

**Beth Am Temple**  
Religious School

Parent/Student  
**Handbook**  
5772 (2011-2012)

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## Preface

*Shalom!* Welcome to Beth Am Temple Religious School. This Handbook will explain many things you need to know, including descriptions, directions, and information. We invite you to contact us with any questions. We have an active, involved Religious School Committee of parents and other volunteers, which meets monthly. (For info about Hebrew High School, see the Hebrew High Handbook.)

Beth Am Temple Religious School offers a lively, engaging curriculum which emphasizes Jewish values, history, culture, and ritual throughout the grades. Our children are encouraged to develop a love of their Jewish background through a variety of educational experiences including classroom attendance, field trips, retreats, family programming, Shabbat services, *t'filah* (prayer), story-telling, cooperative learning, individual research, artistic expression, music, and crafts. They learn to become active learners as well as active members of their Jewish community and synagogue. Our goal is to provide our children with a strong foundation in Jewish learning which they can build upon in their adult years.

Our classes usually follow the following schedule. If changes are made, parents will be notified prior to the start of the school year. A calendar of School Events and Dates, and the School Curriculum, can be found online at our Religious School web pages: [www.bethamtemple.org](http://www.bethamtemple.org)

Kindergarten and Grade 1: Sundays, 9-11 am

Grades 2-3: Sundays, 11:15 am–1:15 pm

Grades 4-5: Sundays, 11:15 am–1:15 pm and Tuesdays, 4-6 pm

KESHET, Grades 4-7: Sundays, times vary

Grades 6-7: Sundays, 9-11 am and Wednesdays, 4-6 pm

Hebrew High (Grades 8-10): Tuesdays, 6-8 pm

Post Confirmation: once a month

We at Beth Am Temple have a commitment to Judaism and to providing the highest quality Jewish education for our students. To this end, we have certain standards and expectations of our Religious School families. Our goal is to help your family participate fully in our program. We understand that occasionally there may be extenuating circumstances that preclude your full participation in some of the prescribed learning experiences. In those instances, we will try to find alternate activities in which you can participate. The overall success of our program depends upon your cooperation. And, we thank you in advance.

*All the best,*

Marian Kleinman, Principal

Rabbi Daniel Pernick

Cantor Marcy Kadin

Beth Am Temple Religious School  
**Code of Conduct: The Brit of Ethics**

Adopted November, 2009

*Where there is no Torah, there is no proper conduct; where there is no proper conduct, there is no Torah. (Pirke Avot - Ethics of the Fathers 3:21)*

Beth Am Temple Religious School believes that in order for Jewish education to be effective, there must be mutual respect and cooperation between teachers, students and parents. Teachers are expected to treat all students with dignity and respect. Students are expected to follow the guidelines for classroom conduct that their teachers set. Parents are expected to become involved when disciplinary problems arise. The following guidelines have been adopted to deal with disciplinary situations. Please read and discuss this *Brit* (Covenant) with your children.

*Who is wise? One who learns from all people. (Pirke Avot - Ethics of the Fathers 4:1)*

Goals:

- 1) To provide a safe and comfortable environment for learning.
- 2) To create an environment of respect for self, respect for peers and respect for authority.
- 3) To establish a community where the home and school work together to produce responsible students who are accountable for their actions at all times.

*Learning begins with listening. (Noah Ben Shea, The Word)*

Expectations:

- 1) Students are expected to:
  - a. Speak, act, and dress respectfully at all times;
  - b. Follow instructions;
  - c. Conduct themselves with self-control;
  - d. Follow all classroom and school rules.
- 2) The following are examples of specific behaviors which interfere with the stated goals and expectations of our school and are therefore subject to discipline.
  - a. Disrupting class
  - b. Engaging in any physical act that can hurt someone
  - c. Bullying/teasing another student
  - d. Acting disrespectful toward teacher(s)
  - e. Causing damage or disruption to property, building or items; vandalism; "making a mess"
  - f. Cutting class
  - g. Possessing dangerous items
  - h. Cursing/using offensive language
  - i. Using cell phone/electronics in class, the halls, bathrooms, or sanctuary (cell phone should be off)
  - j. Smoking, possessing drugs or alcohol

