



**The Tendrich Center for Lifelong Learning
Parent Handbook
2019-2020**



Rabbi Anthony Fratello
Cantor Judith Borden Ovadia
Lisa Tenenbaum RJE, Education Director

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Letter from the Education Director

Dear Families,

Welcome to Temple Shaarei Shalom! We are excited that you have chosen to join the TSS family. We look forward to your participation in our vibrant Jewish Community.

Our goal is to help our students develop a strong Jewish identity. Age appropriate curriculum will engage our students to learn about Torah, holidays, Israel, history, worship and performing mitzvot. We encourage our students to explore our traditions in order to embrace Judaism with pride and joy. Education at Temple Shaarei Shalom is considered a life-long process that emphasizes the partnership between parents, synagogue and school. We believe that the success of our students depends upon parental support and participation.

In addition to our Religious School Classes, we offer many opportunities to expand Jewish education to all of our members through our Family Education and Adult Education programs and services. The 2nd Friday of each month is Family Shabbat Service designed for families with children. We begin at 7 PM and each month one of our classes helps to lead the service. It is truly a wonderful way for your family to celebrate Shabbat together. Please be sure to join us for these events. The best way to provide a Jewish education for our children is through living and learning, and we are here to do this together, as partners.

This handbook has been compiled to assist you in making your children's Religious School education a fun and meaningful experience. It contains many important policies, so please review the information carefully.

There is also a sheet for your signature. Please sign and return one form for each student, to indicate that you have reviewed these policies with your child/children. Should you have any questions, comments or suggestions, you are always welcome to call or email. My email is: lisa.tenenbaum@TempleShaareiShalom.com.

B'Shalom,

Lisa Tenenbaum, RJE

Letter from the Rabbi

Dear Parents,

From when I was a child, I can remember the excitement and wonder I felt whenever a new Religious School year began. I can remember what it felt like sitting in the Sanctuary being awed by its majesty and splendor.

From when I was an adolescent, I can remember the times I did not always enjoy going to Religious School, and other times when I questioned the meaning, value and importance of the things I was taught.

Now as an adult, I recognize that my Jewish identity was forged by those moments. My years in Religious School helped me to discover the joys of our tradition, and planted deep within me values and ideals that continue to serve me well. The lessons I learned then are still applicable today.

This is ALL we have ever wanted for the Religious School Program at Temple Shaarei Shalom. We place high expectations on your children. Why? Because you, our committed, hardworking, dedicated parents, demand the best for them. We strive to provide our students with the best possible Jewish supplemental education. Why? So that when they go forth to their own work in the world, they are educated in the values that have served our people throughout the centuries.

If we have been, and if we are to be successful, it will be as a team. Parents, students, and staff work together to create the best Religious School system in the community. I thank you for your hard work and dedication. I thank you for trusting us with your children. I pray that we as a community and as a congregation will ever go from strength to strength.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Fratello

Letter from the Cantor

Dear Parents,

According to Talmud, a parent has the responsibility to do several things for his or her children, specifically, to enter them into the covenant of our people, to teach them Torah, to lead them towards loving relationships, and, interestingly, to *teach them to swim!* This last requirement offers me the basis for my vision as a teacher of our children.

The Talmud does not say we must hold our children afloat so that they do not drown. Rather, we must give them the instruction and the confidence required to keep their own heads above water. This takes patience and encouragement. We cannot bark orders from dry land, either; we must be willing to get wet ourselves.

So it is as we bring Jewish learning to life for our families. It is not good enough to drop them off in the “deep end” of Hebrew and heritage and expect them to swim in Torah. We have to join them in the living waters of our tradition and, at the right moment, let them find their own way.

I look forward to getting to know you and your children and sharing my love of Judaism and Jewish music with you!

Shalom!

Cantor Judith Ovadia

Temple Shaarei Shalom Religious School

Mission Statement

The mission of the Religious School is to educate students in all aspects of Judaism, enabling them to make informed choices and shape their Jewish identity within the Reform community and the Jewish community at large.

Religious School Curriculum

Placement of New Students

Hebrew is taught in all grades, starting in kindergarten. Therefore, new students entering Grade 3 and up with no previous Religious School background will be evaluated individually for proper placement. They may be placed in a grade lower than their public-school grade with opportunities to move up after evaluation by the Education Director.

