



## **Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Centre** **CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM**

### **Religious School**

*295 Main Street, East Rockaway, NY 11518 - Tel: 516.599.2634*

*Email: [rsoffice@herjc.org](mailto:rsoffice@herjc.org) - [www.herjc.org](http://www.herjc.org)*

### **Welcome to Our Program**

As the parent of a Jewish child and member of our synagogue, you understand the importance of a strong Jewish education. At our Religious School, students learn in an environment that will encourage them to be proud members of our Jewish community.

Our curriculum is designed to gradually progress through each grade allowing for review and reinforcement of basic traditions and practices while continually presenting new ideas and materials.

We hope in the end to see emerging young Jewish adults, as confident and comfortable observing Judaism in the synagogue as at home and proud to identify as Jews wherever they may be in the world.

Of course, Jewish education does not – and should not – end with the B'nai Mitzvah celebration. While our formal Religious School program culminates with seventh grade graduation, all students are then encouraged to continue in our school as mentors, classroom assistants and by participating in our Madrichim program. Our goal is to instill in our students a love of Jewish learning and experience that will continue throughout their lives.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about our program, or about your child's progress, please feel free to contact our Religious School Director, Chari Nacson, in our Religious School Office telephone: (516) 599-0424 ext.220 email: [rsoffice@herjc.org](mailto:rsoffice@herjc.org) or her direct email: [rsdirector@herjc.org](mailto:rsdirector@herjc.org)

There will be a few changes this year in our program. The first change you will notice is that our grade levels will correspond to the Hebrew Alef Bet. Therefore Kita Alef will be first grade, Kita Bet second and onward. Building Blocks will remain PreK and K. Also, 7th grade (Kita Zayin) will now meet on Tuesdays from 6-8pm. The Rabbi and Hazzan will be doing more hands on teaching with our Kita Zayin.

Our students will be entering on Sundays at the Gym where they will be met with bagels. Their class will gather in the gym with their teacher and move to the classroom together.

## FORMAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**FAITH** Inspire in our children a positive and abiding faith in Judaism.

**PRACTICE** Provide our children with positive, stimulating and inspiring experiences to empower them in their practice and appreciation of Judaism and what it has to offer in meeting their personal needs.

**IDENTITY** Encourage a sense of community with fellow Jews the world over and identify with our Jewish heroes past and present – aspiring to our shared ideals and devoted to their continuance.

**STUDY** Introduction and study of our primary source documents (our sacred texts) and developing an understanding of the deep connection between Judaism and American democracy.

**VALUES** Developing a commitment to peace and harmony for all people of every color, faith, and background.

**ISRAEL** Understanding and appreciation of our connection to the ancient Land of Israel and how the existence of the modern State of Israel has made our spiritual, political, and cultural connection even stronger.

**CONNECTION** Understanding the insights and principles of Conservative Judaism and developing a deep appreciation of Klal Yisrael (all of Israel).

## School Policies

**Enrollment and Registration.** School registration is accomplished by filling out a membership application and a registration form for each child attending with ShulCloud. Parents of new students should contact the Religious School Office (516-599-0424) or the Main Office (516-599-2634) for registration and membership materials.

**Attendance.** Classes begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings for Building Blocks through 6th grade and 4:15 p.m. on Tuesday afternoons for grades 1st grade through 6th grade and Tuesday evenings at 6:00 for 7th grade. Successful religious education relies in part upon consistent attendance. Please arrange your child's arrival PRIOR to the start of school. Parents are asked to call the religious school office in the event of an absence. Please reserve absences for illness or a family emergency. When your child is absent, he/she should obtain any missed assignments from a classmate.

**Early Dismissal.** Please make every effort to schedule your child's after-school activities on days that do not conflict with Religious School. If a child *must* be dismissed early from

school, please send either a note with your child to be given to the office or, email the office at [rsoffice@herjc.org](mailto:rsoffice@herjc.org) with your child's name and grade in the subject line. If need be, you may call the religious school office and speak directly with the Religious school Director Chari Nacson, or the Religious school administrator, Robin Alpert-Kaye. The parent or approved guardian is requested to wait for the child to arrive at the religious school office where the student will be signed out. **No child will be permitted to leave the building without proper supervision.** Children will never be allowed to wait outside alone for a car. Please understand that your child's safety is our uppermost concern.

