



Hebrew School

Parent Handbook

2024-2025/5784-5



Congregation Ahavat Olam, 1600 Osgood Street, Suite 3068 North Andover, MA 01845

Website: ahavatolam4all.org

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Dear parents,

Welcome to the 2024-2025/5784-5 Hebrew School year! We have planned for a school year that will be inspiring, focused on learning, growth, and the celebration of our traditions and heritage.

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 the recognition of consonants and vowels. Our older kids work to improve their Hebrew decoding and vocabulary skills while also learning prayers and blessings. This year, our students will continue to get a taste of modern Hebrew, which is being introduced in class and through music.

Holidays: We like to think of our Shul as your extended Jewish family. Our Sunday/Tuesday school holiday celebrations for Simchat Torah, Chanukah, Tu BiShvat, Purim, Passover, and more are meant not just for study, but mainly for hands-on learning and experiential activities. Judaism is not just for kids! Let's make the holidays joyous and join together with your children, their peers, and families during these school-wide holiday celebrations.

History: As Jewish individuals and families creating Jewish homes, we share a rich and complex history. It is simultaneously inspirational and imperfect, filled with genius and yet, at times, archaic. It is a history of triumph and pain, of groundbreaking moments and multi-dimensional experiences that continue to shape our lives. This means that the Torah stories, historical events, Jewish values, and culture that are introduced in the early grades are later revisited in later grades, allowing our constantly maturing youth to engage with these subjects with new insights and understanding.

Horizons: Our community is equally focused on the future as it is on the past. Our educational program aims to instill in the next generation the noble aspirations of peace, freedom, justice, and compassion that our ancestors have passed down to us. We strive to help our students internalize these values and make them a tangible reality through the lives they lead.

Tzedaka: 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, students have the opportunity to contribute to our tzedakah. At the end of the school year, students will be able to choose where to donate their tzedakah.

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

Parents are encouraged to actively participate in all of the Family Services, which conclude the last 15 minutes of every school day. This provides an opportunity for families to come together and engage in communal prayer and reflection.

We have scheduled class-led Shabbat services and B'nai Mitzvah programming. Please take note of your child's class Shabbat service and be aware that they will have rehearsals during school hours in the two weeks leading up to that date.

Please take a moment to review the information provided in the Parent Handbook. If you have any questions, need more information about our Education Committee, or have questions regarding helping in the classroom, please email Einat at School@ahavatolam4all.org.

With warmest regards and Shanah Tovah U'metukah,

Einat Irelander, Hebrew School Director

Cindy Remis, Hebrew School Chairperson

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Ahavat Olam Hebrew School strives to create a learning environment for our students that promotes a positive Jewish identity and a warm sense of community for students in Pre-Kindergarten through 10th grade and beyond.

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

Our Hebrew studies program is designed to develop students' abilities to read and understand Jewish prayers. It also supports their understanding of the Torah, preparing them for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah and their lifelong Jewish journey.

Additionally, we feature a joyous music curriculum that reinforces melodies and prayers heard in worship services, along with holiday songs and Hebrew songs. Music plays a significant role in our Shul and is a valuable addition to our learning environment. We also encourage art projects that help students express their Jewish identity. Our curriculum aims to promote creative, dynamic, and interactive classroom lessons to keep our students engaged and focused. Traditional textbooks, creative teachers, guest speakers, and unique programs support our classroom studies.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Pre-Kindergarten – 7th Grade: Sundays, 9:30 am - 11:30 am

8th + 9th Grade: Sundays, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (once a month)

Confirmation Class: Sundays, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (once a month)

*Tuesdays, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Will be offered based on the number of students' requests.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Please ensure that students arrive on time. Parents are expected to accompany their children and join their teacher at the beginning of the day. Similarly, parents should come to the Shul for pick-up when the class ends. If someone other than the listed individuals on the registration form is picking up a child, they must have a written note signed by a parent/guardian.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Membership: In order to register your child for Hebrew school, you must be a member in good standing of Congregation Ahavat Olam.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah: Students must be registered in our Hebrew School program in order to participate in our B'nai Mitzvah preparation with Rabbi Idan.

Attendance: Students encouraged to attend regularly in order to fully benefit from the opportunities provided by the religious school. Please discuss any circumstances that may prevent regular attendance with the Education Director to determine if a supplementary program needs to be put in place.

Absenteeism: We understand that students can become busy, especially as they get older. Please discuss any circumstances that may prevent regular attendance with the Education Director to determine if a supplementary program needs to be put in place.

Early Dismissal Request: Please provide written requests for early dismissal 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 from their class and sign them out.

Courtesy: Students are expected to display kavod (respect) to the Shul, Rabbi, teachers, madrichim, and peers.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

Families are encouraged to join the students for the last 15 minutes of each school day for an uplifting musical service with Rabbi Idan. The service always concludes with our fun "Torah Raffle."

Class-led Friday Service: Each grade will be assigned a Friday night service to help lead (see dates in the attached school's calendar). The class service is designed to celebrate with families what their children have been learning at Hebrew School. It is a way for the students to feel familiar and comfortable at Shul's services, as well as a social opportunity for students to get to know the other families in their class.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The information on the Religious School Student Registration Forms is used by the Education Director and will be shared with the class teacher in a confidential manner with parents' approval. Our goal is to create the most meaningful, comfortable, and supportive learning environment for our students.

Any information regarding special needs should be submitted in writing. Parents may submit additional information to the Education Director throughout the year.

Parents are encouraged to share details of any events in their children's lives that may affect learning or behavior. They are also asked to share effective behavior management and/or learning techniques with teachers to enhance their children's education.

FOOD

Please ensure that your child has breakfast/snack at home before coming to Religious School. Kindly avoid sending food into the classroom as it can disrupt students and the learning process. Water may be consumed in classes.

*The 8th+9th and Confirmation classes will be provided with bagels.

PARENT VISITATION/INVOLVEMENT

Parents are welcome to join their children in class in order to learn alongside them, educate themselves about the curriculum, and 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.

Several family events are planned throughout the school year. We encourage parent participation in these events. Information will be sent out in advance of these programs. Examples may include family programs, Family B'nai Mitzvah programs, and parent meet and greets.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Decisions to cancel religious school due to inclement weather will be attempted to be made by 7:30 am on Sundays (and by 2:00 pm on Tuesdays if class is offered). An email will be sent with a cancellation notice, and a cancellation notice will also be posted on our Facebook page.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Textbooks: Student textbooks and school supplies will be provided by the religious school as part of the tuition.

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

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Teachers may choose to communicate with parents via email. The email may include:

- 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.

Please be attentive to important communications from the Hebrew school director during the school year.