

**WESTCHESTER JEWISH CENTER**

*Rockland and Palmer Avenues  
Mamaroneck, New York 10543  
914-698-2966 FAX; 914-698-3610  
[www.wjcenter.org](http://www.wjcenter.org)*

**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2010-2011      5770-5771**

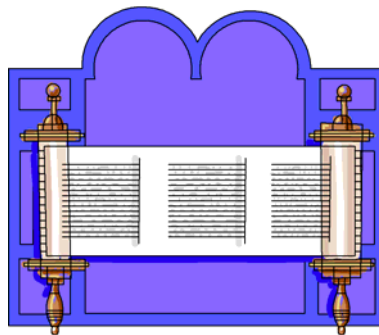
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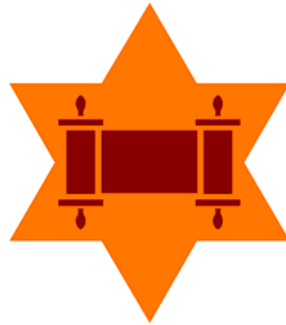
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A new school year is beginning filled with dynamic and creative programs, engaging texts and imaginative learning. We welcome new faculty members and new families to our community. 5770-5771 promises to be an exciting year for all of us at WJC.

Our goal is to provide the best quality Jewish education for your children in a stimulating and nurturing environment. We desire to build an environment for each child that creates a desire to learn and understand, as well as to practice the rituals of Judaism. We are guided in this task by the tenets and principles of Judaism.

WHAT ARE THESE PRINCIPLES?

**TIKUN OLAM**  
*MENDING THE WORLD*

**TZEDEK TZEDEK TIRDOFF**  
*SEEK THE SAME JUSTICE FOR OTHERS AS YOU DEMAND FOR YOURSELF*

**TORAH L'SHMA**  
*THE STUDY OF TORAH FOR ITS OWN SAKE*

**KOL YISRAEL AREVIM ZEH LA'ZEH**  
*WE ARE EACH RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE ANOTHER*

To succeed in our endeavor we need your help. I want to take this opportunity to encourage all parents to be as active and supportive as possible in your children's Jewish education. The more involved you become both at home and here at Westchester Jewish Center the more meaningful you and your children's experience here can be. Here are just a few ways in which you can get more involved at the Religious School:

- Join and support our Parent's Association
- Attend our monthly Board of Education meetings
- Participate in our Religious School Sub-Committee
- Encourage your child to attend our weekly Youth Shabbat Services.
- Attend our Sunday family education programs

This handbook serves as a basic guide to our school. We hope you will read the handbook and learn about the new programs we offer each year. The information in this handbook should answer many of your questions about our philosophy, goals and academic program. Please keep it and use it as a reference throughout the year.

I look forward to working closely with you and your family. Please feel free to speak with me throughout the school year with any thoughts, suggestions or concerns you may have.

A happy and sweet new year to you all.  
Shana Tova U'mtoka!

Aleza Kulp  
Director of Education

## **EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS**

We at the Westchester Jewish Center Religious School endeavor to nurture the child in the context of the family and the community. We appeal both to the child's intellect as well as the child's heart. Our goal is to light the fires of life-long curiosity and love of learning in all our students. We encourage children to participate in all aspects of religious ritual and celebration.

### **Educational Objectives:**

- An ability to read Hebrew print and script.
- An acquisition of a basic Hebrew vocabulary which reflects important concepts in Prayer and Holy Days and represents Hebrew as a living and vital language.
- An ability to use the Prayer book at a variety of services.
- A basic knowledge of the structure and meaning of services.
- Mastery of selected songs and prayers.
- An understanding of the observance of Shabbat and the Holy Days and their meanings.
- The ability to identify Jewish home symbols and understand their functions and origins.
- An understanding of the observance of mitzvot, including Kashrut and Life Cycle events.
- The development of positive ethnic and religious identification.
- A commitment to "*Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh La'zeh*": All Jews are responsible for one another.
- A knowledge of the biblical texts.
- The ability to identify the historical context of Biblical texts and analyze the historical and spiritual role of the main characters.
- An understanding of moral lessons stressed in the Biblical Midrashim (legends).
- The ability to identify various laws with their correct moral behaviors.
- An understanding of the application of Rabbinic Law in modern Conservative Jewish practices.
- A knowledge of Jewish history and the challenges faced throughout the ages.

