



Westchester Jewish Center

Palmer & Rockland Avenues • Mamaroneck, NY 10543 • 914/698-2960 (T) • 914/698-3610 (F) • www.wjcenter.org

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018

5778



Aleza Kulp
Education Director

Ziva Wagner
Assistant Principal

Jeffrey Segelman
Rabbi

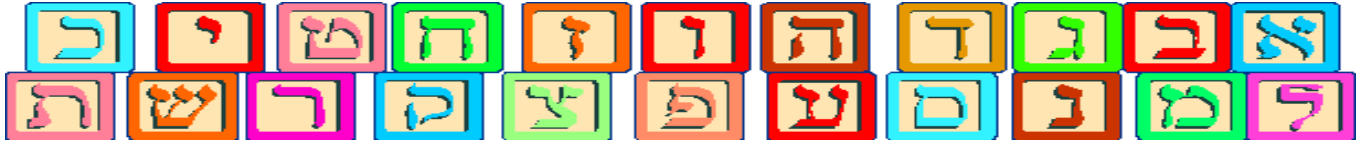
Adir Yolkut
Asst Rabbi

Ethan Goldberg
Cantor



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A new school year is beginning filled with dynamic and creative programs, engaging texts and creative learning. This coming school year promises to be an exciting time for all of us at WJC.

Our goal is to provide the best quality Jewish education for all children in a stimulating and nurturing environment. We strive to build an atmosphere for every child that creates a desire to learn and understand. We are guided in this task by the 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 would like to encourage you 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 the 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
- Participate in our Parent Group and join us for meetings throughout the school year
- Encourage your child to attend our weekly Youth Shabbat Services.
- Attend our Sunday family education programs
- Encourage your children to participate in Youth Department activities

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 successful year for everyone!

B'Shalom,

Aleza Kulp
Education Director and Synagogue Program Coordinator

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 all children to participate in all aspects of religious ritual and celebration.

Educational Objectives:

- The ability to read Hebrew print.
- The ability to be comfortable using the Siddur (prayer book) on Shabbat and Holidays. This includes vocabulary that reflects important concepts in Prayer and holidays.
- A basic knowledge of the structure and meaning of the service.
- Knowledge of selected Shabbat and holiday prayers.
- An understanding of the observance of Shabbat and holidays and their meanings.
- The ability to identify Jewish home symbols and understand their functions and origins.
- An understanding of the observance of mitzvot and Jewish values.
- The development of positive ethnic and religious identification.
- A commitment to "*Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh La'zeh*": All Jews are responsible for one another.
- An understanding of stories and key historical figures from the TaNaKh, the Torah, Neviim (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings)
- The ability to identify various laws with their correct moral behaviors.
- Knowledge of various time periods throughout Jewish history

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 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)

This is a very exciting year for children in Gan as they begin to explore their Judaism. During the school year, Gan will learn together stories in the Torah such as Noah's Ark, Joseph and his brothers and the Ten Commandments. As a culmination of their learning, children will join with their parents and create a personal Torah to take home and cherish as a family. Intertwined with each unit the class will learn songs and Hebrew vocabulary related to each subject. Gan will begin their Sunday mornings with Tefillot (prayers) including Modeh Ani and the Shema. Students will sing the Alef Bet song as an introduction to the Hebrew language.

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. Kitah Alef will begin their Sunday mornings with Tefillot (prayers) including Modeh Ani and the Shema. Throughout the school year, Alef students will learn key letters in the Hebrew Alphabet and extend their emerging Hebrew vocabulary.

KITAH BET (2nd grade)

Just as it is written in Genesis, "In the beginning," so too is this a new beginning for 2nd grade students. In Kitah Bet, students begin attending Religious School on Wednesday afternoons in addition to their studies on Sunday mornings.

