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# Parent Handbook

## 5779

## 2018-2019

*Revised 9/25/18*

The mission of the Midrash Center for Jewish Learning of Temple Sinai is to provide Jewish learning for all members of our Temple community, no matter their age, abilities or background. We provide education to create a community of learners who can meaningfully participate in a lifetime of Jewish Peoplehood, Spirituality, Caring, Social Justice and Learning.

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## **Schedule**

Sunday Next DOR: 9:30 a.m. – noon

Wednesday Hebrew School/Next DOR: 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Monday Teen School: 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

## **Attendance**

Next DOR is intentionally structured to pack a lot into a short amount of time, which allows more flexibility in scheduling Jewish learning around other activities. Please do your best to ensure that your child comes for each session of a *chug*. This will support both your child's learning and the learning of the other students in the *chug* who will be depending on your child's participation in group projects.

For Hebrew School, mastery of any skill requires regular practice. Our Hebrew program is also being redeveloped to include Modern Hebrew comprehension using movement, readings skills and familiarity with prayer Hebrew, and learning about Israel and Israeli culture. Each class builds on the one before, so regular attendance is crucial.

If your child will be absent on any given day, please phone the school office at 412.412.7039.

*Punctual attendance makes a difference.* Late arrivals disrupt class and take away precious time from a limited schedule. Please help us give your child the best learning experience by arriving on time.

*Early Dismissal:* We recognize that there are times when our students need to leave early. The following procedures will ensure your child's safety and the least disruption to the class environment:

- The student must come to school with an explanatory note from a parent/guardian. The note must include the reason and time of dismissal along with the name of the person picking up the child.
- The note should be presented to the office at the beginning of the class.
- All students being dismissed from school early must be picked up by a parent or guardian in the building. Parents must first check in with the office. No student will be allowed to leave the building, even to wait for a ride, without a parent/guardian.

*Visitors:* Visitors are not permitted in classrooms without prior authorization by the Religious School Administration.

## **Drop-off and Dismissal**

These procedures are designed to ensure maximum safety for all of our children. Please help us keep our children safe by following these procedures.

### **Drop-off**

All students must enter Temple Sinai through the Krieger Entrance on Forbes Ave. Please ensure that your child enters the building. You are welcome to bring your child into the classroom.

### **Dismissal**

#### *Sunday and Monday*

Children in grade 3 and above may leave their classroom at the conclusion of the day without further supervision of the school staff unless otherwise instructed by the parent or guardian. Younger students may come to the Krieger Entrance as a class for pick up.

Written permission from a parent/guardian is required for students leaving Temple Sinai property without a parent/guardian.

#### *Wednesday Hebrew School*

To meet your child in the building, park on the street and come up to the school.

If your child is walking to his/her next destination, please provide the school office with a written note of permission or send an email to [dhaber@templesinaipgh.org](mailto:dhaber@templesinaipgh.org).

To pick up your children in a car, without coming into the building, follow the guidelines below:

- The carpool line assembles on Kittanning Way, the street behind the Temple. If running late, please call ahead.
- Right turn only from Wightman St. onto Kittanning Way. If there is overflow onto Wightman St., keep to the right side of the street to avoid blocking traffic.
- Form a line starting at the Temple entrance. Please be respectful to our office staff and neighbors when waiting for your child, allowing them enter or exit their parking spots/garages. To do this, leave space in front of driveways or parking spots so that residents/staff may use them. Please remember that if a driver in front of you is not moving up, it may be to abide by this courtesy.
- Turn RIGHT out of Kittanning Way onto Murdoch St. to prevent bottlenecks on exit.
- As always, general rules of the road are in effect on public streets.

- **There is no in-car pick up on Forbes Avenue or Murdoch Street. It is too dangerous at this hour.**



## **Supplies**

Most supplies will be provided by the Temple, although we may ask for various odds and ends throughout the year to reuse things that might have been thrown away.

## **Homework**

One of our missions as a Center for Jewish Learning is to help students learn how to be Jews in our world. To that end, we want to help our students connect what they learn here in Religious School to what they experience outside of the synagogue.