### **Upon completion of Religious School we desire that our students believe:**

- In God, in some way that is constructive.
- In the Bible as a source of wisdom and a guidance for living.
- In themselves as proud Jews.
- In Prayer as a source of personal comfort and community connection.
- In Mitzvot as an ethical and rational way of life.
- In the centrality of the State of Israel.
- In Shabbat as a positive personal and family institution.
- In the value of Tzedakah.
- In the Holidays as a way to identify and connect to the past.
- In the Home and the Family as a primary focus of Jewish expression.
- In our tradition as an expression of Jewish identity.

## **Academic Program**

### **GAN (Kindergarten)**

Over the course of the year, Gan students will learn three different subjects: Synagogue, Mitzvot, and Holidays including Shabbat. Intertwined with each unit the class will learn songs, dances, and Hebrew vocabulary related to each subject. Gan will begin their Sunday mornings with Modeh Ani and Shema (our morning prayers). Students will sing the Alef, Bet song as an introduction to the Hebrew language. During the year, Gan will also begin to identify certain key Hebrew letters and learn how to identify objects in the classroom and colors in Hebrew.

### **KITAH ALEF (1st grade)**

Alef students begin to explore issues about God and how we as Jews have a belief in one God. They will discuss God's creations, how we as Jews thank God, and how we communicate with God each day through our prayers. Alef will begin their Sunday mornings with Modeh Ani and Shema (our morning prayers).

Throughout the school year, Alef students will learn key letters in the Hebrew Alphabet and extend their emerging vocabulary including learning to count in Hebrew.

### **KITAH BET (2nd grade)**

At the moment Bet students enter their classroom they will feel as if they have entered the land of Israel. Over the course of the year, they will have the chance to meet the people that live in the country and travel to different cities all over the land. Each child will shop for clothing at the shuk (market), learn Israeli dances, celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut and eat falafel on the local streets. They will also be taught how to read the language of the people through street signs, food, and clothing. Of course, as we also celebrate the holidays, they will be celebrated Israeli style!

During the Kitah Bet year, students will continue to learn key Hebrew letters and expand their vocabulary. Bet students will begin class each Sunday morning with Modeh Ani and Shema (our morning prayers) and sing many Hebrew songs.

### **KITAH GIMEL (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)**

Just as it is written in Genesis, "In the beginning," so too is this a new beginning for Kitah Gimel students. Students will begin their 3 day a week study of Hebrew reading and writing (print) skills. Over the course of the year, they will also be taught prayers that will be chosen for their level such as the Shema and Ve'ahavta, Adon Olam, and Shalom Aleichem. In conjunction with their Hebrew studies, students will explore the Book of Genesis and Exodus. As each chapter in Genesis and Exodus is taught students will be introduced to a variety of Biblical characters and the lessons they have taught us. These lessons will help to link students to the history of the Jewish people. During the course of the year, students will learn of legends and tales that Rabbis wrote after the Bible to help explain stories from the Bible.

### **KITAH DALET (4<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

Students will continue to progress in their Hebrew reading and writing throughout the year. Kitah Dalet will be introduced to Hebrew script writing. A variety of prayers will also be learned during the year which will reinforce the students Hebrew reading skills. Students will continue to learn such prayers as Ashrei, Barchu and Hatikvah. In addition to Hebrew and Prayers, students will study the Book of Numbers, Prophets and Kings which helped to shape our Jewish history. Holidays such as Shavuot will be taught in conjunction with their Bible studies. The students will also research the geography of Israel and how it relates to our Biblical history. Students will study the history of such cities as Jerusalem, Tzfat, Haifa, Tiberias and Beer Sheva.

Our Dalet students also learn about the mitzvah of tzedekah. At the conclusion of this unit, parents and children will join together for a family program and explore various charities together.

