



# **bethisraelhebrewschool**

## **student & parent handbook**

**Location:** Our Hebrew School is located in Lexington Park, at Beth Israel Synagogue, 21780 Bunker Hill Drive. We are across the street from Nicolett Park.

**Program Dates & Times:** School hours are Sundays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please see the school calendar for the specific dates that we will be in session. Note that our overall calendar coincides with the start and end of public school in St. Mary's County.

**Ages:** Our program is for children ages 3 through Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

**Registration:** To register, complete one (1) application form, medical and photo release form, emergency contact information and parent questionnaire for EACH child you are enrolling in school. You may photocopy information that is the same for all children. Once your application has been received, you will be contacted by the Beth Israel Treasurer regarding tuition payment.

**Tuition:** The tuition structure includes books and curriculum and is as follows:

- Beth Israel Congregation Members: \$175/child school age, \$90/child pre-school
- Non-Congregation Members: \$375/child school age, \$290/child pre-school

Multiple-child discounts are given. If you have any questions regarding the tuition structure or would like to become a member of the Congregation, please contact Linda Weintraub, Beth Israel Congregation President, or Jack Romano, Beth Israel Treasurer.

**Communication:** Our primary method of communication with parents is email. If you prefer to be contacted by an alternate method, please let us know.

**Attendance:** Parents and children should realize that consistent attendance is one of the keys to a successful school year. We will be taking attendance in each class this year and will use this tool to help track your child's progress.

**Drop Off / Pick Up:** It is important that your child arrives to school on time. However, children should not be dropped off more than 10 minutes before the start of school and should be picked up no later than 10 minutes after the end of school. For your child's safety, please note that you will need to sign your child in when they are dropped off and sign your child out when they are picked up. There will be a sign in/out book located near the door of the Synagogue. Although we have done this in the past, outside drop offs and picks ups are no longer allowed. Your child may only be picked up by an authorized adult as indicated in your child's registration information. Please feel free to list as many adults as necessary on your registration information. You may add/delete adults at any time

during the school year. Children will ONLY be released to those persons indicated as an Emergency Contact or to those persons indicated in writing to Beth Israel Hebrew School as an adult authorized to pick up your child. Please contact the Principal to make any changes. Note that ID may be requested if the staff is unfamiliar with the adult picking up your child. If you find that you need to drop off your child after school has started, please be sure that an adult member of staff knows that they are there. If you need to pick up before the end of school, please see an adult member of staff to confirm that you have picked your child up.

**Dress Code:** All boys are required to wear a Kipah for all classes. In addition, we will follow the standard dress code posted by the St. Mary's County School System which may be found on their website at [www.smcps.org](http://www.smcps.org). If you are unsure, please feel free to ask.

**School Supplies:** A majority of the supplies needed by the children for weekly classes, art projects and activities will be provided by Beth Israel Hebrew School. Donations of typical school supplies are always appreciated. If you'd like to donate, please contact the Principal for a list of items that we can put to good use. A short supply list of items that you should supply for your child will be provided at the beginning of the school year. If assistance is needed with locating or purchasing of supplies, please feel free to contact the Principal.

**Toys, Electronic Games & Cell Phones:** Please do not send your children to school with toys or electronic hand held games such as Nintendo DS, Nintendo Gameboy, Sony PSP, etc. These items may not be used at any time while Hebrew School is in session and are often distracting if the children know that they are in their school bag. We do understand that some children require the use of a cell phone and as such carry the phones with them. However, use of cell phones during class for texting, playing games, making calls, etc. is distracting to the student, teacher and other students in the class. Please be sure that your children understand that cell phone use during class time is prohibited for any reason other than an emergency. If there is an emergency and your child needs to make a call during class time, please request that they notify their teacher who will give them permission to make the call in a location that will not distract the other children. **If your child will be carrying a cell phone with them to school, please see the Principal for a cell phone form that both you and your child will need to sign.**

**Focus Days:** Throughout the year coincident with Jewish Holidays, our schedule of classes and curriculum will be altered slightly from the regular days to allow us to focus on the upcoming holiday. On occasion, you may be asked to send it food or craft related items with your children to support our learning and celebration of the holiday. Our focus on holiday learning will include study of Hebrew words and phrases associated with the holiday, study of the historical basis of the holiday and participation in songs and prayers related to the holiday celebration. While we will definitely spend some time making crafts and sometimes eating as we learn and celebrate, please do not assume that these are "off" days and keep your child home as they will miss critical learning and background related to the particular holiday that they will not get during the rest of the school year. There will be regular classes held for all Focus Days indicated on the calendar. The exception to this is the "Purim Carnival" and the "Chanukah Party".

