



**TEMPLE SINAI**  
**Religious School**

**5777 HANDBOOK**  
**2016-2017**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT / 5777**

The Temple Sinai Religious School, an integral part of our Conservative, Egalitarian Synagogue, welcomes students and families in developing a positive Jewish identity through a supportive, respectful, and nurturing educational environment.

### **Beliefs:**

We believe that all students will:

Have a positive Religious School experience;

Begin to develop a lifelong love and appreciation for Jewish studies, rituals, and traditions;

Feel a sense of pride and gain an understanding of what it means to be a Jew;

Have a love for and a commitment to Israel;

Have a personal and respectful relationship with teachers and clergy; classmates and friends;

Understand that ethics, morality and Tikkun Olam are the foundation upon which we build a Jewish life.

### **Goals:**

Students are motivated to continue their Jewish studies beyond 7<sup>th</sup> grade;

Students are provided the opportunity to learn to read Hebrew fluently;

Students will have a familiarity and comfort with prayer and worship;

Students and families will increase Jewish practices at home;

Students and families will know about the history, land, people and culture of Israel;

Students and families will embrace Shabbat and holidays;

Students will have a meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

## **RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SCHEDULE:**

**Sundays 9:30am – 12:00pm (*Grades K-6<sup>th</sup>*)**

**Tuesdays 4:30pm – 6:30pm (*Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> only*)**

**Tuesdays 6:45pm – 8:45pm (*Grades 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>*)**

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES / 5777**

## **ENROLLMENT**

In order to enroll a student in Temple Sinai's Religious School, the student's immediate family must be members of the congregation. The exception to this policy is that if a student is being enrolled in Temple Sinai's Mechina program (Grades K - 2) for the first time, membership is optional. Membership is required after the first year of Mechina. A tuition discount is given to all first year Mechina students if the family is a member of the congregation.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Religious School students are expected to attend classes regularly throughout the year. Classes will begin promptly at 9:30am on Sundays (Grades K-6) and 4:30pm on Tuesdays (Grades K-6). 7<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> grade will meet at 6:45pm on Tuesdays along with special programs as scheduled. We request that parents call or email the Religious School office when a child will be absent or tardy at: (215) 643-6510 ext. 111 or email: [schooloffice@tsinai.com](mailto:schooloffice@tsinai.com). Because instructional time is so limited, with so much to accomplish, every minute of the school session counts. Please make every effort to get your child to school on time. In addition, please plan for your child to remain for the duration of Religious School.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

For safety reasons, we must limit the ways our students enter and exit the building. Upon arrival, students may use only the school entrance on the side of the building. Students are not permitted to enter the main entrance of the synagogue for Religious School unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian. Dismissal will take place from the main lobby. Students will be brought to the lobby, where parents or guardians should pick them up. Students will not be permitted to exit the building without a parent or guardian. All students who are brought to school more than 10 minutes late, or leave school early, must stop in the Religious School office to be signed in or out by their parent/guardian. We are responsible for your children while they are in our care and we need to know that they are safe and secure while here and when leaving the building. **No parking is permitted in front of, or along- side of the building during dismissal. Parents should park in the parking lot and enter the building to pick up their child(ren). Please drive slowly and exercise caution in the parking lot during religious school hours.**

## **SCHOOL CANCELLATION**

The Education Director, in consultation with the Executive Director and using the Upper Dublin school district as a guide, will make all decision for school closings. In the event that the Upper Dublin schools close early due to weather concerns the religious school will be cancelled. The Education Director reserves the right to open school on days when the Upper Dublin schools have a delayed opening or are closed.

## **SHABBAT ATTENDANCE**

Students are encouraged to attend Shabbat services, both Friday night and Saturday morning each school year. Whether it's a Friday night service a Shabbat morning service, a holiday service, or a Family Shabbat service, they will count towards their goals. While the training of all students in preparation for Bar and Bat Mitzvah services will consist of Torah reading and Haftarah chanting instruction, there is no better way to learn the Shabbat morning service than experiencing it.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 5777 *continued***

### **ROAD TO 18**

Students will receive points for every Shabbat service, youth group program, and Jewish activity that they do. Points can be tracked on an easy form linked on the Temple Sinai website. The goal of this program is to incentivize and reward the involvement of the students in Jewish life. Students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> who earn 18 points will be eligible for a trip at the end of the year. Students in grades K-2<sup>nd</sup> will receive a special prize at the end of the year if they earn 9 points.

### **ILLNESS**

Please do not send your child to school with a fever or contagious condition. We will notify you if your child becomes ill. As we always prepare for a potentially challenging flu season, our school will regularly clean and disinfect areas and items likely to have frequent hand contact. We ask that you speak with your children about the following:

- Covering their mouth when they cough with their upper elbow;
- Properly disposing of tissues and other soiled items; and
- Ask permission to wash their hands whenever necessary.

Please contact your health care provider when your child or another family member is sick with the flu (symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache, and body aches). Please allow your child to return to school only when fever-free for at least 24 hours (i.e. no longer having a fever without use of fever-reducing medicines).

### **MEDICATION**

Parents must inform the Religious School office if their child requires medication during school hours. No medications are permitted in the Religious School without prior notification. Please inform the Religious School office of any chronic conditions, allergies, or illnesses that may require special attention.

