



Lifelong Learning
Temple Israel of the City of New York

Temple Israel of the City of New York Parent Handbook 2024-2025

**THIS HANDBOOK CONTAINS
INFORMATION, DETAILS, AND PROCEDURES
FOR OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.
IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS,
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US!**

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A PRAYER FOR OUR CHILDREN FOR THIS YEAR OF LEARNING:

V'she-nan-tam l'va-ne-kha
Teach them diligently to your children.

What is it we shall teach so diligently? Let us teach our children Torah and how to create Torah. Let us teach our children wisdom and how to become wise. Let us teach our children the past and how to fashion the future.

Let us teach them to take pride in their heritage, and to see in that heritage the foundations of a good life, a moral life, a life of caring, compassion and peace; a life devoted to the wellbeing of self and stranger, a life devoted to the healing of the world. May our children enter into the study of wisdom with a sense of joy. And may we who teach them find joy in our teaching.

Let us take care that we teach what we believe, and that what we believe is what we do, and that what we do is who we are, that the message we impart be one of integrity.

May our children come to see in their heritage a way of life that challenges as well as comforts, a way of life that is worthy of their devotion and their love.

ברוך אתה אֱדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׁהַחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה
Baruch atah adonai eloheinu
melech ha-olam, she-heh-cheh-
yanu, v'kee-y'-manu, v'he-ge-
anu laz-man ha-zeh.

Blessed is the Source of Life, the Fountain of Being whose power enlivens us, sustains us, and enables us to reach this moment of joy.

Rabbi Rami Shapiro

WELCOME!



Dear Parents,

Bruchim Haba'im! Welcome to the new academic year. We thank you for making the choice to give your child a religious education at Temple Israel and welcome you to an exciting year of learning and living Judaism!

The teachers and staff all aim to create positive Jewish learning experiences that make both children and adults alike yearn for more. It is not our task to complete your child's Jewish education, but we intend to light the fire that exists inside your child, so that they get a taste of a vibrant, rigorous, and identity-forming education that transforms them into life-long learners of Judaism. Holding an ear up to the door of one of our classrooms, you would hear exciting discussions, buzzing children busy on a creative project or belting out the lyrics of value-laden songs with our very own Sheldon Low, or students responding to directives entirely in Hebrew while moving around the room.

We welcome you to our school, a warm and remarkable place to learn and live Judaism. We encourage you and your children to take advantage of all that we offer, and to get involved with Temple life as well. A Religious School education in isolation isn't one that excites the mind or infuses life with meaning. Jump in with both feet and let us know how we can help make your experience in the Religious School as well as the congregational community more invigorating and engaging for the entire family.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Melissa Buyer-Witman, RJE
Director of Lifelong Learning



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THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

"It is not enough to only study Torah, but to BE TORAH!" But to really be Torah, we need to find a way to allow Judaism to speak to us and give us a foundation and direction for our life's journey. Lifelong learning enriches our lives, encourages us to nurture our souls, immerse ourselves in the wonders of Jewish life, stimulate natural and intellectual curiosity about our tradition and culture, and participate in *tikkun olam* or mending the broken pieces of our world. As Rabbi Hillel taught almost two millennia ago, "the more Torah, the more life."

Lifelong Learning at Temple Israel seeks to engage every learner of every age in Jewish Education. We view Jewish learning as a path to come together, to form relationships with teachers, fellow learners and texts and thereby allow Torah, in the broadest sense, to be our guide and support for own journey, knowing full well that in this day and age, we never know where the journey of our life – or that of our children's and grandchildren's, nieces' or nephews' – will take us.

Jewish learning is an opportunity for every individual to feel they are an integral part of our inclusive, creative and active congregation. We are a synagogue community that is willing to excel as a vibrant, energized center of Jewish learning and living and to allow Torah to speak to the hearts, minds, and souls of our members. As a congregation that invests in a serious and sophisticated program of Lifelong Learning, we embrace a thoughtful vision that reflects the best of our congregation with its warmth and inclusivity, yet will also lead us to engage in learning to deepen our knowledge and commitment to leading full, meaningful lives as serious Jews.

