



**Parent Handbook
2018-19 / 5779**

Shaare Tefila Congregation
16620 Georgia Ave Olney, MD 20832
www.shaaretefila.org

Dear Friends,

Welcome to another year of Chavaya! We are so happy to have your child(ren) back with us for another year of Jewish learning and living. It is our goal to provide an enriching and engaging experience for all involved, ultimately strengthening each student's Jewish identity and sense of community.

My door is always open if you have any questions or concerns.

B'Shalom,
Babette Cohn, Director of Education and Programming
bcohn@shaaretefila.org
301-593-3410 x106

Faculty 5779

Kitah Alef-Bet	Miriam Marks & Yardena Sultan-Reisler
Kitah Gimel	Rebecca Elspas
Kitah Dalet	Eleanna Weissman
Tefila/Music	Cantor Adina Ackerman
Teens/Israeli Dance	Maddie Ferguson

Education Committee

Under the excellent leadership of Cathy Plotkin, Education VP, this committee provides guidance and support to Chavaya. Contact: cathyp1130@gmail.com

Class Schedule

Grades K-2: Sundays 9:30-12:00

Grades 3-7: Sundays 9:30-12:00, plus 30 minutes of Hebrew tutoring online each week.

Teens: Sundays, 9:30-12:00, twice a month for classroom topics and field trips.

Special Needs and Tutoring Program

Chavaya is committed to meeting the needs of all students. We work with parents, students, and teachers to integrate every student into our school. If your child has a special need of any kind, let us know so suitable arrangements can be made. We strive to provide all our students with an enriching and meaningful Jewish education.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR CHAVAYA

Our mission is to provide the children of Shaare Tefila with:

- A familiarity and knowledge of Jewish traditions,
- Love and respect for Torah,
- Connection to the people of and the land of Israel,
- An understanding of Jewish history and
- Fostering a sense of responsibility to our world through *Derech Eretz* (ethical decency) and *Tikkun Olam*.

With a focus on achieving a deeper understanding of what is being studied, our goal is to discover the very essence of what it means to live a Jewish life. Taking guidance from the Torah, adhering to the idea of [*Na'aseh V'Nishma* \(we will do and we will understand\)](#) our children will explore the many facets of Judaism through acts of *chesed* (kindness), performing *mitzvot* and actively engaging in *Limud Torah* (learning Torah), thereby building a solid connection which will remain with them long after they graduate from our school. Chavaya's aim is to help children gather the tools they need to engage in building a strong Jewish identity and knowledge base in order to lead active Jewish lives.

BUILDING SACRED COMMUNITY

When your child is with us at Chavaya they are part of a *Kehilah Kedoshah* (sacred community). It is this goal of building sacred community that is at the core of our approach to classroom management.

Classroom Atmosphere

We strive to create a place where students can grow Jewishly and enjoy the community of their classmates in a nurturing and supportive environment. The atmosphere in our classrooms should be *heimish*, positive, relaxed, and respectful. Students are expected to participate in all activities and follow teacher instructions. Teachers should work towards making their classroom a *makom kadosh* (holy place), taking into account ways to bring holiness to classroom space and time. All staff, parents, and students are expected to act like *mentchen* and treat each other with respect and *kavod*.

Core Values

Teachers will utilize the following Jewish value terms in their classrooms on a regular basis, using them as the core for discussions about behavioral expectations.

- *KEHILAH KEDOSHAH*
We are a "holy community".
- *SHALOM BAYIT*
"peace in the house"
- *KAVOD*
"respect" or "honor"
- *CHESED*
"kindness" or "loving kindness"

קהילה קדושה

שלום בית

כבוד

חסד

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

We are fully committed to personally supporting each Chavaya student on his/her/their individual journey of Jewish growth and involvement. As our partners in Jewish education, we hope that you will support our policies, which have been developed to maintain school quality and ensure that each student receives a meaningful Jewish education.

Arrival

Classes start promptly at 9:30am. Please be considerate of our very limited class time by dropping off your child on time. With only 30 sessions for the year, we value every minute of time we have with your child. Additionally, it is disruptive to the class when students come in late. Thank you in advance for your support in valuing our time here.

Students in Kitah Alef-Bet are walked into the classroom by a parent or an older sibling. Students in Kitah Gimel and above may be dropped off in front of the synagogue or at the Education Wing of the building.

Books and Materials

All families paid a books and materials fee when enrolling in Chavaya. If a book is lost, you will need to purchase a second copy. Students are responsible for bringing all necessary books to class. We recommend that you purchase a tote bag to dedicate specifically for Chavaya books and materials.

Cell Phones

Students and teachers are not allowed to use cell phones during a class session, including break times. All emergencies or necessary calls should be handled through the office. Teachers will hold on to phones for the session if they are taken out by students. Our goal is to be building community while students are here during class time.

Communications

Regular communication with parents is an important means of empowering parents as partners in their child's Jewish education. We will provide:

- Introductory e-mails from your child's teacher/s.
- A parent welcome meeting on the first day of classes to orient you to the year ahead.
- Weekly school communications by e-mail - our 'Chavaya Hot Spot' weekly updates. These e-letters will inform you of upcoming activities and programs of interest.