### **KITAH HEY (5<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Imagine a class where students are taught about ethical behavior and the way we, as Jews, are taught to live. Over the course of their Hey year, students will study the Rabbinic time period (500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E.) and what laws were written for the Jews and why. They will look at Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Fathers) and the lessons Pirkei Avot taught us. What was happening during the time period that Rabbi Hillel, who lived over 2,000 years ago told us, "If I am not for myself, who will be?" Also during this time period two very significant holidays were established -- both the Maccabees (Hanukkah) and Esther (Purim) lived during this era. We learn about the story of Esther and the holiday of Purim. During Rosh Chodesh (the Jewish new month) students will learn about the new month and have a special text study together related to the coming month. In addition to their studies of ethics and history, students will continue to build upon their Hebrew and Tefillot skills from previous years. Students will continue to practice their Hebrew reading and script writing. They will also continue to learn prayers such as the second part of the Shema, parts of the Ma'ariv service, and B'rachot in the Amidah.

### **KITAH VAV (6<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Kitah Vav students will be given a taste of our Jewish roots during different time periods in this grade. This experience will give them the opportunity to begin to think as a Jewish adult and feel a deep connection to our history as a people.

The school year will explore throughout the year the American Jewish Immigration experience. The year will begin with a look at the beginnings of European Jewry and the development of Ashkenazi and the Sephardic culture. The students will have the opportunity to learn about this time period through the use of maps, the internet and other media. Our year will continue with the Jewish American Immigration experience. Students will explore the history of the Jews and where they settled in America. They will learn about the past three centuries and how the experiences of the Jews have shaped America today.

As an introduction to the B'Nai Mitvah experience, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet on a select number of Saturdays in lieu of their Sunday morning class. The Shabbat class will meet from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and attendance will be taken promptly. The morning will consist of a service, lessons on the Torah portion, Hebrew reading and participation in the main congregational service.

The Vav Shabbat Learning Program dates are listed in the Religious School calendar. Reminders will also be e-mailed home prior to each assigned date. Students will not have class on the following Sunday morning.

Please note, that students who do not attend Religious School on the designated Shabbat morning will be marked absent. Students may make up the session by attending services at WJC on a different Shabbat morning within 30 days. If a student misses his/her assigned Shabbat because he/she is attending services at a different congregation, the parent should notify the Education Director to receive attendance credit.

### **KITAH ZAYIN (7th Grade)**

Zayin students will meet on Sunday mornings and Thursday afternoons from 4:00 -7:00 pm. Each day will be broken into 45 - 55 minute class periods with classes rotating to multiple teachers/subjects. On various Sunday mornings, one class period will be devoted to a chug (activity). The chug topics will include Israeli dancing, Jewish ethics and a course on Tallit and Tefillin in preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. On Thursdays, in addition to Tefillot and class time, students will have a 20 minute pizza break.

7th grade will continue to work on their Hebrew reading and prayer skills in order to assist students in their studies for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A variety of Tefillot (prayers) will be taught over the course of the year including the blessing after the Haftorah, Mi Chamocho, and Kaddish Shalem. In addition, all our 7th grade students will learn how to lead the Ma'ariv service.

Kitah Zayin's year will be divided into semesters, each focusing on one of three Judaic subjects. Each topic will help guide our 7th grade students in their becoming a young Jewish adult. They will learn about the history of the Jews during the Holocaust and how this time period shaped our lives. At the conclusion of this unit, students will visit the Museum of Jewish Heritage. During the next semester, students will connect the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. They will learn about our homeland and how it has shaped our lives as Jewish people.

### **Resource Room**

Our school provides resource help for those students who have difficulties or need reinforcement in Hebrew and/or Judaic studies. Students may work individually with one of our teachers or in small groups. The sessions do not last more than 20 - 30 minutes, once or twice a week. The resource teachers work closely with the classroom teacher. Students are referred to the Resource Room for additional instruction upon recommendation of the classroom teacher, with approval of the Education Director.

### **Shira - Music**

Gan through Kitah Hey have music each week for a period of 20 to 30 minutes. Music enriches their academic program and adds spirit to the classroom. Modern Hebrew songs as well as traditional Shabbat and holiday melodies are learned during the weekly shira class.

### Library

The synaogue library is open on Mondays and Thursdays to students in Gimel through Zayin. Students in Kitah Gimel visit the library on a weekly basis as part of their curriculum.

### Hebrew High School (grades 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>) Tuesdays: 6:00- 8:45PM

Beginning with an informal supper and Birkat Hamazon, students from grades 8 through 11 meet once a week for two classes and an evening prayer service. Each student is required to take one course on grade level. The second class is an elective, chosen by the students from several offered each semester.

