
SYRACUSE HEBREW DAY



PARENT and
STUDENT
HANDBOOK

ADMISSION

For Kindergarten admission, a child must be five years old as of December 1st of the entrance year. Students entering grades 1-6 must submit records from their previous school. An application form, a \$750 deposit and a copy of the child's birth certificate should be submitted to the school office during the year preceding Kindergarten admission or as early as possible. To ensure busing, parents must have applied for admission by March 15, unless they are just moving into the area.

AFTERSCHOOL

Please use the form provided to let us know your child's afterschool plans. Please be sure to notify us should these arrangements change.

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are held every Friday at 11 a.m. in the auditorium. They give our students an opportunity to perform in front of their peers, to learn to be a good audience, to see special programs, to sing, and to learn about holidays, history and culture. Parents are welcome to come to assemblies whenever they wish. Class assemblies that are of special interest to parents are announced in the newsletter or through invitations created by the children for their parents. Assemblies where students perform are filmed and posted on our private youtube channel for viewing at home or to share with out of town friends and family.

ATTENDANCE

According to New York State law, children are required to attend school every day. The only legal excuses for absence or tardiness under Education Law are sickness, sickness or death in family, impassable roads, weather making travel unsafe and required presence in court. All other absences are illegal.

Any interruption in a child's attendance will have an effect upon his/her progress in school. If your child will be absent from school, please call the office at 446-1900 prior to 8:30 a.m. to notify us of the reason for absence. Upon return to school, New York State law requires a written excuse. When a child is absent and has missed work, the teacher will contact the parent and will send home missed assignments, if the teacher considers it necessary. For extended absences due to illness, teachers will make appropriate arrangements. Children who are absent for a period of time greater than a week must have a physician's note stating that the child is able to return to school.

Please do not ask that your child be dismissed during school hours unless it is absolutely necessary. Medical/dental appointments should be made after school hours whenever possible. If you must take your child out of school, please come to the office and sign him/her out. When your child returns, you should bring him/her to the office and sign back in. This procedure assures the security of our children.

BEHAVIOR

A goal of the Day School is to have students become responsible, self-motivated and independent learners. Therefore, students are expected to:

- Assume responsibility for their own actions
- Respect the rights and property of others
- Solve problems in an appropriate way
- Treat others as they wish to be treated
- Support everyone's right to learn
- Take pride in their classroom and school appearance
- Share responsibility for maintaining a caring atmosphere



There is also a need for specific rules for particular areas of the building. They help ensure a safe and proper learning environment for everyone.

Lunchroom Rules:

1. Take seats upon entering the cafeteria
2. Stop talking when lights are turned out
3. Remain seated when eating
4. Keep own area clean
5. Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal language
6. Include everyone at your table in conversations
7. Bench respectfully and appropriately

Gym/Recess Rules:

1. Use equipment safely
2. Share equipment
3. Stay within school boundaries
4. Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal language
5. Show good sportsmanship

Bathroom Rules:

1. Keep bathroom clean and quiet
2. Respect others' right to privacy
3. Always take a bathroom pass

Assembly Rules:

1. Sit quietly in seat
2. Listen to the person on the stage
3. Applaud to show appreciation

Hall Rules:

1. Walk quietly in the halls
2. Always have a PASS
3. Go to and from destination promptly

To help maintain and enhance the positive learning environment at SHDS, students are NOT ALLOWED to:

- Bring toys or electronics to school (unless asked to do so by a teacher)
- Chew gum in school
- Wear hats in school
- Leave shoelaces untied

BUS SAFETY

Each year school children are killed in school bus accidents. Most of these fatalities involve children who are run over by their own school bus or by a passing motorist. The Day School makes special efforts to educate our students about school bus safety, but parents have a vital role to play. The following points should be stressed to your children:

1. Look at the driver's FACE from in front of the bus before crossing;
2. Look BOTH WAYS while crossing in front of the bus;
3. Stop mid-way to check for oncoming traffic;
4. Carry books in backpacks, not loose in their arms.

Also, please remember: NEVER EVER pass a school bus with its lights flashing (this includes the loading zone in front of SHDS.)