Curriculum Blocks

Grades Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten–2nd Grade:

These first years are the foundation of our students' Jewish education. Students learn their Hebrew *aleph bet* and basic Hebrew vocabulary. They are introduced to Torah and Jewish holidays and generally become comfortable in the Temple. Classes meet on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Grades 3–6:

These are the years our students will receive the foundations that will bring the wisdom of Jewish tradition to their contemporary life. They will continue to decode Hebrew and learn the blessings and prayers that not only will help them in their B'nei Mitzvah, but also will form the foundations that will allow them to Jewish adults in the larger Jewish community. They will continue their Torah study with the enduring understanding that Torah study is lifelong and ongoing. They will explore the core values found in the Torah. They will also cover topics such as Jewish American History and Israel.

These classes meet twice a week, once on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to noon and once during the week on Wednesdays. Third through Fifth Grade meets on Wednesdays 5:00p.m.-6:30p.m., Sixth, Seventh, and High School Classes meet at 6:45p.m.-8:15p.m.

Grade 7:

This is the bridge between adolescence and adulthood. These students are exploring, questioning and maturing as they go through the B'nei Mitzvah year. The students will begin the year by reviewing T'filot (prayers), but the focus of the year will be finding their personal connection to Judaism, examining the Holocaust, and debating contemporary Jewish issues. Family Education and class trips may be part of the program.

Grades 8-12: Tichon (Post B'nei Mitzvah)

Our high school students will continue to explore Jewish Issues and values as they apply to their busy lives today through interactive, engaging, and entertaining elective classes. As these students mature, we look forward to their continued involvement in our Religious School as *Madrichim* (teacher assistants), on Sundays and the early Wednesday sessions, and participating in our Temple Youth Group.

Religious School Days & Hours

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Times</u>
Kdg. – 2	Sundays	9:30 a.m.–11:50 a.m.
3–5	Sundays	9:30 a.m.–12:00 noon and Wednesdays 5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.
6 th	Sundays	9:30 a.m.–12:00 noon and Wednesdays 6:45 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.
8–12	Wednesdays	6:45 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

School Policies

For our school to succeed, we need parents to be actively involved in their child’s education. Therefore, we ask your cooperation with the following school policies.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is critical to learning. Therefore, we encourage students to be in class each week and attend every session. Please help by having your children arrive on time.

If your child will be absent, please call the school office (561-364-9054, Ext 107) and we will inform the appropriate teacher. A child with frequent absences (20% of the classes or more) will be required to make up the work and/or participate in a Temple-sponsored summer tutorial or approved private tutoring at the parents’ expense in order to complete the academic year. If a child has excessive absences, (45% of the classes or more), promotion to the next grade is subject to review by the Education Director and the Rabbi.

Early Dismissal

Pulling students out of class early is disruptive and detrimental to the student’s learning. Therefore, please use restraint in determining what occasions necessitate early dismissal.

If your child does need to leave early, we will need a note from you with, and you must show your I.D. and sign out your child at the front desk. Please note: just like public school policy, and for safety considerations, children will not be released within 15 minutes of dismissal.

Communications

Notices and forms will be sent home for you to review. Be sure to ask your child, and look through your child’s school papers, to see if there are any notices. Other important papers will be sent directly to your home, e-mail address, or via text. **Please make sure we have your correct email address and phone number on file.**

The Education Director and staff are available to hear your concerns or discuss your child’s progress with you. Please call to schedule an appointment to ensure your privacy and to permit the staff members enough time to discuss your concerns.

Homework

Homework is given as needed per the curriculum. If your child has homework, he or she should be encouraged to complete it before attending the following class. As your child progresses to a more intense study of Hebrew and prayers, practice and review are mandatory for your child to attain any mastery of the language. They should be reviewing the letters taught, or the prayer being practiced, several times throughout the week. In third through sixth grades, students need to know the prayers that are part of their prayer mastery programs.

If you are not familiar with Hebrew or the prayers yourself, this is a wonderful opportunity to ask your child to teach you! Take time to show you have an interest in your child's religious development and that you place value on what they are learning.

Progress Reports

Teachers will be sending out monthly emails detailing the learning that is occurring in the classroom. All students in Grades 3 – 7 will have a prayer goals chart, that will be updated frequently, so that you will know the specific prayer they are studying and how they are progressing. If you have any questions about your child's progress, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher via email. We are also happy to schedule a conference at any time.

Requirements for Attendance at Worship Services

Attendance at Friday night, Saturday morning, Holiday and Intergenerational Family Services will help with familiarity of synagogue worship and enhance your child's understanding and love of Judaism. All students are expected to fulfill the attendance requirement. (For example, Students in K and 1 should attend at least 1 service, 2nd graders 2 services, 3rd graders 3 services, 4th graders 4 services, 5th graders 5 services, and 6th graders 6 services.)

