



BEIT RAYIM HEBREW SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

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GOALS AND POLICIES

CURRICULUM

GENERAL AIMS

1. To educate our students in the spirit of Jewish tradition and the practice of Judaism
2. To develop in the child a sense of COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY (“all Israel is responsible for one another”) and to enable the pupil to participate ACTIVELY AND INTELLIGENTLY in the life of the Jewish community
3. To impart knowledge of the Hebrew language, its importance as a key to Jewish sources and traditions, as well as a strong living bond with the State of Israel and with Jews all over the world
4. To implant in the child a deep love for ERETZ YISRAEL (the LAND OF ISRAEL) and to strengthen as well the active participation in the building of the State
5. To impart the basic knowledge of the Tanach (Bible). To instill in the student an awareness of the significance of the Tanach (Bible) as the foundation of the religious and ethical tradition of Jews and its influence on the Western world
6. To enhance and to foster the harmonious growth of the student as a loyal, proud and well-adjusted Jew as an inseparable part of his/her Canadian life and heritage

The goals can be divided into two (2) distinct categories: Cognitive and affective.

The acquisition of skills and information comprise the cognitive component. This is reflected in the materials and programs selected for each grade level. The affective component is addressed in the manner in which material is presented and the tenor of the school. For a detailed description of the curriculum please see the addendum at the end of this booklet.

STUDENT EVALUATION SYSTEM

Report Cards

Report cards will be issued in January and at the end of the school year. These indicate your child's academic achievements as well as effort and attitude. Parents are invited to speak with teachers utilizing the mechanism set forth in the report card.

Parent-Teacher Interaction

Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the teacher to discuss their child's progress or with questions. To contact a teacher, speak with the school administrator who will facilitate this process.

We encourage parents to communicate on a regular basis with their children's teachers if they have any concerns or questions.

Teachers may also ask to see parents regarding their children's progress.

BEHAVIOUR STANDARDS AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Beit Rayim Hebrew School promotes a safe learning environment where our children develop a sense of respect for self, others and property. The school is committed to fostering respect as a primary focus. Each student at the Beit Rayim Hebrew School has the right to learn in a positive classroom atmosphere. Our students are generally well behaved and serious of purpose. Nevertheless, please spend a few minutes with your children to review what is expected.

We all want the most meaningful, life-enhancing Jewish education for our children. In order to provide a positive experience for students at Beit Rayim Hebrew School, all children need to learn not only about being Jewish, but to live from a Jewish perspective.

A significant aspect of Jewish culture is the reverence for learning. Learning will occur when an optimal environment for learning is provided. An important means for providing this is for children to understand what is expected in terms of acceptable student behavior.

A simple, clear chart has been devised based on the acronym "MENSCH" to remind children of respectful classroom behavior. A copy of it is enclosed with the Parent Handbook.

At the beginning of the school year, each teacher will review the chart and tailor expectations of these basic behaviors in an age-appropriate way for their particular students. Any student who is not complying with these expectations will be referred to the chart, in a gentle, consistent way, to get their behavior back on track with the least amount of distraction to the classroom routine.

If, after several reminders, a student still does not comply with these requests, reasonable consequences will need to be implemented, among which might be:

- conflict resolution with help of faculty member and principal
- parental involvement, if deemed appropriate
- individualized behavioral plan
- work to be done independently (outside class) with tutor at parents' expense.

EGALITARIAN RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

As our school is affiliated with Beit Rayim Synagogue, a Conservative, egalitarian, synagogue, we strive to provide an egalitarian education where both boys and girls are knowledgeable about Judaism. In teaching holidays and observances, we do so with no distinction between the role of men and women. Using Shabbat as a case in point, we teach that both men and women are obligated to have candles lit in their homes and to recite kiddush. Therefore, boys and girls both need to know and to practice the skills needed for the observance of these mitzvot. The traditional “*aba/ima*” roles are not part of our pattern of teaching.

Conservative Judaism accepts that all people, regardless of gender, are obligated to bless God for the food they eat. Therefore, the opportunity to lead those blessings (*Birchot Nehenin* and *Birkat Hamazon*) is given to both boys and girls in our school.