CALENDAR

The Day School calendar, which is determined by the Head of School and teachers, closely parallels those of area schools, with the exception that all Jewish holidays are observed. The calendar is finalized and given to parents as soon as public school calendars are made available to us. A copy of the calendar is sent to parents as soon as it is finalized.

CELEBRATIONS/PARTIES

A lovely way to celebrate birthdays at school is through PTO sponsorship of a party or Friday kiddush in your child's class. Arrangements **must** be made through PTO to have a birthday celebration in your child's class.

As a community day school, we serve families whose religious practices span a wide range. In order not to exclude classmates of your child(ren) from participating in any parties you plan, it is requested that parties not be held on Shabbat or Jewish holidays and that foods served should come from stores under Kashrut supervision. In addition, we ask that invitations to parties be mailed to students' homes. However, if all children in the class are invited, invitations may be passed out in school. If you have any questions, please call the office.

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

The Day School sponsors a Chess Club, STEM Club, Art Club, Chorus, Israeli Dance, Shabbat Committee, Student Council, Club 56 and Drama Club during the lunch/recess hour. In addition, each year students in grades 2-6 also have the opportunity to participate in a full-scale dramatic production which has after-school practices. Schedules for all clubs and activities are distributed to students and posted in the school newsletter.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication is a foundation for a good relationship. The Day School publishes a weekly newsletter for parents to keep them up-to-date on in-school activities. The school's formal Communication Policy states: It is crucial that we maintain open lines of communication in order to best meet the needs of the children and for the most effective operation of the school. To this end, parents should first speak to their child's teacher when they have a particular question relating to the class. If they feel their concern has not been resolved, they should then contact the Head of School. If the parent feels that further discussion is necessary, the Head of School will refer the parent to the chairperson of the Board of Education.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are an important means of communication at the Day School. Curriculum Night for all grades is held the second Monday after school begins in the fall. Conference Week for all grades coincides with Veterans Day, at which time the first report card for grades 2-6 is distributed. An optional conference period is scheduled in March and individual conferences with parents are also held as needed.

CURRICULUM

The Day School's General Studies curriculum parallels or exceeds that of area public schools. The General Studies curriculum includes reading, language arts, spelling, penmanship, math, science and social studies as well as instruction in technology, music, art and physical education. The Judaic curriculum at the Day School covers four major areas: Hebrew language, Chumash (Bible), Dinim (laws and customs), and Jewish Social Studies. In-depth curriculum guides are available at www.shds.org

DISCIPLINE

While our high expectations result in few disciplinary issues, at times it is natural for children to push boundaries. When students are having difficulty following classroom or school rules, we make every effort to address the behavior in class with the classroom teacher. If redirection and/or a change of seating do not address the issue, a child may be asked to leave the room for a short time (3-5 minutes) under the supervision of a staff member to "take a break." Any repeated instances of misbehavior will result in a consultation with the Head of School and a call or email home to parents. In cases where a child is having regular difficulty following school rules, a personalized behavior plan may be used to help the child achieve success in school.

DISMISSAL

All children taking a school bus home are checked off before they are allowed to board. If your child is not taking a bus on a regular basis, please be sure to fill out the appropriate form and send it to the office. If you want to change a bus schedule on a given day, please call the office before 2:45. Students who attend the JCC Afterschool program will be checked in by JCC staff at dismissal. Students who are being picked up will exit the building and walk down the front stairs. **ALL PARENTS MUST PARK IN THE LOWER LOT TO PICK UP STUDENTS.** Please be sure to walk toward the building so that the staff member dismissing can see you. **NO STUDENT WILL BE DISMISSED TO A PARKED CAR OR TO A CAR THAT PULLS UP IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING.** For additional safety, please be sure to drive slowly through parking lots and be prepared to show identification to SHDS and/or JCC staff.

DRESS CODE

SHDS is a vibrant learning institution. We believe in hands-on, project based learning. Students should come to school wearing clean and comfortable clothes that are easily laundered. On PE days, students should wear sneakers and an SHDS t-shirt and may bring an extra shirt to change into after class. Parents and students should use their best judgement as to what clothing is appropriate school attire. However, please be sure that students are prepared to go outside for recess each day from Monday through Thursday. Therefore, shorts on cold days or flip flops or loosely structured footwear should be avoided.