Please see our Hebrew High School Handbook for more information regarding this program.

### Classroom Aides

Students who attend our Hebrew High School are invited to be aides in the younger grades of the religious school. Aides assist the teachers, work with students and serve as role models for the children. These are paid positions that encourage our teenagers to be responsible leaders and positive role models for our younger students. All aides are expected to act as a *dugma*, an example for the others. At the discretion of the Educational Director, an assistant may be asked to discontinue working in the school if they cannot act as dugma.

### Educational Leadership Institute (ELI)

Students in eleventh grade are invited to participate in ELI, a teacher-training program, which encourages our young people to work in our religious schools. Students in twelvth grade are also eligible to participate in ELI if they have graduated from our Hebrew High School. These students meet informally on a weekly basis learning about the classroom, about lesson planning, classroom management and educational resources. During the year they teach mini-lessons in the actual classrooms and are guided by the mentor teacher. A certificate issued by the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, signifying the completion of this program, is issued to each participant. Many students who have completed this program go on to take part-time jobs in congregational schools during their college years.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

**Children learn best by experience. Educational activities are not just limited to the classroom environment. We provide diverse and varied programs for our students.**

### School Prayer Services

Students in Kitah Gimel through Kitah Zayin come together to pray the Mincha (afternoon) or Ma'ariv (evening) service on weekdays and participate in Shacharit (morning) service on Sunday mornings. Children in Gan, Alef and Bet learn some of the simpler prayers in their classrooms. This encourages the students and faculty to begin the session in the proper frame of mind for religious studies.

### **Class Trips**

School trips are taken when unique opportunities can enhance the Religious School curriculum. We aim to further the students' awareness both culturally and historically. School trips are an integral part of the curriculum and we expect full attendance.

As part of their curriculum, students in Kitah Hey, Vav and Zayin visit museums that help to reinforce class instruction. Since participating in the class outing is part of our school program, students who are unable to attend their class outing will be assigned a make up assignment from their teacher.

Institutions we visit often request deposits weeks ahead of time and bus transportation commitments are made well in advance. We therefore ask that parents assure attendance and return the permission slip into the Religious School office no later than its due date. Any cancellation made by individual families can not be reimbursed by the synagogue.

### **Family Education Programs**

Family Education Programs provide an opportunity for parents to spend quality Jewish time together with their children. Parents are invited to learn with their children and share in creative activities, to see and to hear what their children are learning and to spend some time in adult study. The programs are relevant to the class curriculum and enable the parents to become partners in the learning. Dates for these programs are listed in our school calendar. Please make sure to check your e-mail for further information!

### **Gemilut Chassadim/Righteous Acts of Giving**

Helping others is an important Jewish value. Each class has its own Tzedakah box and each student is asked to contribute from her/his own money each day. Our students help to decide how their Tzedakah money is allocated. Each grade has their own tzedekah chart to monitor their collectings over the course of the school year.

### **Class Services**

Students in Gimel through Zayin have been assigned a Shabbat where they are responsible for leading the services. Gimel and Dalet will lead Friday evening services, followed by a family Shabbat dinner. Students in Hey and Vav will have the opportunity to lead the congregation in a Shabbat morning service. Please check the School Calendar for your child's service date.

### **Lillee Rubee Bible Contest**

Students in our Kitah Hey, Vav and Zayin will be invited to participate in the WAHS Lillie Rubbee Bible Contest. This is a year long program which provides weekly enrichment for students interested in learning Torah. Details about the program will be e-mailed in the beginning of the school year.

## AWARDS & GRADUATION

Students have many opportunities to be recognized and rewarded each year at our end-of-year programs.

### Gan - Kitah Bet Ceremony

Students in our primary grades will join together at the end of the school year for a special ceremony. Each student will receive a certificate for completing their grade and work for the school year. We will join together for a song festival where each grade will have the opportunity to sing a unique song that they learned during the year.

### Kitah Zayin & Hebrew High School Graduation (Other grades encouraged to attend)

At our year-end graduation, we will honor our 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who have completed their years of Religious School and present diplomas to our graduating Hebrew High School students. We will acknowledge all of our students for their hard work and dedication. Please see our religious School calendar for the date and time.