Knowing this, Temple Israel aims to provide formal, informal, intergenerational, and experiential opportunities for learning. In unique and diverse settings we will foster collaboration and social connectedness among our students of all ages, hoping to provide a warm and nurturing community in which to learn and grow. We will ensure our educators have substantial resources and that with our help they will achieve the highest level of expertise among educators in our community. We will boldly experiment with new models of education, aiming to be an inspiration to other congregations and more importantly we will offer each one of our members an opportunity to be moved and transformed by Jewish education throughout the seasons of their lives.

PLURALISM

As a progressive synagogue affiliated with the Union of Reform Judaism, we are committed to embracing a pluralistic approach to Jewish life and practice. We encourage Jewish growth honoring the individual choices and personal decisions that all Jews are free to make in their lives. At Temple Israel, there is **no one way** to be Jewish and we encourage each individual Jew to find their own unique connection with Jewish tradition. We are uniquely sensitive and accommodating to the modern Jewish family, which includes families of interfaith, interracial, single-parent, same-sex, and step-parent backgrounds, and more. The synagogue is renowned for its outreach activities. Our Religious School program promotes and supports this approach to Jewish life and living.

WHO WE ARE – PHILOSOPHIES & VALUES

ISRAEL

The Religious School promotes and supports an integrated approach to Israel education throughout our values-based curriculum. We see it as our goal to establish meaningful and deep connections to Israel's land and people.

Temple Israel affirms our Movement-wide commitment to *ahavat Medinat Yisrael* (love for the land and people of Israel), through our words, by personally studying about and traveling in Israel, and through adult and student curricula. Temple Israel prides itself as a diverse, inspired, and educated pro-Israel community. We know this to be true: The State of Israel represents the greatest achievement of modern Jewish history, reuniting millions with the land that gave birth to the faith and people of Israel. Following nearly 1900 years of exile – centuries of persecution and expulsion, that culminated in eras of both catastrophe and creative growth and innovation – the Jewish people are again sovereign on Jewish soil. We are continually inspired and moved to share in our diverse programming the burst of Israeli creativity and contributions to Jewish life and culture. We will not yield in our pledge to strengthen our ties to the Jewish state and to be strengthened by her.

Temple Israel is also committed to working for a secure and just Israel. Across her first seven decades, Israel frequently has been forced to defend herself against stronger and more numerous enemies that have sought her destruction. We are steadfast in our support of the security of Israel's people and land. Additionally, we must work for the future, securing an Israel that fulfills the aspiration of its Declaration of Independence as Israel's founders imagined when they wrote that the Jewish State will “uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of race, creed, or sex.”

OUR GOALS

Temple Israel's Religious School offers toddlers through high school seniors a distinctive opportunity to learn about their Jewish heritage, to explore and expand their Judaic knowledge, and to strengthen their Jewish identity.

Our central task at the Religious School is to build among all students in our community a positive Jewish identity and a commitment to Jewish living and learning. Our goal is to provide the highest quality Jewish education in a warm and enriching environment. We strive to promote the growth and development of each child and to form a strong identification with the Jewish people and the Jewish community. We accomplish this through a commitment to cultivating a dynamic, effective and diverse faculty.

BEYOND THE B'NAI MITZVAH

We have a dynamic education program that is especially effective in creating an opportunity for our children and their families to celebrate a B'nai Mitzvah at our synagogue that is a positive Jewish experience and a wonderful family celebration. We are also committed to the retention of our children beyond B'nai Mitzvah through our Junior Academy and Academy programs, volunteering opportunities, youth groups, and national and international trips. For full details about our teen grade programs, please contact Barry Shainker at bshainker@tinyc.org.

