

... from the Education Director

Welcome to our school! Some features of our school of which we are especially proud:

Tzedakah & Tikun Olam Our students learn the importance of Jewish ethics and values. They learn about Tikun Olam (repairing the world) and Tzedakah through hands-on participation in ongoing charity projects, including providing food for the homeless, Habitat for Humanity and literacy programs. B'nai Mitzvah students provide meaningful gifts; these have included money, time, books, blankets, mittens, and services.

Services Learning to participate in congregational services is an important part of our school. Every school day starts with Tefilah in the sanctuary. The Rabbi is joined by students assigned to do recitations for day. He adds insight and explanations. On Sundays, Mrs. Hindy Kalmenson explores the weekly Torah portion with discussion, drama and games.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah During the week prior to being called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, our students read Torah on Monday and Thursday morning and lead Shāharit on Friday morning. On Shabbat morning, they read Torah and Haftarah and lead the Torah service and Musaf.

Family Events In addition to classroom learning, students come together for holiday activities, family learning workshops, Shabbat services and Havdalah.

Learning Differences Our religious school program is open to children in grades K-8. Our staff works with our families to develop and modify instruction to meet the individual needs of each student. At Beth El, it is important for all learners to have access to their Jewish heritage. Our program engages students in Judaic studies, cultural experiences, Hebrew instruction, and prayer skills. We strive to create a program in which each child can reach his or her maximum potential.

Mission The mission of Congregation Beth El's Religious School is to plant the seeds for future generations of proud, committed Jews—able to participate in Hebrew prayers, skilled in Torah and Haftarah reading, knowledgeable of the Hebrew Bible, practicing Jewish ethics, exposed to Jewish history, tradition and religious observance, and nurtured in the love of Israel and Am Yisrael.

Major Subject Areas

- Shabbat and Holidays
- Bible and Ethics
- History and Israel
- Hebrew and Siddur

Guiding Values

- Jewish learning and study are lifetime pursuits.
- A positive Jewish identity is fundamental.
- Acts of loving kindness and Tzedakah are a way of life.
- The Torah is a source of our values and traditions.
- The home and the family are central to Jewish education. The synagogue and families are partners in shaping the next generation of committed Jews.
- Prayer is both personal and a way of connecting to the Jewish people.
- Jewish life has a rhythm. Shabbat and the Holidays include personal and family and community experiences.
- Our personal and community ties to Israel are strong and everlasting.
- Jewish arts and culture add meaning to our lives.

School Policies

Safety: Parents are required to **enter the school wing** to pick up their children and their carpools. Children will not be permitted to leave the building unless accompanied by an adult. If a child needs to leave early, an adult must come to the Religious School office to sign the child out, and a staff member will bring the child to the office.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend classes at least 75%. **You must notify the synagogue office if your child will be absent, late, or seeking early dismissal.** We need to know attendance for class preparation and for the safety of our children. **Students will be released only to parents or siblings unless prior arrangements have been made.** Students are required to attend synagogue services at any time their class has a participatory role.

Conduct: Students are expected to behave in a manner that demonstrates respect for themselves, their teachers, and fellow students. Likewise, students should be mindful that the synagogue, and its sanctuary and contents, are sacred and shall be treated in a respectful manner at all times.

Dress Code: Students should come to Religious School in proper attire that will be respectful to the sanctuary, the faculty and themselves. No tank tops, no short-shorts, no bare midriffs. Shabbat dress should be neat and dignified - no jeans, no t-shirts.

Cell Phone: All electronic devices must be turned off and kept out of sight during school hours, unless used for instructional purposes. Otherwise, the electronic device will be held by the teacher or kept in the office until a parent comes to collect it.

Food: Children are expected to bring their own small snacks. Any food brought to the synagogue must be kosher and **nut-free**. Please be mindful of any serious allergies of classmates. The children are responsible for cleaning up and properly disposing of all trash.

Cancellation: Our snow day closure is guided by the decisions of Fairfield Public Schools. If Fairfield schools are closed or have an early dismissal, then Religious School will be canceled. All decisions will be made no later than 2:00 PM on Tuesday. On Sundays we will call every home if school is canceled.

Aides / Paraprofessionals: If a paraprofessional is required for a student, it is the responsibility of the parent to hire the paraprofessional. Payment for the paraprofessional is the responsibility of the parent. The Hebrew School Education Director/Preschool Director needs to approve of the credentials of the paraprofessional.