During the graduation ceremony, we will have the opportunity to recognize students for the following awards and recognitions (United Synagogue certificates will be mailed home at the end of the school year):

**Lillee Rubee Bible Contest:** Students from our Kitah Hey, Vav and Zayin who have participated in the Lillee Rubee Bible Contest will be acknowledged for their effort. See page 7 for more information about this program.

**Attendance Awards:** Students who have not missed more than three sessions throughout the school year will also be recognized by United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism METNY region.

**Junior Congregation Awards:** Awards to students in our Gimel - Vav who attend our Youth Services on Shabbat and Holidays on a regular basis (ten sessions or more) will be recognized by United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism METNY region.

**United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism - Judaic Scholar Awards:** Judaic Scholar Awards are rewarded to students who are in the top 90% of their class and have excellent class attendance. Teachers in each grade will nominate the top three students in each class for this award. Judaic Scholar Awards will be mailed with student's end of year report cards.

**Keter Honor Society:** Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade who have received the Judaic Scholar Award three or four times during their years in Religious School will be inducted into the Keter Honor Society by United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism METNY region.

**Marshak Award:** Two graduating students from Kitah Zayin will be presented with the Marshak Award from the Board of Trustees Foundation. This award is for strong attendance, good class participation and commitment to the synagogue and Jewish community.

**Akiba Award from the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's METNY region:** Awarded to one graduating 7<sup>th</sup> grade student who is a role model for others and committed to Jewish learning. Chosen by the Education Director, the Youth Director and the clergy, this student is recognized for being involved in all areas of our congregation including synagogue attendance and youth programs.

## **COMMUNICATION/STUDENT EVALUATIONS**

You are encouraged to acquaint yourself with the school curriculum, your child's teachers and the many programs offered by the WJC Religious School through both formal and informal means of communication. Please do not hesitate to call the Educational Director should you have any questions or concerns.

### **E-MAIL**

Each week our families will receive a weekly newsletter via the school website with reminders of our upcoming programs. In addition, we will send program notifications and various classroom communication from the teachers via e-mail. During the course of the year, your child's teacher will send home updates about their curriculum via e-mail. We recommend each of our Religious School families check their e-mail each week for notices.

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT/OPEN HOUSE**

Back-to-School Night is an opportunity for parents in Gimel through Zayin to meet with your child's teacher together with other parents to learn about the curriculum and the teacher.

### **CONFERENCES**

During the month of January, parents will have the opportunity to schedule a conference with their child's teacher. In the event that any problems arise during the year, you will be contacted by the school to discuss the situation. The Education Director will be glad to meet with you any time during the year if you have some concerns or issues to discuss. Occasionally your child's teacher may invite parents into the class to show off the parents' related talents as well. Your participation always enhances the curriculum.

### **EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION**

Students' achievements are constantly evaluated by the classroom teacher. Such evaluations are prepared by the teacher and shall be reviewed by the Director in conjunction with the teacher. In certain cases where the academic level of the student is found to be unsatisfactory by both teacher and the Educational Director, procedures will be established to correct the situation. The Educational Director shall recommend to the parent that remedial help, when possible, will be provided by the school. If the parent rejects the school's remedial help for her/his child, then the Education Director may advise the parent to retain a tutor at the parent's expense in order to maintain the educational level that is required on the part of the child.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports/report cards are sent home via e-mail twice each year. These reports provide parents with information on how their child is performing in the various subject areas.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### POSITIVE ATTITUDES

We must emphasize the importance of parents' encouragement in developing the student's attitude toward the school and synagogue. It is a known fact that a child's attitude is most directly influenced by the parents' own outlook. Our best students are almost always those whose parents participate in adult education, Shabbat & holiday services, and other aspects of congregational life, and who bring Jewish observance into their homes. If such activities and observances are a normal part of a child's family lifestyle, s/he will happily accept Religious School as a normal part of her/his schedule and not as an extra burden.

### ATTENDANCE & LATENESS

Due to the limited time of Religious School, the subject of one lesson may be continued over a number of class sessions. Repeated absences can seriously interfere with a child's progress. We request that parents prevent and discourage absences unless absolutely imperative. During the week, classes start promptly at 4:00PM and conclude at 6:00PM. On Sunday, classes begin at either 9:00AM or at 11:10AM and conclude at either 11:00AM or at 1:10PM. Please see that your child arrives on time for the beginning of each class.