OUR CURRICULA

טעם (TA'AM) OUR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Hebrew for "taste" *Ta'am* sessions are designed to embrace Jewish culture and traditions through interactive, project-based learning. Studying Jewish holidays, Hebrew language, Torah stories, and exploration of Jewish identity are significant

KINDERGARTEN – INTRODUCTION TO תורה (TORAH), עברית (HEBREW), & HOLIDAYS

Each 90-minute Kindergarten session is jam-packed with rich, experiential learning for students. In any given week, students will spend their time engaged in crafts, games, story-telling, and more as they explore some of the role models in the Torah (our Hebrew Bible) and discover the key vocabulary words and themes of upcoming holidays (i.e., *shofar* and its symbolism). In addition, students will take part in Hebrew Through

GRADES 1-5 – VALUES-BASED JUDAICA CURRICULUM

The Judaica curriculum for all students in 1st through 5th grade is rooted in Jewish values. By partnering with ShalomLearning, we are able to offer our students and families a course of study that is academically rich and pedagogically diverse. Students learn each value by its Hebrew name, and they explore firsthand how it relates to their interactions with the world. Within each value unit, students will also explore the relevant holiday traditions, Torah stories, Israel connections, Jewish historical events, *mitzvot*, etc.

1st & 2nd graders will cover each value unit for a period of 2-3 weeks. Collectively, the two grades will explore the following:

- סליחה (*Slichah*): Saying "I'm sorry"
- בקור חולים (*Bikkur Cholim*): Visiting the Sick
- הכנסת אורחים (*Hachnassat Orchim*): Welcoming Guests
- צדקה (*Tzedekah*): Working for Justice
- אומץ לב (*Ometz Lev*): Finding Courage in Our Hearts
- ארץ ישראל (*Eretz Yisrael*): The Land of Israel
- בל תשחית (*Ba'al Taschit*): Taking Care of our Environment
- הכרת הטוב (*HaKarat HaTov*): Recognizing the Good
- פורים (*Purim*): Overcoming Our Own Fears
- כבוד (*Kavod*): Respect for Oneself and Others
- השבת אבדה (*HaShavat Aveida*): Returning Lost Items
- פסח (*Passover*): Celebrating Our Accomplishments
- תודת (*Todah*): Saying "Thank you"
- יום העצמאות (*Yom Ha'atzma'ut*): Happy Birthday, Israel!
- שבועות (*Shavuot*): Celebrating the Torah

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3rd-5th graders will spend 3-4 weeks exploring each of the following seven values. As we read the same Torah portion each year and learn something different each time, this values-based curriculum is “scaffolded” across the grades, so students revisit the same values each year from a new, age-appropriate perspective. This incrementally deepens students’ knowledge and understanding of Jewish values, history, language, and customs, laying the foundation for a strong Jewish identity:

תשובה (Teshuvah): Taking responsibility for your actions.

בצלם אלהים (B'Tzelem Elohim): Honoring the image of God in ourselves and others.

גבורה (Gevurah): Using one's inner strength to do what's right.

אחריות (Achrayut): Doing what you can to make the world a better place.

הכרת הטות (HaKarat HaTov): Seeking joy and being grateful.

כוח הדיבור (Koach HaDibbur): Understanding the power of words.

שלום (Shalom): Helping to create a calmer, more peaceful world.

Judaica “Homework”

Teachers do not assign traditional at-home work for students to complete. However, teachers may ask students (and families) to complete an enrichment activity that will enhance or deepen the learning they do in class. Examples of this might include:

- Family discussions for parent and child to share.
- Completing a community-oriented task that relates to the unit the class is studying.
- Watching and then discussing a short online video clip.

HEBREW LEARNING GRADES 4-5:

DECODING AND PRAYERS

Students in Grade 4 solidify their Aleph-Bet, vowels, and decoding by using various primer workbooks; towards the end of the year, students will begin working through “prayer packets” that allow them the opportunity to explore the meaning and text of each prayer at their own pace. Students in Grade 5 begin their year with a short review and then jump into the packets where they left off. To maximize learning in the limited time we have, 5th graders will be placed into Hebrew groups depending on their decoding skills and which prayer packet they are working on.