Students will study the weekly Torah portion throughout the year and gain an understanding of the lessons that we learn each week in the Torah. They will also be introduced to various Jewish leaders and the values they teach us. Students will discuss major stories told in the Torah through art, drama and other stories told by their teacher.

In conjunction with their studies on Torah and Hebrew, 2nd grade students will begin their study of Hebrew reading and writing (print) skills. Students will be introduced to various *Brachot* (blessings) and learn the various ways we thank God for what we are given.

Towards the middle of the school year, Kitah Bet will join students in Kitah Gimel, Dalet and Hey for Tefillot (prayers) on Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. This will introduce the students to the prayers and melodies.

KITAH GIMEL (3rd Grade)

Kitah Gimel children continue the Hebrew reading and writing skills they have learned in Kitah Bet. Over the course of the year, the students will learn how to read and write in Hebrew and participate in weekday tefillot (prayers). Students will also be taught prayers from the Friday evening service including Kiddush, L'cha Dodi 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.

The children continue to learn prayers in the Siddur. Towards the beginning of the school year, 3rd grade students will join students in 4th and 5th grade for Tefillot.

KITAH DALET (4th Grade)

Students will continue to progress in their Hebrew reading and writing throughout the year. 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 Barchu, Kiddush and the blessing recited on Shabbat and for various mitzvot. 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.

KITAH HEY (5th grade)

Imagine a class where students are taught about ethical behavior and the way we, as Jews, are taught to live. Our Jewish values are the principles on how we live our daily lives. As students in Kitah Hey learn these values they will see that each one is a part of the mitzvah of learning Torah. In Kitah Hey, we will explore together Jewish values that relate to ourselves and our family. We will begin the year studying the value *Kevod Habriyot*, individual dignity. We are going to learn how we can have dignity in our lives and treat our family and friends with respect. Students will continue to discover ways Judaism teaches us to have *Shalom Bayit*, Family harmony in our homes and how we need to live a life of *Kiddushah*, Holiness as Jews. In addition to our study of *Midot*, values, 5th grade will begin to learn the Shabbat morning service including the Sim Shalom, Shalom Rav and the Amidah.

KITAH VAV (6th grade)

What does mean to be part of a Jewish community? What are the values and principals that we need in order to live our day to day lives? During the school year, 6th graders will begin to explore the Jewish values that are thought provoking and relevant to their lives. They will discuss what it means to be a good friend to others and how each student has a responsibility of *Tikkun Olam*, taking care of the world around us.

6th grade students will continue their Hebrew studies twice a week. During their Hebrew lessons, students will be introduced to the Shabbat morning Torah service. This includes the blessings before and after an Aliyah and the Haftarah and the prayers recited before we open the Ark.

KITAH VAV (6th grade) AND ZAYIN (7th grade)

Students in 6th and 7th grade will join together for a half hour once a week during Thursday afternoon to learn various middot, ethics/morals. This will allow the students to socialize with friends and get to know students in both age groups.

KITAH ZAYIN (7th Grade)

Zayin students will meet on Thursday afternoons from 3:45 - 7:00 pm. Each session will be broken into a one hour class period with classes rotating to multiple teachers/subjects. Each week, in addition to Tefillot and class time, students will have a 25 minute pizza break.

In 7th grade students study two parts of our Jewish history that has not been studied during previous year. They will learn about the history of the Jews during the Holocaust and how this time period shaped our lives, as Jewish people. Students will also explore the history the establishment of the State of Israel and its' history since 1948.

Zayin students participate in mitzvah projects during the school year on select Sunday mornings in addition to their Thursday afternoon classes. This is part of their ongoing commitment to Judaism and becoming a part of the adult Jewish community. Please know that the community service projects are an integral part of the Religious School curriculum.