#### **Attendance Policy:**

1. A maximum of ten absences during the school year is permitted. At the end of each month, each Religious School family with children in Gan - Kitah Zayin will be notified by our Religious School Assistant Principal of the number of absences your child has had during the preceding month. It is the responsibility of each family to make sure that their child has received and completed the class work that they missed in class.
2. If there is excessive absenteeism, the parent shall receive notification from the Educational Director who may request a conference with the parents. Together they will establish a home study program at the expense of the parents for the child. This is to ensure that the child continues with their Jewish Education and does not fall behind in their studies.
3. Students in Kitah Zayin have two different teachers, one for Hebrew and Prayers and one for History. Each teacher takes attendance in their individual class on Sunday and Thursday. Students may not miss more than 20% of the total hours of each class subject during the school year. Parents will be notified each month of their child's absences. If their Zayin student has exceeded the number of section absences they will be given a take home project during the month of March related to the section they have missed. They will be given until the middle of May to complete the assignment. If the work is not completed the Zayin class member will not receive their diploma and will not graduate in June.
4. Parents who are concerned that their children may not be able to attend Religious School on their designated day(s) of school on a regular basis must consult with the Educational Director. Any changes to a student's Religious School schedule will be made at the sole

discretion of the Educational Director on a case by case basis. In determining whether a change to the schedule should be made, the Educational Director may consult one or more of the parent(s), the Religious School teacher, the Religious School special educator, and if necessary, any appropriate outside professionals.

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

For the safety of all of our students, the school has established procedures for both arrival to and dismissal from school.

#### **Arrival for all Religious School Students**

##### **Weekday afternoons**

- All students are to enter the school building via the upper parking entrance.
- All other doors to the synagogue will be locked to maximize security.

##### **Sunday mornings**

- All students are to enter the school building via the sanctuary entrance/lower parking lot entrance.
- All other doors to the synagogue will be locked to maximize security.

#### **Dismissal for Gan – Kitah Bet (Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) Students**

- Students will be dismissed from their classrooms. Parents will need to park in one of our designated parking lots and enter via the lower parking lot entrance.
- If you would like an older sibling to pick up your child please provide to the teacher written authorization in the beginning of the school year.

#### **Dismissal for Kitah Gimel – Kitah Zayin (3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> grade) Students**

- All students in grades 3 and up will be dismissed from the lower parking lot entrance. Religious School faculty will supervise the students as they await pick up.
- Cars must enter via Palmer Avenue and line up around the circle so that children can enter the passenger side. At no point will any child be allowed to cross any lanes of traffic to reach any car.
- All cars in the pick up line will exit via Palmer Avenue.
- Any parents or drivers who do not wish to wait in line in their cars to pick up Religious School students must park in a designated parking area and come to the lower parking lot entrance to pick up their children.
- Do not enter the pick up line via Rockland Avenue.

#### **Please note the following**

We do not rope off our Rockland Avenue entrance so that cars may park in the newer parking lot area. However, cars will not be permitted to enter or exit the dismissal car line through Rockland Avenue. As stated above, if you prefer to wait in the pick up line, please use the Palemer Avenue entrance.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

In order to ensure safety, no child will be dismissed early without written permission or a phone call from the parent to the school office. Notes are to be submitted to the teacher and children must be picked up from directly from the classroom. Students will be dismissed only if a parent or a

parent representative picks up the student in person; children will not be released from class to wait outside. No exceptions will be made.

### TRANSPORTATION

If any parent needs help in arranging a carpool for school, please do not hesitate to call the school office at 698 – 2966. We will be happy to supply names and phone numbers to assist.

### CELL PHONES

Cell phones may be brought to school, but cannot be used during school hours. If your child carries a cell phone, please remind them to turn it off and store it their school bag until after school. If cell phones are seen being used during school hours they will taken by the teacher and returned at the end of the day. Parents will also be notified when a student uses their cell phone during school hours. If the problem continues, the phone will be given to the Educational Director and returned to a parent.

If you need to reach your child during Religious School hours, please call our office at 698-2966 and our Religious School Secretary will be able to give them a message.

