

Knesset Israel Hebrew School Handbook

All Hebrew School information can be found online.
Please visit www.knessetisrael.org, create your
member log in and register for Hebrew School through
the website.



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Families Together

2019-20

KIHS – Knesset Israel Hebrew School

Please read through this entire handbook so that your family will understand how our program operates. We appreciate your support and cooperation in following the guidelines in this handbook. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rabbi David Weiner, or Judith Weiner.

Mission Statement

The Knesset Israel Hebrew School welcomes students from preschool through 12th grade to dynamic classes where they learn Hebrew, Torah, Jewish Studies, history and culture. The school prides itself on its intimate classes and extraordinary faculty. In addition to teaching skills for meaningful Jewish living, the school also incorporates a 'hidden curriculum' helping students learn to value and prioritize their own involvement in Jewish life.

Curriculum Outline

All programs follow the same school calendar. (Any exceptions are noted below and will be communicated to parents in advance of the school year.) Age & grade ranges are approximate – KI is committed to making sure each student enjoys the most appropriate learning environment possible. We routinely have multi-age classrooms, so curriculum varies from year to year to avoid repetition. There are sometimes reinforcement opportunities made available on other afternoons during the week for students who are struggling. To serve the educational and social needs of our students, we have established two-year cohorts that we expect to travel together through their religious school years.

Tot Shabbat – all children up to kindergarten age

Shabbat morning, 10:30-11:30

Parents and teachers lead monthly programs for our very youngest students and their families. These shabbat morning programs include prayer, music, a craft, purposeful play time and a kiddush & challah snack.

Ages pre-K-K (Shabbat Only)

Shabbat morning, 10:30-11:30am

Experienced early-childhood teachers lead students through structured and unstructured play around Jewish themes, songs, games and activities about the Jewish holidays and Shabbat. While light and fun, classroom activities lay the foundation for meaningful holiday observances in home and synagogue. Each day will end with "purposeful play", which gives our youngest pupils a chance to learn creatively and experientially. Students will also participate in Tot Shabbat with their parent(s).

Grades 1-2 (Shabbat only)

Shabbat morning, 9:00-11:30am

Students' play and learning center around early Hebrew literacy, holiday themes, Jewish values and biblical stories, with an emphasis on experiential learning. Students begin to learn select prayers from

the Shabbat morning service. Each day will end with “purposeful play”, which gives our youngest pupils a chance to learn creatively and experientially.

Grades 3-4 (Shabbat and Wednesday)

Shabbat morning, 9:00am-12:00pm

Classroom Studies: Over the course of a 2-3 year cycle, curriculum elements include an overview of themes, characters and plot from the weekly Torah portion; social studies themes like Jewish Heroes or Jews around the World; attention to mitzvot like shabbat, tzedaka, kashrut and/or blessings over food; God; lifecycle; and the early prophets. Folklore is also incorporated. This class will have dedicated time most Saturday mornings to practice their Hebrew Reading skills.

Tefilla/Jr. Congregation: Learners become familiar with the liturgy and eventually reach the point where they can chant and sing many of the prayers of the Shabbat morning service. Families are always welcome to join Junior Congregation, 10:45-noon.

Wednesday afternoon, 4:00pm-6:00pm

This program will move students forward in their studies of Hebrew language and reading incorporating both traditional classroom elements and introducing a more informal approach through games, song and music. Several times throughout the year, parents will join their children for special programs around holidays. The Wednesday afternoon program incorporates classes in the creative arts – visual, musical and dramatic - facilitated by qualified and experienced teachers.

Grade 5-6 (Shabbat & Wednesday)

Shabbat morning, 9:00am-12:00pm

Classroom Studies: Over the course of a two-year cycle, students’ study of Torah will deepen, with discussions focusing on themes found in the weekly Torah portion. Bible study continues with the stories of David, Solomon and associated folklore. Students will learn about Medieval, modern European and American Jewish history focusing on immigration and religion as well as influential people and events. Study of mitzvot continues.

Tefilla/Jr. Congregation: Together with the younger students, learners master the shabbat liturgy and prepare to lead the congregation in prayer. Students will practice chanting Torah several times this year. (The ‘Chanting Torah’ class is offered every other year to students in grades 4-5 and is tentatively scheduled for 2020/2021.) Families are always welcome to join Junior Congregation.

Soul: On approximately eight Shabbat mornings during the school year, students will enjoy an extended class on prayer & prayerfulness, incorporating conversations and exercises for emotional-spiritual-Jewish growth.

Wednesday afternoon, 4pm-6:00pm

This program will move students forward in their studies of Hebrew language and reading incorporating both traditional classroom elements and introducing a more informal approach through games, song, music and the arts. This year, we will teach Hebrew through study of Mishna. Several times throughout the year, parents will join their children for special programs around holidays. The Wednesday

afternoon program incorporates classes in the creative arts – visual, musical and dramatic - facilitated by qualified and experienced teachers.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program – Grade 7

This program presents a wonderful opportunity for learning, growth, celebration and involvement with the Knesset Israel community. You and your family will have an opportunity to find personal meaning in this significant passage as your child begins a life-long journey as a Jewish adult. More details are available in the bar/bat mitzvah handbook, available at www.knessetisrael.org.

