



# **The Kehilah School**

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **2025-2026**

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<http://www.jcch.org/kehilah-school/>

# CONTENTS

Included in this booklet is important information for the coming year. Please familiarize yourself with its contents. It contains items such as the school calendar (watch for possible email updates during the year) and addresses, issues such as attendance, behavior, service attendance requirements and more. Keep it in a handy place for reference.

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It is with great excitement that I welcome you to the 2025–2026 school year at the Kehilah School. Our entire faculty, staff, and school board are eagerly looking forward to filling our hallways once again—with familiar faces and new ones, with the joyful sounds of tefillot (prayers), shirim (songs), and most importantly, with the energy and curiosity of our children.

As we approach a new year filled with new beginnings, we're reminded of the gift of community and the role Jewish education plays in shaping the lives of our families. Jewish learning is not just about the classroom—it's about building identity, cultivating values, and connecting across generations. When we teach our children Torah, Hebrew, tefillah, and the meaning behind our traditions, we are helping them write their own Jewish stories—rooted in the past and looking boldly toward the future.

At Kehilah School, we believe Jewish education is a living experience. It's in the challah we braid, the prayers we chant, the mitzvot we perform, and the relationships we build. It is not a one-way transmission, but a sacred exchange—where students, parents, teachers, and community members all learn from and inspire each other.

Throughout the year, we invite you to take part in moments of learning, celebration, reflection, and connection. Whether it's at a Shabbat service, a family program, or a hands-on project, there will be countless opportunities to experience the richness of Jewish life together.

This year, we aim to:

- Instill the joy of Jewish tradition, observance, and learning in meaningful and age-appropriate ways.
- Turn Jewish learning into Jewish living through real-life application and community connection.
- Share personal stories and collective experiences to deepen our understanding of Jewish identity.
- Embrace tradition while welcoming innovation, all within a warm and inclusive environment.
- Foster strong partnerships between clergy, educators, lay leaders, and families.
- Encourage volunteerism and mitzvah projects rooted in our core values.
- Strengthen our bonds with each other, our local community, Israel, and the wider world.

We are honored to be your partners in this journey and can't wait to grow and learn together this year.

B'vracha (with blessing),  
Ronit Razinovsky  
Director, Kehilah School

## **MISSION STATEMENT *B'ruchim haba'im (Welcome)!***

The JCCH Kehilah School is an experiential living and learning community in which children and families enhance their Jewish identities through an understanding and appreciation of the culture, history, values, and language of the Jewish people in Israel and around the world.

Our Kehilah Religious School is committed to creating a learning environment in which our children and families develop a strong Jewish identity through an understanding and appreciation of the culture, history and language of the Jewish people.

We believe that the family and religious school must work together to nourish our children's Jewish identities in our synagogue, homes and the broader community. We provide opportunities for learning and participating together in Jewish rituals and celebrations, offering occasions for active participation in Jewish study, mitzvot and traditions in order to create a strong partnership between the home, the school and the synagogue.

Along with our commitment to providing each student with the skills to participate in ritual at home and in the synagogue, we strive to make Jewish values and tradition an integral part of each student's life and foster a lifetime commitment to the Jewish people, Jewish learning, the State of Israel and the practices of our tradition.

It is our hope that upon entering the doors of the JCCH, walking through the corridors of our school, observing children's artwork and projects on the walls, hearing songs and class discussions, everyone will have a sense of comfort, warmth and a feeling of belonging. Belonging to a community of friends, family and Jewish learners; a connection with our past, and a bridge to our future. It is our mission that families make a personal connection between Jewish knowledge, traditions, Jewish history and Torah and our Jewish lives today. It is our belief that there is not one way to learn, therefore, each person has a unique way of making a connection both personally and spiritually with our Jewish teachings and heritage. We aspire to offer these opportunities to our students of all ages through the study of our text, music, the arts, open ended discussion and the importance of hands-on learning experiences. Thus, every person, of all ages, may feel connected and be able to learn and grow. The classroom experience focuses on Hebrew with an emphasis on Tefillah, Torah study, Jewish history, values and holiday celebrations. The extracurricular programs such as Junior Congregation, school wide events and family workshops enhance our families' connection with each other and our heritage.

