



TEMPLE BETH TORAH
MORRIS NIRENBERG RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Special Needs Policy

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*Developed by Special Needs Initiative, 2004
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Commitment

Temple Beth Torah's Morris Nirenberg Religious School is committed to ensuring that all our children achieve Jewish educational success in a personal and meaningful way. This special needs policy reflects an approach in which students are treated with respect and acceptance regardless of their learning style or ability. Individual learning styles and personal differences are accepted and valued. The end result is an enriching educational experience and a culture that fosters mutual respect and a sense of community.

Vision

Our vision is to provide religious education experiences to children with a variety of learning styles in a way that maximizes their personal development of a Jewish identity. Temple Beth Torah Religious School is committed to supporting reasonable adjustments to the learning process in order to promote success. This vision recognizes that, for some students, additional or alternative accommodations within and/or outside the classroom may be necessary.

The Special Education Team

The primary educational team in the Religious School consists of the parents/legal guardians, the teachers, and the Director of Education. Communication, cooperation and collaboration create a successful learning environment subject to reasonable and appropriate limitations.

Parents/Legal Guardians: Parents/legal guardians know their children's educational needs. They play a pivotal role on their child's educational team. Parents/legal guardians' responsibilities in the area of his/her child special education include: ⌚ Request educational adjustments and services through the teacher or Director of Education. ⌚ Provide input and materials relating to their child's learning style and needs. ⌚ Respond to concerns raised by the class teacher or Director of Education. ⌚ Reach agreement with other team members on services and classroom accommodations.

The Classroom Teacher: The classroom teacher is the provider of education for all students. The teachers' responsibilities in the area of special education include: ⌚ Meet with the Director of Education to discuss the student's learning styles and to plan accommodations to be made in the classroom. ⌚ Meet with the special education team regarding specific student's needs. ⌚ Make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to classroom materials and instruction as agreed upon with the parents, the Education Director and other relevant professionals. ⌚ Bring all concerns to the attention of the parents and the Director of Education. ⌚ Reasonably modify class, home assignments and learning experiences to accommodate various learning style. ⌚ Attend training sessions offered to assist with classroom modifications and individual accommodations.

The Director of Education: The Director of Education oversees the teaching staff. The Director of Education's responsibilities in the area of special education include: ⌚ Inform all parents about the opportunities for special education services. ⌚ Encourage all parents to share information about their children's individual learning styles. ⌚ Discuss with parents how the Religious School can best meet the child's individual educational needs. ⌚ Discuss special education needs with the teachers on a regular basis and ensure mechanisms are in place to identify "at risk" children. ⌚ Review shared materials, which may include public/private school documents or recent evaluations. ⌚ Consult with professional and lay staff to formulate educational strategies, accommodations and other modifications to best meet the student's needs. ⌚ Facilitate agreement among parents, teachers and other relevant professionals about the specific adjustments to be made. ⌚ Mobilize resources, including special materials, classroom aides, volunteers and other services, if needed. ⌚ Supervise and review the delivery of special educational services, ensuring that accommodations that have been agreed upon are carried out effectively. Follow-up on student's progress. ⌚ Explore options for special education in-service training for staff.

* The Chair of the Education committee will identify a committee member who will support the Director of Education in these activities.

Education Accommodations

While we strive to accommodate many learning styles within the regular classroom, at times other modifications are necessary to help students. These will vary for each student. The Religious School is committed to planning and making reasonable adjustments to lesson plans, instructional materials, classroom presentations and discussions to promote success for students with different learning styles.

There are times when flexible arrangements may be needed. Educational options can be initiated by parents, teachers or the Director of Education. These accommodations can be implemented for the short or long term at any point during the year. Adaptations will be determined through collaboration with parents/legal guardians, student, Education Director, teacher, and other participants as needed.

The Agreement Process

Collaboration, team work and consensus are essential to the process by which parents/legal guardians and staff reach agreement on needed accommodations. This decision process is to be accomplished in a timely manner, with as much flexibility as possible.

Confidentiality

Special education conversations and processes are to be kept confidential between parents/legal guardians and the education staff who have involvement with the child. These may be discussed with other parties with the parents/legal guardians' consent only. All written documentation and discussion regarding the child are kept confidential.

Parents/legal guardians Rights

Parents/legal guardians should know what special education services the school is planning to provide for their child. Parents/legal guardians have a right to decide whether to accept special education services offered by the school. Parents/legal guardians have a right to meet with the education staff to discuss their child's needs. Parents/legal guardians are strongly encouraged to provide the public school's updated IEP or 504 Plan to the Religious School on a yearly basis.

Contact with Outside Professionals

With written permission from the parents/legal guardians, members of the education staff may consult with outside professionals.

Behavior

Parents/legal guardians may recommend behavior management guidelines and strategies adapted to their child's special education needs. Consideration needs to be given for behaviors that result directly from a disability. The Director of Education and the teacher shall jointly consult on action to be taken in case of behavior problems. The Chair of the Education Committee shall be consulted as necessary.

Staff Training and In-Service Programs

The Director of Education shall arrange for special needs training sessions on a yearly basis. Teachers are expected to participate in these trainings. In addition, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for professional development through Jewish conferences for educators and other sources. The amount of training a teacher is expected to complete will vary based on her/his experience and the needs of her/his students.

Classroom Aides

The purpose of classroom aides is to assist the teacher and students in all classroom learning experiences. Religious School cannot provide a 1:1 aide for any one child. Aides are assigned to assist the class as a whole with the possibility of particular attention provided to those students who require additional support.

Progress Reports and Feedback

The classroom teacher shall be available for conferences with parents/legal guardians as needed. The education staff shall provide feedback and other pertinent information as concerns develop or as the child's progress changes. The teachers shall provide feedback at least two times per year on the regularly scheduled Progress Reports. If more frequent feedback is deemed necessary a special agreement with the parents/legal guardians, teacher and Director of Education will be developed.

Limitations

There may be situations where the specific and challenging needs of a child exceed the services that can be reasonably provided in the Religious School. The Director of Education should bring these concerns to the Chair of the Education Committee. Through conferencing with all relevant parties, an agreement will

be made between the teacher, Education Director, Chair of Education and the child's parents/legal guardians, based on what is best for the child. If appropriate, the Education Committee will review parental requests for services.