

Temple Aliyah Religious School

2009 - 2010/ 5770

Parent Handbook

Dr. Beverly Schwartz-Katsh
Director of Education

Rabbi Carl M. Perkins
Congregational rabbi

Gaston Bogomolni
Cantor

Bryan Wexler
Youth Director and Community Educator

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MISSION STATEMENT

Temple Aliyah's Religious School is committed to providing a comprehensive Conservative Jewish education in a positive, inclusive and creative environment. This education reflects and transmits Jewish values with the goal of teaching our children to be active participants in all aspects of Jewish life. In addition to instructing students in the practice of a range of mitzvot, our educational objectives include a sound knowledge of Hebrew and studies in prayer, Torah, history, customs, literature and traditions. We strive to create a next generation of life-long learners who are eager to remain connected to their synagogue, their community, Israel and Jews throughout the world.

TEMPLE ALIYAH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Janet Besser, Chair

Peter Alpert

Sharon Cohen Gold

Caryn Goldberg

Natalie Kadis

Paula Markman

Shari Most

Ellen Pulda

David Rudolph

Alisa Shapiro

Margot Shuman

Steven Spitz

Dina Troen-Krasnow

Dan Winograd – Vice President of Education

ENROLLMENT POLICY

The Aliyah Religious School is committed to educating the children of congregation members in an eight-year curriculum that emphasizes the study of Torah, the Siddur, including the meaning of prayer, customs, and ceremonies, Hebrew reading and language, mitzvot, history, Jewish values and the development of a Jewish identity within the Temple community. We believe that the completion of this program is necessary for children to begin their journey into adulthood as *b'nai mitzvah* and to become active members of the Jewish community.

In order to celebrate a bar or bat mitzvah at Temple Aliyah, children in our congregation are expected to pursue a Jewish education through regular attendance in our Religious School or in an accredited Jewish day school.

There are only two exceptions to continuous enrollment in the regular 8-year religious school program, from Gan through Zayin (7th grade):

Special Needs: Children who cannot be accommodated at Temple Aliyah because of special needs may, at the discretion of the Director of Education and in consultation with the Rabbi and parents, pursue their religious education through an alternative program. This program will be under the supervision of the Director of Education.

Secular Day School: Children attending private schools that have a required after-school program must complete their religious education through tutorial means. The tutorial instructor and the curriculum must be approved by the Director of Education. Parents are responsible for payment of all tutorial costs. A discounted tuition, to be determined by the Treasurer, may be assessed. **No student, beyond Aleph, may attend Religious School only once a week.**

SPECIAL NEEDS

The Aliyah Religious School is an inclusive environment, where students with a variety of abilities, orientations and needs can receive a quality Jewish education in an environment that is respectful of differences. There are two professionally trained and experienced special educators on staff—Dr. Bev and Marion Green. If a student has an IEP or receives any accommodation in public school, this information should be shared with Dr. Bev so that she can help the classroom teacher to meet the student's needs appropriately. Any parents who are concerned whether Aliyah Religious School is the proper placement for their child should call Dr. Bev directly.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We encourage parents to be involved in their children's education here at Temple Aliyah. Parents and faculty must work as partners in transmitting our tradition and its values to our children.

During the course of the year, there will be opportunities for parents to participate in special activities, such as Back-to School Day, Mitzvah Fair, Class Services, and Family Education programs, and we invite and encourage your involvement.

From time to time, we may also solicit volunteers to help with programs. Parent volunteers enhance the Religious School experience and send a clear message that this learning is important to the whole family.

HOME – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Use of Email: In an effort to provide timely correspondence with families and also to be fiscally responsible and environmentally friendly, the Religious School communicates almost exclusively via e-mail. Please check your email regularly for communication directed to your child's grade

Weekly Newsletters: Dr. Bev sends a weekly e-mail called the *Temple Aliyah Education News – Hadashot* every Thursday. We encourage you to [read this weekly email](#); it will contain the most updated calendar and other important and timely messages

Parent Contact: If you have a concern or a question, please feel free to talk with your child's teacher after class or you can also leave a message in the office for the teacher to call or email you. Dr. Bev is also available by phone or email.