For Grade 7 & B'nei Mitzvah student requirements, see the B'nei Mitzvah Handbook.

- All services, such as Intergenerational Services, Shabbat morning Torah study, and holidays count towards these requirements, **except Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur**. Your child must sign the notebook on the table in the lobby to get credit for attendance.
- All students who complete their T'filah requirements will receive a certificate.
- Each grade participates in an **Family Shabbat Service** during the school year where the students lead *T'filah* (prayers). These services count towards the service requirements listed above. All students and their families are expected to attend their class Shabbat and are encouraged to attend all of our family worship experiences. The corresponding dates are listed on the school calendar. Please mark your personal and family calendars to ensure your attendance.

Textbooks and Supplies

Textbooks and educational supplies are provided at the beginning of the school year. Your child must have his/her materials (books or worksheets) and pens and sharpened pencils at every class session. If a book, booklet or workbook is misplaced or lost, the student will be required to pay for the replacement. The books may be stored in the classroom at the teacher's discretion.

Teachers may send a supply list for each student. **Please bring in the supplies listed for each child.** If you wish to donate additional supplies, or need assistance in acquiring supplies, please contact the Education Director at 561-364-9054 ext. 107.

Tzedakah and Mitzvot

As Reform Jews, we practice Mitzvot (Commandments) both ritual and ethical, in order to lead lives of personal fulfillment and in to contribute positively to our society. The values we teach, like *Tzedakah* (righteousness through charity/Justice) encourage this ethical behavior we cherish. Money for *Tzedakah* is collected during Religious School and is donated each year to various charities. Any amount is welcome. As a class, the students will determine the beneficiaries of their donations. This our students to learn that giving is an essential part of Judaism.

Throughout the year, your child's class may be asked to participate in a class *mitzvah* project, such as collecting food for the needy or an off-site activity. Children should be encouraged at home and through any other organizations to which they belong to perform these acts of kindness.

Family Programs

Religious School is a partnership between parents, students and teachers. Therefore, we will be having family programs throughout the year, both at TSS and off-site. These are interactive, fun programs that will help your family learn and explore together. We encourage all families to take advantage of these opportunities and participate in these happenings.

Special Needs

Our goal is for each student to reach his or her truest potential and have the best possible experience at TSS. Our teachers are instructed and encouraged to use differentiated learning techniques while in the classroom. Special Education accommodations will be made for special needs students on an individual basis. In order to make these arrangements, a meeting must be set with the Education Director and the Special Needs Coordinator. Any IEPs or 504 plans must be brought to the Education Director's attention at this meeting. Accommodations are made at the discretion of the Education Director and Rabbi, after consulting with our Special Needs Family Coordinator.

Emergency Closure Protocol for Severe Weather

Midweek: If a hurricane warning is issued for Palm Beach County, all Temple programs and events are automatically cancelled. If Public Schools are cancelled, Religious School classes are also cancelled.

Sunday: Should severe weather threaten or occur, use your best judgment or watch your local news channel for updates.

The Temple will attempt to update weather related emergencies (cancellation, delayed dismissal, early release) through various sources, such as emails, Facebook, or mass text messages, but your best judgment should be taken in all cases.

Emergency Contact during School Hours

In case of emergency, please call the Temple office at 364-9054, ext. 101.

B'nei Mitzvah

Each student **must** be enrolled for the full year in our Religious School during the year in which their B'nei Mitzvah will occur. This is true even if a child has entered 8th grade at the time of their B'nei Mitzvah. In addition, we also require their continued attendance after their ceremony through the completion of the school year.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not the culmination of a child's Jewish Education. It is a "comma" rather than a "period" in their Jewish education. We expect and (sincerely desire) that each and every one of our B'nei Mitzvah students will continue their religious education to Confirmation in 10th grade and beyond. For more information regarding B'nei Mitzvah, please refer to the B'nei Mitzvah Handbook.

Volunteering

The cornerstone of Judaism is doing *Mitzvot*. Our hope and expectation are that every family will opt to volunteer in some way. There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer like being involved in the PTO, serving on the Religious School Committee, and by serving on various Temple Committees. To find out more about volunteer opportunities in congregation, please contact Caryn Feldman, at the Temple Office at 364-9054, ext. 103.

PTO

The Religious School has a volunteer Parent-Teacher Organization. This committee plays an integral part in the overall success of the school. It provides an opportunity for parents, staff, the Religious School Committee and the Education Director to work together in the best interest of the students and the school. PTO board and members are chosen and elected by the parents, and everyone is encouraged to join.