### VISITORS

If any person would like to visit our school, please schedule a visit with our Educational Director. Students are not permitted to bring a guest to class without the permission of the Educational Director and teacher.

### HOMEWORK

We recognize the existence of public school work and outside activities that take up much of your child's free time. The purpose of homework is to challenge our students as well as to keep concepts fresh in their minds. It is necessary to assign a limited amount of homework. Assignments relevant to the curriculum are given at least once a week. When assigned, homework is a requirement, not a suggestion. When teachers request parent participation and/or signatures, please make sure that you have followed through.

### BOOKS & SUPPLIES

Students are always required to bring their textbooks with them to class unless otherwise advised. They should also bring pens, pencils, and notebooks as required by the teacher. All are encouraged to bring their own personal Kippot to Religious School. Please double check that your child is equipped with these materials before leaving the house.

### SNACKS/KASHRUT

Students who come to Religious school directly from Public Schools are often hungry and in need of a snack. Students should bring their own Kosher snack to school but must finish eating before class begins.

Please do not send your child with a bag of microwave popcorn that has been prepared at home or that needs to be popped at school. We will not be able to use the synagogue microwave to pop children's popcorn at 4:00 pm.

Please ensure that any snacks or food brought into the school/ synagogue are properly marked kosher in keeping with the Jewish dietary laws. Home baked or cooked goods are not permitted in the school. Suggested Kosher brands are: Entenmann's, Freihofer's, and Drakes. All fruits and vegetables are naturally Kosher as is all canned soda. Juices and juice boxes must have a Kosher symbol. No food prepared at home may be brought into the Center. If you have specific questions, please feel free to contact Rabbi Segelman or Rabbi Steigmann.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, our local TV station channel 12 will be notified no later than 8:00 am on Sunday mornings and 1:00 pm on weekdays that classes are canceled due to dangerous weather conditions. Religious School is automatically canceled when Mamaroneck public schools are canceled. If, however, we decide to cancel school when Mamaroneck public schools are open, our office will call the various schools and they will announce that there is no religious school. Please trust your gut instincts and call the office if you have not been notified by phone and feel that there is a problem with the weather. Do not drop off a child and leave until you determine that the building is open.

### WJC RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Board of Education and staff at the WJC Religious School work with parents and educational professionals to provide a productive and safe learning environment for all of our students. Students and teachers are expected to behave in a way that exemplifies the concept of "Derech Eretz," proper respect. On rare occasions, however, a student makes it difficult or impossible for the teacher to lead the class and for the other children to learn, or otherwise behaves in a manner that is not consistent with the exemplification of "Derech Eretz" towards our teachers, administrators, school, institution, building or facilities. Our discipline policy is intended to be implemented only in those unusual circumstances where a child will not adjust his or her behavior to the requirements and safety standards of the Religious School.

1. In the event a student is disruptive in class, which shall constitute behavior which, in the opinion of the teacher, is detrimental to the respectful work environment in the classroom, the teacher will speak directly to the student. In the event that the student continues to act in an inappropriate or disruptive manner after having been spoken to previously, the teacher shall alert the Educational Director. The Educational Director shall immediately

notify the student's parent or guardian to discuss the behavior. The parent is strongly encouraged to speak with his or her child regarding this incident.

Upon notification that a student's behavior has been disruptive for the third time, the Educational Director will require a meeting among the parent, student, teacher and Educational Director and, if the parent so requests, with a Rabbi. The purpose of the meeting will be to determine appropriate measures to correct the disruptive behavior. The student shall not be allowed to return to school until the meeting has taken place and a solution acceptable to the Educational Director is determined.

If the student is allowed to return to school and exhibits disruptive behavior for a fourth time, the student shall be suspended. While suspended, the student shall complete a "mitzvah project" under the supervision of the student's parent, in consultation with the Educational Director. The student may return to Religious School after no fewer than 30 days from the date of suspension, provided that the student has completed the mitzvah project. In addition, the student is responsible for learning the material covered in his or her class during the suspension. Should tutoring be necessary as a result of the suspension, it shall be at the parent's expense.

Upon return from suspension, if a student exhibits disruptive behavior for a fifth time, the student shall be suspended for the remainder of the school year. The student may return the following year. Tuition will not be refunded for any portion of the school year for which a student was suspended.

