

North Suburban Synagogue

Beth El

בית כנסת בית אל

PARENT HANDBOOK

5786/2025-2026



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 NSS Beth El services, including *Junior Congregation* and *Mini Minyan*. 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* (enrichment program that offers accommodations for students with different learning styles and interests).

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 847-432-8924 or abesser@nssbethel.org to set-up an appointment before the school year begins.

We 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. We are committed to creating a strong family connection, where the synagogue and the school are an extension of your home. CRS is designed to provide students with an opportunity to explore and deepen their understanding of Judaism and to develop their Jewish identity through the study of Jewish liturgy, rituals, customs, Hebrew language, life-cycle events, Jewish holidays, and Jewish history. The school offers a comprehensive curriculum for students from Pre-K through 7th 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 and understand *tefillah*-based Hebrew. 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 *Tefillot* (prayers) by gaining an understanding of the main ideas of each *tefillah*, its origins and the order of *tefillot* 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.

MADRICHIM (TEACHER ASSISTANTS)

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

COHEN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SCHEDULE

שְׁמַאי אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה תוֹרָתְךָ קִבֵּעַ.

Make your study of Torah a fixed engagement

- Shammai, Mishnah: Avot

Regular School Hours

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

Enrichment/Tutoring Room Hours

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

Tuesdays, Wednesdays – in-person Thursdays – Zoom	4:00 – 6:00 pm
Sundays	9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Shabbat Attendance

Tot Shabbat	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Open to all families with children 1 st grade and younger
Mini Minyan	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Several times throughout the year; open to all K and 1 st grade families
Junior Congregation	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Open to all 2 nd – 6 th grade families

COHEN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM



Shalom! Welcome to the North Suburban Synagogue Beth El's 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 NSS Beth El families. *Ganon participating in Tot Shabbat: Shabbat morning, April 18, 2026.*

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*. We believe in the notion that one *mitzvah* leads to another *mitzvah* (*mitzvah goreret mitzvah*).

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 NSS Beth El families. *Gan participating in Tot Shabbat: Shabbat morning, April 18, 2026.*

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.

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

TORAH: Introduce Torah stories and Biblical heroes ranging from Creation to Exodus, from Abraham to Moses.

ALEF (1ST 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 names. 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. Families are encouraged to attend Tot Shabbat services. *Alef participating in Mini Minyan: Shabbat morning, April 25, 2026.*

HOLIDAYS: Continue exploring Jewish holidays by retelling holiday stories, 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 community in the classroom.

SYNAGOGUE: Explore the synagogue, the places in it and the people who work there, so as to make the students feel comfortable and welcomed at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El.

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

BET (2ND 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. 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 *Shabbat* morning services. The *Bet* class will lead one *Shabbat* morning service in Junior Congregation. 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
BET leading Junior Congregation: Shabbat morning, March 14, 2026

SHALOMLEARNING: Second Grade curriculum explores Jewish values and holidays through literature and art. Students are introduced to artists, authors and musicians and create an original piece of work connected to the theme of the lesson in the style of the artist. Students will put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year and continue fostering community in the classroom and synagogue.

TORAH/PARASHAT HA'SHAVUAH: Explore connections between the weekly *Parashah* and core Jewish values.

ISRAEL: Embark on a journey through Israel by connecting Hebrew letters to significant locations. We will explore Israeli culture through its holidays, symbols, and foods.

GIMMEL (3RD 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. Continue blending and developing basic literacy and decoding skills. Focus on reading accuracy and chanting skills of grade-level *Shabbat tefillot*. Communicate using single words, expressions and language patterns acquired in subjects studied on a regular basis.

TEFILLAH: Learn to read and chant selected prayers of the *Shabbat* morning services. The *Gimmel* class will lead one *Shabbat* morning service in Junior Congregation. 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
*Gimmel leading Junior Congregation: **Shabbat morning, February 21, 2026***

SHALOMLEARNING: Third Grade curriculum explores Jewish values through the lens of Family. Each value incorporates Social and Emotional Learning skills that enable students to build positive relationships and make responsible choices. Through the values, students explore Jewish text, history, *tefillah* and holidays. Students will put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year and continue fostering community in the classroom and synagogue.

