

North Suburban Synagogue

# Beth El

בית כנסת בית אל

## PARENT HANDBOOK

5782/2021-2022



Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School (CRS)

1175 Sheridan Road  
Highland Park, IL 60035

847-432-8924

<https://www.nssbethel.org/learn/cohen-religious-school>

Dear Parents,

*Bruchim Habaim!* – Welcome! We look forward to welcoming you and your family back to our school this fall. We are very excited to continue providing our students the highest quality education while allowing for greater flexibility in our families' busy schedules. As a school housed in the synagogue, we believe in a strong family link between synagogue, school, and the home. Families will be invited to participate in many school activities, such as services, field trips, family programming, adult education classes and Beth El services, including *Junior Congregation* and *Likrat Shabbat*. We hope all will take advantage of these opportunities for family participation throughout the year.

We are eager to guide your children in their development as they deepen their understanding of Judaism through the study of Jewish liturgy, rituals, customs, Hebrew language, life cycle events, Jewish holidays, and Jewish history. CRS offers a comprehensive program that involves academics, enrichment (movement, music, library), field trips, *chugim* (elective classes), and *Halomdim* (an enrichment program that offers accommodations for students with different learning styles and interests). We also offer after-school activities such as *Café Kef* prior to school hours.

The school provides a safe place for your children to develop friendships and seek each other for help, study, and play. Attending class regularly is therefore a good mechanism to ensure that children not only keep up with the academic portion of the program, but also continue to cultivate friendships. Our teachers are continuously being trained to make accommodations to the curriculum in order to ensure your child's success.

If you would like to discuss your child's educational needs, please contact Anna Besser at 847-432-8900 x227 or [abesser@nssbethel.org](mailto:abesser@nssbethel.org) to set-up an appointment before the school year begins.

We are asking for your cooperation in following the traffic security instructions (outlined on Page 13 of this document) during drop-off and pick-up times. We want to keep everyone safe.

We also want to keep the lines of communication open and available between your home and our school. It is our hope that you will never hesitate to contact us for questions, updates, or concerns.

**All of us at the Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School  
look forward to welcoming you in September!**

וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כָּלֶם

*V'Talmud Torah K'Neged Kulam*

*...and the study of Torah is equivalent to all [the other mitzvot].*

*- Shabbat 127a*

**North Suburban Synagogue Beth El  
Cohen Religious School  
Mission Statement**

The Cohen Religious School is committed to offering a high quality Conservative Jewish Education. The goal of the educational program is to nurture students spiritually, intellectually, and artistically while deepening an understanding of what it means to be Jewish and to live a Jewish life. The school offers a comprehensive curriculum for students from Pre-K through 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, blending learning with practice. In partnership with our families we strive to strengthen students' faith in G-d, study of Torah and the Hebrew language, love of Israel, and connection with the people of Israel.



**COHEN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL GOALS**

- ☆ Learn to read, write, speak and understand the Hebrew language. Hebrew is the key that opens many locks. It has the power to unravel our past and connect us with the people of Israel.
- ☆ Master the reading and chanting of *Tefilot* (prayers) by gaining an understanding of the main ideas of each *tefilah*, its origins and the order of *tefilot* in the *Siddur* (prayer book).
- ☆ Celebrate *Shabbat* and the Jewish holidays.
- ☆ Become familiar with Jewish history to strengthen a national Jewish identity and foster a sense of pride.
- ☆ Translate Jewish values into *Mitzvot* (commandments) and decisions which promote social justice.
- ☆ Support and participate in the life of the synagogue as a way of strengthening the fabric of Jewish life and ensuring the future of Judaism and the Jewish people.
- ☆ Prepare children to become responsible Jewish adults and assure that they continue embracing and learning Judaism throughout their lives.
- ☆ Foster a love of Israel (*Ahavat Israel*) and develop a sense of kinship with the people of Israel.
- ☆ Foster the feeling of kinship with Jews (*K'lal Yisrael*) by actively seeking the welfare of Jewish people throughout the world.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

### **A. *Beyt Sefer* (Religious School)**

- *Ganon, Gan, and Alef* - (Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade)– Sundays
- *Bet* through *Zayin* (2<sup>nd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> Grade) – Sundays and choice of Tuesdays or Wednesdays

### **B. *Noar* (Youth Groups)**

- M&M Club (Kindergarten through 1<sup>st</sup> Grade)
- Shalom Club (2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Kadima (6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)