**Late Arrival.** Please try to make sure your child arrives at school on time. Should your child arrive late they should report to the religious school office first and confirm his attendance before proceeding to the classroom. This will allow us to adjust the attendance records accordingly. If your child must arrive after the beginning of class, please instruct him/her to enter the class without being disruptive to the class in progress.

**Emergency School Closings.** The closing of Religious School due to inclement weather will always coincide with the Lynbrook, Hewlett, and Woodmere Public School closings. Our school will be using **Whatsapp** for emergency closings as well as a follow-up email. In the event of an emergency or school closing, you will receive a text alert.

Please advise the religious school office as to which parent's number(s) you choose to use so we may set up your class's group. If you wish to have both parents please let us know.

**Textbooks and Supplies.** Textbooks and workbooks will be distributed at the start of the school year. Please make sure that your child treats these books with respect and care. If your child loses or defaces a book you may be asked to replace it. Assigned textbooks should be returned at the end of the year; workbooks may be kept. **Please make sure that your child is prepared for class each day with the supplies he needs to be successful.** Parent involvement in seeing that your child is prepared conveys an important message.

**Homework.** Homework may be assigned each week to reinforce skills learned in class. Prayer practice should be done at home on a regular basis. Please encourage your child to approach their Religious School homework with the same seriousness and thoughtfulness that goes into public school homework.

**Student Behavior.** Appropriate school behavior is expected of all students. Behavior that is disrespectful of school personnel, property, and procedures is unacceptable. Actions that disrupt the school's physical, social, or educational environment demand an immediate and appropriate response. Please sign and return the Derech Eretz contract.

**Cell Phone Policy.** The use of cell phones is discussed in this handbook. Please take the time to read, sign the form, and return it to the Religious School office.

**Tzedakah – Keren Ami.** It is customary for Jews to share what they have with others less fortunate. We would like to instill this value in our students by asking them to contribute to tzedakah (charity) whenever they come to class. We will also be having various mitzvah drives this year. I hope our families will participate.

**Kashrut and Food.** We observe Kashrut at HERJC. Any snack or food that is brought into the school is properly marked with a **K** or **OU** in keeping with the Jewish dietary laws. All snacks will be dairy or pareve. In addition, we maintain a nut-free environment due to allergies. Please check with the office about any specific allergies of classmates if you wish to provide food for a birthday or other celebration. Please send your child with a refillable water bottle if they would like to drink during class.

**Kippot.** **Everyone is encouraged to wear a kippah while at HERJC.** Please make sure to have a place set aside in the school bag for easy access to their kippah. From a hygienic perspective, it is far better to use one's own kippah rather than sharing from a general pool from the school office. We are able to provide a kippah in the event theirs is forgotten but it is to be understood that this is the exception. Please include clips if necessary.

**Parent-Teacher Communications.** We will be using Whatsapp to communicate with our families. Communication is a two-way street; we welcome your comments and feedback as well as questions that arise. Messages will be left for teachers to return at their next attendance at school. Twice a year (in January and May) you will receive written progress reports and there will also be an opportunity for in-school conferences in December. Updates will be sent via email. Please be sure to add the events of the school and synagogue to your personal calendars. In addition, our Facebook page will provide another opportunity for you to see what our school is doing.

**Hebrew Reading Support.** Students who exhibit difficulty with Hebrew language skills will be given 1:1 support once per week. We will continually monitor progress and this will be shared with parents throughout the tutoring. This support is for those students who are struggling and not for those students who have frequent absences. Referrals to private tutoring can be arranged in the event that there is a need.