When a student thinks they have finished a prayer packet, they may “test out” out of that prayer and move on to the text one in our sequence. Any teacher or administrator may conduct the test. In order to pass, a student must achieve the following 3 benchmarks:

- Read/chant the prayer with accuracy; a few minor hiccups are fine, but it must be clear that the student knows it well.
- Read 4-5 words which are randomly picked out by the teacher (to ensure that the student hasn't memorized the text).
- Articulate the key theme and/or meaning of the prayer.

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Homework Policy - 4th-5th Grades

- Students are asked to review their Hebrew letters or prayers at least one additional day per week for at least 10-15 minutes. Like any sports skill or musical composition, the more practice that one puts in to master Hebrew, the faster they will learn it. We have designed our Hebrew program so that all students who follow our recommendations and attend classes regularly will achieve success, and the feedback we've gotten from families who have done so speaks to this goal.

Beginning in March, 5th graders will spend time preparing a service which they lead in front of our full-school community. In groups, they will lead a prayer, describe its meaning, and express what it means to them as individuals. We invite all families to join us for this special moment, our **טקס התפילה (Tekes HaT'filah, or Ceremony of Prayer), which will take place on May 15, the final Wednesday session of the year.**

GRADES 6-7 – JUNIOR ACADEMY JUDAICA

Recognizing the growing independence of middle schoolers, we have designed the Junior Academy as program that affords a mix of choice and core classes. 6th and 7th graders will study together, and they will spend half a year exploring an elective of their choice and half a year engaged in learning about the Holocaust (where we use the resources from Facing History and Ourselves) or Israel; we will alternate which of these topics is taught year each, thus giving students the opportunity to complete both courses by the end of 7th grade. Each course is based on weekly, one-hour sessions. All classes will be taught by clergy, full-time educational staff, or other familiar faces with whom our students have a pre-existing relationship.

HEBREW LEARNING GRADES 6-7:

PRAYERS AND B'NAI MITZVAH PREPARATION

Each week before their Judaica class, 6th graders will participate in a 45-minute Hebrew learning block that follows the same protocols and structures outlined above for 5th grade. Roughly once every 4-6 weeks, 6th graders will attend the weekly *t'filah* for the students who attend our afternoon sessions in order to practice their prayers in a "live" setting. In addition, students will have a virtual 20-minute meeting with a Hebrew tutor at a standing time each week who will assess and guide their progress through our Hebrew program.

Since students generally begin meeting one-on-one with the Cantor in their 7th grade year, formal Hebrew learning is not a required part of the program. However, we know that many children may benefit from dedicated time and structure when learning Hebrew. Therefore, 7th graders may sign up for one or more 8-week trimesters of one-on-one Hebrew tutoring at a nominal cost.

OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PROGRAM

WEEKLY תפילה (T'FILAH) - Families encouraged to join us!

Students put their learning into practice at our 20-25-minute weekly Religious School service. They participate in age-appropriate prayer experiences aimed at helping each child develop an inner spiritual life. The service also allows students to develop relationships with Temple Israel clergy, which we hope will continue to grow throughout their lives. Kindergartners through 5th graders will participate weekly in services or a prayer experience. Kindergarten through 3rd grade services will usually take place Mondays at 5:25pm, 4th & 5th will usually take place on Wednesdays at 5:35pm. 6th graders will join the 4th & 5th cohort approximately once per month.

שירה (SHIRA)/MUSIC

Music (*shira* in Hebrew) is often seen as the soul of Jewish practice. Our beloved "Rock Star-in-Residence" Sheldon Low integrates holidays, Israel, and our curricular values into his classes and songs he teaches. *Shira* usually occurs at the same time each week for 10 minutes (times vary depending on grades).

FAMILY PROGRAMS - A family member should join us!

Our Family Education Programs (once a year per grade) aim to stimulate the adult and student learner, cultivate relationships between the parents, faculty, and temple clergy, and foster community and bring families closer together. It has truly been an inspiring experience to have parents, grandparents, and students interacting with one another through this learning experience.