# GOALS:

**“On three things the world stands: Torah, Avodah, and G’emilut Hasadim” (Pirkei Avot, 1:2)**

**We want our graduates to be committed to the love of *Torah* (study), *Avodah* (worship) and *Gemilut Hasadim* (moral and spiritual justice).**

We strive to help our students feel comfortable:

- Asking questions about life and growing up, while seeking answers within the framework of Jewish tradition
- Being linked to a rich tradition and realizing their place in this chain through the study of Jewish history and culture
- Using their skills regarding Shabbat, holidays and other religious observances in their home
- Praying in the synagogue as part of a community of worshipers and experiencing prayer as our attempt to draw closer to God
- Transmitting the Jewish tradition to the next generation

We want our students to experience:

- The religious school as a joyful place of learning, friendship and community
- Respect for the uniqueness of each individual learner
- Jewish teachers and other Jewish professionals as positive role models and skilled communicators of Jewish knowledge and values
- A curriculum that illuminates the depth and beauty of Jewish knowledge and the relevance of ancient traditions to our daily lives
- Moments and events of *kedushah* (holiness)
- Families who are committed to active participation in Jewish living and mitzvot

As they progress through our school’s curriculum students will:

- Know the Jewish calendar, and celebrate life cycle events and the yearly cycle of holidays
- Read the Siddur in Hebrew and be aware of its theological themes and various liturgies, especially the Shabbat service
- Experience modern Hebrew, using Hebrew in the classroom and acquiring a basic vocabulary
- Experience Jewish literature, music and the arts as creative expressions of our heritage.
- Recognize the *TaNaKh* (Bible) and other classical Jewish texts as the record of the evolving *Brit* (covenant) between the Jewish people and God
- Recall stories of our ancestors and themes of ethical behavior from the *TaNaKh*
- Identify *Torah* (Jewish learning) as the source of *mitzvot* (commandments)
- Understand and willingly undertake mitzvot between themselves and others, as well as between themselves and God
- Accept responsibility for giving *tzedakah* (righteous giving) and performing actions of *Tikkun Olam* (making the world a better place)
- Understand that the world is God’s gift to humanity and that it is our responsibility to protect it and use it wisely
- Understand the value of the Jewish community and be committed to be a member of it
- Identify with all Jews (*Klal Israel*) as brothers and sisters and be committed to Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people

Together with parents, our schools and the synagogue community plant the seeds of Judaism in our students. With nourishment from the home and cultivation from the school, our students’ Judaism will grow and continue to flourish throughout their lives.

## What is Simchat Shabbat?

Simchat Shabbat is a community day where families have an opportunity to attend Friday night or Saturday morning/evening services. This is a unique opportunity for the whole family to celebrate Shabbat as a community. With the effort to increase opportunities for each class to lead part of the services, we invite all classes with their parents to lead prayers. Students and teachers are working hard to develop the ability of the students to read Hebrew and to understand the structure of the service and the main meaning of the prayers they lead.

Simchat Shabbat Dates
Friday, September 12 - Welcome Back Shabbat
Friday, October 10 - Sukkot dinner
Friday, November 7 Grandparents Shabbat
Friday, December 8
Friday, January 9
Friday, February 6 Honor the teens Shabbat
Saturday, May 2 Living Museum Students Lead Service

**What is a Holiday Family Celebration?** Our school is called Kehilah which means Community. At the JCCH we are hoping to come together and celebrate the holidays.