Responsibilities of the PTO include events and fundraisers that are held during the year, such as such as LatkaPalooza, Family Challah Bake, Oneg Shabbats for the Intergenerational Services, the Model Seder, Shabbat Dinners, Family Fun Nights and so much more! If you are interested in finding out more about the PTO, please contact PTO President, Lori Weinberg, at PTO@TempleShaareiShalom.com

Security

Secure Access During Religious School

To ensure the safety and security of your children, the Temple doors will remain locked while school is in session. Therefore, please observe these guidelines for Drop-off and Pick-Up.

Students will enter at the Main Synagogue Lobby Doors. **On Sundays**, the doors will open at 9:15 AM, and students will be permitted to go to their classrooms at 9:20 AM. **On Wednesdays**, the doors will open at 4:45 PM and students will be permitted to go to their classrooms at 4:50 PM. (If there is a problem with midweek drop off times, please contact the Education Director directly.)

Five minutes after starting time for Religious School Sessions (on Sundays at 9:35 and Wednesdays at 5:05 and 6:50), **the inside doors to the Religious School by the gift shop, and the lobby doors to the Sanctuary, will be locked.**

After these times, you will need to come to the Temple office under the Tendrich Center sign and ring the buzzer. Someone at the front office will let you in.

Please also use this door for any early dismissals. You will need to show a photo ID and sign your child out in order to have your child released. If someone else will be picking up your child, please be sure to forward WRITTEN PERMISSION with identification details, prior to the pickup. This is to ensure your child's safety.

Pick Up and Drop Off Policies

Patience is a virtue in drop-off and pick-up! Please follow the directions below. Please be advised that students SHOULD NOT be dropped off any earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of school, as we do not have supervision in place before that time.

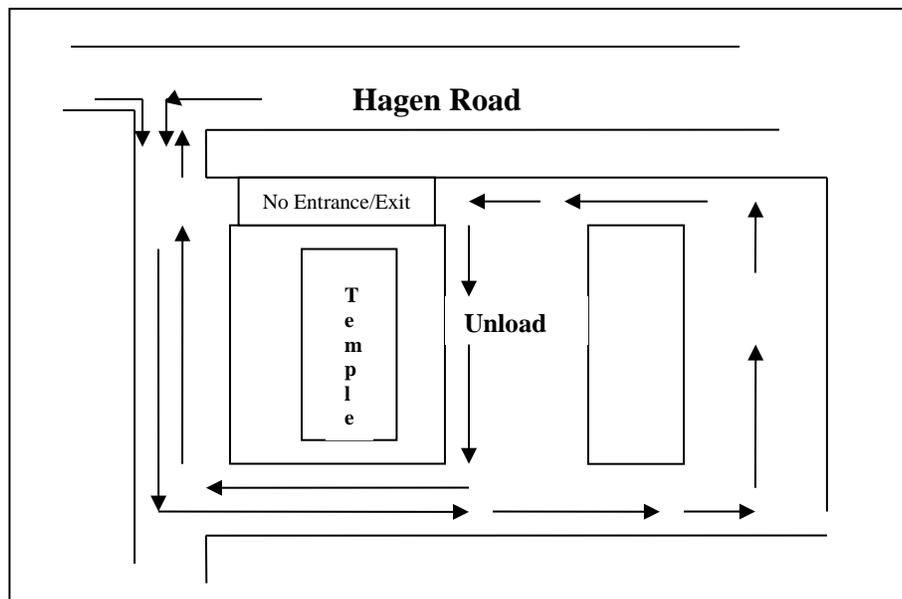
Drop-off for All Students

We prefer that you be part of the car line and drop students off in front of the Main Lobby entrance doors. Please pull all the way up to the first available spot to discharge your passengers. If you wish, you may park your car and walk your children into the Temple.

Pick-up for students in 3rd-12th grades

- All pick up should be via carpool. If you must park your car, you must physically pick up your children, who will be waiting outside, and escort them to the car. We do not allow children to walk in the parking lot without an adult. Please do not encourage your child to cross into the parking lot and walk to you, but rather, please walk to them. During pick-up, we ask that you wait in the line and pick up your child only along the side of the Sanctuary Doors.
- Do not leave your car in line un-attended - be mindful of the crossing lane.
- Guards will direct traffic. Please follow their directions.
- Please follow these rules for the safety our students.
- Please make sure you have updated your online profile to reflect those who are permitted to pick up your child.
- Sunday Pick-up for Pre-K through 2nd Grade students only!
 - **Pick up your Pre-K through 2nd Grade students in the Sanctuary at 11:50 a.m.** The parent or designated driver (as indicated on your form or note from parents) must go to the teacher to sign the student out.
 - **Please wait in the Sanctuary and do NOT congregate in the Lobby.** All dismissal will be done from the Sanctuary in order to provide adequate coverage and security for the children.
 - **Siblings and other students in your carpool should be instructed to meet you in the Sanctuary at dismissal time. You or your child must check out with the teacher before leaving the group to join you.**

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Traffic Pattern Map



** Please note that we are constantly reviewing and updating our safety protocols in accordance with the guidelines from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. In addition:

Code of Conduct

As Jews, we are expected to conduct our lives with love and respect for others. At Temple Shaarei Shalom, we stress the following kinds of respect: Respect for others and ourselves, respect for educators, respect for subject matter and respect for our surroundings.