Your participation is very important; if you cannot be present, please send any family member (aunt, uncle, adult cousin, etc.) or close family friend *in lieu of a babysitter or caregiver*. This is a rare and wonderful opportunity to learn alongside family members and we would not want your child to feel left out of this experience.

The current family program dates for the 2024-2025 school year are as follows, but note they are subject to change:

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten | Monday, February 10 |
| 1st Grade | Monday, March 3 |
| 2nd Grade | Monday, April 7 |
| 3rd Grade | Monday, November 18 |
| 4th Grade | Wednesday, January 15 |
| 5th Grade | Wednesday, March 12 |
| 6th & 7th Grades | Wednesdays, November 13 & April 23 |

ROCKIN' SHABBAT

Don't miss out on this exciting experience! Geared towards K-5th graders and their families (but all are welcome to join us!), our Rockin' Shabbat services will have you out of your seats celebrating Shabbat. Led by our "Rock Star-in-Residence", Sheldon Low, and our Director of Lifelong Learning, Rabbi Melissa Buyer-Witman, our visual, experiential and musical service creates a perfect atmosphere for families to come together and join one another in singing, prayer, interactive learning, and community! **Rockin' Shabbat occurs roughly once a month from 6pm-7pm. Check the calendar for the dates.**

OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PROGRAM

TILEARN - GRADES 4-5

Temple Israel Religious School enrolls students in Grades 4-5 in our alternative approach to Jewish learning. Our program has evolved since its inception more a decade ago, but the core principles remain the same:

- “i” for in-person — students attend classes weekly at Temple Israel, harnessing the magic of our physical community.
- “i” for individual learning — students meet weekly on Zoom for one-on-one Hebrew learning, offering them customized support and feedback.
- “i” for innovative learning — our web-based curricula are updated annually and allow students and their families to access our resources from anywhere.

JUNIOR ACADEMY: TEEN PROGRAM (GRADES 6-7)

Research and studies show that the benefits of spiritual exploration, engaging learning, community involvement, and social action during one's adolescence are significant in the development of character, identity, and self-esteem. Temple Israel enrolls teens in Grades 6-7 in our innovative program, the Junior Academy. Learning in the program is made up of three pillars:

Core Learning - During their weekly session, students will study the year's core class for one semester. Courses rotate in a two-year cycle so that teens experience different courses as they progress through the program. In Year 1, students work with the Facing History and Ourselves Holocaust curriculum, and in Year 2 they explore Israel through "Finding the 'I' in Israel," a curriculum specifically designed for our community. Both courses are taught by our member of our clergy (Rabbi Melissa, Rabbi Peter, Cantor Altshul) or full-time educational team (Barry Shainker, Savannah Hastings).

Hebrew - 6th graders will participate weekly in *t'filah* or a prayer exploration, as well as a Hebrew class to practice prayers and improve their proficiency. In addition, they will have a 20-minute one-on-one session via Zoom with one of their teachers. 7th graders will join for *t'ilfah* but do not have a formal Hebrew class since they will begin to meet regularly with Cantor Altshul for the B'nai Mitzvah lessons. They are welcome to register for one or more trimesters of one-on-one Hebrew learning at a nominal cost.

Other programs and offerings through the year include: 7th Grade Day Out trip, youth group activities, volunteer opportunities like the *Madrichim* program.

OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PROGRAM

THE ACADEMY - TEEN PROGRAM (GRADES 8-12)

Research and studies show that the benefits of spiritual exploration, engaging learning, community involvement, and social action during one's adolescence are significant in the development of character, identity, and self-esteem. Temple Israel enrolls teens in Grades 8-12 in our innovative program. The Academy.

Students meet monthly on a Sunday evening for a 2.5 hours for dinner, social time with their peers, and learning about a relevant social justice topic. We believe that learning about the problems facing our community and our world is an important part of advocating for systemic solutions, we award 1.5 hours of community service for each of these sessions. We anchor our sessions around three pillars: *limud* (lifelong learning), *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), and *areyvut* (community mindedness).