TORAH: Students will engage in authentic, dynamic *Torah* study by pondering and grappling with the text. Students will explore connections between the text and core Jewish values that will help personalize the *Torah* stories.

HOLIDAYS: Continue learning about holidays through historical context.

ISRAEL: Students will explore the story of Israel from its origins to the present day, meeting influential figures such as pioneers, politicians, farmers, and generals who helped shape the state. Through engaging stories and activities centered around meaningful locations, they will examine key themes like Connection, Independence, Diversity, Innovation, Hope, and Zionism. This journey will help students develop a deeper understanding of Israel's history, culture, and modern achievements while fostering a personal connection to the land and its people.

DALET (4TH GRADE)

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

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

HEBREW: Continue blending and developing basic literacy and decoding skills. Focus on reading accuracy and chanting skills of grade-level *Shabbat tefillot*. Students will work at their own pace to master prayers and blessings as well as develop an understanding of the meaning of these prayers. Students will have opportunities to participate in weekly *Tefillah* assemblies based on *Shabbat* morning services.

TEFILLAH: Read and chant selected prayers of the *Shabbat* morning service (using *Siddur Lev Shalem*). *Dalet* students will lead one *Shabbat* morning service in Junior Congregation. Students are encouraged to participate in Junior Congregation on *Shabbat* mornings and read one or two lines of Torah.

SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 5 Shabbat Services during the school year
*Dalet leading Junior Congregation: **Shabbat morning, February 7, 2026***

SHALOMLEARNING: Fourth Grade curriculum explores Jewish values through the lens of Self. Each value incorporates Social and Emotional Learning skills that enable students to build positive relationships and make responsible choices. Through the values, students explore Jewish text, history, *tefillah* and holidays. Students will put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year and continue fostering community in the classroom and synagogue.

JUDAIC STUDIES: Using *Etgar Yesodi*, students will delve into the concepts ranging from *Zikaron: My Roots*, *My Memories*, *Brit: My Beginning*, *My Name*, *Berakhot: My Blessings*, *Tokhehah: Improving My Friendships* and more.

TORAH: Students will continue to engage in authentic, dynamic *Torah* study by pondering and grappling with the text. Students will explore connections between the text and core Jewish values that will help personalize the *Torah* stories.

ISRAEL: Students will explore Israel through a Biblical lens, finding locations and learning Israel's history through what is described in the *Torah*.

HEY (5TH GRADE)

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

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

HEBREW: Build students' Hebrew reading accuracy and fluency skills. Students will work at their own pace to master grade-level *Shabbat tefillot* and blessings as well as develop an understanding of the meaning of these prayers. Students will have opportunities to participate in weekly *Tefillah* assemblies based on *Shabbat* morning services.

TEFILLAH: Read and chant selected prayers of the *Shabbat* morning service (using *Siddur Lev Shalem*). Hey students will lead one *Shabbat* morning service in Junior Congregation. Students are encouraged to participate in Junior Congregation on *Shabbat* mornings and read one or two lines of Torah.

*SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 5 Shabbat Services during the school year
Hey leading Junior Congregation: **Shabbat morning, January 24, 2026***

SHALOMLEARNING: Fifth Grade curriculum explores Jewish values through the lens of Peers. Each value incorporates Social and Emotional Learning skills that enable students to build positive relationships and make responsible choices. Through the values, students explore Jewish text, history, *tefillah* and holidays. Students will put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year and continue fostering community in the classroom and synagogue.

TORAH & PROPHETS: An exploration of key Biblical prophets, especially as they relate to Jewish holidays, how the prophets' timeless moral and spiritual teachings continue to resonate in today's world.

ISRAEL: Begin an in-depth exploration of contemporary Israel, examining its diverse cultures, people, innovations, and the challenges it faces today. We will explore key aspects of the country's history, geography, security, and conflict, gaining a broader understanding of its complexity. In addition, students will investigate the Biblical roots of the Jewish connection to the land and how these enduring values continue to influence daily life in modern Israel.

VAV (6TH GRADE)

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

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

HEBREW: Build students' Hebrew reading accuracy and fluency skills. Students will work at their own pace to master grade-level *Shabbat tefillot* and blessings as well as develop an understanding of the meaning of these prayers. Students will have opportunities to participate in weekly *Tefillah* assemblies based on *Shabbat* morning services.

