



TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

*Come As You Are*

# Religious School Parent Handbook 2025-26 5786

Director of Education: Sheli Marks

Email: [schooldirector@sftbs.org](mailto:schooldirector@sftbs.org)

205 E. Barcelona Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
[www.sftbs.org](http://www.sftbs.org)  
505-982-1376

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom is a place where children and families grow together in Jewish learning, celebration, and community. Our program offers a strong foundation in Reform Jewish education from kindergarten through high school, rooted in joy, belonging, and connection.

We emphasize Jewish values and ethics, holiday celebrations, social justice, Torah study, Hebrew language, prayer, and Jewish culture. Our goal is not only to teach but to nurture a love for Jewish living and learning that lasts a lifetime.

Our dedicated teachers bring passion, warmth, and creativity to their classrooms. Each child is seen as a unique individual, and we honor different learning styles and abilities. Together with clergy and staff, we create meaningful opportunities for students and families to celebrate Judaism and to build lasting bonds with the Temple Beth Shalom community, the Jewish people, and Israel.

The Hochberg Academy for teens (grades 8–12) offers deeper Jewish learning and youth group connections, thanks to the generous support of Stephen and Jane Hochberg.

The success of our school depends on partnership with parents and grandparents. When families participate in programs, family learning days, social action, and worship, children see Jewish life modeled with love. We are so grateful to walk this journey together.

## WHAT'S NEW?

Holistic curriculum that builds year on year

Discoveries program for deep dives into topic areas that the student chooses

Hineini program to celebrate progress in learning and involvement in community and in rituals

# 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)
- 10:30–12:00 Grade-Level Classes
- 10:30–12:00 (Once a month) Project-Based Learning led by Madrichim

Parents and grown-ups are warmly encouraged to stay for Tefillah — it is a beautiful way to begin the day together.

## **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.

\* Attendance at Hebrew is required for grades 4–7 (optional for grade 3). Families with scheduling conflicts are encouraged to reach out to Sheli, our Religious School Director, so that together we can find a path forward.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## **Sunday School (PreK–7):**

Sunday mornings are the heart of our community. Each class blends Jewish stories, holidays, values, art, music, and community building in age-appropriate ways. Children begin their day together in joyful prayer (tefillah), then go into grade-level groups:

- **Younger students:** Explore Jewish life through play, song, and storytelling.
- **Middle students:** Build connection through values, Torah stories, and interactive learning.
- **Older students:** Dive deeper into Jewish texts, empathy, and meaning-making.
- **6–7 graders:** Engage in learning while preparing for bar/bat mitzvah with growing responsibility and leadership.

## **Project-Based Community Learning:**

Once a month, students gather across grades for a creative, hands-on project of their choice, designed and led by Rabbi Neil and our teen Madrichim. These joyful sessions allow older and younger students to learn from one another, strengthening the sense of community that makes our school special.

## **Hebrew School (Grades 3–7):**

Our Hebrew program focuses on both skill and spirit. Students learn to read and chant prayers, understand their meaning, and gain the confidence to participate fully in Jewish worship. Class time includes games, small-group work, and guided practice. By the end of Hebrew School, students can navigate the siddur (prayer book), contribute to services, and prepare for bar/bat mitzvah with confidence.

## **Tzedakah & Social Action:**

Each Sunday, children are encouraged to bring a small donation for tzedakah (“righteous giving”). At the end of the year, students decide together where to give, learning that even small gifts have power when combined.

## **Family Learning Days:**

Several times a year, families gather for joyful programs that weave together Jewish learning, connection, and creativity. These days help parents and children grow together while strengthening friendships across the community.

## **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation:**

Students preparing for bar/bat mitzvah are expected to attend Religious School and Hebrew School regularly for at least two years. Once a month during Hebrew School, students share and teach about their Torah portion with peers — building confidence, leadership, and a personal connection to Torah.