## Code of Conduct: The Brit of Ethics, *continued*

*Everyone can raise himself, but only by his own actions. (Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, 1772-1810)*

### Consequences:

The following measures may be taken when a student engages in misconduct. Generally, progressive steps shall be taken with repetitive incidents. Depending on the nature, severity and/or frequency of the misbehavior, steps may be skipped at the discretion of the teacher and/or Principal. Individual consequences will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 1) Teacher will discuss incident with student. Where applicable, the following measures may also be taken:
  - a. Teacher may confiscate any forbidden item. At teacher's discretion, item shall be returned at end of class or held until it can be returned to the parent.
  - b. Student shall make restitution for damage/behavior (e.g., apologize to class or individual, replace damaged items, clean up mess).
- 2) Student will be sent to the Principal and student's parents will be contacted.
- 3) Meeting will be held with parent/teacher and Principal. As needed, a behavior management plan will be created (See #4).
- 4) A behavior management plan will be created with consequences built in. Individual circumstances will be considered, such as whether the student has an identified disability, current family issues, etc.
- 5) Parent will be required to sit in during class.
- 6) Meeting will be held with parent and Rabbi. (Principal and/or teacher will be included if appropriate).
- 7) Student will be suspended from class. Suspension will count as an unexcused absence and an appropriate make-up assignment will be required. If the student is currently taking Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons, lessons will also be suspended.
- 8) Dismissal from Religious School.

*Say not, "When I have leisure I will study." Perhaps you will have no leisure. (Pirke Avot - Ethics of the Fathers 2:3)*

# The Aleph Bet ABCs Handbook

## Absenteeism

Students are expected to attend Religious School regularly. Excessive absences tend to lower the status of the Religious School in the eyes of the child and negate all our efforts to maintain and improve the school's standards.

**Students are expected to attend a minimum of 75% of the classes in each subject.** If this minimum is not met, a student may not advance to the next grade level unless a make-up assignment in the missed subject is satisfactorily completed by **July 1<sup>st</sup>**. If a student does not complete the make – up assignment, the child will not be advanced to the next grade level. Only one make – up assignment may be done in lieu of inadequate or irregular attendance for grades 4, 5, 6 and 7. A make-up assignment to satisfy excessive absences will only be allowed once in one grade. Excessive absenteeism more than one year will result in repeating the grade.

We recognize that some families will have circumstances (ie. prolonged illness or custody arrangements) that merit special consideration. These families must contact the Religious School Principal or the Religious School Committee Chairperson in a timely manner prior to, or at the same time as the issue develops, so that each student's academic and attendance issues may be properly addressed.

To check student attendance records, parents may contact teachers and the Principal at any time. It is the parents' responsibility to keep track of overall attendance.

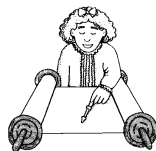
## Arrivals

Students are asked to make every attempt to arrive promptly. Should a student arrive late, we ask that the child report to the Principal's Office first and sign in. The teacher usually takes attendance when the bell rings. In the interest of safety, we need a record of a student being tardy in case of a fire drill.

## Attendance

Attendance and achievement go hand in hand. Occasionally, the Principal and/or Teacher may call home or send a letter to the family about a student's absences. One cannot progress without being present.

For more detailed information, please refer to **Absenteeism** above.



## B'nai Mitzvah (Bar/ Bat Mitzvah)

Beth Am Temple Religious School students are assigned Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates based upon their having been enrolled and performing satisfactorily in the Religious School for a minimum of four years. Students who enroll after the beginning of the third grade must still complete the minimum of four full years, even if this means that the

Bar/Bat Mitzvah date they receive is not close to their thirteenth birthday. Families must be in good financial standing.