On Fridays, there is no recess and children should dress to welcome Shabbat. Again, please use your best judgement to decide what constitutes Shabbat dress in your family, but please try and avoid jeans and sweatpants on Fridays.

EMERGENCIES

All children enrolled in the Day School must have an emergency information card on file at the office. The school has a full-time registered nurse on staff and is equipped with necessary first aid items for minor injuries. In case of a serious injury, parents are notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, the family doctor will be consulted. Following this, a relative or friend, authorized by the parents, will be contacted. Also, please be sure that the office is aware of any special health problems. In the event a child becomes ill at school, his/her temperature will be taken. If there is evidence of fever, arrangements will be made to send the child home. No medication whatsoever will be given unless there is written authorization by BOTH the child's physician and parents on the appropriate form.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE DRILLS- SHDS holds 10 fire drills each year to best prepare our students and staff on exiting the building quickly in the event of emergency.

EVACUATION- In the event that an outside threat calls for us to leave the JCC campus completely, students and staff will follow JCC Evacuation procedures and be safely transported to an off-site shelter. This procedure was developed in cooperation with Local and State Law Enforcement, the JCC, and the Day School. Evacuation will be practiced once per year.

SHELTER IN PLACE- This emergency procedure is called when there is a threat in the community or neighborhood that is NOT perceived to threaten the interior security of the JCC or Day School. During a Shelter in Place, students continue working uninterrupted, but no one may enter or leave the building. Students are also escorted to restrooms. Shelter in place will be practiced once per year.

LOCK DOWN- The most serious of our emergency procedures, a Lock Down is called when there is a perceived threat INSIDE our building. Teachers will lock doors, pull shades, and gather students in a pre-determined "safe space" within the classroom that is out of sight from the hallway. This drill will be practiced once a year.

Teachers and staff are trained extensively on these and other security procedures regularly throughout the year.

IN THE EVENT THAT ANY EMERGENCY PROCEDURE IS ENACTED, THE HEAD OF SCHOOL WILL BE IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS THROUGH THE REMIND APP. Please help us maintain calm and control during these times by waiting for instructions- showing up at school will only lead to confusion and chaos for law enforcement involved.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are part of our curriculum. A field trip permission form is included in your packet and must be completed so that your children may go on class trips. Notification of upcoming field trips is given in the weekly newsletter and/or directly from the classroom teacher.

FOOD

To ensure that the kashrut of the building is not compromised, lunches and snacks brought to school must be dairy or parve. No meat or products containing meat may be brought to school. Those eating meat provided through the school's lunch program must bring a parve (non-dairy) dessert from home. Please do not send in food for your child's classmates. We must be very aware of food allergies and kashrut at all times. All food provided by the school will have been thoroughly checked to ensure that all students may safely eat it. If you have any questions, please consult the Head of School. The Day School provides an optional food and drink service as a convenience for parents. Forms are provided to sign up for these items.

In addition to Jewish dietary restrictions, the Day School follows the standards set by the Onondaga County Health Department to minimize the spread of Hepatitis A and other diseases in the school setting.

Teachers emphasize the importance of personal hygiene (particularly handwashing after using the bathroom and before handling or eating food.) In addition, there is NO sharing of individual food and beverage items at school. We also have children with severe food allergies – please emphasize to your child that NO food should be shared.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising activities are vital to the financial well-being of our school. In addition to PTO fundraising efforts, the Day School holds a Celebration event each year. This event, in conjunction with our Annual Campaign, allows us to maintain a balanced budget and remain a vibrant learning institution. Parent involvement and volunteerism are crucial to the success of fundraising endeavors.

GOVERNANCE

The Syracuse Hebrew Day School is governed by a Board of Directors; approximately 1/3 of which is elected annually for a three year term by parents and current members of the board at the annual meeting each spring. The board in turn elects a President, Vice President, Treasurer and a Secretary. The Board is responsible for the overall direction of the school and, in particular, for engaging its staff and providing for its fiscal needs.