Holidays Kids services Dates
September 23, 24 Rosh Hashanah Family Service
October 2 Yom Kippur Family Service
October 10 Community Sukkot Dinner
October 14 Simchat Torah Celebration
December 17 Community Hanukkah celebration
March 25 Passover Experience

## FACULTY AND CLASS TIMES

JCCH Religious School Faculty 2025-2026			
Office	Ronit Razinovsky Ronitr@jcch.org		
Office	Donna Baer Donnab@jcch.org		
Shorashim K & 1	Emily Hertzfeld <a href="mailto:emshertzfeld@gmail.com">emshertzfeld@gmail.com</a>	Wednesday	3:45-5:45
Bet & Gimmel 2nd & 3rd grade	Sherry Kfare <a href="mailto:Sherry4k@aol.com">Sherry4k@aol.com</a> <a href="mailto:Sherrykfare@gmail.com">Sherrykfare@gmail.com</a>	Monday & Wednesday	3:45-5:45
Dalet 4th grade	Irit Hadari <a href="mailto:irithadari@gmail.com">irithadari@gmail.com</a>	Monday & Wednesday	3:45-5:45
Hay & Vav 5th & 6th grade	Jeff Kelman <a href="mailto:morehyaakov1@gmail.com">morehyaakov1@gmail.com</a>	Monday & Wednesday	3:45-5:45
Zayin 7th grade	Jeff Kelman <a href="mailto:jeffkelman@yahoo.com">jeffkelman@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:morehyaakov@gmail.com">morehyaakov@gmail.com</a>	Wednesday & Sunday (once a month)	5:00-7:00
Youth Director BBYO	Jeff Kelman <a href="mailto:morehyaakov1@gmail.com">morehyaakov1@gmail.com</a>	Wednesday	7:00-8:00

## Synagogue Service Curriculum Requirements

At the Kehilah Religious School here at the JCCH we do our best to teach about Shabbat and prayer in the classroom. At each session we have tefillah (prayer) experience of some type and we work hard to give the students a taste of Shabbat. However, the optimum way to experience and learn is to be part of the real thing. If we want to learn about prayer and Shabbat then we need to come on Shabbat and have the real experience!

Attendance at synagogue services has been incorporated into the curriculum requirements of the Religious School and as part of the b'nei mitzvah preparation for all of our members. See dates above.

In addition to experiencing Shabbat, attending and participating in Shabbat and holiday services helps families and students become familiar with the rhythm and content of our synagogue service, not to mention our delicious Kiddush lunch every week. The more comfortable families are in synagogue, the more meaningful the service can be. By the time a student's bar or bat mitzvah arrives, the hope is that both the family and the student will feel at home in the sanctuary and within the community, enhancing the meaning and communal nature of this lifecycle event.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וּדְבַרְתָּ בָּם (...) דְּבָרִים, א:ד (...)

“V'Shinantam L'vanecha V'Dibartah Bam”

“Teach them thoroughly to your children” (Deuteronomy, 1:4)

Parents are encouraged to get involved with the religious school and assist their child's educational development in different ways.

## Participation in class and school-wide celebrations:

From the open school night to parent/child workshops, from student-led services to our Chanukah and Purim celebrations, there are plenty of opportunities for parents to share and take part in their children's learning. Attending these events shows your child(ren) that their Jewish education and identity is important to you. Join us!

## Class Parents:

One or two parents per class are needed to inform other parents (via e-mail) about upcoming programs, collect money for holiday gifts, attend some meetings and distribute minutes, and more. If you are interested in being a class parent, contact our Kehilah School co-chairs, Heather Ross.

**Volunteers:** Parents are encouraged to volunteer for various activities throughout the year. These include the **Mitzvah activities** and other fundraisers.

## The School Board:

Working with the religious school's educational director, this group sets policies and procedures, develops instructional objectives and oversees the junior congregation. The School Board also works with the educational staff, developing and proposing an annual budget in consultation with the officers and represents the religious school at board meetings. For monthly meeting dates contact the Religious School office.



## **Parent Teacher Association. WE NEED YOU!**

This year we reach out to you and hope you can get involved in creating a PTA. The role of the PTA is to support the Jewish education and spiritual growth of the children within the synagogue community. As part of the mission of our religious school, we are “committed to offering the opportunity for active family participation in Jewish learning, creating a strong partnership between the home, the school and the synagogue.”