**Homework:** On occasion your child will be given homework to help reinforce what they have learned in school or to help prepare them for the next week's lessons. It is important for you to ensure that your child completes this homework so that they will be prepared to go on to the next class. If your child will not be at the following week's class, please be sure to have them complete the homework and hand in any worksheets (if applicable) when they return to school to insure that they get credited for completion. If you need any assistance in helping your child complete the homework, please feel free to contact the Principal.

**Parent Participation In/Outside the Classroom:** Please encourage your child to talk about the day's lessons while they are still fresh in their mind. This will help reinforce what was learned and provide your child an opportunity to discuss any homework they may have for the following week. If you would like to see the curriculum or a particular day's lessons at any time, please feel free to contact the Principal. You may also feel free to come into school and sit in on any lesson at any time.

We understand that we all have changing schedules, so to help accommodate teachers that may need the day off we are looking for a list of willing substitutes. If you would like to be added to this list, please see the Principal. We will provide as much notice as possible to our substitute teachers and will also provide you with the lessons so that you can prepare in advance if needed. If you are able and willing to teach or substitute teach Hebrew lessons, please let us specifically know that you are okay with Hebrew lessons.

We also require at least one parent volunteer each Sunday that school is in session. As a parent volunteer, you may be asked to help with crafts, serve food, work with the children during a lesson (you do NOT need to read Hebrew to do this), lead a Parshah play, lead the children in singing songs or some other activity. All parents with children registered in Hebrew School are required to help at least one Sunday during the year. A calendar will be posted near the sign in/out sheet. Please add your name to an available date.

**Attendance at Services:** To reinforce what is learned in the classroom, both for the weekly Torah Portion (Parshah) and for the prayers that the children are learning, it is required that your child attend at least five (5) Friday evening services. The children earn points when they attend services and additional points when they help lead Hebrew Prayers during a designated "Children's Service" or "Tot Shabbat". In addition, for those children that will making their Bar/Bat Mitzvah within two years, there are additional service participation requirements in order to successfully complete the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program. The requirements specific for Bar/Bat Mitzvah are coordinated with the Rabbi, the Head of the Religious Committee and the Hebrew School Principal and are documented separately.

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah:** Enrollment and active participation in Hebrew School is mandatory for those students in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. Additional requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are coordinated with the Rabbi, the Head of the Religious Committee and the Hebrew School Principal and are documented separately.

**Conduct:** All Hebrew School students, teachers, members of staff and parent volunteers are expected to act in a manner that is respectful and courteous to all persons attending, participating in or volunteering while Hebrew School is in session. The parent or guardian of any student that is unwilling or unable to conduct themselves in a respectful manner will be notified either orally or in writing as warranted. Any teacher, member of staff or parent volunteer that is unwilling or unable to conduct themselves in a respectful manner will be asked to meet with the Principal and Beth Israel Synagogue President for further action. Students may earn points for exceptionally respectful or helpful behavior.

**Point Reward System:** The student point reward system is intended to reward those students who attend and participate in Hebrew School activities, attend and participate in Friday night, Saturday morning and Holiday services, add Hebrew vocabulary words to their personal "Word Bank", complete and turn in homework assignments, perform Mitzvot in the community and for other actions and events as recommended by the Hebrew School Staff. As students reach certain point "goals", they will be eligible for individual rewards and as a whole grade level of students reaches a point goal, they will be eligible to participate in a special event such as kids movie day or party (outside of regular class time). More information will be provided separately.

**Tzedakah:** Tzedakah (charity) is a concept, which is basic to Judaism. Our school attempts to develop a commitment among our students to share with others less fortunate than themselves by donating a few pennies a day to charity. Students are encouraged to bring a coin for Tzedakah each Sunday.