KI Hebrew High – Grades 8-12

We offer a program that supports teens as they follow their passions and continue their Jewish education. Students are encouraged to choose any or all of the following opportunities.

Torah & Rashi: Close reading of the text of the Torah is one foundation of Jewish life. Students work their way slowly through some of our people's most beloved stories, discussing themes that come up along the way. They can expect to grow not only in their knowledge of Torah but in their capacity to ask good questions and analyze the written word. The class chooses what part of the Torah they will read together. This class meets on Shabbat mornings whenever Hebrew School is scheduled, 8:40-9:30 a.m.

Goldblum Tefilla Institute: Furthering knowledge of the services of weekdays, shabbat, holidays and High Holidays with expert teachers, coordinated and assigned by Rabbi David Weiner and the Service Assignment Committee. Some students study to become *shlihei tzibbur*, the congregation's emissaries for prayer.

Torah Reading: Students who excel at cantillation will be offered regular opportunities to make use of and develop their skills.

Hebrew School & Bar/Bat Mitzvah Teaching Assistants: Some students choose to teach as a part of their journey of learning. Opportunities are available on Shabbat morning, Wednesday afternoon and as a part of the bar/bat mitzvah program. While many students choose to volunteer to teach (and receive credit for volunteer hours for school honor societies and the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires), KI may offer a stipend to bar/bat mitzvah tutors and teen teaching assistants who are 16+.

Congregational Programming: **All** adult education programs are open to ages 13+.

Schedule

Tot Shabbat: Sat, 10:30-11:30 (dates as scheduled – consult synagogue or Hebrew School calendar)

PreK-K: Sat, 10:30 – 11:30

1-2: Sat: 9:00-11:30

3-6: Sat: 9:00-12:00 & Weds, 4:00-6:00

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Class: Sat, 9:00-12:00 & Weds, 4-6 p.m.

High School – Torah & Rashi: Sat, 8:40-9:30*

For the family programming schedule and details, please consult the school calendar.

Timeliness is essential to the quality of the classroom experience and the achievement of stated goals. Students who arrive late on Wednesdays may be retained in the office to complete an alternate assignment until a break in the school schedule. A pattern of tardiness may necessitate the completion of alternate assignments and/or conferences with their rabbi.

Membership

Membership at KI is strongly encouraged to anyone inquiring about our Hebrew School program, although we welcome any child whose family wishes to enroll him/her. Participation in the Hebrew School without membership can take place **only for one year before 5th grade and must, for students in grades 3-5, include participation on Saturdays and Wednesdays.** By 5th grade, and/or after one year of unaffiliated enrollment, the family will be expected to apply for membership at Knesset Israel in order to re-enroll their child in Hebrew School. Students must be members and enrolled in the KI Hebrew School program by 5th grade in order to pursue a bar/bat mitzvah at Knesset Israel.

Annual Tuition

Knesset Israel Members	Non Members
Shabbat Preschool Program - \$250	Shabbat Preschool Program - \$480
Grades PreK-K - \$400	Grades K-1 (Shabbat only) - \$740
Grades 1-2 - \$530	Grades 2-7 - \$1090
Grades 2-7 (2 hr Wed & 3 hr Shabbat) - \$890	KI Hebrew High - \$470
KI Hebrew High - \$300	

The congregation makes financial aid available on a needs basis to ensure that every member child at Knesset Israel receives a Jewish education. Financial aid is not available for non-members.

The \$200 surcharge for non-member students can be applied towards membership if the family joins KI during the same school year.

Policies

Attendance: Regular attendance at all classes and programs is essential in order for students to make proper progress during the year. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class for the entire session. *70% attendance per year is required for promotion.* If attendance requirements are not met, an independent study program will be designed in consultation with the Rabbis and Judith Weiner.

Absence and Early Release: JUST LET US KNOW! Only for very legitimate reasons should a child arrive late to class or be withdrawn from a class session before its conclusion. For the KI Shabbat program, a parent should submit a signed note or email in advance to Judith Weiner stating the specific reason for late arrival or early dismissal; for Wednesdays, the parent should contact Judith Weiner. *Please keep in mind that the easiest, least disruptive time for late arrival or early dismissal is during a break between classes.*

Student Evaluation: Teachers will keep parents informed of what is happening in the classroom through periodic newsletters, organized by the school administrator. Midyear, or as needed, teachers may request a conference with parents to explore progress and concerns. We encourage parents to communicate on a regular basis with their children's teachers if they have any concerns or questions. Parents may also request conferences with the teacher and/or rabbi.

Behavior Standards and Discipline Policy: The faculty and staff of the CHAI program and KI religious school are committed to creating a safe learning environment where our children develop a sense of respect for self, others and property. Therefore, the following are the behavior expectations:

- Students will be ready to learn and participate in all class activities.
- Students will not disrupt any other student, will not touch any other student and will not mistreat Knesset Israel.
- Students will respect each other, the teachers and Rabbi, and behave in accordance to standards established by the teacher.

