



August 2025

Dear Parents,

We are looking forward to a positive and dynamic school year. This summer we have reviewed and updated our curriculum to reflect the changing needs of our students. Six content areas are still covered each year and the curriculum moves from one year to the next with opportunities to fill knowledge gaps as well as discover new information. We hope that you take the time during our Meet the Teacher Day to look at the curriculum and materials. Please reach out with any questions.

Our theme this year is *בצדק תשפוט עמיתך* (Betzedek tishpot amitecha), which comes from the parashah Kedoshim and means “You shall judge your fellow with righteousness.”. This means more than not judging, it means to give someone the benefit of the doubt. When we give someone the benefit of the doubt we are more able to act with kindness and empathy. You will be hearing more throughout the year about ways to get involved. The information in this handbook should be a helpful guide in ensuring your child(ren)’s success in our programs.

Reminders and updates will be communicated through **weekly emails on Wednesday evenings**. Please let us know if you have not been receiving these emails – they began the first week in August.

This year’s journey will be better if we work as a team to make the world around us better. Know that I am here to listen and support you.

I look forward to an amazing year.

B’shalom,

Stacy Ybarra

Director of Education

Table of Contents

Philosophy of the Religious School at Congregation Beth Shalom	2
Mission Statement and Goals	2
Curriculum Overview	3
CBS Religious School Plans for 2025-26	5
Policies & Procedures General Information:	6
Attendance, Arrival & Dismissal	6
Cell Phone Policy	6
Drop-Off and Pick-Up	7
Guest Policy	7
Homework	7
Masks	7
Parent/Teacher Communication	8
School Board	8
Snacks	8
Tzedakah	8
Student Code of Rights & Responsibilities	9
Discipline Policy	10

Philosophy of the CBS Religious School

The CBS Religious School seeks to instill in its students and their families a love of Judaism, the desire to be life-long learners and knowledgeable participants in the Jewish community.

As Conservative Jews we believe in the importance of creatively maintaining tradition. We believe that quality education is three-fold: first, it forms a knowledge base; second, it teaches skills to put the knowledge into practice; and third, creates a positive attitude that creates an environment where students want to use their knowledge and skills.

We deeply believe that the world has a need for Jews who live with an understanding and practice of Jewish ethical values. The survival of Judaism depends on the understanding of our heritage and the choice to be part of our rich history and tradition. We feel that Jewish education is a shared responsibility between the family, the religious school and the community.

The CBS Religious School recognizes and treats each student as an individual, allowing him/her to become an active participant in the learning process. All students will be respected for their ideas, and teachers will ever be cognizant of the need to strengthen young Jewish minds and hearts.

Our school enriches its students with an understanding of Judaism and what it means to be a Jew, a good American and ultimately a *mensch*. Our fundamental objective is that this education will enable our students to overcome challenges posed by living in the modern world through the wisdom and insight of Jewish tradition, ritual and custom.

Mission Statement and Goals of the CBS Religious School

To provide a strong foundation of Jewish knowledge so as to instill a personal understanding of the rich tradition and long history between God and the Jewish people.

Our Goals

- *Inspire and nurture in every child a lifelong love of Jewish life and learning*
- *Impart to our students knowledge of our heritage and tradition through the study of Tanach and other Jewish texts*
- *Teach the skills necessary to practice Judaism in accordance with the Conservative Movement*
- *Provide skills and knowledge necessary for participation in Shabbat, holiday and life cycle events*
- *Develop an in-depth knowledge and love of the State of Israel and a commitment to its existence*
- *Transmit a sense of responsibility for the worldwide Jewish community and the world at large through the mitzvot and Tikkun Olam*

Curriculum 5786

Preface: Congregation Beth Shalom views its Religious School as an affirmative environment in which both children and adults are appreciated as individuals and come together to create a community of positive Jewish experiences and Talmud Torah, a love of learning. Our curriculum is a living, breathing document that is evaluated and revised based on current research, new texts and materials, student achievement data, personality of the students and personality of the staff. In the true nature of Jewish education, it is the journey to create the unattainable perfect program that is important. The following section is a description of our current path.