There are four standing committees of the Board of Directors: Governance, Finance, Head of School Support and Evaluation, and Development. In addition to these committees, ad-hoc committees may be formed to organize constituents of SHDS to lead during short-term projects.

GRADING

Grades 1-6 uses the following 1-4 rating scale for all subjects on report cards:

- 4- Consistently demonstrates competency
- 3- Usually demonstrates competency
- 2- Developing competency
- 1- Does not demonstrate competency at this time

HOMEWORK

At SHDS, we believe that the purpose of homework is to enrich the school experience at home, to afford opportunities for increasing independence, to provide practice for the mastery of skill areas, to train pupils in good work habits and to promote growth in responsibility. Children can and should do their homework THEMSELVES. If parental assistance is necessary, the teacher will clearly define the kind and amount of assistance needed. The frequency and amount of homework is up to the discretion of the individual teacher who will coordinate assignments with other teachers so that no child is overloaded. Homework assignments will vary according to the individual student's needs. Under no circumstances is homework used for disciplinary purposes. Students are expected to know what each day's homework assignments are before leaving school, to do their homework themselves and to avoid letting television, play or other activities restrict them from doing a good job.

Parents can help their children by:

1. providing materials and a comfortable, quiet, and well-lighted place in which the child may do home assignments (with minimal distractions)
2. checking with the child daily to be sure homework has been completed
3. encouraging the child to accept homework as a part of education
4. arranging a flexible time schedule for homework, household chores, sports and recreation

5. supervising the child's homework so that good study habits will develop
6. assisting the child if some misunderstanding of terms arises, but under no circumstances doing the assignment for the child
7. assuring that the child has homework and supplies ready for school the night before to avoid the "morning jitters"

It is important to remember that students differ widely in the time it takes them to perform various tasks. Some students will finish a 30-minute assignment in 15 minutes; others may need more time. In the event that a homework assignment seems inappropriate to parents, they should immediately send in a note to the teacher. In general, you may assume that homework should take 10 minutes per grade: e.g., 10 minutes in 1st Grade and 60 minutes in Grade 6.

ILLNESS

SHDS is committed to keeping students healthy and has adopted a stringent hand-washing policy. In the event that your child is ill, please keep in mind the following:

- Children may not attend school if they are vomiting, have diarrhea or a fever. Children must be symptom free for at least 24 hours **without medication** before returning to school.
- Students may be sick, but not have any of the above symptoms. Please use your own best judgement. If your child is lethargic, extremely congested or achy he or she will have difficulty attending to lessons and may be better served catching up on rest at home.
- Teachers will work with your child to catch up on any work that is missed due to illness.

INDIVIDUALIZATION

The Day School seeks to provide each child with a learning program based upon his or her individual learning style. To that end, we have defined "individualization" as the homogeneous grouping of children (sometimes in groups of one), by level of achievement and ability in specific subject areas so that instruction will be appropriate to each child, as determined by ongoing teacher assessment. The grouping will change for different subject areas and within different subject areas as children make progress at different rates. We further seek to have children achieve the goals of their individual programs and not in comparison to others.

JUDAIC PHILOSOPHY

As a community day school, the Syracuse Hebrew Day School represents **klal Israel**, the unity of the Jewish people amidst the diversity of Jewish life. The school, governed by the Torah and the traditions of Judaism, develops within its students an appreciation of their rich heritage as Jewish Americans.

The Day School offers Jewish children an integrated program of intensive Jewish and general studies from Kindergarten through sixth grade. The school is committed to excellence in both its secular and Judaic programs. Our philosophy of education endeavors to nurture the uniqueness and individuality of each child and thereby to help all children reach their full potential.

In our secular program we strive to present more than the mandated curriculum, as well as to enrich the school day with music, art, and physical education.

