



TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

Come As You Are

Religious School Parent Handbook 2023-24 5784

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom is dedicated to providing its students with a firm foundation of Reform Jewish education from kindergarten through high school by creating community, instilling an appreciation for and celebration of Jewish identity, and inspiring a commitment to ongoing Jewish living and learning.

The TBS Religious School emphasizes Jewish ethics and values, holiday celebrations, social justice, history, the study of Torah and sacred texts, Hebrew language, prayer, and Jewish culture. We strive to create an environment of *Klal Yisrael* – a caring and active involvement in the temple, the local Jewish community, Israel, and with Jews around the world.

The dedicated faculty members of the Religious School bring to their classrooms a passion for Judaism and Jewish values, as well as deep regard for the individual worth of each student, recognizing varied learning styles and abilities. The TBS clergy and Director of Education are an integral part of the school through teaching classes, leading worship services, and facilitating intergenerational programs.

The Hochberg Academy at TBS is an innovative teen program for grades 8-12. It combines formal Jewish learning with youth group. **This program is underwritten by a generous grant from Stephen and Jane Hochberg.** The Hochberg Academy is facilitated by Rabbi Neil Amswych, Cantor Lianna Mendelson, and Youth Director Ellen Zieselman. See *page 8 for more information.*

The success of children's educational programs at TBS depends on the ongoing support and enthusiasm of parents and grandparents. Please take this opportunity to model ongoing Jewish learning and involvement with the community through participating in and volunteering at school-wide programs, family learning days, social action and *tzedakah* projects, and worship services.

Contact info:

For non-urgent questions, please email cantorlianna@gmail.com or call/text her at (505) 309-0573.

If you need Cantor Lianna specifically during school hours, the best way to reach her is to TEXT her.

CLASS SCHEDULE -

Sunday School: Grades PreK - 7

Sundays: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m

Typical Schedule:

10:00-10:30 All-School Tefillah (Prayer)

10:30-11:30 Grade Level Classes

11:30-12:00 Chugim (Electives)

~Grown-ups are encouraged to stay for Tefillah~

OPTIONAL at no charge: 12:15-1:00 Youth Choir

Hebrew School: Grades 3 - 7

Wednesdays: 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

The Hochberg Academy: Grades 8 - 12

Wednesdays: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday Hebrew is optional for third graders, and REQUIRED for 4th-7th graders who are enrolled in our program and planning on becoming b'nei mitzvah. If your child has a truly unavoidable conflict with Wednesdays from 4:30-6:00, talk to Cantor Lianna to come up with an alternative plan.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Chugim (Electives): Unless there is a special program, Sunday School ends with Chugim (Electives), which are experiential Jewish education classes based on the skills and passions of our teachers. Chugim run from 11:30-12:00. They are broken into 6 or 7 week blocks throughout the course of the school year. Students are expected to commit to a chug for the entire 6 or 7 weeks. They will get a chance to rotate soon if they want to try something else!

Youth Choir (New in 2022!): Youth choir is open to all Sunday school students and teen aides. It runs from 12:15-1:00 on Sundays. There is a fifteen minute break from 12:00-12:15, which may be used to eat a packed lunch or snack. Snack will not be provided by the school, so please bring your own.

Tzedakah & Social Action: Giving is an important *mitzvah* (commandment) of Jewish life. On Sundays, children donate money for *tzedakah* (literally “righteousness”), and at the end of the year the school will decide where the collected money will be donated. Please take time to discuss this *mitzvah* with your child, and encourage your child to donate a portion of their own money. The students consider a variety of possible recipients ranging from local to international organizations, which deal with issues such as homelessness, animal welfare, medical care, and hunger. Each year's *tzedakah* recipients and amounts are announced at the final assembly in May. B'nei Mitzvah students (in 7th and 8th grades) choose hands-on *tzedakah* projects in consultation with their tutor.

Please try to send your child with some money for Tzedakah every week. It is good to set a routine, and even if everyone brings just 25¢ a week, we would wind up with over \$250 to send to a worthy cause at the end of the year.