### **C. *Ha'asharah* (Enrichment)**

- (*Sifriyah*) Library (author events, library visits)
- Technology - I-Rovers, I-Pads, Smartboard
- (*Musikah*) Music
- *T'nuah* (Movement) – every week for the younger grades
- *Café Kef* on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 3:30 – 4:00 pm in the Youth Lounge

### **D. *Mishpachah* (Family)**

- Family Education Programs
- Family *Shabbat* Services

### **E. *Mevugarim* (Adults)**

- Adult classes - Melton, and Hebrew
- Hebrew - This Hebrew literacy class is designed for adult students with no prior knowledge of the language and no Hebrew reading skills. At the end of the year-long course, students will be able to read short stories, and will have acquired a basic vocabulary on a range of topics. The course will focus on literacy rather than conversational Hebrew. Contact Rachel Kamin for more information on Adult Education Classes: [rkamin@nssbethel.org](mailto:rkamin@nssbethel.org)

## **MADRIKHIM (TEACHER ASSISTANTS)**

The Religious School has a core of dedicated *madrikhim* (teacher assistants) that assist in several classes, and in the school office. These *madrikhim* constitute an excellent support system for the teachers as well as the students.

## COHEN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SCHEDULE

שְׁמַאי אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה תוֹרָתְךָ קֶבֶעַ.

*Make your study of Torah a fixed engagement*  
- Shammai, Mishnah: Avot

### Regular School Hours

Sundays	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Ganon (Pre-K) through Zayin (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade)
Tuesdays	4:00 – 6:00 pm	Bet (2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade) through Zayin (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade) OR
Wednesdays	4:00 – 6:00 pm	Bet (2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade) through Zayin (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade)

### Enrichment Room Hours

Individual and small-group tutoring and enrichment to be arranged with Stacy Daybook

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays	4:00 – 6:00 pm
Sundays	9:00 am – 12:00 pm

### Shabbat Attendance

Tot Shabbat	11:00 – 12:00 pm	Open to all families with children 1 <sup>st</sup> grade and younger
Junior Congregation	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Open to all 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> grade families Attendance will count this year toward rewards
Hey/Vav Shabbat Family Services	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	6 Shabbatot Jan. 22, Jan. 29, Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26

# COHEN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM



Shalom! Welcome to the North Suburban Synagogue Cohen Religious School. Here you will find children learning and experiencing Judaism through prayer, study, projects, holiday celebrations and family workshops.

## GANON (PRE-K)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**HEBREW & TEFILLAH:** Introduce basic blessings and prayers such as *Shema*, *Modeh/Modah Ani*, food and holiday blessings. Teach Hebrew words and short phrases through music, games, movement and visual aids. Invite and encourage families to participate in Tot Shabbat services to build connections with other young Beth El families.

**HOLIDAYS:** Uncover the joys of our holiday traditions, such as eating *challah* on *Shabbat*, shaking the *lulav* and *etrog* on *Sukkot* or preparing *mishloach manot* on *Purim*. Explore Jewish holidays through songs, movement, stories, art, music, dramatic play and cooking.

**MITZVOT:** Discover *mitzvot* by doing *mitzvot* by sharing the notion that one *mitzvah* leads to another *mitzvah* (*mitzvah goreret mitzvah*).

--- Bring learning home by involving families in home activities and family programs. ---

## GAN (KINDERGARTEN)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**HEBREW & TEFILLAH:** Teach Hebrew words and short phrases through fun games, music, movement and visual aids. Continue reinforcing basic blessings and prayers such as *Shema*, *Modeh/Modah Ani*, Shabbat blessings, food and holiday blessings. Invite and encourage families to participate in Tot Shabbat services to build connections with other young Beth El families.

**HOLIDAYS:** Explore Jewish holidays through a multidisciplinary approach integrating the holidays with art, music, movement, and creative-thinking activities.

**ISRAEL:** Introduce concept of Israel as the home of the Jewish people; connect the biblical land with the modern state; explore the country's major cities.

**MITZVOT:** Continue exploring *mitzvot* by doing *mitzvot* and by sharing the notion that one *mitzvah* leads to another *mitzvah* (*mitzvah goreret mitzvah*).