2. If a student exhibits any other form of behavior deemed disruptive in the sole discretion of the Educational Director while attending Religious School, including (without limitation) defacing school property, acting disrespectfully to teachers, administrators or any WJC staff member, etc., such student shall be subject to such disciplinary action as the Educational Director shall deem appropriate in her sole discretion.
3. If a child has acted in any way that the Educational Director or Rabbi feels is dangerous or poses a safety risk to the children in the school, the school staff, the WJC staff or any aspect of the school environment, immediate suspension will be imposed. The length of suspension and whether the student shall be allowed to return to school will be at the sole discretion of the Educational Director.

Generally, the Board of Education discipline policy shall not affect any student's ability to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the WJC Synagogue; however, all Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates are always subject to the discretion of the senior Rabbi.

Parents/guardians of any student who is suspended shall meet with the senior Rabbi to discuss alternatives in their child's Jewish education.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT.....HOW YOU CAN HELP**

*There are numerous ways you can help the school and assist your child's educational progress.*

**Parents Association (PA):** Our school is a partnership between the synagogue and the home. Our PA offers a variety of activities and opportunities for parents to learn and get involved in our school. We encourage you to join our PA and its many important projects.

**Board of Education:** You are invited to become a member of the Board of Education and to attend BOE Meetings. The Board sets broad policies for the Religious School, Nursery School and Hebrew High School. The BOE usually meets the first Wednesday of each month. Our Chairpersons are Judy Herbst (834-3468) and Sherry Gench Thaler (834-8602). Please check the calendar for Board of Education meeting dates.

**Religious School Subcommittee:** In addition to our Board of Education, our Religious School has its' very own sub-committee to discuss religious school issues. Our sub-committee co-chairpeople are Melissa Shokrian (315-11149) and Marcie Berger (834-0411).

**Hebrew High School Subcommittee:** Our Hebrew High School subcommittee meets periodically during the year and is headed by Rina Beder (833-9837) and Jayne Kligman (835-3959).

**Religious School Enhancement Fund:** This fund exists for the benefit of the children and staff of the religious school. Special programs for the school, appropriate faculty gifts and opportunity for study for the teachers are some of the uses of the fund. When a family seeks an opportunity to thank or acknowledge a staff member, we encourage a donation to this fund.

## **WJC SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY YOUTH SERVICES**

WJC provides religious services for children of all ages. Services run from 10:45-11:45AM each Shabbat and on all holidays (except for Simchat Torah where children are encouraged to join the main congregation. Children in each age-appropriate service will spend time reviewing the customs and meaning of some of the Shabbat prayers as well as learn to sing the individual prayers. Children are encouraged to lead parts of the service.

**Torah for Tots** This Shabbat morning program is geared for children in Nursery School through Kindergarten. Through play, music and dancing children are introduced to the delights of Shabbat. Parents are encouraged to remain with children for this special hour. Kiddush follows the service.

**Junior Congregation Service:** Children in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are invited to participate in a service that introduces our children to weekly prayer. Students sing basic prayers, enjoy skits about that week's Torah portion, learn about upcoming Jewish Holidays and to hear stories about their heritage. The children return to the main sanctuary for the remainder of the service.

**Youth Service:** Becoming a "regular" in our service can be a positive Jewish experience which can last a lifetime and will certainly contribute toward a child's development as a responsible Jewish adult. These services are geared for children in 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade This service affords your child the opportunity to put into practice the lessons they have learned in the classroom. It is the most significant experiential activity in prayer we can offer.

Beginning the Shabbat after Yom Kippur, attendance in Junior Congregation and Youth Services will be taken at the end of each service. At the conclusion of the school year, all students who have attended ten or more Shabbat morning services will receive a certificate and prize.

**Teen Minyan:** This service affords our Teen students the opportunity to hone their skills in prayer and to discuss the Torah portion as it relates to their lives. Students in the Kitah Zayin and in the High School are encouraged to come to these services. Please see the Synagogue Calendar or check our website for the specific service time and dates.

Please note, Torah for Tots, Junior Congregation and Youth Service meet each week throughout the year each Shabbat and on all holidays except Simchat Torah. Rosh Hoshanah and Yom Kippur services will be available for individual grade levels.

We encourage you to contact us or visit our synagogue website to see our Shabbat Program Handbook.