

שיר שלום

CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM | *Song of Peace*

A UNION OF MONTEBELLO JEWISH CENTER
AND NANUET HEBREW CENTER

Makom מקום

The Place to Learn, to Gather, to Grow

Rabbi Paul Kurland

Rebecca Bernstein, Education Director

Student/Parent Handbook

2021-2022

5782

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the Board of Education, and the faculty of Makom Religious School, we welcome you and your children to an exciting and enriching year of Religious School.

Makom is dedicated to educating our youth to be knowledgeable, responsible, and participatory Jews. Our primary goal is to provide our students with a nurturing and enjoyable school environment which fosters an enthusiasm and love for Judaism and a commitment to lifelong Jewish living and learning.

Our curriculum is geared toward fluency in Hebrew reading as well as comfort and familiarity with the *Siddur* (prayerbook), and synagogue and home rituals. We strive to foster a positive Jewish identity in our students, as they develop an understanding and appreciation for the holidays, Shabbat, Israel, History, and Jewish values.

To accomplish our goals, the support and active involvement of our parents is most important. Through participation in our school activities, completion of assignments, on-time arrival to class, and regular Shabbat service attendance, your children will truly benefit from our curriculum, teachers, and all the resources of our school and synagogue. The best way to have an excited and engaged student is to be an actively involved parent.

Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. We thank you for your continued support.

L'Shalom,

Rebecca Bernstein
Education Director

Paul Kurland
Rabbi, Congregation Shir Shalom

Makom Board of Education 5782

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Religious School Regulations and Procedures

Attendance

To best achieve its goals, a school must function with its students who are alert, awake and ready to learn. Regular class attendance is vital to the success of your children's Jewish education. Every student must attend at least 80% of classes to advance to the next grade level. In cases of prolonged or excessive absences, the Education Director will provide names of available tutors to help your child make up his/her work. Tutorial sessions may not take place during regular Religious School hours and are the financial responsibility of the parents.

Attendance awards will be given at the end of the year Graduation and Awards Ceremony to those who meet the following criteria:

- Students who do not miss any Religious School classes: Perfect Attendance Award
- Students in K- 2nd grade who miss 2 or fewer classes: Excellent Attendance Award
- Students in 3rd- 7th Grades who miss 4 or fewer classes: Excellent Attendance Award

Attendance at Synagogue Services

Monthly attendance at Shabbat Mishpacha is encouraged. Our goal is for all our students to feel comfortable walking into any synagogue or Jewish environment having gained at Congregation Shir Shalom, a strong Jewish identity, Judaic literacy, knowledge of Tefillah and most importantly, a love of Judaism. Regular attendance at Shabbat and Holiday services helps greatly in attaining that goal. Students who have attended the suggested number of services will receive a "Service Attendance Award" at the Graduation and Awards Ceremony and will be invited to a special prize activity with the Education Director and the Rabbi. The guidelines listed below represent the minimum number of services that students must attend to receive a Service Attendance Award. An additional "Rabbis Attendance Award" will be given for students who attend more than the required services, arrive on time, and stay for the entire service. The Rabbi will give those students a special gift.

PreK-2nd Grade: Attendance at ALL 10 Mishpacha sessions OR Attendance AT LEAST 5 Shabbat Mishpacha and 5 additional Shabbat/holiday services

Grade 3-7: Attendance at ALL 10 Shabbat Mishpacha AND 2 additional services OR Attendance AT LEAST 5 Shabbat Mishpacha and 5 additional Shabbat/holiday services AND 2 other services of choice.

Morah Mindy Sayer will keep a record of each student's attendance at synagogue services. If your child attends services at another synagogue or is present in synagogue when Morah Mindy Sayer is not, please let Rebecca Bernstein, the Education Director, know either by phone or email, of the date and name of the synagogue. We encourage all students to attend services at Congregation Shir Shalom, however, **students may attend up to 5 services at other synagogues for service attendance credit.**

Arrival and Dismissal

As per CDC guidelines and state mandates, students should put their masks on when they enter the building and keep them on except for snack time until they leave the building. We will have snack time outdoors when weather permits.

Early Dismissal

The following procedure for early dismissal is designed to both protect our children and reduce the amount of class time missed:

- Students must show his/her teacher a signed written note from his/her parents, prior to the beginning of class and bring it to the Education Director's office.
- Upon arrival, parents should go to the school office to sign out their child. The Education Director or a member of the Board of Education will retrieve your child from the classroom.

Please note that children will not be released from the building without following the procedure outlined above, nor will they be allowed to meet their parents in the parking lot.

Late Arrival

When students arrive late, they interrupt the learning process. If your child has an excessive number of late arrivals, it may be necessary for s/he to make up the work with a private tutor, at parental expense.

Drop Off and Pick-up Procedure

Drop Off: Enter the driveway at Little Tor Road and proceed to the lower-level office/school entrance.

