



Temple Beth Torah Morris Nirenberg Religious School Handbook



Table of Contents

TOC and Welcome Letter	Page 2
Contact and Communication	Page 3
School vision and philosophy	Page 4
Curriculum	Page 5-7
Hebrew/Prayer Instruction	Page 8
Policies and procedures	Page 9-12
Special needs	Page 11
Behavior	Page 11
General information	Page 13
Family participation and services	Page 13

Welcome Letter from the Education Chairs and School Coordinator

Welcome to the Morris Nirenberg Religious School of Temple Beth Torah!

Our school program strives to support our students in gaining a greater understanding of who they are and the history and tradition that brought them here. The rich curriculum along with the strong sense of community at TBT contributes to the fostering of our students' Jewish identities. In addition to this important objective, we aspire to nurture the connections between the children and their families, with the greater TBT community and with the world around us.

We are incredibly privileged to have the most dedicated, caring teachers who share these goals. Our tight-knit group allows for the building of close relationships between our students and our educators. In addition to our devoted instructors, the Education Co-Chairs, Elyse Banak and Elissa Washburn, collaborate with Nikki Glick, the School Coordinator, to provide support to the school community and to develop programming that encourages a joyful learning experience. Rabbi Mimi Micner is also an essential partner on the Religious School team, as she oversees curriculum and program development. Additionally, we could not succeed in our purpose without the parent input and volunteerism that is a true asset of our community.

As the New Year 5782 begins, we are so happy to welcome back our teaching staff: Beth Ecker will teach Gan/Aleph; Bet/Gimel will be taught by Laurie Canning; Jane Kohuth will teach Dalet/Hey; Vav will be taught by Charli Bernstein; and Jill Metzger will teach the K'Sharim class. Nina Gursha will be supporting our students' Hebrew learning through individual and small group work. We are also thrilled to bring back our monthly preschool program called Tots and Parents Together led by Chris Brumbach. We are incredibly lucky to have this talented group of teachers at the heart of our school.

Temple Beth Torah and its Religious School continue to operate by the essential values - **kindness-connection – community**. Together, students, teachers and parents will bring these values to life through study, action, creativity and play. We want students to understand that Judaism is about how we live our values every day and how we find meaning in our experiences.

We welcome your ideas for enriching the Jewish experience for our students.

Elyse Banak and Elissa Washburn, Education Committee Chairs
Nikki Glick, School Coordinator

Contact Us

Administration

Nikki Glick, School Coordinator	Work: (508)429-6268	nicole.glick@bethtorah.org
Rabbi Mimi Mlcner	Work: (508)429-7151	rabbi@bethtorah.org
Debka Janak, Office Administrator	Work: (508)429-6268	tbt@bethtorah.org
Elyse Banak and Elissa Washburn, Education Co-Chairs		banakse@verizon.net, elissa.hardy.washburn@gmail.com
David Asher, Temple President		david.asher@bethtorah.org
Michael Fishbein, Temple Administrator		admin@bethtorah.org

Teaching Staff

Grade/subject	Name	email
Tots and Parents Together	Chris Brumbach	chris.brumbach@bethtorah.org
Gan/Aleph	Beth Ecker	Aleph1213@gmail.com
Bet/Gimel	Laurie Canning	lauriecanning15@comcast.net
Dalet/Hey	Jane Kohuth	jkohuth@verizon.net
Vav	Charli Bernstein	cbbneb@comcast.net
K'sharim	Jill Metzger	Jmetz30@gmail.com

Communication

Communication is essential to our school community and will be provided via:

- Regular emails from teachers and School Coordinator on student activities
- Religious School newsletters
- Torah Talk updates
- Temple Facebook and Instagram page

Contact the teachers via email with questions, concerns, or comments. In the event that an issue requires additional support, please feel free to contact the School Coordinator, Nikki Glick or Education Co-Chairs, Elyse Banak and Elissa Washburn.

School Vision and Philosophy

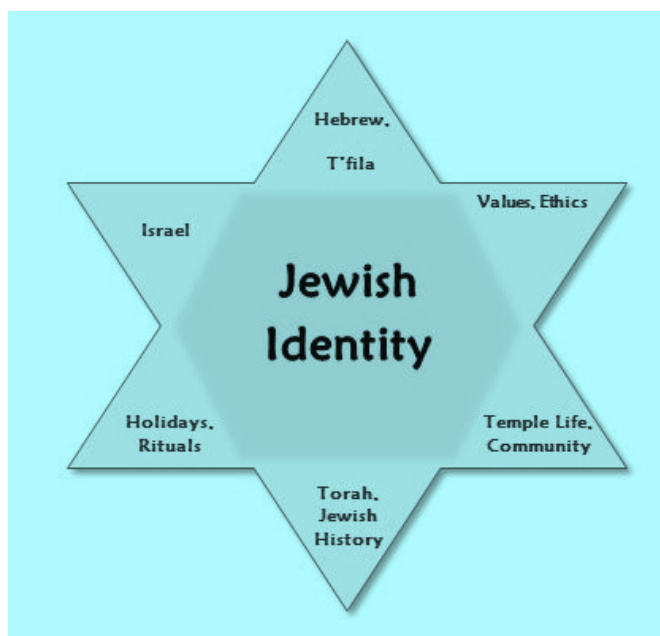
Temple Beth Torah's Religious School Vision