PJ Library Program: It's never too early to create treasured Jewish memories with your family! This initiative from the Grinspoon Foundation provides free books to Jewish children from newborn through 12 years old. You can sign up here: <https://pjlibrary.org/home>

Family Learning Days: Grown-ups and children come together for shared Jewish educational experiences facilitated by the Director of Education or other members of staff. Each program includes learning and socializing with other parents as well as fun, thought provoking, collaborative activities for parents and their children / teens. *Dates are forthcoming*

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation: In order to celebrate becoming bar or bat mitzvah at TBS, students are required to attend Religious School and Hebrew School (both Sundays and Wednesdays) regularly for a minimum of two years.

Who is Welcome at the TBS Religious school? We welcome students from any family structure, any race, any socioeconomic status, and any gender or sexual identity. We want to make sure that you find a home here. We ask only that our students identify as Jewish, which typically means having at least one Jewish parent, but feel free to discuss any individual situations with Cantor Lianna.

Special Needs: At the TBS Religious School, we pride ourselves on providing individualized attention. It is essential that we have the maximum information concerning your child's special needs so that we can provide them with the best Jewish education possible. **Parents are urged to speak with the Director of Education and the child's teacher before school begins**, and to provide a copy of the IEP, if applicable.

Religious School Scholarship: It is the policy of Temple Beth Shalom that no child is turned away from a Jewish education for financial reasons. *Please note that scholarships are NEEDS-BASED.* Contact Cantor Lianna for assistance.

Worship Services for Children:

- **Children's High Holiday Services** are conducted by the BSTY Youth Group, coordinated by Youth Director Ellen Zieselman. Services are held on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur mornings at 10:00 in the Upper Sanctuary.
- **Family Service** is a lively family-friendly Friday Kabbalat Shabbat for pray-ers of all ages at **5:30 PM**, typically on the second Friday of the night. It includes children's favorite songs, and a story in place of a sermon.
- **Friday Night Live!** Don't miss this lively musical Friday night service (generally the last week of the month) that appeals to children and adults of all ages.

Special Shabbatot are subject to change; Cantor Lianna will keep you updated.

Children are always welcome at any service, and we provide toys, fidgets, and Bible cartoon books. You are welcome to bring quiet toys if you want as well.

SERVICE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS: We expect students to attend Shabbat worship, both so they can see what it's like to be part of the community, and because the best way to learn how to pray is to do it! The sanctuary is a space that belongs to all of us, including children, and it's important for our young people to learn that it is their prayer space too. Students in PreK-1st grade should attend at least one Friday night and one Saturday service during the school year. Students in Grades 2-3 should attend at least three Friday night and three Saturday services. Students in Grades 4-5 should attend at least five Friday night and five Saturday services. Students in Grades 6-7 should attend at least seven Friday night and seven Saturday services during the school year. More is always better!

Volunteering: We depend on parents, grandparents, and guardians to support Religious School programs by volunteering in small and large ways. This is an opportunity to become more involved in your child's Jewish education while meeting other TBS parents and having fun! There are many ways to make a difference, no matter how much time you have to give. Contact Cantor Lianna if you are interested.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Enrollment: Placement in the Religious School and the Hochberg Academy is based on the child's secular school grade. **TBS membership is required after the child's first year in the school.** Registration starts in the spring for the following year, with an early-bird discount available before summer. However, new students are welcome to enroll throughout the year. **Please inform the Director of Education of your child's special learning, medical or developmental needs.** Enrollment forms must be completed in ShulCloud so that we have all the information we need to take good care of your child. You can also set up payment plans in your ShulCloud account. Refunds (prorated) will only be granted in the case of serious illness or family move.

Arrivals and Departures: Children may be dropped off on the sidewalk or the parent may park in the lot and escort the child to class. **Do not leave your car in the fire lane!** All classes begin in the **sanctuary**. For the safety of all children, no cell phone use during carpool!

Snacks: There will be no snacktime or food provided during Sunday school. If your child needs to eat during the hours of 10:00-12:00, please let Cantor Lianna know. If your child is staying for youth choir (12:15-1:00), they may bring a snack or packed lunch to eat during the break from 12:00-12:15. No nuts, pork, or shellfish, please.

Canteen: Hebrew School students (grades 3-7) may arrive beginning at 4:00 PM on Wednesdays when school is in session. Adult supervision is provided. Children may do their homework, read or visit quietly. Reasonably healthy packaged snacks are available for a small fee, or your child may bring their own snack. No nuts, pork, or shellfish, please.

