

Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School Policies and Procedures



Our Religious School policies and procedures exist to ensure the quality of the education process, the smooth running of our school, as well as the safety of our students and staff. Should you have any questions, please speak with the Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning and/or the Chairperson of the Religious School Committee.

(Please read and sign on the concluding page.)

Derekh Eretz—The Conduct of our Community

Philosophy

The Religious School of Congregation B'nai Israel is founded on the following values and principles from our tradition that bespeak certain behaviors from our students:



1. Talmud Torah (The Study of Torah)—

The school is a place for the pursuit of learning with the goal of personal growth and the development of students' Jewish identities.

- Attend at all required times.
- Leave games, toys, and electronic games at home.
- Come to school prepared with the necessary supplies and homework.

2. V'Ahavta L're'akha Kamokha (Love Your Neighbor as Yourself)—

Respect for the rights and feelings of others.

- Show respect to all teaching faculty, fellow students and other members of Congregation B'nai Israel.
- Eat politely and in designated areas.
- Clean up after eating or other messy activities.
- Show proper respect to others by proper conduct in language, manners, and not touching others' possessions.

3. Al Tifrosh min Hatzibur (Don't Separate Yourself from the Community)—

Respect and Responsibility for the Community.

- Out of consideration for other students and teachers, maintain quiet in walkways outside classrooms while classes are in session.
- Enter the *Beit K'nesset* (sanctuary) quietly and with reverence. While there, keep feet on the ground and regard the *siddurim* (prayerbooks) with respect. Do not eat or drink in the sanctuary.

4. Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh ba Zeh (All of the People of Israel are Responsible for One Another)—

Responsibility for the safety of self and others.

- Only walking is permitted in the hallways and walkways.
- Respect the wishes of classmates and talk with one another in a responsible manner in order to resolve differences of opinion.
- Remain on campus at all times from the time of drop-off until pick-up unless alternative plans are pre-arranged.

5. Bal Tash-hit (Do Not Destroy or Waste)—

Respect and responsibility for the environment and property.

- Use bathrooms properly and keep them clean.
- Treat all synagogue property with respect and act in accordance with the sanctity of our synagogue whenever on synagogue property.

6. Im Ein Ani Li, Mi Li? (If I Am Not For Myself, Who Will Be For Me?)—

Responsibility for one's own actions.

- Comply with the beliefs of the school and temple. In the event that this *brit* is violated, take responsibility for one's own actions and face the logical consequences.



Attendance

Religious School students are expected to attend at least 80 percent of the school year:

23 of 29 Sunday sessions.

49 of 61 Sunday/Tuesday sessions.

After two absences, parents will be notified. Satisfactory completion of make-up work will compensate for missed class sessions.

Excessive tardiness (consisting of 2 or more tardy arrivals) will be treated as an absence.

We do recognize outstanding attendance. Our goal is that our students be part of a vibrant positive Jewish learning community.

Promotion

Student is promoted upon successfully demonstrated mastery of the required material for his or her grade level.

Students who need to do additional work for promotion will be assigned appropriate activities or projects. This work must be completed by the beginning of the next school year in order for the student to progress. Promotion will be dependent on satisfactory completion of the assignment/s.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

In order to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation B'nai Israel:

- The family must be members in good standing of the congregation.
- The candidate will be encouraged to continue his/her religious education through Confirmation and high school.
- The candidate must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of four years of religious school immediately prior to the anticipated Bar/Bat Mitzvah service; totaling no less than five years religious school experience.
- The candidate must regularly attend Shabbat services during the period of training.



Classroom Visits

1. All visitors need to receive prior consent from the Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning (or a designee) before visiting a classroom. This will prevent disruptions as well as ensure the safety of our students.
2. We are delighted to have parents visit their students' classes during the school year. However, to avoid unscheduled interruptions or other disruptions of the school routine, we require advance notification of a visit. To arrange such a visit, please call the school office to set up a specific time and date.
3. **When you arrive at CBI, please sign in with the office personnel, who will provide you with a written authorization to visit a specific classroom.**
4. A child who is not a member of Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School will not be allowed in the classroom without the consent of the visitor's parent and approval of the DLJL and class teacher(s) **IN ADVANCE OF SUNDAY MORNING OR TUESDAY AFTERNOON.** Sign-in at the office is required.
5. All teaching staff have been instructed to request written authorization or verbal authorization directly to the DLJL before allowing visitors into the classroom. At a time of heightened awareness of security issues, this policy will be strictly enforced throughout the school year.
6. It is also the expectation of our *madrichim*—our teen classroom aides—that as members of our staff, serving in an employment context, they will not bring friends to join them during their duties. This policy aims to ensure the safety of our students, maintain the accountability of our school to our students and parents, and acknowledge the skill and training that *madrichim* undergo to be qualified to work with our students.