TZEDAKAH

All students are encouraged to participate in contributing to various Tzedakah projects as an expression of our Jewish values. Tzedakah is part of our weekly routine at Beit Rayim Hebrew School. This year Tzedakah and Gimilut Chesed (Acts of lovely kindness) will be the school wide theme with students in each class learning what our tradition teaches about these important mitzvot and then engaging in an age appropriate Mitzvah Project.

ALLERGIES AND SPECIAL MEDICAL NEEDS

In order to create a safe and healthy environment for all students, Beit Rayim Hebrew School is a nut aware environment. We ask the cooperation of all parents, students and staff to ensure the policies of the school are carried out consistently.

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 fill out the forms enclosed and available in our office, keep all emergency contact information current; and ensure epi-pens have not expired.

The school will post a photograph with a description of any anaphylactic child's condition in the office in order to identify the child to all staff. Each teacher is given a list of all allergic children in the school, identifying their specific allergy; their classroom and teacher. Teachers are asked to identify anaphylactic children to the class in a sensitive manner, in order to gain the cooperation of fellow students with respect to hand washing prior to school and remembering to bring nut free or fish free snacks where appropriate. A note will also be sent home with classmates of identified anaphylactic children asking for cooperation with hand washing and appropriate snacks.

Some staff members of at Beit Rayim Hebrew School are Red Cross certified and we encourage all staff to become certified. While we cannot create a completely risk-free environment we endeavor to make the school as safe as possible for all children.

All children are asked to clean their hands with a hand sanitizer available from each teacher prior to having snack.

COMMUNICATION

There are many levels of communication in the school. In the early part of the year, each teacher will phone in order to introduce herself to the parents. There will be an opportunity at the opening Assembly for parents to meet the Principal and to hear an overview of the curriculum and the coming year.

If a parent has a problem or concern about the classroom, the following procedures are to be used:

1. **Contact the teacher.** You may call the school office asking for the teacher to call you at home or send a note to the teacher requesting either a phone call or a meeting. Teachers are not able to meet with parents during teaching hours.
2. **Contact the Principal.** If you are unsatisfied and have given the teacher time to implement the results of your conversation please contact Mr. Kevin Knopman, BRHS Principal. Please remember that as a part-time school it takes longer to achieve change than in a public school.
3. **Please do not let an unhappy situation fester.** It is easier to remedy small issues than to repair large ones.

In order to carry out a successful program, the wholehearted support of our parents is essential. Those who become involved get to know the intricacies of their children's school find that they have a very real input.

KASHRUT

Our school recognizes that it serves a community that is not uniform in its observance of Jewish religious precepts, customs and ceremonies. As an institution, however, we maintain a religious posture that is consistent with the standards of Conservative Judaism. Therefore only kosher food may be sent for snack. Baked goods must be from a certified kosher bakery or packaged with an appropriate kosher label.

HOMEWORK

Parents who exhibit interest in their child's learning and who work with their children on homework and reading actively demonstrate their commitment to their child's Jewish education. Teachers will make every effort to provide homework, which allows parents to interact with their child. The assignments grow out of school experiences, and are

given for educational re-enforcement. At Beit Rayim Hebrew School, we are cognizant of the fact that our students often have many other commitments, most significantly, homework from their public school program. Therefore, we strive to provide homework relevant to their learning, and most certainly do not wish to overwhelm them.

We strongly encourage parents to read with their children throughout their years at BRHS. Just listening to your child read sends a powerful message to them about your willingness to invest your time in their Jewish education.

It is the policy of the school that any homework assigned is due only on Thursdays in order to ensure that children not feel compelled to complete homework on a Shabbat preceding their Sunday class.

PROCEDURES AND ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at all classes is essential in order for students to make progress during the year. In the past, a toll has been taken on attendance due to other commitments such as hockey or dance. 75% attendance is required in each term.

Attendance is monitored regularly and families will be called after two consecutive absences. If your child is ill, please notify the office during the day. Three or more absences will be followed up with make-up assignments in order to enable the student to keep up with the class. Students who do not meet minimal attendance standards will be required to do significant make-up work in order to proceed to the next grade level. A note is required upon return to school after an absence.