Respect for Others and Ourselves

We do not hit, tease or hurt others in any way. **We have a zero tolerance policy for verbal or physical bullying.** We allow others to express their opinions in a safe environment, without any negative attitude toward one another. This type of respect includes caring for the emotional well-being of schoolmates. No one can say hurtful things or use harmful language in the classroom or in the school. One must also respect the possessions of others.

Respect for Educators

The Rabbi, Cantor, teachers and the school administrators provide students with a rich Jewish education. They are devoted to teaching the students, have much to offer and hold a respected place in Jewish life and history. Inappropriate language and actions towards the educators will not be tolerated. Classroom disruptions negatively impact the learning process of the entire class. Such actions will not be tolerated and, if the child is being disrupted, the appropriate actions will be taken in accordance with the policy.

Respect for Subject Matter

Torah is at the heart of all we teach. Within every subject, we study Jewish heritage, culture, beliefs and values. These are essential for conveying Judaism from generation to generation. Textbooks and all educational materials must be treated with care, and assignments must be taken seriously; all are Kadosh-Holy at the core.

Respect for Our Surroundings

The Temple and other school facilities are sacred buildings and should be treated with dignity. We pray in the sanctuary, learn in the classrooms and socialize in the hallways. It is inappropriate to misuse these facilities in any way. If our students abide by these basic rules, then the Religious School experience, both individually and as a community, will be rich with opportunities for learning and friendship.

Dress Code

Children should never wear clothing or accessories to Religious School that would be unacceptable at public school—no short shorts, spaghetti straps, or bare midriffs. In addition, because ours is a Religious School, students often go into the sanctuary. They should refrain from wearing t-shirts or other items that might have inappropriate language or be otherwise disruptive or inappropriate in a synagogue environment.

Cell Phone Policy

All cell phones need to be in a backpack or pocket and turned off unless used as a resource by the teacher. If they are taken out at inappropriate times, **the teacher has a right to take it from the student.** At the teacher's discretion, it may be given back during class or given to a parent at the end of the school session.

Please refrain from calling or texting your students during school hours. If you MUST reach them during this time, please call the office, and we will have them to call you.

Other Policies

In order to facilitate the Code of Conduct, students need to:

- Arrive on time and limit class absences.
- Come prepared with the assigned books, notebooks, pencils and any other materials requested by the teacher.
- Conduct themselves in a respectful manner within the synagogue and school buildings.

Consequences for Code of Conduct Violations

If there is a violation of any of the above, the following consequences will result:

- **First occurrence:** Verbal warning. The teacher will speak with the child.
- **Second occurrence:** The teacher will call/email the child's parent(s) and inform the Education Director.
- **Third occurrence:** The child will be sent to the Education Director, who will contact the parent(s).
- **Fourth occurrence:** The Education Director, Vice President of Education, or other designated person, and parent(s) will meet to determine what the next steps will be which may include suspension or removal from Religious School. Each occurrence will be documented and put into the student's file.

Zero-Tolerance Policy for Physical Altercations

We have a zero tolerance policy for any physical altercations. If such an event occurs, parents will be called immediately to pick up the involved students. Students will not be able to return to class until a conference has been set up with parents and Education Director and a plan has been put into place.

ATTACHED please find a copy of the Signature Page. Please read and sign one for each child and return it to the student's teacher.



Religious School

**Parent Handbook and Code of Conduct Signature Page
2019-2020**

Please return one Signature page for each family, **signed by each student**, to one of the students' teachers or the Education Director.

I have read and I understand the contents of the Parent Handbook.

Parent's/Guardian Signature: _____

I have read and discussed the Code of Conduct on pages 11 and 12 with my child/children, and we agree to abide by it.

Student's Name (Print): _____ **Grade:** _____

Student's Signature: _____

Student's Name (Print): _____ **Grade:** _____

Student's Signature: _____

Student's Name (Print): _____ **Grade:** _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent's/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____