Pick Up Car Line Procedure:

Enter the property from the Little Tor Rd entrance and drive past the front of the building. Form a single line and await your turn to drive forward toward the rear door of the building (lower level). Students will be dismissed through the rear door of the building when their vehicle is in view. Teachers will supervise the dismissal. Students whose parents are delayed will wait in the lobby.

Students in Grade PreK-2 will be walked to their car.

If you know in advance that you will be delayed, please call the Makom School Office 845-708-9187 extension 14.

Pick up for our Monthly Shabbat School/Shabbat Mishpacha:

To ensure the safety of all our students, we ask that all parents who are not already in the synagogue for our Shabbat programs, please park and come into the building to retrieve their children.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Requirements

To be eligible for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the child must:

- Be the child of a member/s or member family in good financial standing with no outstanding financial obligations.
- Be the minimum age of 13 for boys and 12 for girls.
- Successfully complete 5 years of Religious School (usually starting in the 3rd grade, Aleph Class) or alternatively attending a Congregation Shir Shalom approved Jewish Day School.
- Learn the liturgical requirements for the service on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

For more information about our B'nei Mitzvah requirements, please refer to the Congregation Shir Shalom Bar/Bat Mitzvah Packets.

Behavioral or Academic Issues

It is important that the time our students spend in Religious School be both positive and productive. If your child is having academic issues, the teacher or Education Director will notify you directly by telephone or in writing. If a student's behavior is disruptive, the teacher will send him/her to the Director and the following actions will be taken:

- The first time a child is sent out of the class, s/he will discuss the situation with the Education Director and will receive a warning if necessary.
- The second time, a call will be made to the parents.
- The third time we will arrange a conference for the parents, teacher, student, Education Director and Rabbi to discuss solutions.
- The fourth time there will be a meeting with the family, the Education Director, the Rabbi, and a member of the Board of Education, so that a course of action can be determined.

In addition, please note that at Congregation Shir Shalom we have a zero tolerance for physical violence or bullying. If a physical or verbal threat is brought to the attention of the teacher, Education Director, or any adult within the building, or if that threat is shared with a parent/guardian outside of the Religious School, and

that parent/guardian contacts the teacher or Education Director, then the following actions will be taken:

1. Verification of the threat
2. A meeting to include the following: Education Director, teacher, the witness(es), accused child with parent/guardian(s).
3. A second meeting with a representative of the Board of Education, the Rabbi, teacher, Education Director, President of the synagogue, and parent/guardian(s) of the accused child.
4. No end of the year awards or bowling and pizza with the Rabbi will be awarded to the student, even if applicable.
5. If the threat is proven to be true, regardless of intent, the following discipline shall be instituted:
 - a. First Offense: In-School Suspension (ISS) for 2 classes
 - b. Second Offense: Out of School Suspension (OSS) for 2 classes
 - c. Third Offense: Expulsion from the Religious School with non-refundable tuition.

Class Parents/Volunteers

It is our goal to have a class parent volunteer for each grade. Those who fill these important positions will be responsible for assisting teachers with special projects and coordinating the teacher's gifts at Chanukah and the end of the year. If you would like to serve as a class parent, please contact the Education Director!

Electronic Devices (Cell Phones and iPads)

We understand the importance of providing an environment conducive to learning. The use of cell phones during school sessions is inappropriate, disrespectful, and disruptive toward teachers and students. If a student uses a cell phone during class time, the cell phone will be taken by the teacher and returned to the child at the end of the session. The Education Director will notify the parents. It is strongly recommended that cell phones should be left at home or turned off during Religious School hours.

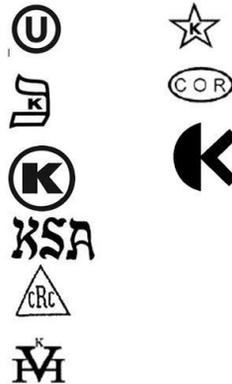
All iPods and similar audio/visual devices must be turned off and put away during school hours unless they are being utilized for class activities. If a student fails to put away his or her device prior to the beginning of class or if the student takes his or her device out during class, it will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

Flyers and E-mail announcements

Flyers will be sent home with students and E-mails will be sent to parents, outlining various activities and programs throughout the year. Please check your e-mail and your children's bags regularly for flyers, as some information will be time sensitive.

Kashrut/Snacks

To ensure that our students have the energy to learn we will provide a snack when they arrive on Tuesday and during the break on Sunday. Students may bring their own snacks as well. To adhere to kashrut and to care for children with allergies, outside food or snacks must show kosher certification (see approved symbols below) and must be nut free.



Mitzvah Club

To encourage our students to become involved in the performance of *Gemilut Chasadim* (Acts of Loving kindness), we have a club for those who perform community service. Students may perform activities from a myriad of mitzvot to earn "Mitzvah hours". Students will be given a list of suggestions of ways to volunteer and may ask the Rabbi or Education Director for further advice or guidance.

Hours will be logged in the "Mitzvah Club Hours Log Sheet", which will be given to each student. Parents/adults are asked to email the Director and teacher on the completion of volunteer activities.