### **Worship Services for Children and Families:**

- **High Holy days:** Children's services led by our youth group on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur mornings.
- **Family Shabbat:** The first Friday of each month at 5:30 p.m., with music, stories, and joy.
- **Friday Night Live:** A spirited, musical service at the end of each month, open to all ages.

Children are always welcome at every service. Quiet toys and books are available to help make the sanctuary a joyful, welcoming space for all.

### **Service Attendance Expectations:**

Being present in the sanctuary is a central part of Jewish education. By attending services, children not only learn the words of prayer but also the feeling of Jewish life.

- PreK–1st Grade: at least 1 Friday night and 1 Saturday service per year.
- 2nd–3rd Grade: at least 3 Friday nights and 3 Saturdays per year.
- 4th–5th Grade: at least 5 Friday nights and 5 Saturdays per year.
- 6th–7th Grade: at least 1 Friday night and 1 Saturday per month.

Parents, your support is essential in helping children meet these goals. More is always welcome — and every service is a chance to create memories together.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

We depend on parents, grandparents, and guardians to help our Religious School thrive. Volunteering is a wonderful way to support our programs, become more involved in your child's Jewish education, and connect with other TBS families.

There are many ways to make a difference — whether you have an hour to give once in a while or can take on a larger role. Every helping hand matters, and we promise it will be fun!

# SCHOOL POLICIES

**Enrollment:** Placement is based on secular school grade. TBS membership is required for all families. New students are warmly welcomed throughout the year.

**Arrivals & Departures:** All classes begin in the sanctuary. Please walk your child in or drop off at the sidewalk — and remember, no phone use in the carpool line.

**Snacks:** No snacktime is provided. If your child needs to eat, please send a simple nut-free snack.

**Illness:** If your child is unwell, please keep them home until they are fully recovered to protect the health of our community.

**Guests & Visitors:** Parents are welcome to visit classrooms with advance notice. Guests must be approved by the Director of Education.

**Cancellations:** We follow the Santa Fe Public School calendar for weather closures. Families will be notified by email or text.

**Code of Conduct:** We model derech erez — kindness, respect, and responsibility. Students and teachers are expected to treat one another with dignity and care. If behavior becomes disruptive, families will be contacted to work toward a solution together.

# 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 caring way to behave toward others.

## **Students at TBS have the right and responsibility:**

- To be respected as unique individuals
- To express opinions without ridicule
- To speak without interruption
- To treat peers and teachers with courtesy and respect

## **Teachers at TBS have the right and responsibility:**

- To be respected as unique individuals and professionals
- To speak without interruption
- To be courteous and respectful to peers, supervisors, parents, and students
- To uphold their responsibilities as educators

## **Discipline Procedures:**

1. First incident: Teacher discusses behavior and gives a verbal warning (unless severe).
2. Second incident: Student may be removed from class; parents contacted.
3. Third incident: Student is removed; parents contacted; meeting arranged with student, parents, teacher, and Director of Education.

**Immediate removal offenses:** theft, vandalism, smoking, drugs/alcohol, weapons, violence or threats, endangerment, or extreme disruption.

Cell phones must be silenced and put away unless explicitly permitted by the teacher.

# THE HOCHBERG ACADEMY: Grades 8 – 12

The Hochberg Academy is where teens grow into Jewish young adults. Together we explore identity, ethics, spirituality, and Jewish tradition in an open, welcoming environment. Sessions are lively, discussion-based, and deeply connected to the real questions and challenges teens face.

All post-b'nei mitzvah students are invited to serve as Madrichim (teen assistants) in the Religious School. Madrichim are leaders, role models, and builders of community — a role that strengthens both them and our younger students.

## **Core Values of the Academy:**

- Building a strong and personal Jewish identity
- Experiencing the joy of community
- Gaining confidence in Jewish ritual, holidays, and texts
- Engaging with ethics, Israel, and Jewish history
- Living out the value of tikkun olam (repairing the world)

The Hochberg Academy is a gift — a space where our teens prepare not only for Jewish adulthood but for life itself, grounded in values, friendships, and pride.