During our first session each year, we engage our teens to come up with the issues they want to explore more. Once we generate a list of topics, we engage specialists from the community to teach us about these topics and develop community organizing strategies to help advocate for change. Past topics have included sexuality and gender, addiction and substance abuse, racial justice, immigration, economic disparities, anti-Semitism, and more.

In addition, once a month teens will gather for a social program under the umbrella of YETI, our teen youth group. Led by our youth board and facilitated by our youth advisor, teens will get together for a meal off-site get together. Past events have included an escape room, ice skating, and Shabbat Dinner Clubs.

Travel seminars are a highlight of the teen experience for many of our students. In partnership with Stephen Wise Free Synagogue and Temple Emanu El, our 8th & 9th graders travel in a two-year cycle to Arizona to examine immigration justice and to Georgia and Alabama to see firsthand the sites and meet the people of the Civil Rights Movement. 10th-12th graders can elect to join us on our annual overseas trip to Europe or Israel and/or a social justice and advocacy trip to Washington where they lobby on Capitol Hill.

Volunteer opportunities abound for our teens. Between our Sunday evenings, *Madrichim* program, staffing junior youth group events, and more, over 125 hours of community service are up for grabs!

COMMUNITY

We are not just a school, but we are also a community of students, parents, faculty, and administration, working together as part of Temple Israel NYC. Our goal is for every child to feel welcome and comfortable. Families are encouraged to see the Religious School as just one part of their involvement in the Temple community.

COMMUNICATION

CONTACT US

We want to hear from you! Our Religious School staff are always ready to answer questions or offer any relevant information. See the list below for the best person to contact for various eventualities:

To reach all members of the Department of Lifelong Learning, email education@tinyc.org.

Rabbi Melissa Buyer-Witman - Director of Lifelong Learning

212.249.5002

rabbibuyerwitman@tinyc.org

CONTACT FOR: special educational needs, discussing a child's prolonged absence, student well-being, confidential matters, curriculum information, pastoral needs.

Barry Shinker - Religious School Associate Director

646-292-9476 (direct line)

bshinker@tinyc.org

CONTACT FOR: curriculum information, Hebrew program, Junior Academy, registration questions, teen travel seminars, general information about all programs, class assignments, updating child information, ShulCloud (our online registration platform and member database).

Rabbi Peter Young - Assistant Rabbi

212.249.5000

rabbiyoung@tinyc.org

CONTACT FOR: Junior Academy, 7th grade mitzvah projects, youth group questions - events, youth board, etc.

Savannah Hastings - Education Coordinator & Youth Director

212.249.5002

shastings@tinyc.org

The Academy, *Madrachim* program, child absences

CONTACTING YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

All of our Religious School teachers can be contacted by email whenever the need arises. Teacher email addresses use the following formula: "first initial + last name @ tinyc.org." If you have trouble or need help obtaining this information, please let us know.

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION HOME

The Religious School office regularly sends communication to our Religious School parents, either in the form of an informational email or newsletter. Please check regularly for these updates and ensure that none of the email addresses we send go to your spam folder. If we need to contact you in an emergency, we will use the phone numbers that you have provided on your child's online registration. Please inform us immediately if any of your contact details change over the course of the year.

You will also receive a periodic class update from your child's teacher describing the work they have been covering, highlights of the learning, questions you can ask your child, discussion points for your family, special events, and reminders. **These emails may also contain short at-home assignments for your child (or even your family)**, so please read them carefully. This way, you are always aware of the teacher's goals, the class's progress, and you can be involved in your child's Jewish education.

PROGRESS REPORTS

We monitor each child's progress, both educationally and socially, in our Religious School environment. Be sure to read the weekly newsletters you receive (see above) for information what your child is learning. Periodically, your child's teacher will also reach out to you discuss their progress and share relevant information. If you have any questions at all about how we are assessing your child's progress, please contact Rabbi Buyer-Witman at rabbibuyerwitman@tinyc.org.