Homework

It is the policy of our school that any teacher may assign homework. Teachers will keep such assignments realistic, interesting, and relative to the curriculum.

Examples of appropriate homework assignments include: workbook pages, collection of artifacts, and interviewing family members, as well as weekly Hebrew reading drills and prayer practice. If there is Hebrew reading homework, it should be **practiced daily for at least 20 minutes.**

Parents are asked to support the work that our teachers and students do to achieve the educational goals that we set. If there are questions about a particular assignment, please speak to the child's teacher.

Early Release

For your child's security, if he or she needs to leave Religious School early, **parents must fill out an early release form in the office and present it to the student's teacher. A note ahead of time to the teacher is also appreciated.**

The adult should pick up the child at his/her classroom and make sure the teacher is aware of the pickup.

No child will be allowed to leave the synagogue grounds unless written notice is received, the DLJL (or a designee such as the teacher) gives approval, and an adult is present at the classroom to collect the child.

This policy will be strictly enforced throughout the school year.

NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE

Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School Dress Code

Our synagogue is often the only sacred place our students encounter in their daily lives. One important aspect of Religious School is to set an appropriate tone and atmosphere for Jewish study and worship. How we dress and present ourselves is a part of the way we demonstrate our seriousness of purpose and show *kavod*/respect for our synagogue and the activities in which we engage when in the building.

We expect that the students and faculty of Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School will wear clothing that reflects the statement from Torah that we were all created in the image of God.

Jewish practice has stringent guidelines regarding clothing. Our liberal traditions guide us along the fine line between maintaining Jewish custom while remaining a vibrant part of the modern world.

With this in mind, we ask that ***all students, parents and faculty*** dress in an appropriately modest manner for Religious School, and specifically adhere to the following guidelines:

- Wear blouses and tops that cover the midriff, the back and shoulders. Choose fabrics that are opaque.
- Wear shorts and skirts at mid-thigh or longer, but no shorter.
- Wear clothing that does not reveal undergarments at the waist or shoulders.
- For girls, wear blouses or tops that do not have spaghetti straps.
- Wear T-shirts devoid of vulgar, obscene, offensive or inappropriate messages.
- Wear shoes without wheels and open-toed shoes that are not “flip-flops” for safety reasons. Wear shoes at all times.
- Sports uniforms are acceptable, assuming they reflect the other elements of these guidelines. However, hats, cleats and other “outdoor” sports accoutrements should remain outside the temple.
- At the discretion of the Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning or the Rabbi, other considerations may be discussed with individual students and their parents.

If a child wears inappropriate attire to school, the office will provide “loaner” clothing. If a child wears “flip flops”, he or she will be asked to remain indoors during recess break. Parents will be called and informed of such infractions.

We trust that you support our efforts to make Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School one of which we can all be proud.



Cell Phones at Congregation B'nai Israel

We ask that all students turn off cell phones during Religious School hours. Student's phone will be confiscated if they are used during school hours. Students have full access to the phones at Congregation B'nai Israel while school is in session. Parents can reach students at (916) 446-4861 during school hours in case of a family emergency. We will use cell phones only if landline phones are not in service. In case of emergency, Rabbi Shoshanah King-Tornberg's cell phone number is 347.216.1547.

Procedures

In order to ensure these expectations are achieved, the following will be enforced:

1. The Religious School Rights and Responsibilities will be enclosed with registration materials. Please read and discuss these expectations with your child and sign the Family Agreement on the Registration Form.
2. Classroom standards, *B'rit ha-Kitah*, will be established by each teacher with their students.
3. This *B'rit ha-Kitah* (Classroom Covenant) is to be signed by the students and parents, and returned to the teacher at the next school session.
4. If there are consistent violations of the *B'rit ha-Kitah* (Classroom Covenant), the teacher will confer with the student, and written notice will be mailed home or the parents will be called.
5. If infractions continue, the Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning will confer with the teacher and the student and the parents will be called.