Our curriculum is divided into six areas of study: Values, Holidays & Lifecycle, Torah/History, Hebrew, Prayer, and Israel.

Our program uses texts as a starting and guiding point. Often texts will not be used from cover to cover and will be supplemented with additional materials.

Curriculum Overview

Congregation Beth Shalom believes in providing a curriculum and educational program in which all students create life-long, joyous, Jewish memories. Our curriculum is six-fold: Values, Holidays & Lifecycle, Torah/History, Hebrew, Prayer, and Israel. All six content areas are taught each year although each grade has a theme or content area that is highlighted.

Gan/Kindergarten – This is a time of Jewish exploration and development of our Jewish self-identity. We learn through symbols about holidays, Shabbat, and the Hebrew alphabet. We learn through music, movement, art and hands-on activities.

Kitah Aleph/First Grade - We continue to explore and develop our identity as we learn through the “8 Biggies”; we will use our hands, mouth, ears, feet, nose, eyes, heart and brain to connect with mitzvot and make the world a better place. We will learn about the synagogue as well as Torah stories that coincide with the holidays. Hebrew letters and vocabulary will also be emphasized. We will continue to learn through music, movement and art.

Kitah Bet/Second Grade – This year we begin to understand our Jewish world on a deeper level. We study Genesis and Exodus through our Hebrew Alphabet. We also explore the rituals of holidays. Israel is more important this year as we learn about the geography, culture and food.

Kitah Gimmel/Third Grade – Third grade continues to build in intensity as we attend religious school two days a week. This year begins more formal Hebrew learning as we begin the Aleph Champ Program. This program allows each student to work at their own pace with individual assistance. Incentives for reaching milestones encourage progress. Our curriculum also emphasizes being a *mensch* with hands-on activities with which every student can be successful. Finally, we begin to explore our Jewish identity as we define the Jewish community and look more closely at the calendar and life cycle events.

Kitah Dalet/Fourth Grade – This year we use the lense of our Jewish values to look at Genesis, learn about the holidays and begin to really talk about God. We will continue to learn more prayers and increase our Hebrew reading fluency through Aleph Champ. Our Jewish identity development continues as we explore our sacred texts.

Kitah Hey/Fifth Grade – Israel is a focal point in the curriculum this year. Students will learn about the history, government and geography of Israel with a textbook that also explores the complexities of the country. This year we will also continue to discuss Jewish values as we look at the book of Exodus. Our Jewish identity continues to develop as we explore our history and heritage from biblical times to living in the United States. Hebrew reading fluency, service participation and the liturgy of the holidays will also be key.

Mechina/Sixth Grade - Sixth grade is an important preparation year towards Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We will meet on Shabbat mornings instead of on Sundays to focus on the Torah Service and *Musaf*. We will also work on developing our Jewish identity and look at the holidays through art. Hebrew on Tuesdays will be more conversational. Students will also begin a taste of the IsraelLink program which continues into 7th grade.

Kitah Zayin/Seventh Grade - This year has a different feel as students become young adults in the Jewish Community and is a bridge between Religious School and CBS High. Our 7th graders meet on Shabbat mornings instead of on Sundays so they can attend the *simchas* of their peers and be more comfortable in the Beth Shalom community. Holocaust studies and values are the main components of the curriculum. Hebrew becomes less formal as students learn basic conversation that they can use when going to Israel on the IsraelNow trip in 8th grade. Another focus is the IsraelLink program, a technology-based program rooted in inquiry, identity and connection. Through interactive lessons, primary sources, and multimedia content, students explore the people, land, and story of Israel with depth and nuance. At the end of class, students participate in minyan here at CBS and have the opportunity to lead as well.

CBS Religious School Plans for 2023-24:

In-Person

- **Saturdays** – Grades 6th and 7th
 - 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

- **Sundays** – Grades K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th
 - 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- **Tuesdays**
 - 3rd, 4th & 5th Grades
 - 4 – 6 p.m.
 - 6th & 7th Grades
 - 6:15 – 8:15 p.m.