Our Judaic program is what sets us apart from other schools in the area, both public and private. We aim to help our students acquire the tools and skills necessary to be functional Jews by understanding our classical texts and history, by fostering a love for the state of Israel, by providing a setting that, by its example, encourages the practice of Jewish traditions, and by developing a sensitivity to and understanding of the variety of Jewish practices.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

The Day School is committed to the success of all of its students and is further committed to working with parents and school district personnel to assure that the educational needs of all students are met. The following definitions and procedures follow New York State guidelines. As in all aspects of our educational program, we seek to work together with parents for the benefit of our students in a positive and collegial framework.

Procedures:

If you suspect that your child has a learning disability, you should confer with your child's teacher. After that, you and/or your child's teacher might elect to request a Committee on Special Education psychoeducational evaluation through the Jamesville-Dewitt School district. This will include a physical examination, an individual psychological evaluation, a social history, an observation of the student in the classroom and appropriate educational evaluations and assessments relating to the areas of the suspected disability.

The Day School will provide the necessary information to the parent to facilitate the referral. The booklet, "A Parent's Guide to Special Education for Children Ages 5-21" is available in the School office to provide complete information about all phases of the evaluation process and the appeal process if needed.

LIBRARY

The Day School's 3,000 volume library contains books relating to curricular studies, literature for reading enjoyment, books of Jewish content, and Hebrew books as well as ipads, laptops and other technologies. The library is open during school hours and children may check out books for one week. The library stresses the children's responsibility for the books they take out and the need to return them promptly so that they may be shared with others. Parental cooperation is requested in this matter. Children may not take out new books unless they have returned books already on loan.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found box is kept in the office. We strongly recommend putting your child's name with indelible laundry marker or attaching name tapes to all outer clothing apparel, especially hats, gloves, and jackets/coats. All lost items are kept for a month and then donated.

MEDICATIONS

Any student required to take medication in school must store the medication (including over-the-counter drugs) in the School office. Students **MUST** have the following to have the medication dispensed:

1. A note from a physician ordering the medication to be dispensed.
2. A note from a parent or guardian requesting the medication to be dispensed according to the doctor's orders.
3. A pharmacy-labeled bottle containing only enough medication for use in dispensing in school. (We cannot send medicine back and forth between home and school.)

NO MEDICATION WILL BE KEPT IN SCHOOL EXCEPT THAT ORDERED BY A PHYSICIAN. Medications will be normally dispensed at noon. Parents should not give children aspirin, cough drops or any other medication to take by themselves.

NEWSLETTER

The Day School's weekly newsletter is sent out via email each Friday. Please be sure to check the newsletter every week. It is our best means of communicating on a regular and timely basis with parents regarding school activities.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Annual dues of \$100 enable the Parent Teacher Organization to provide students with Friday kiddush, transportation for trips, holiday celebrations and refreshments, and special school materials. Participation in PTO helps the school provide a supportive environment for the children's learning. PTO also provides kosher refreshments for in-school birthday celebrations. Participation in PTO-sponsored events is an excellent way to get involved at our school. For more information, please contact Vardit Smith at vardit24@yahoo.com

RECESS

Recess is held outdoors every day except Friday, weather permitting. Children should have appropriate outdoor clothing, including warm coats, sweaters, boots, mittens or gloves and hats. All children will be sent outdoors for recess unless the office is sent a signed request giving a valid reason for the child to remain indoors on a given day. An extra set of snowpants and boots may be left in school during winter months.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

As a community school, we are guided by a desire to teach respect for the broad range of Jewish observance and the differing customs within Judaism. In this spirit of respect, students are welcome to wear **kippot** in school and the laws of **kashrut** are observed in all school activities. It is our school custom for boys to wear kippot during the school days. Girls are also encouraged to wear kippot. Students may bring dairy or **parve** lunches to school. **No meat (not even kosher meat) or products containing meat are to be brought into school.** A hot lunch and/or milk or juice may be purchased through the JCC Kosher kitchen. Please see our school website for forms.

Fridays are special days at the Day School because we welcome Shabbat with a special *kiddush* and challah and grape juice. Children are requested to dress up on Fridays and to welcome the Sabbath with joy. Parents, families and community members are invited to join us once a month for a special, student-led Shabbat from 2:15 to 2:50. Please see the school website for a schedule of School-Wide Shabbat events.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued four times a year in Grades 2 through 6 and three times for Kindergarten and Grade 1. The first report card is given to parents at the fall parent-teacher conference; subsequent report cards are either given to the children directly or mailed. Conferences can be arranged at any time upon request to discuss a child's progress.