**TORAH:** Introduce *Torah* stories and biblical heroes.

--- Bring learning home by involving families in home activities and family programs. ---

## ALEF (1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**HEBREW & TEFILLAH:** Learn names, shapes and sounds of the Alef-Bet as well as sight-read their names and holiday vocabulary words. Introduce right-left directionality and learn to write their Hebrew name. Introduce the joy of prayers by learning the most important prayers of the *Shabbat* morning service. Continue to add in prayers and songs when applicable. Prepare students to lead one Tot Shabbat morning service. Families are encouraged to attend Tot Shabbat services.

**HOLIDAYS:** Continue exploring Jewish holidays retelling each holiday story, introducing key holiday objects, rituals and holiday vocabulary.

**ISRAEL:** Study the symbols of the State of Israel and learn basic geography. Inspire a love of the land of Israel in students.

**MITZVOT:** Connect *mitzvot* with the Jewish holidays, *Torah* stories and Jewish symbols. Put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year. Foster a feeling of classroom and synagogue as a community.

**TORAH:** Teach *Torah* stories and focus on distinctive Jewish values drawn from them.

## BET (2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday or Wednesday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**HEBREW:** Develop basic literacy and decoding skills using parts of the *Tal Am* curriculum. Acquire phonological awareness, sound and structure of words, ability to divide the words into syllables, to compose a word out of separate sounds, to add a sound to a word or delete one from it, to reverse the order of the sounds. Gain familiarity with words and their forms and sounds. Identify all letters and sounds, names of letters, vowels and writing of the Hebrew letters.

**TEFILLAH:** Learn to read and chant selected prayers of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Ma'ariv* services. The *Bet* class will participate in one *Kabbalat Shabbat*/*Ma'ariv* service in the spring. Students are encouraged to participate in Junior Congregation on *Shabbat* mornings and read one or two lines of *Torah*.

---

*SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 4 Shabbat Services during the school year*

---

**HOLIDAYS:** Learn the symbols, the foods, the blessings, and selected songs for each holiday in Hebrew using the *Tal Am Chag Sameach* curriculum.

**MITZVOT:** Connect *mitzvot* with the Jewish holidays, *Torah* stories and Jewish symbols. Put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year. Continue fostering a feeling of classroom and synagogue as a community.

## GIMMEL (3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday or Wednesday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**HEBREW:** Correctly identify letters and vowels, syllables and sentences as individual words. Communicate using single words, expressions and language patterns acquired in subjects studied on a regular basis. Learn to construct simple sentences in Hebrew describing the symbols, the foods, the blessings, and selected songs for each holiday using the *Tal Am Chag Sameach* curriculum.

**TEFILLAH:** Learn to read and chant selected prayers of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Ma'ariv* services. The *Gimmel* class will participate in one *Kabbalat Shabbat*/*Ma'ariv* service in the spring. Students are encouraged to participate in Junior Congregation on *Shabbat* mornings and read one or two lines of Torah.

---

*SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 4 Shabbat Services during the school year*

---

**TORAH:** Read true-to-text translation of Torah stories from Genesis to Exodus. Provide opportunities to participate in biblical dialogue by reviewing classic interpretation of text and creating *midrashim*. Explore connections between text and core Jewish values and help personalize the *Torah* stories.

**HOLIDAYS:** Continue learning about holidays using the *Tal Am Chag Sameach* curriculum.

**MITZVOT:** Connect *mitzvot* with the Jewish holidays, *Torah* stories and Jewish symbols. Put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year. Continue fostering a feeling of classroom and synagogue as a community.

## DALET (4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday or Wednesday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**HEBREW:** Read syllables and sentences with considerable fluency. Formulate communication through the arrangement and combination of words and language patterns acquired in class. Respond correctly to communication initiated by the teacher. Learn to construct from simple to more complex sentences in Hebrew describing the symbols, the foods, the blessings, and selected songs for each holiday.

**TEFILLAH:** Read and chant selected prayers of the *Minchah*/*Havdalah* service and *Shabbat* morning service (using *Siddur Lev Shalem*). Students are encouraged to participate in Junior Congregation on *Shabbat* mornings and read several lines of Torah.

---

*SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 4 Shabbat Services during the school year*

---

**JUDAIC STUDIES:** Using the 4th Grade curriculum *Etgar Yesodi*, students will delve into the concepts of: *Zikaron*: My Roots, My Memories; *Brit*: My Beginning, My Name; *Berachot*: My Blessings; *Tokhehah*: Improving My Friendships; *Ma'akhil Re'evim*: Sharing Our Response to Hunger with Others and *Devekut*: Developing My Relationship with G-d.