TEFILLAH: Read and chant selected prayers of the *Shabbat* morning service (using *Siddur Lev Shalem*). Vav students will lead one *Shabbat* morning service in Junior Congregation. Students are encouraged to attend the main service. Students are also encouraged to ready Torah in Junior Congregation.

SHABBAT ATTENDANCE: Attend 6 Shabbat Services during the school year in the MAIN SANCTUARY
Vav leading Junior Congregation: Shabbat morning, December 13, 2025

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.

- **MOVING TRADITIONS** B'nai Mitzvah program is a new model of Jewish education for students and parents that speaks directly to the psychological, spiritual, social, and developmental issues that pre-teens face as they prepare for and celebrate the rite of passage.

SHALOMLEARNING: Sixth Grade curriculum explores Jewish values through the lens of Community. Each value incorporates Social and Emotional Learning skills that enable students to build positive relationships and make responsible choices. Through the values, students explore Jewish text, history, *tefillah* and holidays. Students will put *mitzvot* into action throughout the year and continue fostering community in the classroom and synagogue.

JUDIAC STUDIES: MY FAMILY STORY is a family root research project that has students use their creative skills to design an original, artistic display that captures the essence of their family history.

JEWISH LITERACY: Students will develop a deeper understanding of Jewish skills and knowledge by learning about rituals, observances, mitzvot, and core texts. They will explore the connections associated with holidays, life cycle events, and customs.

ISRAEL: Students will be introduced to *Ha-Tikvah*, the national anthem of Israel, and explore its historical and emotional significance. They will begin an initial exploration of Zionism by learning about three key figures who helped shape the movement. In addition, students will engage with current events through classroom visits from *Shinshinim* (Israeli young emissaries) and other visiting Israelis, fostering personal connections and real-time cultural exchange.

ZAYIN (7TH GRADE)

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

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

HEBREW & TEFILLAH: As time allows, students will review Shabbat morning tefillot and be introduced to modern conversational Hebrew.

JUDAIC STUDIES:

- ☆ **HISTORY:** Students will explore the broad arc of Jewish history, reviewing foundational Biblical narratives—from the lives of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs to the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. The exploration continues through the Rabbinic period, covering the First and Second Temples, and the eventual destruction and dispersion of the Jewish people.
- ☆ **ISRAEL – PAST & PRESENT:** Students will learn about the deep historical and spiritual ties between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, while also engaging with modern Israeli society. We will dive into contemporary Israeli culture, including its innovations in technology, vibrant arts and entertainment scene, diverse cuisine, and global influence. Students will also grapple with the complexities Israel faces today—political, social, and cultural—developing a nuanced understanding of the country's challenges and achievements.
- ☆ **SACRED TEXT:** In this unit, student will learn about various Jewish sacred texts, ranging from the *Torah* to the *Talmud* to the *Shulkhan Arukh*. They will gain an understanding of what each sacred text is about how they provide not only religious guidelines, but also historical, cultural and social customs of the Jewish people.
- ☆ **HOLOCAUST EDUCATION:** Throughout the year, students will engage with primary source documents and video testimonials as they learn about the Holocaust. Students will explore pre-war Jewish life, the history of antisemitism, Ghetto life, righteous gentiles and discuss upstands vs bystanders. Students will visit the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center.
- ☆ **SOCIAL ACTION:** Students will engage in meaningful opportunities that promote helping others—both within the local community and beyond. Through hands-on experiences and reflection, they will develop a sense of responsibility, empathy, and the value of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Partnerships with organizations such as Bernie’s Book Bank, Ma’ot Chitim, The Ark, and others will allow students to participate in projects that make a real impact. These experiences help foster a lifelong commitment to social justice and community involvement.

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.

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). When students attend services with (or without) their families they apply what they have learned in class. Each grade level is asked to attend a certain number of Shabbat services during the school year.

SHABBAT SERVICES to ATTEND DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.