Throughout the year, monthly meetings lasting about an hour are held as a forum for feedback and announcements regarding the religious school as well as other family programs. The PTA also runs key fundraisers (see above) that allow us to supplement religious school funds, leading to continued innovations in programming for our children. If you are interested, please contact Ronit.

## **SUPPORT AND AFFILIATION**

The Kehilah Religious School and its teachers are supported by the following organizations:

### **WESTCHESTER ASSOCIATION OF HEBREW SCHOOLS (WAHS)**

Operating under the Jewish Education Project, the WAHS is an organization for professionals and lay leaders that sponsors county-wide teacher in-service programs, special sessions for principals and administrators, and the principal’s council, which meets monthly.

### **THE JEWISH EDUCATION PROJECT**

The Jewish Education Project has been strengthening our school ability to create impactful and inspiring models of Jewish learning through its program. Through grant-supported parent-student workshops and special meetings with a consultant to develop leadership among our teachers, we will continue our quest to create meaningful learning environments that will impact our students, teachers and parents.

# SCHOOL POLICIES

דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה

*“Derekch Eretz kadma leTorah”*

*Respectful behavior precedes Torah study (Yalkut Shimo’ni - Bereshit Remez 34)*

## Attendance/Lateness

Classes begin at **3:45 pm – SHARP** - and conclude at 5:45 pm for all students on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Arriving late and leaving early is disruptive to the entire class and impedes learning. We request that parents bring their children at least five minutes early so that class can start promptly, and refrain from early pick-ups. Frequent absences also interfere with student progress. In the event that your child will be late or absent, please notify us by calling or emailing the office [Donnab@jcch.org](mailto:Donnab@jcch.org) . Your child will be provided with any materials or assignments that were given so that they can keep up with the class.

## Behavior

It is our goal to create a positive and productive learning environment. We, therefore, expect children to respect their teachers and peers. If there is a problem with a child’s behavior, including bullying of any kind, the class teacher will contact the parents to discuss the issues and work together to find a solution. If necessary, the educational director and rabbi will become involved as well.

## Dress Code

Students are expected to dress acceptably for Hebrew school. Girls' shorts should be to the bottom of their fingertips when standing up straight (as is secular school policy). Shirts should NOT be seen through. Pajamas are NOT acceptable on a Sunday. Boys should wear a Kippah. One will be provided at school if they don't come with one. We expect all boys to wear one while participating in Jewish study.

## Cell Phones

Students are permitted to bring their cell phones to school. However, they must leave their phone in their (**clearly marked**) class box upon arriving at school. It can be picked up at the end of the day. Students who do not deposit their cell phone and are found using their cell phone during school hours will have their phone taken away. The phone will be given back at the end of the day at pick up.

## Educational Performance and Evaluation

While we strive to engage all students by using a variety of learning modalities and experiential activities, we do assess students’ progress and achievement. In cases in which the student requires extra attention, the teacher together with the educational director shall make recommendations.

## Registration and Fees

The school year begins in September and ends in May. Registration for the subsequent school year begins at the close of each school year.

## **Inclement Weather/School Closings**

The Kehilah School follows the Harrison School District for school closings due to inclement weather and for holidays. However, if in doubt, please call the synagogue office. Parents will be notified of school closings due to inclement weather via email. If you are uncertain whether classes are being held, please do not drop off your child and leave. Make sure that classes are taking place!

## **Food and Kashrut**

The school provides at times kosher snacks for all students. Individual students are not allowed to bring outside food into the classroom, unless they have made special arrangements because of food allergies. If a child has food allergies and cannot have the regular snack, they may bring in food that is certified kosher. For more specific information about what foods are acceptable, parents should check with the rabbi or by calling at the synagogue office.

## **SECURITY AND SAFETY**

Our security officer is always on duty during Religious School hours. His job is to keep our students and staff safe and secure. He arrives before school begins.