COME FOR A CHAT!

Our doors are always open! If you feel that you would like to discuss something in person rather than over the phone or via email, then please do talk to us. We are here to create memorable and engaging experiences for your child(ren). Please don't hesitate to reach out; the sooner we know something is not working for your family, the sooner we can address it. The Lifelong Learning office is located on the 5th floor.

STUDENT WELFARE AND ADMINISTRATION

ATTENDANCE

It is important for academic, personal, and spiritual growth that your child attend Religious School regularly. There are so many wonderful opportunities and activities each week that we want your child to experience! However, we understand that some absences are unavoidable. Our teachers are mindful of making sure that your child feels comfortable and happy when they return to Religious School after a missed class.

Your child's regular attendance is the largest indicator of their success in Religious School. We ask for a minimum attendance of 75% of all class sessions. If your child is absent more than this, a meeting may be set up with your family and Rabbi Buyer-Witman in order to discuss fulfilling all the elements of our Religious School program, so that your child can matriculate in the following year.

If you know in advance that your child will miss a class, please contact Barry or Savannah in the Lifelong Learning office and/or your child's teacher. That way, the teacher can pass on any missed work or information. If you are unable to reach out beforehand, our office will reach out after the session to check-in. If your child is absent for two class sessions in a row, and you have not been in touch with our office or their teacher, their teacher will be in touch.

In the case of prolonged, but time-bound absences which you are aware of ahead of time (i.e., a school play, preparatory sessions for standardized tests, etc.), please contact our office IN ADVANCE to discuss an individualized study plan to address the classes that your child will miss.

TARDINESS

Please make every effort to get your child to Religious School on time. We only have a short amount of time with our students and we want to make the most of every valuable minute. We would also not want any child to feel like they have missed out on an enjoyable and important activity. If punctuality is difficult due to school bus arrival times or another ongoing afterschool commitment, please contact our office.

B'NAI MITZVAH ELIGIBILITY

In order to celebrate B'nai Mitzvah, **students are required to enroll and complete a minimum of four consecutive years of Religious School (usually 4th-7th grade)**

immediately prior to and including the entire B'nai Mitzvah year. Families whose students enter the Religious School after Grade 4 must make special arrangements with Rabbi Buyer-Witman in order to meet grade-level requirements. Students who have attended another accredited Religious School prior to arriving at Temple Israel are eligible for B'nai Mitzvah, provided all requirements have been satisfied. We are sensitive and accommodating of those who have special needs—please contact Rabbi Buyer-Witman to discuss your family's needs.

STUDENT WELFARE AND ADMINISTRATION

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

On most days, Early Arrival rooms will open at 3:15pm for students to arrive before class begins. These rooms are fully-staffed by members of our faculty, so it is not necessary for parents, babysitters, etc. to wait. Students are free to have a snack, socialize, complete schoolwork, or even practice their Hebrew. A few minutes before class begins, students will be dismissed (and escorted, where appropriate) to class.

Pick-up for Grades K-5 will usually take place in the Sanctuary at the conclusion of *t'filah*. Students will also be brought outside for those parents or babysitters who cannot join us in the Sanctuary. Students with permission to self-dismiss will be released from class only when it concludes.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Early dismissals are always discouraged. Not only does a student leaving class early interrupt their learning, it also disrupts the flow of the class and can negatively impact the learning of everyone else. We therefore strongly recommend students attend an entire class session or none of it.

However, we do recognize that on occasion there may be unavoidable conflicts which necessitate a student leaving early. If you find yourself in one of these situations, we kindly ask that you reach out to our office at education@tinyc.org or 212.249.5002 in advance.

After you reach out to our office, we will advise of a pick-up time that will be minimally disruptive. Please note however that all dismissals for Grades K-5 are to be completed by 5:15pm so as not to interfere with *t'filah*. We ask that you come to our office to pick-up an "exit ticket" for your child and sign our logbook. You may then proceed to the classroom for pick-up.