At Temple Beth Torah, we wish to create an ever-growing variety of engaging and well-planned educational programs for students and their families in order to provide a foundation for building strong and lasting Jewish identities.

Philosophy of Jewish Education

We believe that children and adults learn best by doing. Experiential Jewish Education is the process of teaching Jewish life, and Jewish values, by building meaningful Jewish experiences – creating programs that combine traditional methods of text study, learning, and service, with physical and emotional interaction between learners. Experiential Jewish education works to inspire learners to embrace meaningful Jewish lives.

(Adapted from: <http://jewishbeth.torah.org/what-exactly-is-experiential-jewish-education/>)



Curriculum Overview

Our curriculum encourages the development of Jewish identity in a personal and meaningful way.
Please check the Temple website for grade specific curriculum goals.

Hebrew

By the end of my Jewish education at TBT:

- I know that Hebrew is the language of the Torah, most of our prayers and is the spoken language in Israel
- I know that Hebrew is read from right to left,
- I can read and decode Hebrew print with vowels from the Siddur and other text
- With practice, I can read Hebrew from the Torah with no vowels
- I recognize, can say and can translate about 30 Hebrew words
- I may recognize some Trope notes and the sounds they make



Holidays / Rituals

By the end of my Jewish education at TBT:

- I know the background for each Jewish holiday celebration – the story behind it and the reasons for celebrating
- I know how to celebrate each Jewish holiday with its customs and traditions
- I can name all the artifacts and items used for each Jewish holiday
- I can recite the blessings and prayers specific to each Holiday
- I know some songs that are relevant to each Jewish holiday.



Jewish values

- Kavod – respect
- Savlanut – Tolerance
- Kabbalah – Acceptance
- Todah – appreciation, gratitude
- L'shon hara – speech/bullying
- Kehila – teamwork, community
- Tikun Olam – repairing the world,
- Chesed – charity, caring for others
- Vahadarta pnei zaken – caring for elderly
- Mishpacha – family
- Gvura – inner strength
- Savlanut – patience
- Achrayut – responsibility
- Tzedakah – helping the less fortunate



Students in the Hey Class of 5779 organized a temple-wide book drive for students in the Jewish community of Uganda – January 2019

Israel

By the end of my Jewish education at TBT:

- I know what Zionism is
- I understand that Israel is the only Jewish country in the world
- I understand the importance of Israel to the Jews as the Jewish homeland
- I have learned about the conflicts and challenges Israel faces politically and with security.
- I know the basic geography of Israel, its location and neighbors
- I can name main cities and regions in Israel
- I know that Hebrew is the official and spoken language of Israel



Torah/Tanach	Jewish History
<p>By the end of my Jewish education at TBT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand the Torah is central to Jewish life as a book of our Jewish history, Jewish law and is considered to be the word of God • I know the Torah is a parchment scroll, hand written, and is carefully handled • I know that Tanach is made out of three parts – Torah, Prophets and Writings. • I am familiar with many Bible stories • I understand the connection between the Biblical people of Israel and today's Jewish people • I know about major events in modern Jewish history such as the Holocaust, Zionism, and the birth of the state of Israel. 	



Community / Temple
<p>By the end of my Jewish education at TBT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know who the key members of the Temple community are • I understand the function of a Temple as the center for the community Jewish life • I have participated in celebrating holiday festivities/events together with the TBT community • I enjoyed musical T'fila on Sunday mornings • I have attended a variety of Shabbat and holiday services • I have participated in Family education programs • I have taken part of Tikun Olam through various opportunities with the TBT community and in the real world



Hebrew Instruction

Hebrew instruction at TBT religious school begins with our youngest members.

During the early years (**Gan and Aleph**) we introduce Hebrew by:

- * General vocabulary that relates to holidays, Shabbat, and synagogue rituals.
- * Some conversational vocabulary words and terms.
- * First exposure to the Aleph-Bet letters through books, games, crafts, visuals and multisensory activities.
- * Singing Hebrew songs and chanting simple prayers and blessings in Hebrew.