Students who fulfill their Mitzvah Club requirements, as outlined below, will receive an award at the Graduation and Awards Ceremony and will be celebrated in a special party at the end of the school year.

Grades PreK-2	5 Hours
Grades 3-5	10 Hours
Grade 6	15 Hours
Grade 7	18 Hours (May include work for students' B'nei Mitzvah project)

Parental Involvement

As parents, you can help your children become fluent and proficient Hebrew readers by ensuring that your children regularly practice Hebrew Reading. Regular attendance at Shabbat and holiday services is also most helpful.

We are building a warm, comfortable, and positive climate for Jewish experience and Jewish learning for our children. However, we cannot be expected to replace Jewish home experiences. The success of our program depends in large part on whether the children receive positive reinforcement of their Jewish education at home. You can help your children benefit from our program when you:

- A. Help your child understand the importance of attending classes regularly by arranging regular, reliable transportation to and from Makom.
- B. Instill in your child a positive attitude toward Makom through your own personal attendance and participation in special events.
- C. Show parental interest by reminding your child to prepare for Religious School and to bring his/her supplies and completed assignments to class.
- D. Enrich your child's educational experience in the school by sharing with the educator and your child's teacher, information pertaining to his or her special needs.
- E. Make formal religious education relevant to the life of your child by celebrating Shabbat and Jewish holidays and by making your child an active participant in rituals and ceremonies at home.
- F. Help your child supplement the classroom experience by encouraging the reading of Jewish books and listening to Jewish music.

- G. Help your child develop a positive attitude by helping him or her to understand the need for proper attire and good manners in the synagogue and during Religious School.
- H. Make Religious School an exciting family venture by discussing topics covered in the classroom.

To ensure the success of your child's Religious School education, we need your input, feedback, and cooperation. We encourage parents to make an appointment to observe in the classroom, accompany children on field trips, attend family education workshops, and attend Family and regular Shabbat services. If you have any problems at all, feel free to contact the Education Director, Mrs. Bernstein. Do not let problems build. Little problems are much easier to solve than big ones. All parents must have an active dialogue going on with the Religious School staff.

Student/ Parent Responsibilities

Students are expected to ...

- Come to class with the proper materials and assignments completed.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate for synagogue. Please remember that all shoulders and midriffs should be covered, and shorts and skirts are to be an appropriate length. No cleats or wheels are permitted in school.
- All boys need to bring a kippa in their backpack for wearing during prayers.
- Treat the teachers, the Rabbi and Director, their schoolmates, and others in the synagogue building with kindness and respect.
- Behave appropriately while on the synagogue grounds.
- Bring tzedakah to each Religious School class. At the end of the year, each class will determine which charity will receive their tzedakah.

Parents are expected to ...

- Ask your children what they learned in Religious School.
- Ensure that your children practice their Hebrew Reading.
- Help your children prepare questions for "Ask the Rabbi."
- Be actively engaged in the learning process with your children.
- Attend Religious School events with your children.
- Attend Shabbat and Holiday services with your children.

Tefillah Awards

Each class has been assigned grade appropriate t'fillot to learn both during class and services, and through home study. To assist in their learning, all the melodies can be found on the Congregation Shir Shalom website, by going to the tab Welcome to Our Leadership Cantor Barry Kanarek and Prayers and Blessings.

<https://www.nanuethc.org/cantor-barry-kanarek/friday-night-music/>

<https://www.nanuethc.org/cantor-barry-kanarek/shabbat-weekday-morning-service/>

<https://www.nanuethc.org/cantor-barry-kanarek/cantor-kanareks-music-page/>

<https://www.nanuethc.org/cantor-barry-kanarek/haftarah-trope/>

If your child is unable to listen to the files on the computer or put them on his/her MP3 player (iPod), please let Mrs. Bernstein know and she will assist you. Tefillah Awards will be presented at the end of year ceremony to students who reach proficiency on their grade level goals. Students can be tested for prayer competency by their classroom teacher, the Education Director or Rabbi Kurland.

Please note that a list of the Tefillah goals will be sent to students and parents at the beginning of the school year.

Religious School Days and Times

Our schedule of Religious School classes is as follows:

Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st Grade.....Sundays 9:00 AM-11:15 AM

Grades 2-7.....Sundays 9:00 AM-12:00 PM and Tuesdays 4:45 PM-6:30 PM

Reminder: Our monthly Shabbat School/Shabbat Mishpacha takes the place of our Sunday school for that week. Please check the Religious School calendar for more detailed information.

Progress Reports

In November, teachers will invite parents/guardians to have a Zoom meeting to share some thoughts about the students' progress. At the end of December, parents will receive a summary of what the class has learned thus far and a progress report. Progress reports will be sent home again at the end of the school year.

School Closings

Makom School is closed whenever Ramapo Central Schools and Clarkstown Schools are closed. Cancellation information will be announced via email and will be posted on the Congregation Shir Shalom website at <http://www.nanuethc.org/>.

If only one district is closed and the other is open, the Board of Education together with the Education Director, will decide on closing.