## Prayer Opportunities

Students of the Religious School gather together during school hours on a regular basis every week to participate in a service consisting of the prayers and melodies they need to be familiar with to be able to participate in the Shabbat morning service.

Participants in our youth choir, *Kinder Kantors*, are often on the *bima* leading our congregation in prayer. Students who study with Hazzan Bonnie Zakarin in our school learn Torah *trope* and are regularly called to Torah on Shabbat morning to be Torah readers.

We have many opportunities to experience the Joy of Shabbat together as a community. Below are just a few of the programs we have to offer. For more information on programming please see our calendar of events!

**Chevra Shabbat** - Lively Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by a pot-luck dinner. For more information or to RSVP contact Rebecca Osder by text: 561-254-6025 or by email: [Rebecca.Youth.Family@gmail.com](mailto:Rebecca.Youth.Family@gmail.com)

**Simchat Shabbat** - Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat featuring instrumentalists from our congregation, followed by a catered dinner by our very own in-house caterer!

**\*\*NEW\*\* Monthly Religious School Shabbat** Each month (please refer to the Religious School calendar) the religious school students with their families are asked to participate in a Friday evening or Saturday morning Shabbat service. The students will be given a role in each of these gatherings and there will be age-appropriate activities to attend as well.

These are so many marvelous ways for the entire HERJC community to enjoy Shabbat together. We urge all of you to encourage your children to participate in all of our prayer and service opportunities! Please come try out our services yourselves and discover what Jews have known for centuries – prayer, particularly on Shabbat, can energize us with restfulness and meaning.

## Curriculum Outline

We at HERJC pride ourselves on giving our students experiences for them to learn and grow on their Jewish journey.

Our philosophy of teaching focuses on a continuous line of learning from Pre-K through 7<sup>th</sup> grade, our goal is that the students will graduate as knowledgeable, well-rounded, fully functional members of our Conservative Jewish community. The topics we focus on include Hebrew reading fluency, Prayer skills and mastery, Jewish Identity, Jewish History and the State of Israel, Mastery of the customs and rituals associated with our Holidays, and a deep understanding of our Torah and its teachings. Each grade will build upon the last adding to their repertoire of Torah stories, Holiday information, and Prayers they will use in the main sanctuary on Shabbat.

As our students get older, we give them more responsibility in their education, offering leadership and community service opportunities.

### **Building Blocks**

Sundays Grades Pre-K & K

Building blocks students are introduced to Jewish values, rituals, God, and spirituality in an exciting hands-on story and music-filled learning experiences. They will use the learning-through-play method of teaching; one example is using costumes and putting on a play to understand a story in the Torah. The students will also have special music time to begin learning our musical traditions. Our Kindergarteners will have a moving up ceremony at the end of the year to mark the end of their two years in the Building Blocks program.

Sunday/Tuesday **Grades 1 & 2**

1st and 2nd grade begin our formal Jewish educational program. Students begin their learning of the Alef Bet as well as the Hebrew language in general, both in vocabulary and decoding. They will begin to learn basic prayers, familiarize themselves with the people and objects associated with the synagogue, learn *Brachot* (blessings) for food and daily life, continue to learn about the Jewish holidays and customs, and begin weekly Torah study.

**Save the date:** June 1, 2025 at 6:00pm - 2nd grade will have their Kabbalat HaSiddur ceremony in which they are presented with their own Siddurim!

Sunday/Tuesday **Grade 3**

Students will continue to develop proficiency in Hebrew reading and continue formal prayer study. They will study the book of Bereshit (Genesis) in more detail along with an entire unit on the 10 commandments. 3rd-grade students will begin building and understanding their Jewish identity by looking at our community and the connections we have to our Jewish heritage, culture, and values. Our students will be doing an ancestry project to look back into their own family histories and will touch upon the major life cycle events in the life of the Jewish people. In addition, the 3rd-grade students will continue their study of the holidays and will take a deeper dive into the customs and reasons why we celebrate them.