Progress Reports: Progress reports will be mailed home at the end of the first term (end of January) and at the end of school.

A parent-teacher conference with teachers and/or the Director of Education may be initiated by parents at any time by calling the school office. The staff is always eager to answer questions about students' work.

DEREKH ERETZ

Our tradition promotes courteous, respectful behavior, called *derekh erez*, toward all others. Showing *derekh erez* reflects the Jewish view that every individual has been created in God's image and is unique and special.

The Aliyah Religious School strives to promote such behavior among students and teachers. Such an attitude toward others means respecting each other, accepting individual differences, being thoughtful and kind and caring about the other's feelings.

We ask parents to help us to promote the value of *derekh erez*.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The overall goal of the Religious School is to prepare students to be knowledgeable, caring and participatory adult Jews, ready to take their place as eager members of the various Jewish communities they will encounter. The three pillars of Jewish life Torah and study, Jewish prayer and Jewish values and actions are the foundations of our curriculum.

Gesher-Bet (Kindergarten-Grade 2): introduction to Jewish life, familiarity with Shabbat and holiday observances, simple prayers and blessings, Torah stories, familiarity with Israel and Hebrew language and reading, music.

Gimel (Grade 3): Hebrew reading, prayers from the morning service, major themes from first two books of Torah, customs and holidays, Israel geography, music.

Dalet (Grade 4) - Vav (Grade 6): The three main curricula areas for these grades are Tefillah (with Hebrew reading), study of books of the Torah and Hebrew language. In each grade, different sections of the Shabbat morning service are studied and students learn to read and chant these prayers. The Dalet class studies the book of *Genesis* in depth; Heh studies *Exodus* and Vav studies *Leviticus*. Each year, modern Hebrew is studied with increasingly complex vocabulary and grammar. All three grades engage in study of Israel, a music program with the Cantor, social action activities and Family Education programs.

Zayin (Grade 7): The 7th grade year is a special one because of the students coming of age as adult Jews. A curriculum developed at Aliyah of mitzvot, ethics and values, including active engagement by the students in a variety of Jewish experiences, is a center-piece of the year. The students also study modern Jewish history, parts of the *Tanakh* (Bible) beyond the Five Books of Moses, and the organization and content of the Minḥa and Ma'ariv services.

FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In every grade, special opportunities for parents to learn with, teach and share with their children are offered. The goals of our Family Education programs are to empower parents with Jewish skills and knowledge so that they feel comfortable as Jewish educators of their children. A complete list of all Family Education programs can be found in the congregational Program Guide.

Below are listed the programs that are being offered in conjunction with a specific class of the Religious School. Having a parent participate in these programs is essential and students derive a great deal from these experiences. Please check special emails and the weekly newsletters for details.

Temple Aliyah Religious School Family Education Programs

2009 – 2010

Friday, October 23	Vav & Zayin Family Service	6:15
Sunday, October 25	Zayin Family Brunch & Discussion – Comm Bldg	10:30-12:30
Friday, November 13	Dalet & Heh Family Service	6:15
Saturday, November 14	Vav Parents Invited to Youth Svc	11:00–12:00
Sunday, November 15	Heh Family Ed #1 – Torah	9:00 – 10:30
Sunday, November 22	Bet Family Ed #1 – Reading Jewish Books	10:30–12:30
Sunday, November 6	Dalet Family Ed – Hebrew Language	9:00 – 10:30
Sunday, December 13	Family Hanukkah Celebration K - 5	9:45 – 10:30
Sunday, January 10	Gimel Family Ed – How We Hear God	9:00 – 10:30
Sunday, January 10	Zayin Fam Ed – ADL: Confronting Anti-Semitism	10:30–12:30
Friday, January 22	Gesher – Gimel Service	6:15
Sunday, January 24	Yom Camp	10:00–12:00
Sunday, January 31	Heh Family Ed #2 Jewish Prayer	9:00 – 10:30
Sunday, February 7	Gesher Family Ed–Hathalat Halimudim Ceremony	9:00 – 10:30
Sunday, February 7	Bet Family Ed #2 – The Synagogue	10:30–12:30
Sunday, March 7	Vav Family Ed #1 Pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah Series	10:30-12:30
Saturday, March 13	Dalet Class Leading Youth Services	11:00-12:00
Sunday, March 14	Vav Family Ed #2 Pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah Series	10:30-12:30
Sunday, March 21	Vav Family Ed #3 Pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah Series	10:30-12:30
Saturday, May 1,	Vav Class Service – In Sanctuary	9:30 – 12:00
Saturday, May 1	Heh Class Service – Youth Service	11:00–12:00
Sunday, May 9	Zayin Siyum Halimudim	9:30
Sunday, May 16	Gimel Kabbalat Siddur	9:30