**JEWISH IDENTITY:** Articulate positive Jewish identity. Build breadth and depth of understanding about observance of Judaism while building on prior knowledge and current experiences.



## HEY (5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday or Wednesday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**HEBREW:** Read Hebrew accurately and fluently. Use vocabulary adequately to maintain a functional conversation. Respond correctly to communication initiated by the teacher. Answer and generate simple questions.

**TEFILLAH:** Lead the *Shabbat* morning service in Junior Congregation using *Siddur Lev Shalem*. (*Shabbat* Family Services: Families are required to attend six *Shabbat* morning services. Students will lead the services and read Torah on: Jan. 22, Jan. 29, Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26.

---

*SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 6 Shabbat Services during the school year*

---

**HOLIDAYS:** Compare and contrast the different Jewish holidays in Hebrew. Learn age-appropriate short stories and songs for each holiday.

**JUDIAC STUDIES:** Delve into the concepts of *Etgar Yesodi*, *Grade 5: Living Our Values Together*; *Piyyutim: Connecting Our Communities Through Poetry and Song*; *Yisrael: A Modern Look at Our Ancient Land*; *Ahrayut: Our Responsibility Toward Others*; *A Gathering Across Z'man* (Time) and *Makom* (Space); *Developing My Relationship with G-d*.

## VAV (6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday or Wednesday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**HEBREW:** Read Hebrew accurately and fluently. Use vocabulary adequately to maintain a functional conversation. Respond correctly to communication initiated by the teacher. Answer and generate simple questions.

**TEFILLAH:** Lead the *Shabbat* morning service in Junior Congregation using *Siddur Lev Shalem*. (*Shabbat* Family Services: Families are required to attend six *Shabbat* morning services. Students will lead the services and read Torah on: Jan. 22, Jan. 29, Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26.

---

*SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 6 Shabbat Services during the school year*

---

**B'NAI MITZVAH CLERGY CLASS:** Parents and students attend joint B'nai Mitzvah preparation classes with the clergy, including Tefillah, the Jewish Life Cycle, and Tough Questions Jews Ask.

### JUDIAC STUDIES:

- ✧ **HISTORY:** Explore Jewish history from the Creation to the Expulsion of Jews from Spain.
- ✧ **PROJECT ETGAR:** Delve into the topics of Friendship, and *Bikkur Cholim* using Project Etgar in order empower students to wrestle with questions about G-d, commandments and being Jewish.
- ✧ **MY FAMILY STORY:** Participate in the "My Family Story" family root project sponsored by *Beit Hatfutsot*. At the center of "My Family Story" is the Manuel Hirsch Grosskopf International Competition in which Jewish institutions worldwide send their young participants' best two projects to *Beit Hatfutsot*. This is a chance for students to win a free trip to Israel where they join the "My Family Story" Award Ceremony.

## ZAYIN (7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)

Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday or Wednesday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**HEBREW:** Read short stories in Hebrew. Respond correctly to communication initiated by the teacher and other students. Generate questions to texts.

### JUDAIC STUDIES:

- ☆ Learn **100 major concepts of Judaism** and complete an assessment.
- ☆ **HISTORY:** Learn the history from the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain through the Modern Era, with emphasis on the historical developments in the Twentieth Century.
- ☆ **THE JEWISH COURT OF ALL TIMES (JCAT)** is an annual fall program (Sept.-Dec.) in which middle school students participate together in an online simulation of a trial. They delve into a court case based in Jewish history and explore its current impact and moral implications. By discussing issues in the voices of their chosen characters, JCAT provides students with an opportunity to engage in historical research, creative and persuasive writing, perspective-taking and debate, and to develop empathy. Overall, JCAT is an amazing laboratory for developing and practicing skills of citizenship, digital and face to face, that help students explore their Jewish identities in the contexts of the multiple communities of which they are a part.
- ☆ **ISRAELINK** Connect is an online community uniting Midwest religious schools through focused Israel education, funded by the Etta E. Jonas Israel Fellowship Program. This program will partner schools to learn from our comprehensive IsraelLINK curriculum via a newly developed online platform.
- ☆ **G2G - GENERATION TO GENERATION** is a program whereby two different generations are linked via high tech and history. It is based on a successful Israeli initiative undertaken by Beit Hatfutsot – The Museum of the Jewish People, in cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Social Equality\*. Jewish students are paired with Jewish older adults for mutually-beneficial learning. The students share knowledge hi-tech and apps, while the adults relay the value of personal and collective narratives. Together they enrich their Jewish identity, history, collective memory and technical skills.