#### Sunday/Tuesday **Grade 4**

The Hebrew focus now is on reading fluency while increasing prayer skills. In addition, students will begin to learn about the Friday night Service (Kabbalat Shabbat/Ma'ariv), focusing on V'ahavta and Aleinu. Building Jewish identity continues with the study of sacred time and how time is an important and sacred part of Jewish life. Our 4th-grade students will be diving more into Life Cycle events and the rituals associated with them. In addition, the 4th-grade students will be exploring their connection with God and spirituality on a personal level.

#### Sunday/Tuesday **Grade 5**

The Hebrew focus continues on reading fluency, beginning to learn about the Torah service and Musaf to prepare themselves for their pre-B'nai mitzvah lessons which begin in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Our 5th-grade students will continue the study of building Jewish identity learning about why we are the people of the book and about all of our sacred texts – how our sacred texts define and enrich Jewish life. 5th grade will explore the life cycle events from Baby naming to B'nai Mitzvah, including their first course in Torah Trope! Our 5th-grade students will take a large role in our Religious School Shabbat celebrations as well as Kinder Kantors alongside Hazzan Zakarin.

#### Sunday/Tuesday **Grade 6**

The Hebrew focus for 6th grade is the study of Kabbalat Shabbat and the Friday night service. Our goal is for the students to come on Friday nights and lead parts of our services regularly. They can bring their instruments and voices to join in the festive service every week. 6th grade will continue to learn the life cycle events, focusing on B'nai Mitzvah to Chuppah. Our focus will shift in the second semester to begin learning how to write a D'var Torah and how to break down the Parsha of the week and connect it to the world around us. These creative writing skills will help them prepare for their B'nai Mitzvah D'var Torah which they will be writing the

following year. Our 6th-grade students will be assigned to give the D'var Torah during our Religious School Shabbat mornings.

### **Tuesday Grade 7**

The Hebrew focus is the study of Shabbat liturgy especially focusing on Shacharit, Torah service, Musaf, and the concluding prayers preparing them to lead these prayers for Shabbat morning services. Students will learn about Mitzvot, Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), and social justice, exploring how social action fits into their world today. They will also learn about Europe before the Holocaust, Kinder Transports, and other subjects concerning the Holocaust and antisemitism. They will continue to work on their B'nai mitzvah skills and prayers regularly with Hazzan Zakarin and Rabbi Schlesinger. They will also be working with our ShinShin, an Israeli representative, on a weekly basis to further their knowledge and understanding of the modern state of Israel.

### **Specialty Classes - Chuggim**

All students in 1st grade through 6th grade will have the opportunity to participate once a month in a special program of their choice as a way to celebrate Rosh Chodesh - the new month. The activities will include, Arts and Crafts, Music, Food, and Mitzvah Projects to name a few.

### **Sample Sunday Schedule- Judaics, Holidays, Hebrew**

9:00-9:30 Welcome announcements, music, attendance and bagels

9:30-10:30 - Judaica, Life Cycle, Holidays

10:30-11:30 - Hebrew and Tefillot

11:30 -12:00 - Whole School Tefillah with Hazzan Zakarin (35 mins)

12:00 Dismissal from Winnie the Pooh

### **Sample Tuesday Schedule - Hebrew, Torah, and Israel**

Our Classes will be dedicated to the Hebrew language and the decoding and fluency of reading.



We will assess all of our students on their Hebrew levels when they arrive at HERJC in Sept and again in January. They will be divided into groups based on their reading levels. Each level will consist of students from 2 grades 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 5th and 6th. Our students will have the opportunity to move from one level to the next. Our program is self-paced to allow students to move at the appropriate speed for them. Our goal is to have all students proficient one year prior to B'nai Mitzvah.

4:15-4:30 - Do Now activity to review from the week prior

4:30-5:15 - Hebrew Lesson with their Chevruta to introduce a new topic

5:15 - 5:45 - Activity with our Israeli ShinShin

5:45-6:15 - Torah Studies

### **Sample Tuesday Schedule Kita Zayi (7th grade) -**

#### **Hebrew, Torah, and Israel**

6-7 Pizza and activities with our ShinShin - Israeli Geography, Government, Modern Hebrew, games, and songs.