On-line Individual Classes via Zoom

Families seeking this option will set up their program with the Director of Education. This option is available for 3rd-5th grades and can replace either one or both group classes; however, we strongly recommend only replacing one since the community building that occurs during in-person classes is an important aspect of Judaism.

We are not offering an on-line, individual class for our middle schoolers this year. We cannot recreate in an individual on-line class what a student gets out of being at CBS on Shabbat mornings. As the students begin Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons and have their simcha, they view the individual online Hebrew classes as redundant and “a waste of time”. On-line works well for Hebrew and prayer but not for the topics taught on Tuesdays. Middle school is a time of being with peers and creating community. If you have specific concerns and conflicts please contact [Stacy Ybarra](#) to discuss.

Policies and Procedures

General Information

Attendance, Arrival and Dismissal

Since we have so little time with our students and a very demanding curriculum, it is crucial that parents and students strive for the goal of attending classes on a regular basis and that students do their best to arrive on time and to stay through the end of class. In case of absence, please notify the office at 847-498-5352 or e-mail us at school@bethshalomnb.org.

Class Schedules Are:

Saturdays	10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Grades 6, 7
Sundays	9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
Tuesday Early Session	4 p.m. to 6 p.m.	Grades 3, 4, 5
Tuesday Late Session	6:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.	Grades 6, 7

Teachers arrive in their classrooms 10 minutes prior to start time, and are available for students and parents at that time. In case of absence, please notify the office at 847-498-5352 or e-mail us at school@bethshalomnb.org. Students needing to leave early from school must have a parent check-out the student in the Religious School office. A *madrichol* will be sent to the classroom to get the student.

No student will be excused from class without a parent signing them out in the office.

No parent should pick up a child directly from the classroom.

Due to the challenge of getting a child from class in a timely manner, no student may be signed out during the last 15 minutes of class.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones may be used at teacher discretion during class and during break times. Remind students that they should not call or text during class time. In return we ask that you do not call or text your student during class as well. If you have an emergency and need to contact your student, please contact the school office at 847-498-5352.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

In the interest of providing for the safety and security of our students, please follow the following procedures:

Sundays

Drop-Off: On Sundays, students may be dropped off at the Main Synagogue doors. If parking, parents may walk their student(s) in through either the Religious School door or the Main Synagogue doors. We request that students in kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades be dropped off at their classroom by an adult or sibling.

Pick-Up: There will be a pick-up line on Sundays but you are also welcome to walk into CBS to pick up your student. We request that students in kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades be picked up at their classroom by an adult or sibling. For safety reasons students MAY NOT walk through the parking lot without an adult.

Tuesdays

Drop-Off: On Tuesdays, students may be dropped off at the Main Synagogue doors. If parking, parents may walk their student(s) in through the Main Synagogue doors. **The Religious School Entrance will be locked during school hours.**

Pick-Up: There is a pick-up line on Tuesdays with students being picked-up at the Main Synagogue doors. If parking, parents MUST walk into the synagogue to escort their student(s) to vehicles. For safety reasons students MAY NOT walk through the parking lot without an adult.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in keeping all of our children safe.

Guest Policy

We are not encouraging guests this year. We will update you if this changes during the school year.

Homework

There are many valid arguments for and against homework in the religious school. While we recognize the demanding schedules of our students, there may be times when a teacher feels it is meaningful and necessary for students to complete homework. As a general guideline, weekly homework should not exceed 15 minutes a week for K – 2nd and 30 minutes for 3rd – 7th grade students. Hebrew reading and B'nai Mitzvah study may require more regular at-home study.

Masks

Masks are optional. We respect the right of people to choose to wear or not wear masks.

Parent/Teacher Communication

The relationship between home and school is crucial for our students' success. For this reason we take communication very seriously. The **School will send regular emails via Constant Contact on Wednesday evenings**. Teachers will post updates a minimum of 8 times during the first semester and a minimum of 10 times during second semester. Parents will be able to click on links in the weekly Wednesday email to view the posts. Posts will be cumulative with the most recent on top. Teacher emails are included in these updates.