RESPECT

"Kol Yisrael areivim zeh bazeh -All Israel are guarantors for one another." At the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, we think of ourselves as a family, a Jewish family. As in any family, there are sometimes disagreement and conflict, but our love and respect for one another should triumph over any differences that exist. Because of our commitment to Torah, Jewish law and Jewish ethics, we affirm the following belief and ask that you join with us in communicating it, in word and deed, to our children: The Syracuse Hebrew Day School does not condone behavior which is damaging to any individual, whether by gossip, rumor, discrimination, or scapegoating. We have a compelling moral and ethical responsibility to assure that our own children, and all children, are allowed to thrive in an environment free of discrimination, bigotry and enmity.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Parents and guardians will be notified of any previously unscheduled school closing FIRST via the Remind app. The Head of School will also send an email and notify the local news stations (Channels 3, 5

and 9 plus Syracuse.com) as to any emergency closures. More detailed school closing information will be forthcoming as the year progresses.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND SCHOOL STORE

Students are responsible for their own school supplies. The school provides lists of required supplies. These items may be purchased locally or in a kit at the School Store. Please see the school website for further information.

SNACKS

Morning and afternoon snacks are strongly encouraged in all grades. Please help your child select nutritious foods for snack and be sure your child is aware of which foods are for lunch and which are for snack.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Day School Student Council is elected at the beginning of each school year. A representative from each class and an elected executive committee of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer comprise the Student Council. The Student Council plans special school activities and serves as the official voice of the student body. Through Student Council, students learn to take responsibility and develop leadership skills.

TESTING

The Day School participates in the standardized testing programs of the State of New York according to the calendar set by the State. Parents will be notified in advance of the testing dates, and results will be given to parents as soon as the school receives them.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from school is provided at no charge by local school districts within a 15-mile radius. However, notification of the need for busing must be submitted by April 1st each year. Forms will be sent to you in March. The districts will send out a bus schedule approximately one week prior to school's opening. If you do not receive a schedule, please call your district's transportation office.

TRIBUTE CARDS

The Day School will send tribute cards on your behalf to recognize happy occasions or for a memorial. To arrange for a tribute card please contact the school office or follow the links on the school website.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

The Syracuse Hebrew Day School is dedicated to providing a Jewish Day School education for any child in our community regardless of a family's ability to pay. Tuition reduction is available on the basis of financial need through a third party service called FACTS. Information supplied in connection with a request for tuition reduction is kept strictly confidential. Please see the school website for more information.

TZEDAKAH

Money for ***tzedakah*** is collected each day from children who wish to contribute. You may wish to arrange for your child to have money for this act of kindness on a daily or weekly basis as you see fit. The Student Council decides monthly how to distribute the funds collected.

VISITORS

ALL VISITORS MUST REPORT TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE. Parents as well as prospective parents are welcome to visit the school at any time with a phone call or email to a teacher or the Head of School. Arrangements can also be made by calling the school office at 446-1900. All visitors that enter the JCC must sign in first at the front desk in the lobby and get a visitor's pass. The entrance to SHDS is always locked, so visitors must press the call button to gain access to the building. As an extra precaution, visitors will also sign in and out of the SHDS office.

VOLUNTEERS

The work of volunteers is greatly valued and appreciated at SHDS. Assistance from volunteers aids SHDS staff in doing their best for our students. Volunteers at the school function in a professional capacity and we rely upon their professionalism. Therefore, we would like to make explicit certain guidelines and restrictions to help clarify the volunteer's situation and to guard against any breaches of confidentiality regarding students. 1) Volunteers are expected to dress, act, speak and perform as professionals at all times and are entitled to the respect accorded to professionals from students, staff and all others. 2) Volunteers are expected to maintain strict confidentiality about SHDS students both within and outside the school. Discussion of student academic, social, medical, familial or other issues is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. 3) Volunteers do NOT have access to student records.