Our students from Bet (2nd grade) to Vav (6th grade) attend sessions on Sunday mornings and Tuesday afternoons. On both days, students practice Hebrew reading skills and prayers in a logical progression during the first part of the session, and learn Judaics through project-based activities in the second part.

During Ivrit (Hebrew) instruction the students are divided into three groups:

- **Bet and Gimel:** Our 2nd and 3rd graders build on previous knowledge and develop the skills of decoding Hebrew letters, vowels and words. As they progress, students study reading and chanting of Hebrew prayers from the Friday Kabbalat Shabbat service.
- **Dalet and Hey:** Our 4th and 5th graders use a variety of materials: text books, siddurim, handouts, audio, video, peer and teacher support to build fluency of reading and chanting prayers. They continue to master decoding skills as well as understand the meaning and purpose of each prayer. Dalet students will learn key prayers from the Friday evening service, i.e. V'ahavta, Kiddush and Aleinu. Hey students will learn key prayers from the Saturday morning service.
- **Vav:** Our 6th graders continue on the path of self-paced prayer study as they also study Haftorah trope and learn the prayers of the Torah service.

Our K'Sharim students (7th graders) practice their Hebrew reading skills by reviewing prayers. This also supports the students in their preparation for their b'nai mitzvahs.

Religious School Policies and Procedures

Religious School Schedule

Gan (K), Aleph (1st), K'sharim (7th): Sundays Only 9:30am - 12:00pm
Bet (2nd grade), Gimel (3rd), Dalet (4th), Hey (5th), Vav (6th): Sundays 9:30am - 12:00pm &
Tuesdays 5:00pm - 6:30pm



Sundays 9:30am-12:00pm In person classes

Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm Virtual classes

Drop Off/Pick Up

- **Student Drop-off:**

- Parents of students in Gan through Gimel can escort their child(ren) to the lobby or to their assigned classrooms.
- Parents of students in Dalet through K'Sharim can drop off at the front door.
- All children who are brought to school prior to class should be supervised by the adult who brings them to school.

- **Student Pick-up:**

- Children will be escorted by their teachers to the portico.
- For safety reasons, the children must see their parents before being allowed to leave.
- In inclement weather, parents may opt to wait in the lobby.

- **Late Arrival/Early Dismissal:**

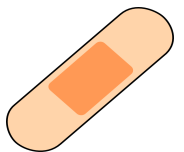
- Students who arrive at school after class begins and/or adults who pick students up early must check in at the office.
- Adults are asked not to go to the classroom to retrieve a child, as it disrupts the class.

Inclement Weather – School Cancellation

- On **Sundays**, school cancellations will be emailed at the earliest possible time to our school families.
- On **Tuesdays**, virtual Religious School classes will not be impacted.
- In the event of cancellation of a school day, make-up days may be added either during the school year or immediately thereafter, at the discretion of TBT.

General policies:

- To contact your child during Religious School hours, please call the Temple office 508-429-6268.
- Students may not leave the school building during Religious School hours without parent authorization.
- Please notify your child's teacher about early dismissal before class begins. A parent or authorized representative must come into the office to pick the student up.
- Students are to come prepared for each class day, equipped with items needed for their Religious School experiences.
- Boys are expected to wear *kipot* at all times inside the Temple. Girls are welcome to wear kippot as well.
- Proper behavior and respect toward teachers, fellow students, education process, and the Temple building are expected at all times.



Medical Emergency

- Some staff members are CPR/first aid trained, and we have a basic first aid kit on the premises.
- However, in the case of a serious medical emergency, the school will contact the child's parent/guardian first. If the parent/guardian is not available, emergency contacts will be called.

School Attendance

- Regular attendance is essential. Not only do we have academic goals to achieve in a limited number of hours, but certain aspects of the religious school experience cannot be duplicated at home. Many of our classes rely on discussions, debates, technological activities, and group work that enrich the student's personal Jewish experiences, and therefore, missed classes cannot always be made up through home assignments.
- Students are expected to arrive promptly and attend regularly. Please contact your child's teacher to notify her of any anticipated absences so plans can be made accordingly.
- For special circumstances, please consult your child's teacher and/or the School Coordinator. Families will be contacted after two consecutive unexplained absences.

Valuables / Devices

- Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used in class unless approved by the teacher for classroom use.
- If your children need to call you, they may use the office phone.
- TBT religious school is not responsible for any loss or damage of such devices if brought to the Temple. Please remember that no cell phones or electronics of any kind are allowed to be used during Shabbat and/or religious holidays.