## SCHOOL GUIDELINES

**ATTENDANCE:** A successful school experience is a partnership between the family and synagogue. We know there is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement, interest and attitude. Consistent Religious School attendance enables our students to learn and grow Jewish-ly. While we understand that our children have busy lives, attending religious school regularly and for the full session helps to ensure that a student will benefit fully from the program. Furthermore, coming late or leaving early disrupts the entire class and disrupts your child's classroom routine. Your support of our attendance policy is appreciated. **If your child is ill, please call the School Office at 847-432-8924** and leave a message prior to the beginning of class. If you know of a planned absence, please contact your child(ren)'s teacher to discuss make-up work.

- Students in *Gimmel* (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade) thru *Vav* (6<sup>th</sup> Grade) need to attend **chugim** (activities) for six consecutive weeks once a year (more information will be forthcoming).

**SHABBAT/ HOLIDAY ATTENDANCE:** It is no coincidence that the Religious School is located in the building that houses the Synagogue. Synagogue life and what children learn at religious school are intrinsically intertwined. Worship is an integral part of Jewish life, particularly on *Shabbat* and Jewish holidays. At school we familiarize the students with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the experience of *tefillah* (prayers) on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* (holidays). This preparation should not be a substitute for the actual participation in the experience of prayers at the Synagogue. In school, the students experience *limmud* (practicing and learning) while they study *tefilah* (prayers). It is only when students attend services with (or without) their families that they can apply what they have learned in class. All the services listed below are age-appropriate and family-friendly.

We offer many opportunities for students and their families to attend religious services:

- **Tot Shabbat** –*Shabbat* morning service beginning at **11:00 a.m. every Shabbat**. This service is for families with babies through 1<sup>st</sup> Grade children.
- **Shabbat services for Hey (5<sup>th</sup> Grade) / Vav (6<sup>th</sup> Grade)** students and their families, beginning at **10:30 a.m.** Students will read from the Torah during these services. **Hey/Vav Services will be Jan. 22, Jan. 29, Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26.** Families are strongly encouraged to attend all six (6) services. These services are led by the students.
- **Junior Congregation** for Beth El youth in Grades 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning at **10:30 a.m. every Shabbat**. This service is designed to promote the integration of day-school students and the Cohen Religious School students. *Bet* (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade) through *Dalet* (4<sup>th</sup> Grade) students are required to attend Junior Congregation services four (4) times a year, and they may read from the Torah if they wish. Junior Congregation services are led by *Hazzan* Barbara Barnett.\*\*
- Jewish Holidays - Families are encouraged to partake in these community holiday services on each Jewish holiday. Please see the NSS Beth El website for information on these holidays. Family-friendly services and activities are planned for each one of them.

\*\* We strongly encourage students to volunteer to read from the Torah during these services. If your child is interested, please contact *Hazzan* Barbara Barnett at [bbarnett@nssbethel.org](mailto:bbarnett@nssbethel.org).

## CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF LEARNING:

Every student has the right to participate in and contribute to class discussions. However, he/she must also give the same right to fellow students and teachers. At Cohen Religious School we emphasize the following:

- (a) Mutual respect and consideration.
- (b) Cooperative learning.
- (c) Respectful expression of disagreement ***Al tedaber lashon ha-ra* - Avoid unkind talk.**
  - Use of hurtful talk such as name-calling or profanity and bullying is strictly prohibited and constitutes a violation of the teachings of our Torah.
- (d) Respect for individual differences.
- (e) Social integration through classroom dynamics and school social functions.
- (f) Respect that North Suburban Synagogue Beth El is a place of worship and the building must be treated as such.
- (g) Leave objects that could disrupt learning at home. **If you bring a cell phone to school, the phone must be turned off during school hours unless the teacher tells you otherwise.** You may use the office phone if necessary. **If a cell phone is used for any reason, including text messaging or making phone calls during class, the phone will be confiscated and held in the School Office.** Students can reclaim their cell phones from the office at the end of the school day.