LATE ARRIVAL / EARLY DISMISSAL

Students are expected to arrive at each class on time and to remain in school for the entire session. If your child is late, please go to the main office in order to receive a late slip. Students will not be permitted to enter class without a permission slip. Only for very legitimate reasons should a child be withdrawn from a class session before its conclusion. In such a case, the parent should submit a signed note to the child's teacher, in advance, stating the specific reason for early dismissal.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Students will be placed in classes based on their age and public school grade. Depending on class sizes, requests for placement with friends will be honored if registration forms are received on time and it is determined by the Principal to be in the best interests of the class.

FAMILY STUDIES PROGRAMS

Please refer to the calendar on our website for the dates of the Family Studies programs for your child(ren). These are an important part of your child's education and another way for parents to model ongoing Jewish learning.

FIELD TRIPS

In the event that field trips are scheduled you will be asked to complete a special permission form and return to the Hebrew School office or teacher one week prior to the trip.

FIRE DRILLS

The purpose of a fire drill is to teach the students procedures for the safe and orderly evacuation of the building. In case of emergency evacuation, for any reason, the procedures followed are those of a regular fire drill practice.

Students must always be on the alert to prevent fire hazards, and to report dangers at once.

When the fire alarm sounds, all students are required to stop whatever they are doing. They are required to listen carefully to their teacher's instructions and to maintain complete silence throughout the drill.

KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICES

Beit Rayim Synagogue in conjunction with the Hebrew School offers Kabbalat Shabbat services during the school year. Attendance at this program is considered an important part of the school curriculum and students are actively encouraged to attend as many services as they can during the year. Each class will have a designated month in which they will be called upon to help lead the service. Please support your children and plan to attend at minimum their class Kabbalat Shabbat service. We begin with snack and schmooze at 6:00 pm followed by the service from 6:30- 7:15 pm.

KIPPOT

Students must bring their own kippot to class. For hygienic reasons, the office will not loan out kippot.

KISS AND RIDE AND DISMISSAL

As an added convenience we have arranged a Kiss and Ride through the parking lot on the West side of the building. The South doors will be open on Sunday's from 9 - 9:15 a.m. and on Thursdays from 5:15 – 5:30 p.m. The Kiss and Ride is strictly for dropping off and will only be available at arrival times. We will have supervision at the South doors. Please note after 9:15 am on Sundays and 5:30 pm on Thursdays the South doors will be locked and students must enter the building and report to the Office for a late slip before entering the classrooms.

At dismissal, teachers of Grades 1 to 7 will escort their students to the area adjacent to the parking lot. Students will wait with their teachers in a designated area of the schoolyard until met by their parents. Students in Kindergarten will wait with their teachers in their classroom until picked up by their parents. Parents may assist the dismissal procedures by picking up their children on time and phoning the office in the event that they are detained.

LOST AND FOUND

A Lost & Found box is located in the school office and is emptied before the winter break, before Pesach and at the end of the school year.

NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters and the school calendar can be found on our website with the listing of events for the year and school closures. You will also receive this information every Wednesday through our Weekly News email.

PARKING

All parents and staff will park only in the area designated. Parking in the Kiss and Ride zone will result in cars being ticketed. Please respect this request in order to ensure our student safety procedures.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Beit Rayim Hebrew School does not assume responsibility for personal items. All items brought to school, including toys and games, should be labeled.

Some students are bringing items of value to school such as electronic games, cell phones, MP3 players, leather jackets and so forth. We would like to remind all parents that personal items must be covered by your own insurance in the event they are lost, misplaced or stolen.

Please ensure that jackets have a strong loop inside the collar so they may be hung up easily and stay put on the coat hooks.

Students are not permitted to wear shoes with rollers in them.

During the winter months, students are expected to bring a pair of shoes. Children are **not** permitted to wear snow boots in the classroom.

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

GRADE	SUNDAY MORNING	THURSDAY AFTERNOON
Kindergarten - Grade 1	9:15 – 12:30 p.m.	
Grade 2-7	9:15 – 12:30 p.m.	5:30 – 7:15 p.m.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

In case of bad weather on a Thursday, our procedure is as follows: If York Region schools are closed, we are automatically closed. If public schools are open and the weather worsens during the day, please listen to the school office voice mail, which will be updated by 3:00 p.m. You may also listen to CHFI-FM, 98.1; CFRB-AM, 1010 or 680-AM for announcements of a school cancellation.