- Weekly teacher e-mail updates. These will include a question about the core lesson to ask your child when picking them up.
- Our monthly synagogue newsletter, 'The Shofar.'
- Be sure to "like" the Shaare Tefila Facebook page, follow us on Twitter, Instagram & Pinterest, and subscribe to our YouTube channel.



Dismissal

Please arrive promptly at 12:00 p.m. Late parents make students nervous and prevent our staff from leaving at the appropriate time. Students in Kitah Alef-Bet must be picked up in their classroom. Students in Kitah Gimel and above will wait at one of the two exits (stairs or the Education Wing) to be released by a teacher. If your child needs to be picked up early, please send an email to Babette Cohn, bcohn@shaaretefila.org. Parents must "sign out" their child in the Religious School office before going to their classroom. If someone other than a parent is picking up a child, the office needs a written note.

Dress Code

Kippot with our school logo will be distributed to all students. Rabbi Layman's kippah policy: Boys are expected to wear them at all times in the building. Girls are strongly encouraged to do so. Please send a sweatshirt or light jacket with your child as the classes will often go outside.

Field Trips

Field trips are a way for students to gain firsthand information about topics we are studying. As an experiential school, field trips are an integral part of our program. Transportation for some field trips may be the responsibility of the parents; we will create carpools wherever possible. Other field trips will be taken by bus. Parents are invited to participate as chaperones on our outings as well. Thank you for supporting our trips (and joining us) as our curriculum is enriched in this manner.

Fire Drills

Fire emergency instructions are posted in every classroom. There will be at least one fire drill exercise conducted during the school year.

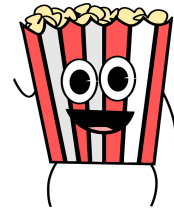


Inclement Weather

Shaare Tefila follows MCPS when deciding whether to close due to inclement weather. If MCPS activities are canceled on Sunday, then school will be cancelled. We will utilize email, Facebook, Twitter and our Shaare Tefila website to announce a school closing.

Snack Policy

All our classes will have time for a 5-10 minute snack break in the classroom. This provides an opportunity for the class to learn blessings, to socialize, build community, and to enjoy informal sharing. At the beginning of the year teachers will assign dates for parents to bring in snacks. You are responsible for communicating with other parents and making changes in the schedule if needed. Students with allergies may bring their own snack.



Chavaya follows the Conservative Movement's guidelines for Kashrut. Any questions in this area will be referred to Rabbi Layman. The snack you choose must be nut-free & hechshered. Alternative snacks are available for other allergy/medical needs.

Options:

We recommend sending in juice boxes (100% juice) along with one of these snack items:

- graham crackers
- pretzels, crackers
- cheese and crackers
- fruit
- fruit roll ups
- veggies and dip
- mini bagels and cream cheese
- challah and white grape juice; an alternate snack can be provided by the school for students with nut or gluten allergies.

No food with nuts or food made in a facility that processes nuts are allowed in the classrooms. Please check labels!

Teen Program

Our teens meet Sundays approximately twice a month during the Chavaya session. Our program includes learning in the classroom, social action projects, and field trips which support learning objectives.

Tzedakah (Charity)

Tzedakah money will be collected weekly to encourage our students to give regularly. Towards the end of the year, students select a charity to which the funds will be contributed. Over \$200 has been donated to various charities in the past. Any amount of tzedakah is greatly appreciated.



CONNECT TO YOUR SHAARE TEFILA COMMUNITY

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation and Celebration

Rabbi Layman meets with the families of all 7th graders at the beginning of the year to review expectations. Students learn with the Cantor, supplemented by their Skype tutor, to lead a Shabbat morning service. As Jewish learning is a lifelong endeavor, all 7th grade students are required to complete the year no matter when they become a bar/bat mitzvah. It is respectfully requested to invite all the 7th grade students in the class to your child's bar/bat mitzvah celebration. A list can be obtained from the office.



Café Shaare Tefila

The café has become a wonderful addition to Sunday Mornings at the synagogue. It is open weekly when Chavaya is in session to provide parents an opportunity to spend time together in the building. Coffee, juice, and breakfast is served buffet style by volunteers in our sunny gallery. Community members enjoy reading the newspaper or schmoozing while students are in class. Donations are always appreciated.

Parent Participation Program

Our Kitah Alef-Bet class welcomes parents for a special program one morning during the year. This gives parents an opportunity to learn with their child and experience the classroom dynamic first-hand. Please join your child that day.

Shabbat and Family Service Participation

We encourage parents and children to attend weekly Shabbat, Holiday and Family Shabbat services to further learning, enrich spirituality, and strengthen community bonds. **Students will prepare at Chavaya with Cantor Ackerman to lead parts of the Family Shabbat Service on the following dates: October 27, December 15, February 23 and May 18.**



Youth Groups and Community Programs

Our youth groups provide a nurturing environment where children gather with friends for activities that focus on having fun and promoting a strong Jewish identity. Our community programs are designed to bring

congregants of all ages together to celebrate and learn. Contact Babette Cohn, Director of Education & Programming, bcohn@shaaretefila.org, for more information.