Food in School

- Only **Kosher** food in unopened packages may be brought into school. Please see the approved Kashrut symbols in the Temple kitchen, in the Temple office and on our website.
- **Gum chewing is not allowed in the school OR sanctuary.**
- Due to the severity of nut allergies, we request that **NO NUT PRODUCTS** be brought into the school.
- If you have any questions about any aspect of this policy, please contact the School Coordinator or Rabbi.

Guests Visitors and Volunteers

- Volunteers are welcome and encouraged!
- Please inquire and/or arrange for opportunities with the classroom teacher and/or School Coordinator.
- A CORI (background check) must be completed for anyone over the age of 16.

Madrichim (Teen Aides)

Madrichim are teens from our congregation who volunteer their time to work at our religious school. They are integrated into the classrooms on a preset schedule. Their role in the classroom varies and may include: assisting with class-wide activities, small group instruction, creating enrichment activities for students and helping in school events. Madrichim are supervised by classroom teachers and are trained by the School Coordinator.

Special Needs

We recognize that children have various learning styles and we strive to be sensitive to your children's needs.

- Please bring any medical, learning or emotional issues to the attention of the School Coordinator so that we may best serve your child.
- We strive to design our learning environment to accommodate all children. Should a special situation develop after the registration form has been completed, please contact the School Coordinator so accommodations can be made as needed. (i.e. illness, death in the family, divorce, changes of address, etc.)
- To receive a copy of our Special Needs Policy, please see the School Coordinator or check our education page on the TBT website at www.bethtorah.org.



Behavior management

We expect that students will follow basic school rules for conduct. Disciplinary action will be implemented as needed for behaviors which include, but are not limited to:

- Interfering with other students' learning
- Theft or vandalism of personal, school, Temple property, or property of a field trip destination
- Any smoking or illicit drug use on Temple premises

The Education Committee has adopted the following procedure for disciplinary action:

- If a behavioral problem arises, student and teacher will confer and seek to resolve the matter. The behavior will be documented.
- If a second disciplinary action is required, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by the teacher, the School Coordinator will be notified and a Student Disciplinary Conduct Form will be sent home for the child's parent(s)/guardian to sign and return to the School Coordinator.
- If a third disciplinary action is required, the School Coordinator will meet with the teacher, student and parent(s)/guardian. The Chairs of Education, Temple President or Vice Presidents may be consulted at any point deemed necessary.

A disciplinary action plan may be implemented at any point in this procedure. If the disciplinary action plan is unsuccessful, suspension or dismissal may result. Restitution will be required for any damage to another child's belongings, school or Temple property and/or property of a field trip destination. In the event that the first incident is serious in nature, the School Coordinator reserves the right to respond and/or contact the parent(s)/guardian without following the above procedure. The School Coordinator may contact the Chair of Education, Temple President or Vice Presidents at any point deemed necessary for purposes of appropriate actions for all involved.

Jewish Holiday programs

Holiday programs take place throughout the school year. Please consult the Temple Calendar on the Temple website www.bethtorah.org, Torah Talk (Temple update emails), and emails from the classroom teacher for updated information.



General information

Library

Our library is an excellent resource of books available to students and families. It contains a wide range of Jewish topics with literature geared toward young children through adulthood.

Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World)

In an effort to teach our children the importance of Tzedakah and to develop a greater sense of community, our Religious School promotes participation in Tikkun Olam projects throughout the year.

Some examples of Tikkun Olam are:

- Temple-wide events promoting activities of social service and charity.
- Donating *tzedakah* throughout the year to charity organizations. Look for notification in the school newsletter for details.

Volunteers

We rely on your help to ensure the success of our school! Volunteering as a room parent, helping with programs, or participating on the Education Committee – **we need you!**

To volunteer, please contact Elyse Banak (banakse@verizon.net), Elissa Washburn (elissa.hardy.washburn@gmail.com) or Nikki Glick at nicole.glick@bethtorah.org.

Student and family participation services and events

- Students have multiple opportunities to lead prayers during Friday evening and/or Shabbat Morning prayer services. Students can lead portions of the service in designated school services, as well as most Friday night or Shabbat services during the year.
- In addition to Shabbat services, we offer other opportunities for families to participate in educational workshops and community events.
- Changes to these dates of student/family services as well as other events may occur as the year goes along – please check your email for reminders for the various events and communication regarding date change via Torah Talk, a designated email, and the school newsletter.



EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AT TBT

Tots and Families – monthly Sunday morning programs for children 1 – 5 years old. Each session focuses on a special holiday or other Jewish event/topic with songs, crafts, games and fun.

Tot Shabbat – Songs, blessings, stories, friends and fun! Led by Rabbi Mimi with support from Beth Ecker and Lauren Passier. This is a warm, wonderful way to celebrate Shabbat with your young children.