It is equally important that you communicate with us. If there is a significant change in your home life or if you have information that is pertinent to our staff, we need to hear from you. If you would like to speak with a teacher, please arrange a time to talk outside of class time. The Director of Education is available at 847-498-5352.

School Board

Congregation Beth Shalom and our school are volunteer driven. Our volunteers are at the heart of our success. Our School Board meets once a month to discuss different topics that help our school succeed. If you are interested in being on the CBS School Board, please contact the School VP at schoolvp@bethshalomnb.org

Snacks

Each class session will have a 10 minute break.

During breaks, students are welcome to bring a snack from home. Vegetables and fruits do not need a *Heksher* (kosher designation on the package). All other items must be dairy or *pareve* and must be in store sealed packages (no Ziplocs) and must have a *Heksher* (kosher designation on the package).

On Tuesdays, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders who come early between 3:30 and 4 p.m. are welcome to buy snacks from the Youth Snack Cart. Snacks range from \$0.25 to \$1.

On Shabbat Mornings students will have a 10 minute break and snacks will be provided. Please do not bring snacks to services. After services all students are invited to have *Kiddush* lunch with the congregation.

Tzedakah

Tikkun Olam, caring for our world, is a vital concept. We teach this concept as a way of building life-long ideals and practices. This year, in collaboration with the CBS Social Action Committee, we will be highlighting different *Tzedakah* projects for families to participate in. Information about each project will be highlighted in the weekly emails from the Director of Education. Money will also be collected in classroom *tzedakah* boxes.

Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities

Within each class, teachers will establish and review class rules, policies and procedures within the bounds of the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities.

We recognize the following individual rights and responsibilities:

The right to feel safe and the responsibility to make sure that others feel safe.

The right to be respected as an individual and the responsibility to respect others.

The right to use our land and the property on it and the responsibility to protect them.

To participate in the Congregation Beth Shalom community, parents, students and staff must affirm the following:

1. I am responsible for making this a safe environment. Some of the ways I can help do this are:
 - ✧ Keeping hands, feet and objects to myself
 - ✧ Walking on the school grounds
 - ✧ Being where I am expected to be
 - ✧ Keeping my actions safe for myself and others

2. I am responsible for making sure people respect themselves and one other. Some of the ways I can help do this are:
 - ✧ Speaking kindly to others
 - ✧ Listening when others are speaking
 - ✧ Including everyone so that no one feels left out
 - ✧ Using good manners
 - ✧ Treating others with care and respect
 - ✧ Helping others
 - ✧ Staying on task
 - ✧ Doing my best work always
 - ✧ Attending class regularly and bringing all required materials

3. I am responsible for taking care of the school property and everything around it. Some of the ways I can help do this are:
 - ✧ Cleaning up after myself
 - ✧ Keeping all property free from damage
 - ✧ Using property in the way it is intended to be used
 - ✧ Leaving classrooms, bathrooms and common areas clean and neat.

Discipline Policy

At Congregation Beth Shalom, we are committed to providing a positive learning experience for all of our students. This can only be accomplished by creating an orderly and safe environment. It is also important to have cooperation between the school and the home.

In order to reach these objectives, the following discipline policy has been adopted by our Religious School. Discipline is a corrective action designed to help teach our students more appropriate behavior. Under no circumstances will discipline violate the emotional wellbeing of the student. Since all students have the right to learn, any one student continually interfering with the rights of others will be excluded from the classroom and, if necessary, from the program itself.

Religious School Standard Student Discipline Procedure **

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| First Offense: | The student and teacher work out the problem. |
| Second Offense: | The teacher contacts the parent(s) to discuss how to best help the student. |
| Third Offense: | The student is referred to the Religious School Director who will meet with the teacher and parents. |

**The above list is not required to be sequential, but will be determined by the type and severity of the repeated misbehavior. If the conduct is particularly harmful or offensive, it may be necessary to warrant consideration as a higher offense.