While we will do all that is reasonable to assign dates as close to a student's 13th birthday as possible, the primary factor will be completing the Religious School requirement of a minimum of four full years of participation in our school (or another recognized Religious School setting). Private tutoring does not constitute an acceptable substitute for Religious School and will not be accepted in lieu of attendance or in order to skip a grade. (Of course, tutoring may be useful to help learn the material.)

Students are expected to be registered and attending Religious School satisfactorily as of the date of the celebration of their becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If a student celebrates their becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah anytime including or after August 1st, students must be registered for the coming year's Religious School classes.

In addition, students in Grades 4 through 12 are expected to attend a specific number of worship services each year. (See "Shabbat Worship Participation and Attendance," below)

The expectations and policies in the paragraphs above apply to all students, regardless of whether they are in the seventh or eighth grade (or higher).

In assigning Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates, preference is given to students of the more advanced grade. Thus, though a student currently in the third grade may have their 13th birthday closer to a particular date, a student currently in the fourth grade will be given priority for that date. Requests to change an assigned date are welcome and will be granted by the Rabbi when possible and deemed advisable from an academic and religious perspective.

## **Class Led Shabbat Service**

Each class/grade has the opportunity to lead a Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat worship service. Please refer to the calendar for dates. Each student is expected to participate in the class-led service. Please be sure to mark your calendars. It is social, educational and fun! Children who are leading worship services need to dress appropriately for their turn on the bima in front of the congregation during services.

Families are responsible for the Kiddush following a class-led Saturday morning Shabbat service. Families often organize a Shabbat community dinner prior to a class-led Friday night Shabbat service.

In addition, Religious School students in grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 participate in and lead weekday services every month on both Sunday mornings and weekday afternoons.

## **Classroom Behavior**

Please see our Beth Am Temple Religious School "Code of Conduct: The Brit of Ethics," included at the beginning of this Handbook.



## Dismissal

Students will be dismissed from the building when the bell rings. Supervised by the teachers and Principal, they should wait in the area in front of the building until their ride arrives and comes to a complete stop in the car line. Following dismissal procedures will empty the parking lot safely in less than 10 minutes! Please follow dismissal procedures – otherwise you will be asked to park and come inside the building to pick up your child after the lot empties.

Cars must make a loop around the parking lot and stop where directed (past the edge of the front sidewalk). This allows seven cars to load or unload simultaneously.

Do not switch lanes or cut – it is unnecessary and endangers the children. If you have occasion to park, due to a meeting inside the Temple, please wait until all cars have left the carpool line. Please do not cut in front of a vehicle unless a teacher or the Principal directs you to do so.

**Please do not park in the parking lot if you must depart immediately**, Please park on the street outside the Temple and walk inside to retrieve your child(ren). If someone unfamiliar with our dismissal policy picks up your child, please be sure to acquaint the driver with our dismissal procedures.

**Please be respectful to the Principal, teachers, and parent volunteers during dismissal**. They are only trying to insure the safety of all of our children.

For **Early Dismissal**, if you must pick your child(ren) up early, please park the car and proceed to the Principal's Office on the 2nd floor. There, you will be asked to sign your child(ren) out while the Principal or a teenage volunteer goes to retrieve the student(s). This is a safety and security precaution so that the Religious School has a record of who is in the building at any given time. If you're going to pick up your child early, for a doctor's appointment or other unavoidable early dismissal, we encourage you to pick up your child at least 15 minutes before regular dismissal time.

## Disruptive Students

Teachers use their utmost classroom management skills to make sure every student remains in class. The classroom teacher will remind the students of the established code of conduct, which is included at the beginning of this handbook. If a problem occurs and persists, the teacher may elect to call home or send the child to the Principal.