Should it be necessary to cancel school on a Sunday, please listen to the school voice mail or the radio stations listed above. The school will make every effort to utilize our

volunteer telephone chain and call each family in the event of a school cancellation; however we cannot guarantee we will reach each family in a timely manner.

SCHOOL SAFETY

1. Emergency forms were part of your registration package. If there is any change please inform the office immediately, as it may be crucial to your child's health and safety.
2. A child may be released early from class only to a parent. If the parent cannot be present, notification of an approved adult to pick up the child is necessary.
3. In order to ensure the safe departure of our children at the end of classes, parents must park in the designated parking spaces. No one will be permitted to park in the fire lanes or on Weldrick Road. Please follow all parking regulations and signs. The safety of your children is our primary concern.

STUDENT SUPPLIES REQUIRED

Kindergarten:

- 3 Kippot for boys (Kippot for girls are optional)

All Grades 1 to 7:

- 3 Kippot for boys (Kippot for girls are optional)
- 4 sharpened pencils
- 2 white erasers
- 2 glue sticks
- 1 small pair of scissors
- 1 pencil sharpener with attached container
- set of crayons or coloured pencils

Grades 3 to 7, please add the following supplies:

- 1 3-ring binder
- 2 pocket folders
- 1 package of dividers with tabs (for 3-ring binder)
- 3 hole lined paper

TEXTBOOKS AND WORKBOOKS

Each student is provided with the necessary class books. If you register late there may be a delay until textbooks are available due to delays in shipping. All students who were in Grade 3 last year received a copy of the Siddur. They have to bring it to each lesson. There will be siddurim available for purchase for those students entering the school in Grade 4 and up. Students who misplace or lose textbooks during the year must pay replacement cost. All texts and workbooks must be covered. Students are responsible for returning the textbooks at the end of the school year. Workbooks are for the students to keep.

Addendum

Beit Rayim Hebrew School

Curriculum

HEBREW LANGUAGE:

Here we must accept the constraint of time and recognize that conversational Hebrew is beyond our scope - indeed it is something rarely attained even in full Day School programs.

The focus then must be on Hebrew reading and specifically the Siddur. The results should be:

1. The ability to read correctly and fluently
2. A familiarity with the contents of the Siddur, its geography and the concepts expressed
3. A functional Siddur/Hebrew vocabulary

JEWISH LIFE CYCLE:

1. Familiarity with life cycle events
2. Familiarity with the other events that are part of day-to-day Jewish living
3. Participation in the foregoing both at home, in family settings, in the synagogue, and in daily life

JEWISH HISTORY:

1. To have a broad overview of the sweep of Jewish History
2. To know the major events of our people's history
3. To recognize the names and contributions of outstanding personalities

TANACH (BIBLE):

1. To know what books comprise each section of the Tanach (Bible)
2. To develop an historical knowledge of the Tanach (Bible) and its major figures

PARASHAT HASHAVUA:

1. To focus on the weekly Torah portion
2. To understand the text and the views of past sages interpretations
3. To apply the lessons and ideals to modern times and daily life

4. To know specific terms and phrases

ISRAEL:

1. To know the history of Zionism as a movement including its primary proponents
2. To be familiar with the development of the State of Israel including significant dates and events
3. To have a basic knowledge of present day Israel and Israeli society

JEWS AND JUDAISM IN CANADA:

1. To understand the growth and development of the Jewish community in Canada
2. To be familiar with the major institutions of the Jewish community and their purpose
3. To recognize the names and contributions of outstanding Jews in Canada

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM:

1. To understand the historical and theological roots of the movement
2. To appreciate how Conservative Judaism is a unique expression of Judaism
3. To be familiar with the major figures and institutions which shape the movement
4. To understand how affiliation in the Conservative Movement is reflected in the life of Beit Rayim Synagogue and School

CURRENT EVENTS:

1. To be informed and conversant with the events and issues which impact on the Jewish community in Canada, Israel and all around the world