### In case of disruptive behavior:

- The teacher will first redirect a disruptive student. If the disruption persists, the student will be asked to leave the classroom and speak with the Director of Cohen Religious School. Parents will be called to pick up the student from school, if necessary.
- Repeated disruptive or inappropriate behavior will require a meeting with the parents.

**COMMUNICATION:** *For Jewish education to work, parents must be supportive and reinforce Judaism at home and in life.* Gil Mann, 1996.

Our educational program relies on your commitment to help make our programming strong and successful. At the Cohen Religious School we encourage parental participation in a variety of school events: family programs, class *Shabbat* services, holiday celebrations and commemorations, field trips, classroom visits, etc.

The school will send out announcements on school happenings and reminders, as well as class updates from your child's teacher. **Please make sure your correct e-mail address is on file in the School Office.** Do not hesitate to call the School Office at 847-432-8924 if you have any questions.

**Parent-Teacher:** In addition to a scheduled mid-year parent-teacher conference, teachers will maintain regular communication with each parent of his/her students. This may be through personal conversations, over the phone, by mail or e-mail. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in their student's progress in school and should contact the teacher on a regular basis with any concerns or suggestions.

**Parent-Director:** The Director of the Cohen Religious School is always available for formal or informal conversations with each and every parent. Please feel free to contact the Director personally, by phone or e-mail. As a general rule, the Director of CRS will be available to meet with parents throughout the week and on Sundays except during school time. The Director of CRS will be supervising the Religious School when school is in session and therefore no meetings will be scheduled during school. Parents will also receive regular communication on school events or general news from the Director by mail and e-mail. Anna Besser's e-mail address is: [abesser@nssbehtel.org](mailto:abesser@nssbehtel.org)

**Progress Reports:** Progress Reports will be e-mailed to parents twice a year: in January and again in June.

**Children's Learning Style:** Parents are encouraged to share information pertaining to the child's learning style and emotional development with the Director of the Cohen Religious School and teacher(s). This will help the staff to plan more effectively in order to reach every child. Also, please share events in your child's life that may have an impact on his/her learning and behavior. Please let the staff know if your child is taking medication and possible side effects of such medication. Note that the above-mentioned information will be kept confidential.

**DROP OFF and EARLY PICK UP:** *We have limited time with your children and every minute counts.* Please have students at CRS a few minutes before class starts so they can get to their classroom on time.

Any parent picking up a child prior to the end of a class must first go to the Religious School Office in order to sign the child out. This is very important – please help us to ensure the safety of our children. **For your child's safety, the person picking up your child must come to the Religious School office to sign the child out. NO CHILD WILL BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM WITHOUT THE PARENT HAVING SIGNED THE CHILD OUT IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE.**

#### **DUE PROCESS PROCEDURE (for students and parents):**

A grievance is a complaint involving the individual rights of a student or parent as it relates to the program of the Cohen Religious School, a complaint involving the conduct of another student or member of the staff, or a complaint arising from an interpretation or application of a school policy or procedure. **Any aggrieved student or parent wishing to file a grievance shall do so in accordance with the following steps:**

##### **1. Informal – Cohen Religious School Staff**

The student and/or parent will meet with the appropriate Religious School staff members and attempt to solve the problem informally within five days of the specific incident precipitating the grievance.

##### **2. Informal –Director of Cohen Religious School**

If the matter cannot be resolved in Step 1, the aggrieved party may request a meeting with the Director of the Cohen Religious School. The aggrieved party will meet with the Director to attempt to informally resolve the problem. If it cannot be resolved within 10 days of the meeting, the aggrieved party may proceed to Step 3.

### **3. Formal – Education VP**

The aggrieved party may request to meet with the Education VP. The written request will indicate what the grievance is (refer to definition of a grievance). The Education VP will meet with the aggrieved party and attempt to solve the problem within the limits of the Religious School policy and within ten days. The formal decision will be in writing.

### **4. Formal – Education Committee**

The aggrieved party may, within five days of the receipt of the written decision in Step 3, request in writing to meet with the Education Committee at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Education Committee, after hearing the complaint, will render its decision, which shall be final.

**EMERGENCY CLOSINGS AND DRILLS:** Information on school closing due to inclement weather will be posted on the school page on the NSS Beth El website at <https://www.nssbethel.org/learn/cohen-religious-school/>. A fire drill will be conducted at the beginning of the year to familiarize students with the safety rules.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Field trips and other special programs may be scheduled to enrich a topic being learned in school. Students who do not attend a field trip will be marked absent for that day. When a class has a special project or field trip requiring different hours, advance notice will be given.