If the student is sent to the Principal, both the student and the teacher must sign an incident report, explaining the reason(s) why the student could not remain in the class. This report gets filed. If this happens more than once, or if the situation is particularly serious, the Principal will call home and the parent must meet with the Principal, student and teacher to resolve the issues.

Please be sure to read and keep your copy of your child's classroom Brit, Code of Conduct Agreement, which is signed by the class and teacher(s).

## Dress Code

Prayer is an integral part of our Religious School curriculum. Students pray in their classrooms and in the sanctuary.

- 1) All children are encouraged to wear *kippot* in the sanctuary.
- 2) Students are to wear safe, neat, clean clothing to all Religious School classes that will not cause any disruption or interference with the educational process.
- 3) "Heelies," or sneakers with concealed wheels may not be worn in the building. It is dangerous since our students are required to use the stairs, as most of our classrooms are located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- 4) Extremely brief garments, tube tops, tops with spaghetti straps, halter tops, plunging necklines, bare midriffs, see through garments, and low rise jeans or slacks are not acceptable for school. All clothes must cover belly buttons.
- 5) Underwear must be completely covered by outer clothing.
- 6) Clothes must not have vulgar or obscene messages, promote the use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, or encourage other illegal or violent activities.
- 7) When students are leading worship services, they're expected to dress well and appropriately. They will be on the bima in front of the congregation.

If the need should arise, the school office will ask a student to turn his/her shirt inside-out, or will provide oversized t-shirts to wear over inappropriate clothing without calling home.



## Electronics

Electronic equipment such as iPods, video games, cellular phones and all other electronic toys are to be left at home. If they are seen in class (even if they are not on), the teacher or Principal may confiscate them and hold onto them until the end of the class meeting, to return to the parent.



## Email Address/ Cell Phone Number

Please be sure the Principal has an emergency cell phone number and/or your email address for easy contact. Nearly all our communication is done via email. Be sure we have your current email address. We hope you check your email regularly, as weekly *Chadashoat* (Hebrew word for "news") as well as other important reminders are emailed weekly to each grade..

## Family Activity Day Participation

It is expected that families (student and at least one parent) attend the grade appropriate Family Activity Day. Meet the teachers will be held at family education workshops some years. These dates and activities will be announced to families. If special circumstances prevent your attendance, please contact the Principal as soon as possible, so that alternate arrangements can be made for your family.

## Food in the Religious School

While sale of assorted chips, pretzels, and chocolate from Israel to our students before class on weekdays will continue, we will only allow food to be eaten on weekday sessions (Tuesday and Wednesday) for the first 10 minutes (4 – 4:10 PM) of class. All snacks are \$1.00 each.

This food policy does not apply to Kindergarten through grade 3. They will continue to have challah/snack and juice on Sundays. (See below for more information about snack on Sundays.)

Peanuts and peanut snacks are prohibited in the Religious School.

## Guests

If one of our students may need to bring a friend on a rare occasion, please send the student with a note to inform the office. It is preferable to notify the principal prior to the class when possible. This is necessary for security reasons. It is important that we know who is in our building at all times.



## Hebrew

Learning a language is no different than learning to play an instrument or participating in a sport. [Practice, review and reinforcement are important parts of maintaining one's skill and progress.](#)

Your child only has two hours of Hebrew language instruction each week. In order to sustain reading skills or progress, students should read Hebrew at home and go over the work done in class. [Please encourage and support your child to review Hebrew at least 10-15 minutes at least three times a week.](#)

## Hebrew High School Information

Please refer to the Hebrew High Handbook for all information. Please arrange to return all forms to the School Office **before classes begin.**

## Hebrew Names

Our Hebrew names give us a sense of identity and family. We strongly encourage the use of our Hebrew names in Religious School. Please try to cooperate with this, making sure your child's Hebrew name is clearly written on their registration form and confirming that your child knows his/her name.