Illness: Should your child become ill while at school, we will dispense band-aids and TLC, but we cannot administer any medication (including Tylenol). When necessary, we will contact the parent or others listed on the emergency form to pick up the child. **Please make sure your emergency contact information is current!**

Covid Policy: Enrollment in the TBS religious school is contingent upon being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. You must either show Cantor Lianna your child's vaccination card or email her a picture of it. **We are now MASK OPTIONAL.** Please make the choices you need to to protect your family and our community, and let Cantor Lianna if you have any concerns.

Guest Policy / Visiting the Classroom: Parents are always welcome to visit the classroom; however, we request prior notification. If your child wishes to bring a friend or relative to class, permission must be obtained from the Director of Education and the teacher. The parent / responsible adult **must** be reachable while the guest is on the premises.

Cancellation: The Religious School follows the Santa Fe Public School schedule. If SFPS has a snow day or early dismissal on a Wednesday, we also will cancel. In the event of severe weather or other emergency on a Sunday morning, you will be contacted via email, phone or text.

If in doubt, you are welcome to call or text Cantor Lianna: (505) 309-0573.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Temple Beth Shalom is both a House of Worship and a House of Study. The goal of the Code of Conduct is to help maintain an environment of *Derech Eretz*, the correct and caring way to behave towards others.

Please read and discuss with your child.

Students at Temple Beth Shalom have the following rights and responsibilities:

1. To be respected as unique individuals;
2. To express opinions without ridicule;
3. To speak without interruption;
4. To be courteous and respectful to their peers and teachers.

Teachers at Temple Beth Shalom have the following rights and responsibilities:

1. To be respected as unique individuals;
2. To be treated as professionals;
3. To speak without interruption;
4. To be courteous and respectful to their peers, supervisors, parents and students;
5. To adhere to the terms of their yearly contract.

In all cases of behavioral difficulties, the teacher will inform the Director of Education immediately. Confidential records will be maintained. The discipline procedure is as follows:

1. **First incident of misbehavior:** The teacher will discuss the problem with the student, and give a warning (unless misbehavior is so severe that the child must be removed from the classroom immediately).
2. **Second incident:** If necessary, the student will be removed from the class and escorted to the office (accompanied by an adult or aide). The parent/guardian will be called to discuss the situation and possible resolutions.
3. **Third incident:** The student will be escorted to the office. The parent/guardian will be contacted. If circumstances warrant, they will be asked to pick up the student. A meeting will be arranged with the student, parent(s), teacher and Director of Education.

Certain offenses will result in immediate removal from the school:

- Theft
- Vandalism
- Smoking
- Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, harmful or dangerous objects
- Violence or threat of violence to others
- Placing self and/or other students in danger
- Extreme disruption in the classroom

Please note: Cell phones must be silenced and not used during class except with permission from the teacher.

THE HOCHBERG ACADEMY: Grades 8 – 12

The Hochberg Academy at TBS helps students explore their identities as contemporary Reform Jewish teens, and encourages them to take their rightful roles as active adult members of the Jewish community. The Hochberg Academy assists students in developing a strong foundation of Jewish ethics, knowledge, and spirituality, to support them as they confront the many challenges of college life and adulthood. Taught by Rabbi Neil Amswych, Cantor Lianna Mendelson and Youth Group Director Ellen Zieselman, these interactive discussions become very lively!

Thanks to a generous grant from Stephen and Jane Hochberg, TBS teens have the opportunity to engage in sophisticated Jewish learning while also participating fully in our vibrant BSTY youth group. Fees for the program include classes, youth group membership, and a light dinner every week. The Hochberg Academy meets on Wednesdays from 6:00- 7:30 pm.

All post B'nei Mitzvah students are invited to apply as *Madrichim* (teen assistants) in the Religious School on Sunday mornings and/or Wednesday afternoons. All *Madrichim* must be registered in the Hochberg Academy.

Core Values

- Strong personal connection to Judaism
- The importance of community / How to be a valuable member of a community • Teen Family Learning Days (Dates forthcoming)
- Familiarity with Shabbat and holiday ritual, prayers, Torah
- Empowering students to find answers for themselves

Sample Topics

- Moral / ethical decision-making with reference to Jewish sources
- Jewish History
- Tikkun Olam: Repairing the world
- Essential Jewish texts: Torah, Talmud, Midrash
- Judaism 101 – Tools for the Road
- Israel: History, culture, society, issues
- Comparative Judaism & Comparative Religions