After drop-off, all doors are locked and remain locked until shortly before pick-up time. This is to ensure that no strangers enter the building undetected. If your child is picked up early, either our security officer will let you in, or please ring the bell to the office to be buzzed in. If there is a change in our security procedures, you will be notified. Please know that we will do everything we can to keep your child safe and secure while they are in our care. We will keep you informed in the event of all emergencies.

**IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE WAIT UNTIL CONTACTED TO COME AND PICK UP YOUR CHILD(REN). PLEASE DO NOT COME TO THE SYNAGOGUE AS YOU MAY INTERFERE WITH EMERGENCY SERVICE WORKERS (POLICE/FIRE ETC.).** In the unlikely event of a building evacuation, your child(ren) may be at an alternate safe location (at the Rabbi's house. You will be notified when and where to pick up your child(ren).

## **Fire Drills**

Conducted by our Executive Director, Building Manager, Educational Director and school staff at least three times during the religious school year, fire drills prepare both the teachers and the students to know what to do in that kind of emergency. Usually one is expected and the other two are unexpected so that observers can evaluate the procedure for quickness and organization.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up**

All doors to the building will be locked and there will be a guard at the front entrance to the school on all school days. If you choose to walk your child in, please park in the back. Ring the doorbell to be buzzed in. Please notify the teacher or office if your child will be going home with someone other than the parents.

When you bring your child(ren) to religious school, you may either walk them in yourself or drop them off at the side entrance. *If you want to drop off your child(ren) from the car*, please continue straight around to the side of the building and stop near the steps while your child(ren) leaves the car. If you need a little more time, please pull ahead into the space to the right and let your child(ren) get out there so that others may continue the drop-off process.

**When driving into and in the parking lot, please always observe the 5 mph speed limit.**

At pick-up, all drivers can drive to the right and form a line in the parking lot. Teachers will be outside to help the students get into their cars.

We do encourage you to park the car and walk into the building to pick up the kids. This gives people the added bonus of viewing the children's' learning and mingling with the community and the religious school staff. *If you want to walk your child(ren) in*, turn right as you enter the parking lot, park your car and proceed to the main front entrance. Follow this same procedure for pick up as well.

**IF YOU ARE PICKING CHILDREN UP IN THE FRONT. PLEASE WAIT ON LINE IN THE CAR.**

**Kindergarten -1<sup>st</sup> Grade:** Students are brought outside to wait for parents on the pick-up line at 5:45 PM. Parents who choose to pick children up in the classroom will park in the back and wait by the classroom door at 11:25 AM. After the other children are dropped off at the pick-up line, the teacher will bring those children to the office to wait for their parents. **Parents are requested to notify Donna Baer, 914-835-2850 if running late.**

**Grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>:** Students are brought outside to wait for parents on the pick up line at 5:45 PM on weekdays. Parents who choose to pick children up personally (other than on the pick-up line) will park in the back and wait in the entranceway near the Security Guard, at the front entrance to the Gym at 11:25 AM or 5:40 PM. **Parents are requested to notify Donna Baer at 914-835-2850 if running late.**

EARLY PICK UP: If a child is picked up early, parents/guardians must go to the school office first to check children out and receive a note from the office to bring to the teacher. Teachers will not be dismissed without note from the office.

## **Medical Issues**

Minor injuries such as cuts and bruises will be treated at school. In the case of more serious injury, parents will be notified immediately. If the parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency person on file. If necessary, appropriate steps will be taken to obtain immediate medical attention.

If your child(ren) does not feel well, the parent or contact will be called and we will do our best to make your child(ren) comfortable until someone arrives to take him or her home.

**PARENTS SHOULD NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OFFICE OF ANY ALLERGIES, PARTICULARLY TO MEDICATIONS AND FOOD, AND ANY OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS.**

**Kehilah School Calendar**

**The Calendar can be found on the following website:**

<https://jcch.org/kehilah-school-calendar/>