Parents of Jr. Academy students with permission to self-dismiss should reach out to us in advance with the designated time for their child to be released. Students will not be dismissed early from class without parental notification.

GUEST POLICY

Guests, especially those who are considering a formal affiliation with our community, are welcome to come and learn with us. Please note the following rules:

- Guest visits must be approved by the Lifelong Learning Office in advance. A phone call or email is sufficient, but it must be done before that day's program begins. This ensures everyone's safety and helps any teachers prepare for a new student.
- All guests must check in with a school administrator at the beginning of the visit before being directed to any classrooms or activities. Student guests will also need to provide emergency contact information and any other relevant health and safety details.
- All guests must comply with the same set of school policies and standards as those enrolled in our program. Any student, parent, or family who arrives without advance permission and/or is unable to meet the requirements above will not be permitted.

STUDENT WELFARE AND ADMINISTRATION

BEHAVIOR POLICY

We strive to provide classrooms in which our children and staff can work together, be respected, and benefit from our program. This type of classroom atmosphere provides students with the opportunity to learn as much as possible. In order to meet these goals, we feel it is important for each student to be accountable and responsible for their own behavior. If your child is seen to be behaving inappropriately, you will receive a call from the class teacher to discuss the matter. Together, we will strategize solutions to make our school a positive and healthy learning environment for your child. If you have concerns about your child or their class, please call as soon as possible so we can work together on solutions. The sooner we begin to work on a problem, the better our chance to solve it quickly and effectively.

FOOD & DRINK POLICY

Students in K-7th grades are invited to enjoy a snack or drink before class begins each day. From time to time, we may sell snacks as a fundraiser for a charitable organization. Students are always welcome to bring snacks of their own, but we ask that all snacks be kosher-style and free of common allergens. Snacks may be consumed before class begins, and K-5 teachers are asked to give students a few minutes at the beginning of each class. However, if snacks or drinks become disruptive or distracting, teachers may place limits on snack consumption during class.

Please also note the following:

- We are a "nut-aware" institution, While we will make every effort to ensure that products with nuts are not brought into Temple Israel, we cannot guarantee that cross-contaminant has not taken place in manufacturing facilities
- We ask that students NOT share food with friends and classmates.
- All foods which students bring should have the ingredients clearly listed - either on original packaging or a card if a student is bringing in something homemade.

CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

To better protect the integrity of the classroom environment and promote meaningful social connections, **we will be asking students to turn in their cell phones at the start of the school day. All devices will be held in a safe place in the classroom with the teacher and returned at the end of the day. If a student uses a "smart watch," it should be set to clock-only mode.** We believe this will help eliminate distractions, encourage active participation, and foster deeper relationships among students. By creating a more focused and engaged atmosphere, we hope to support the growth of both learning and community-building within our school.

If you need to reach your child during school hours, please contact the Lifelong Learning office at 212.249.5002. We will be happy to deliver any relevant or urgent messages to your child. Similarly, we will gladly give you a call if your child needs to connect with you.

STUDENT WELFARE AND ADMINISTRATION

DRESS CODE

We do not have a strict dress code for our Religious School. However, children should not wear any clothing with inappropriate language or symbols. We suggest comfortable clothing that you don't mind getting messy as we may do art activities.

FIRST AID

If a child becomes injured or ill, they will be sent to the Religious School office, where Sarah Stein will call a designated parent, caregiver, or emergency contact. For minor injuries, Band-Aids and cold compresses will be administered. Please note that we will only administer any medication (including over-the-counter drugs like Advil and Tylenol) that were indicated as approved medication on your online registration. Certain members of our staff are trained in first-aid and using an Epi-Pen. **If your child needs to carry an Epi-Pen and/or an inhaler, note this on their registration form.** We ask that you also speak to your child's teacher at the beginning of the year.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY...

To ensure that our community is prepared in the event of a true emergency, we may conduct both evacuation and lockdown drills several times throughout the course of the year.