7-8 This hour will alternate between studying with the Rabbi, the Hazzan, teaching time for the subjects stated above, and special guest speakers.

### **School Brit/Covenant – Derech Eretz Contract**

#### **Derech Eretz**

At Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Centre we strive to create a positive, safe, inclusive, Jewish environment for all children and staff. We ask everyone who is part of our community to conduct themselves in accordance with the value of *derech erez*. We define *derech erez* as the proper way to behave as individuals and as Jews. This emphasizes respect for others, good manners, and good citizenship. Only when all members of our community follow these important values can our program happen in an effective, meaningful, and enjoyable way.

#### **Our Expectations**

At HERJC we expect children to behave with a strong sense of *derech erez* by:

- ✧ Treating one another with respect and kindness
- ✧ Treating our teachers and staff with respect
- ✧ Respecting sacred texts, spaces, and objects
- ✧ Maintaining the property and physical space
- ✧ Demonstrating the understanding of personal space
- ✧ Keeping hands and feet to themselves at all times

To ensure that our youth environment is physically and emotionally safe for all. These values as well as basic rules and expectations will be discussed with children to make sure that everyone is aware of the expectations.

### **Consequences**

It is the responsibility of every member of this community to create a respectful environment where families can connect to one another and learn together.

If a student cannot adhere to these expectations and is having persistent behavioral challenges, consequences will be implemented as follows and at the discretion of the Religious School Director.

1. If a situation is deemed to be disruptive or inappropriate the child will be spoken to and given a warning to change their behavior.
2. If a second situation arises that the child is continuing the unwanted behavior, a phone call will be made to parents by either the teacher or the Director.
3. If a member of our community continues to have difficulty following these guidelines, participants will meet with the Director of Education to create a plan of action to move forward to ensure a positive and fulfilling learning experience for all of our students in the HERJC Religious School community.

**By signing below you indicate that you have read this Behavior Contract and agree to abide by these expectations.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Cell Phone Policy**

We understand that cell phones have great utility, but their use has increasingly become a source of distraction.

HERJC Religious School believes in maintaining a safe and effective educational environment for all of its students.

Upon entering the HERJC building, all students must place their devices in their bookbags on silent. Students may be asked from time to time to use their phones for instructional purposes such as games or research. At all other times, the phones should be put away. If a teacher sees a phone she/he may ask the student to put the phone on the teacher's desk or other safe location until the end of class. There will be no phones allowed in the restrooms.

If a student or parent feels the need to communicate, they are instructed to do so through the Religious School Office (516)599-0424

Please review the policy with your child, have both of you sign and return this form to HERJC by Tuesday **Sep 17, 2024**

**By signing below you indicate that you have read this Cell Phone Policy and agree to abide by these expectations.**

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Parent's signature

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Date

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Student's signature

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Date

## EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD

Student's First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACTS List below the names of two additional people who may be called in case of emergency or if your child is sick in school. CHILD WILL BE RELEASED ONLY TO PEOPLE NAMED ON THIS CARD UNLESS PERMISSION IS GRANTED FROM THE PARENT

First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTH INFORMATION Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Known Diagnoses (please check all that apply) Allergies (select all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma	<input type="checkbox"/> Milk
<input type="checkbox"/> Seizures	<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Nuts (Other Nuts)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish
	<input type="checkbox"/> Soy
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheat
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____

**CONSENT TO PHOTOGRAPH, FILM, OR VIDEOTAPE A STUDENT  
FOR NON-PROFIT USE  
(e.g. educational, public service, or health awareness  
purposes)**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Center Religious School

I hereby consent to the participation in interviews, the use of quotes, and the taking of photographs, movies, or videotapes of the Student named above by.

I also grant the right to edit, use, and reuse said products for nonprofit purposes including use in print, on the internet, and all other forms of media.

I also hereby release the Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Center and its agents and employees from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Parent/Guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_