have their service attendance requirements met by the end of the 7th grade.

Class led Friday Service

Each grade will be assigned a Friday night service to help lead (see dates below). Each class will have an opportunity to participate in a class dinner before the service as well as the actual service. The dinner, cheese pizza and soda, juice or water, is intended as a social means for students to get to know the other families in their class. The service is designed to celebrate with families what their children have been learning at Religious School.

K–2nd grade Class Onegs & Services will take place as part of Tot Shabbat starting at 6:30 pm. 3rd – 7th grade Class Onegs & Services will take part during traditional Shabbat Services starting at 7:00pm. The Class Oneg & Class Service Schedule is available on the education page of the BCRC website (times and dates may change— please confirm with your teacher).

2019-2020

Friday, September 27 th (PM) And Saturday, September 21 st (AM)	7th Grade
Friday, November 8 th	6th Grade
Friday, January 10 th	5th Grade
Friday, February 7 th	4th Grade
Friday, March 6 th	3rd Grade
Friday, May 1 st	2nd Grade
Friday, May 1 st	Pre-K – 1 st grade invited to join for family pizza dinner and the service, led by the 2 nd grade

BEHAVIOR ISSUES

Classroom Management -Assigned seating or supervised time outs in the hallway or education office may be used.

Student Warnings- Students will generally receive two verbal warnings for inappropriate behavior. If behavior does not improve, teachers will contact parents to discuss their concerns. If inappropriate behavior persists, the student and teacher will devise a behavior contract that details agreed upon behavioral changes.

Student Suspension - Continued disruptive or inappropriate behavior may result in suspension after meetings involving Education VPs, the Rabbi, the teacher, the student and parents. After an agreement between all parties has been reached, the student may return to class. The student will be responsible for catching up missed work.

Immediate Suspension - A student who engages in behavior that seriously disrupts a class, endangers themselves, other students, teachers or property may be immediately removed from the classroom, or suspended, and required to wait in the religious school office while a call is placed for the student to be picked up.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

All of the information on the Religious School Student Registration Forms is used by the Education VP and Teachers in a confidential manner.

Any information submitted regarding special needs should be in writing. Parents may submit additional information throughout the year to the Education VP. This can be mailed to the synagogue, Attention: Education VP or sent via email to educationvp@bcrcva.org.

The Education VP and teachers ask that parents please share any information regarding their child's learning capabilities and emotional / psychological development. This information will enable Beth Chaverim Religious School to facilitate your child's success in religious school.

Parents are encouraged to share the details of any events in children’s lives that may affect learning or behavior. Parents are also asked to share effective behavior management and/or learning techniques with teachers so they can better educate their children. Parents are requested to detail any medication their child takes as well as any medications which may result in noticeable changes to mood or behavior.

DRESS CODE

Parents and students, please remember that we meet in a religious institution and everyone is expected to dress appropriately. That said, dress can be informal. Think “camp.”

1. Clothing with obscene, vulgar, or inappropriate language or symbols is not permitted. Clothing with smoking, drug or alcohol logos, or excessively tight clothing are not permitted.
2. Short shorts/skirts are inappropriate. Clothing must be worn so that undergarments are not visible.
3. Shoes/Sandals must be worn at all times.

FOOD

Please give your child breakfast at home before coming to Religious School. Students are not permitted to bring their breakfasts into the classroom as this can disrupt students and the learning process.

Water may be consumed in classes. Children in Grades Pre K - 3 will have snack in their class. This is typically challah and juice and is provided by the students and their families on a rotating basis. No other food or drinks are allowed in the classrooms without teacher consent. If you are bringing snack for the class, please consider healthy snacks and remember: **nuts of any kind are prohibited from the classrooms and the entire building.**

The 4th – 7th grades will be provided with a 10 minute break when they may eat a quick snack. Teachers will reach out to parents to coordinate snack.

The 8th – 10th grade classes will be provided lunch.

ILLNESS AND EMERGENCY

All families are required to maintain up to date emergency medical information on a current religious school registration form. Please promptly inform the Education VP if this information changes.

We cannot dispense prescription or non-prescription medication to students.

In the event of an emergency, we will make every effort to contact a parent. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact an emergency name listed on the Emergency Care Form.

In an extreme emergency an ambulance will be called immediately.

If your child is sick, please keep him/her home! Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100° F or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. They should stay home at least 24 hours even if they have begun antibiotic treatment. In cases of conjunctivitis, students' eyes must be free of discharge for 24 hours. Please keep them home if they have had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.