Enrichment Programs

The Religious School two-day per week formal classroom setting is complemented by a variety of enrichment programs that are a key part of the Religious School for each enrolled child. Each student in the WJC Religious School is required to participate *in four or more* enrichment programs over the course of the year. Enrichment programs are organized into the following three categories:

- **Classroom-based learning.** Electives vary by grade and run anywhere from 3 weeks to the full school year. Topics include Nature and Judaism, Lessons on Kashrut, Hanukkah Fun, Mezuzzah Madness and Building Jerusalem with Lego.
- **Synagogue-wide programs.** These programs are designed to engage the whole family in the WJC experience. Friday night family services and dinner, Purim services, Simchat Torah celebrations are just a few examples of the lively opportunities WJC offers to families in our congregation.
- **Family activities.** We encourage the Religious School community to expand their Jewish educational experience beyond the school and the synagogue. Performing mitzvot as a family, conducting Jewish rituals as a family at home, and visiting a Jewish museum are highlights of family activities.

Each student is required to complete an enrichment program in each of the three categories. Each student may choose their fourth enrichment program from any of the three categories.

For more details on the Religious School Enrichment Programs, please see the 2017-2018 Enrichment Program Handbook.

WJC Family and Youth Shabbat Learning Program

During the school year, students in 3rd – 6th grade will meet on a select number of Saturdays *in lieu of* their Sunday morning class. Kindergarten – 2nd grade will continue to meet on the Sundays of those weekends. 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 service with the main congregation.

It is our hope that the whole family will come to WJC to celebrate Shabbat on the Religious School Shabbat mornings. As you may know, in addition to the service in the sanctuary, WJC offers youth services every Shabbat and holiday beginning at 10:45 am for various ages. By attending Shabbat services with your children, you will serve as a role model to your Religious School child(ren) as well as leave with a better understanding of the Shabbat morning service.

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 15-20 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.

Resource Room is for students with regular attendance who need an extra boost in their Hebrew reading and/or writing skills. Students who have fallen behind in their Hebrew skills due to excessive absences are not sent to the Resource Room for support. If a child is behind in their studies to do poor attendance, he/she may need to be tutored at home privately.

Shira - Music

Gan through Kitah Dalet 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 Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons to our Religious School students. Students in Kitah Bet and Gimel visit the library weekly as part of their curriculum.

Hebrew High School (grades 8th - 11th)

Students from grades 8 through 11 meet once a week from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Please contact our Director of Teen Engagement for any further questions at (914) 698-2960.

Classroom Aides

WJC teenagers who either attend Hebrew High School or a Jewish Day School are invited to be aides in the younger grades of the Religious School or on Shabbat morning. 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. These students meet informally on a weekly basis learning about the classroom, about lesson planning, classroom management and educational resources. For more information, contact Aleza Kulp.

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 Bet through Kitah Zayin come together to pray the Mincha (afternoon) service on weekdays and participate in Shacharit (morning) service on Sunday mornings. Children in Gan and Alef 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. As part of their curriculum, students in 7th grade visit the Museum of Jewish Heritage to enhance their unit on the Holocaust. Since participating in the class trip 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 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.

Class Services

Students in Gimel through Vav have been assigned a Shabbat where they are responsible for leading the services. Please check the School Calendar for your child's service date.

AWARDS & GRADUATION

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

Gan - Kitah Alef Celebration

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 Graduation

At the end of the school year, we will honor our 7th grade students who have completed their years of Religious School. 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:

Keter Torah Honor Society: Students in 7th grade who have received the Keter Torah Award three or more 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 7th 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.

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Awards

Judaic Scholar Awards: These awards are rewarded to students who are in the top 90% of their class and have excellent class attendance. Judaic Scholar Awards will be mailed with student's end of year report cards.

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

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 e-mail from our Religious School secretary with reminders of our upcoming programs. In addition, we will send program notifications and various classroom communication from the teachers via e-mail. Each month families will receive a summary of what students are learning in the classroom. If a parents would like to meet with their child's teacher any time during the course of the school year, please contact the Education Director to schedule a meeting. Teachers also have their own e-mail account for parents to communicate directly with their child's teacher.