For Hebrew, regular practice helps maintain the Hebrew work being done in the classroom. We encourage 15-20 minutes of prayer review each day. Recordings of the prayers are available on our website at <https://templesinaipgh.org/learn/bnei-mitzvah-recordings>. Feel free to email Rabbi Gorban for line-by-line recordings and the Hebrew text as well.

## **Special Needs**

If your child has special needs, please inform the Religious School of those needs at the beginning of the year or when they arise. Since each child is different, we would be happy to partner with you to create a positive, Jewish learning environment for your student.

If you know of particular strategies to help engage your child and encourage them to learn, please share those with us. We invite you to set up a meeting with the Associate Rabbi, Director of Education, and/or your child's teacher to develop a plan.

## **Behavior**

Students are expected to act respectfully towards teachers and peers. If students are unable to do so, they will meet with the Director of Education. During this meeting, the student will telephone a parent to inform that parent of the meeting and the events leading to it. The student will then return to class. If behavior does not improve, parents will be asked to come to the Temple for a conference.

## **Food & Snacks on Wednesdays**

On Wednesdays, our canteen is open until 4:30 PM where students can buy snacks for \$0.50/portion. It is important to our Hebrew program that we maximize student learning time. In order to minimize this problem students will be asked to put away all food once the session begins at 4:30. Children may bring water bottles to use throughout the afternoon.



*"In the World to Come," taught Rabbi Zusya of Hanipol, "they will not ask me: 'Why were you not more like Moses our teacher?' They will ask me: 'Why were you not more like Zusya?'"*

How can your child to be the best version of himself/herself?

## **Emergency School Closings**

Midweek School closings generally follow the decisions of the Pittsburgh Board of Education.

- If public school is canceled due to inclement weather, school is canceled.
- If public school enacts early dismissal due to inclement weather, school is canceled.
- If public school enacts late start due to inclement weather, school will most likely occur (depending on later weather conditions).
- Religious School might be canceled even if public school is not. Check with the Temple website, your email, television/radio, or call the Temple.

Sunday morning closings will be announced on the radio, television, and Temple website ([www.templeinaipgh.org](http://www.templeinaipgh.org)).

Religious School is either opened or closed; we do not delay openings.

## **Building for Next Year**

We also appreciate your end-of-the-year comments and suggestions to better plan for next year. Please feel free to speak with Rabbi Keren Gorban or Marilee Glick about your suggestions. The community of learners in our Temple is strengthened through the input of every individual and family.

## **Summer Jewish Learning**

The end of school does not necessitate the end of Jewish learning and living for the summer. Take advantage of the relaxing pace of summer to:

- Light Shabbat candles and have a special meal
- Conclude Shabbat with Havdalah
- Visit the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC
- Spend the day in the Lower East Side of New York (don't forget to stop at Gus' Pickles)
- Visit the Jewish Museum in NYC
- Take a day trip to the Maltz Museum in Cleveland
- Do family mitzvah projects
- Come to Temple
- Read a Jewish Book



## **Summer Jewish Living**

The joy of Jewish living need not end in May when the school year ends. Many of our students have continued their Jewish growth by participating in summer programs sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). Our regional camp, Camp Harlam (in Kunkletown, PA), is just a car ride away, but it feels like a different world, one where there's excitement for Jewish living and enthusiasm for services. Each URJ camp offers a wide variety of activities, competitive with other camps. However, no other camps provide the love of Jewish living and learning, friendship and fun, as do these camps.

We know that Jewish summer camps of all sorts provide opportunities for growth and learning along with the development of deep foundations in Jewish living. We encourage you to consider other Jewish camps as well, especially those run by our JCC.

Our high school students can join other Jewish teens from around the country on summer journeys to Israel sponsored by NFTY (the North American Federation of Temple Youth, an affiliate of the URJ). These six-week tours make Judaism and Jewish history come alive through a wide range of experiences.

Brochures for all of these programs are available in the Nathan and Hilda Katzen Center for Jewish Learning. Ask the Rabbis for their recommendations.