SPECIAL CLASS AND MILESTONE EVENTS

In some grades we celebrate specific milestones in a child's education. Below are the programs for this year.

Hat'halat Ha-Limudim (Beginning of Learning)—This is a fairly new ceremony welcoming our Gesher students into the joy of Jewish learning. (February 7, 2010)

Zayin Siyum Ha-Limudim (Ceremony of completion)—This ceremony marks the successful completion by the students of their studies here at Aliyah and their promotion to Prozdor or a Jewish high school. (May 9, 2010)

Gimel Kabbalat Siddur (Receiving the siddur) – This ceremony recognizes the special achievements of the Gimel (grade 3) students in learning to read prayers in Hebrew. Students will lead some of the prayers and each student receives an inscribed copy of the congregational siddur, *Sim Shalom*. (May 16, 2010)

MARKING A SPECIAL OCCASION

If you would like to show your appreciation to one of your child's teachers, celebrate a bar/bat mitzvah, remember a birthday, wish someone a Happy New Year or Happy Hanukkah, please consider making a donation to the Religious School Fund. These funds are used to buy equipment that we do not have money for in our budget and for special programs such as Yom Camp. You can do this online through the Temple website (www.templealiyah.com) or by filling in an envelope in the office. We really appreciate this extra help during these difficult budgetary times.

DRESS CODE

The Religious School is sacred space. Out of respect for what we study here and the values we are trying to communicate, students should dress appropriately. In particular, girls should not wear tank tops, halters or have bare midriffs. Boys should not wear sleeveless shirts. Neither boys nor girls should wear very short shorts or tee shirts with suggestive or offensive wording.

Boys are required to wear a *kippah* at all times in the building. Although we do not require them to do so, we encourage girls to wear *kippot* as well. At the beginning of the academic year, each student will receive a white *kippah* to decorate and personalize. Your child is also welcome to bring a *kippah* from home. Beautiful *kippot* can be purchased from the Sisterhood Gift Shop or at local Judaica stores. **Baseball caps are not appropriate as head covering in class or synagogue.**

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Students who do not conform to appropriate classroom behavior will receive a warning from the teacher. After receiving two warnings, any student who continues to disrupt a class will be sent to the Director of Education. If this occurs twice in the school year, the parents will be notified and a meeting with the Director of Education, the student and the parents will be scheduled. If this happens a third time, the student may not return to class unless accompanied by a parent for the next two weeks of school.

If there is continued disruption by the student, suspension for the remainder of the year may be imposed by the Director of Education. **Tutoring, at the parents' expense and without tuition refund, will be required in order for the student to qualify for bar/bat mitzvah.** Re-admission the following year will be allowed only after a conference with the student, parents, Rabbi and Director of Education.

CLASS TIMES

Gesher	Sun	9:00-10:30			
Bet	Sun	10:30-12:30	Wed	3:30-5:00	
Gimel, Dalet, Heh	Sun	9:00-10:30	Mon	3:30-5:30	Wed 3:30-5:00
Vav	Sun	10:30-1:30	Wed	5:00-7:00	
Zayin	Sun	10:30-12:30	Wed	5:00-7:00	
Hebrew Elective	Sun	12:30-1:30			

ATTENDANCE AND EARLY DISMISSAL

Students are **required** to attend class on a regular basis. Parents of a student with excessive absences will be notified. If absences continue, the student may be required to be tutored at the parents' expense in order to complete the school year and be eligible for bar/bat mitzvah.