OPEN HOUSE

Our Religious School Open House is an opportunity for parents in Gan through Kitah Zayin to meet with your child's teacher, see the classroom and learn about 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, the school days begins promptly at 3:45PM and conclude at 6:00PM. On Sunday, classes begin at 10:00am and conclude at 12:00pm. 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. 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 Assistant Religious school Principal. The Assistant Principal may suggest 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. 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 change 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.
4. In order to ensure the continuity of the curriculum, no child is permitted to attend class on a different day or time without permission from the Education Director.

Kitah Zayin (7th grade) Attendance Policy:

1. Students in Kitah Zayin meet with various members of the WJC Clergy and Religious School faculty each Thursday afternoon. The day is divided into two class periods with a dinner break in the middle with attendance taken each class period.
2. Our hope is that students in 7th grade not miss more than 20% of the total hours of each class subject during the school year. For the 2016-2017 school year, students may not miss more than 8 periods of each class. For example, if a 7th grader arrives at 5:00 pm, he/she may be absent from their first period class and be present for their 2nd period class.
3. If a 7th grader has been absent and is close to reaching the maximum number of absences permitted, parents will be notified by the Religious School Assistant Principal. A take home assignment may be given to make up any work missed.

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 on 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 Alef (Kindergarten - 1st 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 Bet - Kitah Zayin (2nd - 7th grade) Students

- All students in grades 2 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 Palmer Avenue entrance.

EARLY ARRIVAL

Supervision on Monday and Tuesday afternoons for any children enrolled in the enrichment programs begins at 3:00 pm. Supervision on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons beginning at 3:00 pm is provided by WJC for students in 2nd - 7th grade. Students are supervised by the Assistant Religious School Principal each afternoon.

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 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.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Religious School is automatically canceled when Mamaroneck public schools are canceled on weekday afternoons. Please note this include any notifications from the Mamaroneck public schools that afterschool programs have been cancelled. 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.

This coming school year on Sunday mornings, in addition to an email, the Religious School will be sending a text message notifying parents of school closures for snow days. We will begin using Remind, a messaging platform developed specially for schools that helps educators, students, parents and other users send quick simple messages to any device.

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.

WJC Religious School is nut-aware and does not service or allow any food containing nut products in the classrooms. It is important to note that Westchester Jewish Center is not a nut-free building. Please help us by not sending food items that may contain nut products to school.

In addition, please ensure that any snacks or food brought into the school/ synagogue are properly marked kosher in keeping with the Jewish dietary laws. No food prepared at home may be brought into the Center. Please do not send your child with food in a Ziploc bag other than fruits or vegetables. All food needs to be in its' original package.

If you have specific questions, please feel free to contact Rabbi Segelman or Rabbi Yolkut.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones may be brought to school, but our policy is that they are not to be used during school hours. Teachers will ask students to turn off their phones and place them in a designated box. All phones will be returned to each student before school dismissal. 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.

SAFETY

Fire and lockdown drills are performed several times throughout the school year for the safety of the children. Parents will be notified in advance of any drills and notified upon completion.

VISITORS

If any person would like to visit our school, please schedule a visit with our Educational Director.

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. We also would like to ask you to encourage students in 2nd grade through 6th grade to practice their reading, as practice strengthens their reading skill. We would be happy to provide you with material so that your child could also practice at home. This material would not involve a parent to know Hebrew. It would just involve time and focus for your child.

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.

WJC RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

The 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, his or herself, 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

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. To learn more about our PA contact Laura Grill (261-2327) or Mia Mandel (718-685-2209)

Religious School Parent Committee: The Religious School has its' very own Committee to discuss Religious School issues. Our committee co-chairpeople are Jonathan Berg (630-0609) and Lisa Kern (834-2024)

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.

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 1st - 6th grade. Check the WJC Weekly Shabbat Announcements for weekly topics and lessons.

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