	BET	GIMMEL	DALET	HEY	VAV
# of Services (Junior Congregation)	4	4	5	5	6 (main service)
Grade-Level Service Dates	03/14/256	02/21/26	02/07/26	01/24/26	12/13/25

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 1st Grade children.
- **Mini Minyan**–*Shabbat* morning service beginning at **11:00 a.m.** once a month for students Kindergarten and 1st grade (and parents). This service is a bridge between Tot Shabbat and Jr. Congregation.
- **Junior Congregation** for Beth El youth in Grades 2nd through 6th, 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. Junior Congregation services are led by *Hazzan Jenna Greenberg*.**
- 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 Jenna Greenberg* at jgreenberg@nssbethel.org.

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.**

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 e-mail.

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.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF LEARNING:

The Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School's behavior policy is guided by a commitment to KAVOD (respect). We strive to provide a positive environment in which all students can thrive. Our teachers are committed to treating all students with dignity and respect. Our expectation is that students will treat their teachers and classmates in the same manner, putting Jewish values into action at all times. Effective learning results when students, teachers, and parents are working together to implement these policies.

STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

A *Brit Ha-Kitah* (Classroom Covenant) will be established by the CRS teachers and students on the first day of school. The *Brit Ha-Kitah* will be guided by the principles set forth below:

- Students will be respectful towards teachers, administrators, assistants, clergy, and other students.
 - Students will be respectful of the physical and psychological well-being of others.
 - Students will refrain from disruptive behavior in class.
 - Offensive or inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
 - CRS has a zero-tolerance for bullying. Students have the right to learn in a safe and sensitive environment. Bullying in all its forms, whether verbal, physical, or psychological, is completely unacceptable. We encourage parents and students to speak with us at any time concerning bullying issues.
- Students will be respectful of NSS Beth El's building, grounds, and all furnishings within.
- Students will arrive on time and be prepared to participate.
- Students may not leave the school grounds without permission.
- Students will not use their cell phones or text during class time. If a parent needs to reach their child, please call the school office and we will follow up appropriately.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

- Encourage *kavod* (respect) for teachers and peers.
- Create positive and supportive attitudes about Judaism and Jewish learning.
- Send their children to school ready to participate and learn.
- Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Know school rules and help their children understand them.
- Work with the CRS Administration to solve any disciplinary or other problems that may arise during the school year.

TEACHER/ADMINISTRATION EXPECTATIONS

- Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity and promote confidence to learn.
- Promote the student's Jewish identity and love and appreciation for Jewish life and learning
- Know school policies and rules and enforce them in a fair and consistent manner.
- Participate in professional development programs to continuously increase their knowledge base and improve teaching techniques.
- Communicate with students and parents about students' progress and upcoming programs.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES:

The first instance of a violation will be handled at the classroom level between the teacher and the student(s) involved when possible, and in consultation with the Director of CRS. In dealing with students, teachers will display *kavod* (respect) for the student while providing the appropriate level of discipline for the situation, beginning with a warning level.

Subsequent violations will be handled in an appropriate manner in consultation with the Director of CRS, including, but not limited to, any of the following means:

- The student will be removed from the classroom for an appropriate period of time to reduce negative behaviors or calm down if needed.
 - The teacher will discuss negative behaviors with the Director of CRS.
 - The Director of CRS and/or teacher will speak with the student to address the behavioral concerns.
- If disruptive behavior persists, the Director of CRS will arrange a conference with the parents to discuss next steps, working together to develop an action plan to improve student's success within the classroom.
 - This may include temporary suspension from CRS when warranted (such as when a student is insubordinate, violent, extremely disruptive, or whose conduct endangers the safety or welfare of him/herself or others).
- In situations resulting in damage to synagogue property, the family/student may be responsible for its restoration or replacement.

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 – CRS Chairperson

The aggrieved party may request to meet with the CRS Chairperson. The written request will indicate what the grievance is (refer to definition of a grievance). The CRS Chairperson 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 – VP of Education

The aggrieved party may, within five days of the receipt of the written decision in Step 3, request in writing to meet with the VP of Education. The VP of Education will hear the complaint and have final say of the decision.

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 notice though Remind will also be sent out. 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. A security guard is present during all class sessions.

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.**
- 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 (*heksher*). 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 *tzede*k (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

Sandra Zussman, CRS Administrator, ext. 225

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