Bringing a child late or taking a child out of school early is extremely disruptive. We ask parents to be sensitive to the needs of other students who find such disruptions interfere with their learning.

If early dismissal cannot be avoided, **the dismissal time must coincide with the break between classes: Mondays at 4:30; Wednesdays at 4:15 and 6:00; and Sundays at 9:45 and 12:00.** A parent's note indicating early dismissal must be given to the teacher. The student **should be picked up by a parent or designee at the school office.**

Any Zayin student with less than 70% attendance will not be eligible to go up to the bimah to receive a certificate of completion at the class Siyum in May.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Members of the School Committee formulate the class lists. Each year classes are designed to reflect a balance of boys and girls and to combine students from the various schools represented in our community. Whenever possible, students will be grouped with at least one other student of the same gender from their secular school.

We are sorry but we cannot grant requests for placement with a specific classmate or teacher.

HOMEWORK

Homework is necessary for real learning to take place. The assignment of about 10 minutes of activities should be expected on a regular basis. All teachers will require a parent's signature to indicate that the parent is aware of these assignments and they have been completed. Students should also allot 5 to 10 minutes **every day** for practice of Hebrew reading if that is not part of the night's homework. Reading should be done from the special siddur pages that the students have in their binders or from their Hebrew textbook.

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Parents are required to pay a book and supply fee in addition to their child's tuition. The fee is for texts and workbooks, which will become the property of the student. In addition, some books will be on loan to the student. We ask that these books be treated with care and respect.

The fee also covers materials such as loose-leaf binders, folders, paper, pencils, markers and other art materials, photo-copied pages used in the classes for reading, as well as the cost of holiday celebrations and the annual class trip to the Jewish Community Center Art Department to make a ceramic art project.

TZEDAKAH

One of the goals of the Religious School is to teach students to perform mitzvot, one of which is giving *tzedakah*. Students will discuss and select recipients of their class donations. **Sunday is Tzedakah Day** so please help your child to remember to bring some of his/her own money to donate.

PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF

For reasons of safety, Gesher and Bet students must be escorted to and from their classrooms. Parents and caregivers should park their cars and come into the building. We also ask that children not be left unattended before 3:15 in the afternoon because teachers need the time before classes to set up their rooms.

For Gimel through Zayin students, parents should follow the established traffic pattern (Maps are available in the office) : Upon entering the Temple driveway, make an immediate **right** turn into the parking lot and follow around the tree belt, before lining up along the sidewalk. Students can be picked up and dropped off between the two sets of building doors only. Please follow instructions given by teachers in order to insure the safety of all of the children.

If you live near the synagogue and want your child to walk home, we must have a **dated letter of permission** on file.

SNACKS, CLASS PARTIES, ETC.

Students are allowed to eat snacks before class and during designated snack and lunch times. All food and drinks brought into the building must be certified kosher, from an approved bakery, or in a package marked with an approved symbol of kashrut. A list of symbols of kashrut can be found on the bulletin board outside the main office. The letter **k** alone is not an approved symbol.

We ask students **not** to share snack because of food allergies.

Please remember that because of severe and dangerous allergies, no products containing peanuts, peanut oils, tree nuts, nut oils, sesame seeds or sesame oils (including hummus) may be brought into our building. Please check all ingredients very carefully to assure safety for all our students.

SNOW DAYS

Temple Aliyah will cancel Religious School whenever classes are cancelled for the Needham Public Schools. If a decision is made to cancel school during a day in which public school is already in session, public schools will be notified and asked to make an announcement. **If your child carools with someone else, you need to discuss with your child what to do in the event that a Religious School cancellation is announced.** We will try to reach parents of non-Needham students in this situation. Please make sure that we have your correct emergency numbers.

Information about our school cancellations can be heard on WBZ 1030 AM, (Sundays only), WRKO 680 AM, and Needham Public Access. PLEASE DO NOT CALL the Temple because this ties up the lines and makes it difficult for us to notify schools.

SHABBAT SERVICES

One of the goals of our Religious School is helping students to learn to pray with understanding and with *kavannah* (spirit), and to feel comfortable in a Jewish service. In order to achieve this goal, we have integrated prayer study and practice into our curriculum.