**HOMEWORK:** Students are strongly encouraged to complete homework assignments, especially, but not exclusively, weekly Hebrew reading. As with any other skill, the more the child practices his/her Hebrew reading, the more comfortable s/he will feel reading prayers and Hebrew text.

**ILLNESSES AND EMERGENCIES AT SCHOOL:** Each family must fill out the Doctor and Emergency Contact Information on the online registration form. This authorizes a physician or 911 squad members to render emergency treatment to a child in the absence of a parent. Please email the School Office of any changes to the Doctor or Emergency Contact Information. If a child becomes ill, the parent or emergency contact will be called and asked to pick up the child. As the Religious School staff cannot care for sick or injured children, parents are urged to pick up their children as quickly as possible. Please make every effort to be available during Religious School hours. If your child has any communicable conditions, please contact the Director at 847-432-8900, Ext. 227.

**LOST AND FOUND:** Please check the Lost-and-Found area in the School Office for lost items. Articles left unclaimed by the end of the school year will be donated to *tzedakah*.

**PICK UP AND DISMISSAL POLICY:** The safety and security of our students is of utmost importance to all of us in the Cohen Religious School. For security reasons, all doors to the school wing are locked during school time, except for approximately 15 minutes before and after each school session, when a security guard will be present at the school entrance. Anyone arriving when the doors are locked can ring the doorbell located to the left of the inside doors. Additionally, the grey doors separating the school area from the rest of the building will remain locked during school hours. Students will be allowed to go through these doors when attending an activity (for example: going to the Cultural and Learning Center or to the Art Room). On those occasions, students will be escorted by their teachers. **Please remind your child to follow these safety procedures, and please adhere to the following rules when dropping off or picking up your child:**

- Please wait patiently in line as you drop off or pick up your child.
- Do not block Sheridan Road. On the north end of the parking lot, there is a sidewalk that goes down the street. Cars are asked to pull up all the way down to the end of the sidewalk by Sheridan Road to wait for their children who will come down the sidewalk to enter the car. **The purpose of extending the pick-up area is to ensure that cars are not blocking traffic on Sheridan Road. Additional lighting will be placed along the sidewalk going to Sheridan Road in the winter months.**
- If you do not wish to wait in the pickup line, you are asked to park in one of the center lanes. If you park your car, you will need to come to the sidewalk to pick up your child. **No child will be allowed to enter the parking lot without a parent during this busy time, regardless of age.**
- **Parents of students in the *Ganon, Gan* and *Kitah Alef* (Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade) must pick up their children from their respective classrooms.**
- Please discuss these safety issues with your child. Everyone's cooperation is needed to ensure the safety of the children.

**SNACKS/FOOD:** The Cohen Religious School will organize the distribution of snacks during school. This will serve a two-fold purpose: 1) to make sure that each child has a snack in school; 2) students will have an opportunity to recite the *brachot* (blessings) for different types of foods.

**As a reminder: the religious school area is a NUT-FREE ZONE.** If your child has a birthday and you would like to send a special snack to school, please let the Director of the Cohen Religious School know. **All snacks sent to school for special occasions must be Kosher and nut-free.** Any snack sent from home must have a kosher symbol (*heckscher*). Please look for the following product symbols:



**TZEDAKAH:** *"If an opportunity to do a mitzvah presents itself, do not delay it," Rashi, Exodus 12:17. Tzedakah, from the Hebrew word tzedek (righteousness, fairness or justice), is an important mitzvah. Caring for others who are less fortunate than we are is a fundamental principle of Judaism. Our students are encouraged to contribute to the class tzedakah collection, which in turn will be donated to various worthwhile organizations at the end of the year.*

**VISITORS:** Parents and guests wishing to visit classrooms must first obtain permission from the Director of Formal Education.

We are looking forward to instilling the joy of Judaism in your children. Thank you for being our partners in the Jewish education of our children!

**To reach us, call the Synagogue office at 847-432-8900, and ask for the appropriate extension:**

Anna Besser, Director of Cohen Religious School, ext. 227

Rayna Forman or Anne Loshbough, ext. 225

**The direct line to the school office is 847-432-8924**