If your child does not have a Hebrew name, please contact Rabbi Pernick or Marian Kleinman. They will help you find an appropriate Hebrew name. Beth Am Temple holds a special group naming ceremony in the winter. Your child can participate at that time.

Kindergarten – Grade 3 will participate in a special family education program with regard to Hebrew names every few years.

## Homework

There are times when your child(ren) will have written homework. Please be sure to remind them to complete it. Even when there is no official homework, please remind and encourage your child to review the Hebrew learned in class.

## **Parent Volunteers/ Class Parents/ Va'ad Horim**

Please sign up to be a class parent. Our parents' organization, Va'ad Horim, helps provide traditional food for Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah, Purim and Passover celebrations in Religious School, coordinates Shabbat dinners for every grade, telephone chains, shopping, etc. Please be generous with your time. It's for our children!

## **School Supplies**

Please be sure your child comes ready to learn. They should always have:

- Pencils, pens, and eraser
- Single subject notebook
- Homework assignment
- All Religious School textbooks for the class
- *Siddur* or Prayer packet, when applicable
- The student is responsible for lost materials, including textbooks.

## **Shabbat Worship Participation and Attendance**

Shabbat worship is an integral part of our Religious School program, in addition to being an important family exercise. It is our expectation, that beginning with our 1<sup>st</sup> graders, families attend a Shabbat worship service at Beth Am Temple at least once a month, for a total of 9 services per school year. Students must remember to sign the attendance sheet whenever they attend services. The Rabbi maintains the records and the number of attended services will be reflected on the progress reports.

Students who do not fulfill the service attendance requirements will have to make up those services prior to beginning *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah* lessons. Please refer to the Rabbi for service requirements.

*Revised policy (July, 2008) regarding student service attendance requirement:*

All religious school students through confirmation class are required to attend nine (9) services per year. During the 12 months prior to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students are required to attend three services a month.

With the exception of the 12-month period prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, students can receive service attendance credit for up to two services per year at a location other than Beth Am Temple.

During the 12 month period prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, students can receive service attendance credit for up to one service per month at a location other than Beth Am Temple.

Parents have the responsibility to inform the Rabbi when their child attends services at another location.

## **Sunday Snacks**

Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders receive snack during Sunday school. Parents are asked to follow the schedule distributed by their child's teacher(s) or be sure to swap days so that our youngest students receive snack. Snack provides an enjoyable time for the children to recite the blessings for bread and juice. Grades 4 – 7 do not receive snack every Sunday. They are only in Religious School for 2 hours and should have breakfast before they arrive. We kindly ask that the students not eat during class time. (See Food Policy)

## **Snow Days**

If the weather is inclement, you may check the voicemail: 845-735-5858 ext. 15, email Marian Kleinman at [principal@bethamtemple.org](mailto:principal@bethamtemple.org) or log onto

[www.cancellations.com](http://www.cancellations.com)

## **Trips**

From year to year, different grades have varying opportunities for trips. If a trip or outside program is offered, please make every attempt to send your child. Trips contribute to your child's education and are considered an important part of the Religious School experience.

In the past, the Religious School has participated in Rockland County –wide programs with other Religious Schools for Chanukah, Tu B'shevat, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Israel Independence Day, and others. Grades 6 and up went to the Holocaust Museum in Spring Valley. Grades 5 – 6 attend a weekend retreat and the Confirmation class joins other Temples to travel to the Religious Action Center in Washington, DC. There may be trips planned to New York City. Some trips occur during non-Religious School hours, and/or may require a small charge.

## **Youth Group**

Beth Am Temple's Youth Group ("PRTY") invites students in Grades 6-12 to participate in a variety of social, religious, educational, and community service activities throughout the year. We often join with other area youth groups. Our youth group is affiliated with NFTY and our students take part in several NFTY events.

For more information, please contact our Youth Advisor, Janet Levitt, at [prtyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:prtyouthgroup@gmail.com)