Our Youth Shabbat Services are an integral part of our educational program. The Religious School experience helps students to learn parts of the Shabbat service. We cannot, however, teach everything during class time, nor give enough practice time. Much more prayer learning and an opportunity to practice and to lead are available in our weekly Youth Services.

It is the policy of the School Committee that students should attend a minimum of 10 Shabbat Youth Services at Temple Aliyah during the year.

During the school year, we offer three children's/youth services each Shabbat from 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (excluding vacation weeks). They are:

1. Geshet Shabbat, for kindergarten and first grade students, is a kid-friendly experience for students and their parents. This service will introduce *davening* and the cycle of weekly Torah portions in story form and is led by Jessica Levine.
2. The 2nd- 3rd grade service is led by our teacher Mr. Lichtman and is geared to the developmental needs of second and third grade students.
3. The Daled-Heh-Vav service is run by the very popular Josh Edelglass. This 4th-5th-6th grade service offers the student a chance to practice leading in small groups, some Torah discussion and some educational games.

On the first Shabbat of the year and on the first one each month, we have Shabbat Haverim (Friends' Shabbat). There is an opportunity for students to socialize with peers from 10:00 to 11:00 am and then attend the Youth Services from 11:00 to 12:00. At 12:00, there is a special Kiddush, usually including an ice cream party, for all students in attendance.

Temple Tots sponsors Shabbat Yeladim, usually offered twice a month, for infants, toddlers and preschool age children and their parents.

All children are invited to join the congregation for the conclusion of the sanctuary service and for Kiddush.

Attendance is taken at Youth Services but we also encourage parents to maintain their own records and to advise the office of attendance at other synagogue services by sending a note.

Prizes are given three times a year for attending Shabbat services. Only students who have attended Shabbat services will be eligible for the Marcia Levin Awards at the end of the school year (see next page).

AWARDS

At the conclusion of each year, the Marcia Levin Memorial Award is given to one outstanding student from each class, Gimel through Vav. Previous recipients of the award are not eligible to receive a second award.

There are also several awards given at the Zayin Siyum at the end of each year. A special Marcia Levin Award and Scholarship to Prozdor is given to one member of the Zayin class who has shown excellent all-around academic work and who will be pursuing continued Jewish education.

The Diamond Family Hebraic Award, a scholarship towards Prozdor tuition, is given each year by Ruth and Ben Diamond in honor of their children, to a Zayin student who has demonstrated a love for Jewish learning and achievement in Hebrew language.

The Rick Park Memorial Award, which also carries a scholarship, is given by the Temple Men's Club to a Zayin student who shows fine academic work and leadership.

The Cheryl Kramer Memorial Award given by the Temple Sisterhood and Rick Kramer to a student who has demonstrated perseverance and consistent effort. This award carries a scholarship to the Prozdor High School.

At the Zayin Siyum, awards are also given for outstanding mitzvah work, outstanding progress, and for consistently demonstrating *derekh erez* (courtesy and respect) to fellow students and staff. These awards carry a gift certificate.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

To be eligible for bar/bat mitzvah, all students must have attended and successfully completed Religious School for a minimum of 5 years or the equivalent. All students are expected to complete their Zayin year successfully, regardless of their bar/bat mitzvah date.

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

For the past seventeen years, Temple Aliyah has participated in the Passport to Israel Program, which is sponsored by the Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP). This program allows the children of our Temple members to save for an educational trip to Israel during their teenage years. Participation in the program begins at either the Gimel or Zayin class level. Parents pay a predetermined amount of money to CJP through Temple Aliyah each year for three or seven years, depending on the date of enrollment. The payments made by the parents are matched by a combination of Temple Aliyah and CJP funds and accrue interest. The total amount contributed by the parents, Temple Aliyah and CJP, which usually exceeds \$2,000 by the time the student completes tenth grade, can be applied towards an educational trip to Israel, of which there are many to choose.

Remember—Dr. Bev’s door is always open for questions and queries. We want you to be our partners in Jewish education.

Temple Aliyah

664 Central Avenue Needham, MA 02492

781-444-8522 Fax: 781-449-7066

www.templealiyah.com