6. If there are further problems, parents will be called for a conference with the teacher, Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning and/or the Rabbi and the student to determine further action, which may include any or all of the following:

- Parents on premises during school hours
- Suspension for a period of time with satisfactory completion of homework/study assignments
- Any mutually agreed-upon arrangements by parents, student and Congregation B'nai Israel personnel at a conference

If a student is suspended from religious school, the Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning, in consultation with the Senior Rabbi, will monitor actions of all suspended students to determine whether readmission is possible after the prescribed time.

7. SEVERE CLAUSE: In case of extreme or unusual circumstances, the foregoing sequence may be suspended and action taken at the Director's/Rabbi's discretion.

All families must sign, initial and return the Family Agreement on the final page of this Registration document.

The Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School Committee meets regularly to assess the programs of the Religious School. The committee members set policy, review the budget and monitor the educational programs in our school. They promote projects and programs through task forces and subcommittees addressing specific issues within the school. Some task forces and subcommittees include: 1) Special needs 2) Developing an equitable teacher pay scale

3) The *Madrichim* program and 4) Fundraising. The religious school committee assists in the evaluation of the Director and makes recommendations to the CBI Board of Trustees. The Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning, the temple President and the Rabbi are ex-officio members of the Religious School Committee. Any congregant in good standing may seek to be a member of the Religious School Committee. **Your involvement** on the Committee is one of the most important instruments for ensuring we have a quality program for our children. **Please contact Lisa Brodkey, Vice-President for Education or Bernardette Behar, Chairperson of the Religious School Committee to become more involved.**



Enrollment in Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School

Our congregation strives to provide a welcoming environment and place of belonging for all of our members. We recognize that interfaith families are an integral part of our sacred community, and we welcome the participation of each of our congregants in exploring the depths and joys of Jewish life.

The issues surrounding the religious education of children of interfaith families are complex and challenging. We admire and appreciate the many parents, brought up in other religions, who are raising their children as Jews with pride, love, and open support. Our Religious School reflects these same goals by teaching Judaism as a faith that is lived, so that our students can develop a strong, positive Jewish identity that reflects a relationship to God, Torah and Israel. We therefore expect that students not practice, profess beliefs, or receive formal training in any faith other than Judaism. This is not to preclude a family from sharing the religious traditions of non-Jewish family members, such as holiday celebrations with extended family. A non-Jewish parent should be free to share cultural traditions and not be made to feel invisible in a child's religious life.

However, participation in cultural and family traditions should be distinguished from formal religious training. As the Union for Reform Judaism has emphasized, enrolling a child in the religious education program of another faith is contrary to theological principles, as a person cannot identify as both Jewish and Christian (or as an adherent of any other faith). Dual enrollment places a child in an untenable position for spiritual development. It is also incongruent with the mission of Jewish religious schools to teach Judaism as a living faith and to enable students to develop strong Jewish identities.

Therefore, it is the policy of Congregation B'nai Israel that students registered in our Religious School be raised as Jews and not receive formal religious education in any other religion. To assure that this policy is communicated and understood, we as a congregation ask that all parents/guardians positively acknowledge this policy as a condition of Religious School enrollment by signing this document (on page 7).



Please initial, sign and return this page with your registration materials.

_____ My child's behavior will be in keeping with Religious School values and principles (Page 1)

_____ I understand that regular attendance is essential for learning; and for promotion, Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation (page 2)

_____ Arrangements for classroom visits must be made in advance, and with Rabbi King-Tornberg's approval (page 3)

_____ In the event that my child requires early dismissal, a parent or designee (approved by a parent) will first fill out a sign-out form in the office and deliver this form to the child's teacher (the one supervising/teaching at the time of dismissal). (Page 3)

_____ I'll support my child(ren) in completing assigned homework (Page 3)

_____ My child(ren) and I will dress appropriately for Religious School (Page 4)

_____ My child's cell phone will remain off during Religious School (Page 4)

_____ My child(ren) is/are not receiving formal education in another religion. (Page 6)

I acknowledge these policies as conditions of Religious School Enrollment. I understand that should I have any questions about any of these policies at any time, I am welcome to contact Rabbi King-Tornberg, our Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning.

Parent/Guardian #1

Date

Parent/Guardian #2

Date