Should disciplinary action be necessary after several warnings, the following steps will be taken:

- Discussion with the teacher and Rabbis or Judith Weiner.
- Discussion with student, teacher, and Rabbis or Judith Weiner.
- Contact parents for participation and assistance in addressing the issue
- Create an individualized behavior plan
- Work to be done independently (outside of school) with tutor at parents' expense

Communication: A vital aspect of our community and a pillar of quality education is communication between parents and faculty. Therefore we encourage you to keep the lines of communication open. We will employ the following methods of communication with families:

- Email newsletters for the Wednesday program with class updates and upcoming event information.
- Email notifications of all program changes and updates. (Our communication is exclusively paperless.)
- An open invitation to dialogue.

If a parent has a problem or concern about the classroom please feel free to:

- Contact the teacher. You may call the school to request a phone call from or a meeting with the teacher. Teachers will not be available to meet with parents during school hours.
- Contact Rabbi Weiner or Judith Weiner if you are unsatisfied and have given the teacher time to implement the results of your conversation.

Kashrut: The Knesset Israel building is kosher. Accordingly, please do **not** send any food or drink with your child. Food and drink from outside will not be permitted, and all snacks will be provided. (Please make sure that any relevant allergy information is included in your registration forms.)

Dress Code: Each student is expected to maintain a neat, clean and appropriate appearance at all times. Revealing clothing and inappropriate slogans are not allowed at Knesset Israel.

Kippot: All boys are required to wear kippot. For girls, wearing kippot is optional.

Equipment: Cell phones must be turned off during school hours. All other electronic devices, toys, music players, balls, etc are not permitted at school and may be confiscated by the teacher and returned at the end of the school day.

Allergies and Special Medical Needs: In order to create a safe and healthy environment for all students, we ask the cooperation of all parents, students and staff to ensure that the policies of the school are carried out consistently. Please be sure to fill out the Medical Information on both the Personal Information and Emergency Contact Information registration forms. **It is the responsibility of the parents of anaphylactic children to identify the student to the school office.** We ask if you have an anaphylactic child, that you keep all emergency contact information current and ensure EpiPens have not expired. Teachers will be notified of children in their class who have an allergy or special medical concern, what their allergy or medical concern is and the preferred means of treatment or management for that child.

Field Trips: Please complete the enclosed form and return with your registration materials before the first day of class in September.

Fire, Evacuation & Lockdown Drills: In accordance with city fire codes and recommended security practice, fire, evacuation and lockdown drills will be conducted during the school year to prepare our students to act quickly and safely in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Drop-off, Pick-up and Dismissal: Parents should please park in the parking lot and swipe their children into the building at the canopy door to drop them off. If, as is often the case on shabbat morning, there is a greeter present outside the door, s/he can also open the door for students and parents. On Saturdays, please come to the door of your child's classroom to pick up your child. On Wednesdays, please park around the circle in the front of the building and wait for dismissal.

Security: The Knesset Israel building is locked at all times. Like all members of the congregation, Hebrew School parents are eligible for a keyfob or keycard that will enable them to access the building through the canopy door. Either may be signed out from the synagogue office – it will have a unique serial number. Simple rules apply:

- Do not lend or give your keyfob to anyone;
- Only allow people you know into the building.
- Do not write "Knesset Israel" or "16 Colt Rd." on the keyfob
- If your keyfob goes missing, please contact the synagogue immediately so that it can be deactivated. No questions will be asked, nor will you be charged a fee.

KI invites parents to help out as backup greeters – please contact the office for more information about requirements and training.

School Cancellation Procedures: The Wednesday program will follow the Pittsfield Public Schools schedule with respect to closings for weather related concerns. If the Pittsfield Public Schools are closed on a Wednesday, our Wednesday program will also be closed. In the event that the Wednesday program closes for another reason when the Pittsfield schools are open, parents will be reached via their 1st or preferred emergency contact number or email listed on the registration form.

Shabbat classes at Knesset Israel are generally not cancelled. We will adjust programming around attendance on any given Shabbat morning. Please use common sense during inclement weather. An advance cancellation might take place on Friday afternoon. Notification as above.

Leadership Structure & Contact Information

Rabbi David Weiner
Knesset Israel

Phone: 413-445-4872 x 10
Email: rabbiweiner@outlook.com

Responsibilities include:

- **Vision, mission, goals, objectives**
- **Recruitment of faculty and students**
- **Overall supervision of program**
- **Curriculum**
- **Budgeting**

Judith Weiner

Director of Families Together at Knesset Israel

Phone: 413-445-4872 x 15
Email: jweiner@knessetisrael.org

Responsibilities include:

- **Registration, publications, communication, attendance, logistics**
- **Arrival, snack and dismissal**
- **Present during school hours**
- **Billing for students**
- **Ordering of books and supplies**
- **Administrative support for teachers**
- **Special Programming**
- **Family Education Programming**