If your child gets sick at school, they will be sent to the office. A parent will be called and expected to pick up the child immediately.

We may have a fire drills scheduled during the school year.

PARENT VISITATION/INVOLVEMENT

Parents are welcome to join their children in class in order to learn along with them, to educate themselves about the curriculum, and to meet their children's teachers and other families. Please contact your child's teacher ahead of time to let them know you would like to be in the class.

We may have several family events planned throughout the school year. We encourage parent participation in these events. Room parents will send out information in advance of these programs. Examples may include: Family programs, Family B'nai Mitzvah programs, and Parent meet and greets.

Beth Chaverim considers the safety of students to be one of the highest priorities. In order to provide a safe and secure learning environment and discourage interference with classroom routine, we ask parents to adhere to the following policy:

Make arrangements to visit at least one week in advance with your child's teacher. Upon arrival please report to the Religious School Office first in order to be identified and escorted to the students' room.

Please note that a visitor may be denied permission to enter a classroom or permission may be revoked if a visitor does not comply with these procedures or other circumstances that may warrant revocation in our sole discretion.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

As always, if we do not cancel school, please use your own best judgment in deciding whether it is safe for your family to travel.

Decisions to cancel religious school due to inclement weather will attempt to be made by 7:30 am of that Sunday.

There are several ways to check for BCRC weather cancellations and delays:

1. BCRC will send out a special e-mail announcement to members.
2. Check the WTOP website (www.wtop.com) or listen to WTOP on the radio (103.5 FM or 107.7 FM).
3. BCRC will update our Facebook status (www.facebook.com/bethchaverim).

4. BCRC will post a status on the homepage of its website.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Student textbooks and workbooks will be supplied by the religious school. Students should bring textbooks, notebooks, assignment books, folders, a pen or pencil to class each week as instructed by their teachers.

Homework

Hebrew homework may be assigned from time to time. Please encourage your child to practice their Hebrew and review the assignments with your child. Minimal or no Judaics homework will normally be assigned.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Teachers may elect to send communication via email. Included in the email might be:

- Details about what has been learned or will be taught in class.
- Details of homework assignments for the coming week(s).
- Tips for parents to help their children prepare for class.
- Request for substitute teacher

Please keep an eye out for important communications in the monthly religious school newsletter, and from room parents, too.

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

For Judaics and Hebrew we partner with the Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL). They have created a curriculum that is age appropriate and geared to our school schedule. They also have people available to modify the lessons to our congregation's needs.

For both Judaics and Hebrew there may be additional workbooks and textbooks used that BCRC will provide. Judaics will follow the ISJL Curriculum – This program enables the teachers to follow age appropriate lessons about Judaism and Jewish life.

Hebrew - Our Hebrew program goal is for students to be competent in reading prayers and knowing the general theme or idea for Shabbat prayers, as appropriate by age.

Any suggestions, comments, or compliments by parents or students are welcome! Please email educationvp@bcrcva.org.

Service Attendance Requirements

BCRC's Religious School Service Attendance Requirements

In preparation for Jewish life and to reinforce Religious School learning it is vital that your child has a familiarity with Jewish worship. The more often you attend services as a family, the more natural the words and choreography of prayer will become and the greater will be your family's connection to the community. The Education Committee has determined the following as the minimum number of services to be attended by each student during the academic year:

**Please note the services counted will end early enough to give time to prepare rewards for those students who have completed their requirement. For 2015-2016 that date is April 22nd, 2016. Any services attended after this date are counted toward the following year including summer services.

Grade	Friday/Festival Evening	Saturday/Festival Morning
8 - 10	5 total	
7	5 (not Tot Shabbat)	5
6	5 (not Tot Shabbat)	5
5	3 (not Tot Shabbat)	3
4	5	1
3	5	1
2	3 Tot Shabbat	
1	3 Tot Shabbat	
K	3 Tot Shabbat	
Pre-K	1 Tot Shabbat	

A service attendance card can be found outside the sanctuary. Please have your child fill the card out and hand it to the rabbi/service leader at the conclusion of the service and encourage them to wish the leader of prayer a warm "Shabbat Shalom!" or "Chag Sameach!"

Summer services, and services within two weeks before the end of the last religious school year, count towards this year. If you attend a service at another synagogue, have an official (rabbi, cantor, board member) sign that you were in attendance. And remember, if you were at a Jewish camp over the summer... every service attended counts!

Children that fulfil their service requirement will receive a reward at the end of the year (usually during the teacher appreciation breakfast). We look forward to seeing you at Shabbat and Holiday Services!