### **KAVOD (RESPECT)**

Every student is entitled to a safe, peaceful environment in which they are assured the opportunity to learn and thrive. Any individual who intentionally disrupts this environment infringes upon the rights of other students and is in violation of the following discipline code:

- Follow established class rules;
- Treat others with derekh erez (common courtesy);
- Use restrooms only when necessary;
- Treat synagogue property with respect; and
- Walk; do not run, while in the synagogue.

### **POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS ITEMS**

Any item that poses the risk of causing harm to one's self or another is not permitted in Religious School, and the possession of such an item may be grounds for immediate dismissal. Other potentially dangerous items, such as skateboards, rollerblades, and bicycles are not allowed in the building without clearance from the Religious School office. These items will be appropriately stored for the student if necessary.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 5777 *continued***

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

In order to ensure a safe and secure environment in our school, the following discipline policy will be in effect. If a student demonstrates an unwillingness to abide by the rules established for his/her classroom, then the following steps will be taken:

- The teacher will develop a prescriptive action plan for that child in conjunction with guidelines provided by the Educational Director, who will identify possible alternative approaches that the teacher can institute. The child's parents will be informed of the contents of this plan and will be updated on the classroom situation.
- If the child continues to be disruptive, he/she will be asked to meet with the Education Director and his/her teacher to discuss the situation. The parents will be notified.
- If the situation does not improve, the child's parents will be asked to meet with the Education Director, the child, and his/her teacher.
- If there is no observable improvement, the child will then be prohibited from attending class unless accompanied by his/her parent. However, he/she will still be responsible for all work covered.

Any further infraction will result in the child's suspension from school.

**Please read and discuss this discipline plan with your child. If you have any questions about the policy, the Education Director is always available to speak with you.**

### **KIPPOT**

All male students and parents are expected to wear a kippah while at Temple Sinai, whether or not school is in session. Wearing a kippah shows respect for learning and humbleness before God, and demonstrates an awareness of the fact that a synagogue is a holy place. Any female that chooses to wear a kippah or similarly appropriate head-covering may do so as well.

### **APPROPRIATE DRESS**

Students should wear comfortable, appropriate, and respectful clothing to synagogue. Please no roller wheeled sneakers, no extremely short skirts or shorts, and appropriate pants worn at the waistline. The only hats worn in the synagogue should be kippot.

### **CELL PHONES and ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

During Religious School hours, there is no reason for a child to be using his or her cell phone (or any other electronic device).

To that end, a child must place his/her cell phone in his/her backpack. The cell phone must be turned off during Religious School hours. If a child is caught using a cell phone during school hours, the phone will be confiscated by the teacher and returned to the student at the end of the day, and the parents will be notified. If this continues, he/she will be sent to the Education Director's office.

In the case of an emergency in which a student must be contacted by a family member, **please call the Religious School office 215-643-6510 ext.111.**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 5777 *continued***

### **FOOD AND DRINK**

**Please note that the Ann Newman Preschool and the Religious School will now be NUT Free.** The preschool and religious schools have several nut allergies and after meeting with parents over the summer we found this to be the safest measure for both of the schools. The building will not be nut free, just the school wing.

Food that is intended to be shared or used for snacks, birthday treats, cooking projects will not contain peanuts, peanut oil, be processed in a plant/facility/on equipment with peanuts or that contain traces of peanuts. There are several peanut substitutes that can be used instead of peanut butter and we are more than happy to get you a list.

Students are permitted to bring only Kosher, dairy, nut free food or drink into the building to be eaten during breaks. Because of the large number of allergies and medical alerts here in school, we are nut free in all our rooms. Please do not send in any foods or products containing, or made on machinery using nuts or nut products. Prior to school on Tuesday afternoons, a small snack will be provided for all students. On Tuesdays and Sundays, students may buy snacks as a fundraiser for PTO during their designated break time. All snacks sold are nut free.

# **Shabbat Youth and Family Services**

## **Family Services and Shabbat Programming**

The most effective way to gain familiarity and comfort with *tefillot* (prayers) is by regular attendance at Shabbat services.

This year there will be new additions to the Shabbat offerings including a Shabbat brunch book club, Shabbat afternoon/Havdallah programming, as well as Friday evening services.

The synagogue is a place of gathering. Our prayer services are a place of social, spiritual and physical gathering. Each participant knows his or her place in the gathering and is appreciated, needed and makes the *tefillah* meaningful.

The strength of our belonging is best modeled by our connections to our family, both nuclear and extended. During religious school recess and classroom sessions, every student belongs and is welcome. The crucial link in our *tefillah* is the participation of family.

## **Student Resource and Enrichment Center**

The Resource Room at Temple Sinai opened in 2012, with the purpose of providing a classroom designed for students who learn more effectively in a quiet space with fewer auditory and visual distractions. The room is set up to accommodate individual or small group instruction, with scheduling arranged to fit the students' needs.

There are two designated staff members who will work with the classroom teachers to review the needs of the individual students and design a plan that works best for them.

The Resource Room provides a place within Temple Sinai's Religious School for individual students to receive the type of instruction that works for them. With administrators, parents, and teaching staff working together, our goal is to provide the opportunity for all students to have the best possible Jewish academic and social experiences.



# SINAI YOUTH

## **YOUTH GROUPS**

Temple Sinai's youth groups serve as a home away from home for our students, where young people come together and participate in fun and educational informal activities. Youth groups help young people develop a strong sense of Jewish identity, and help create socially active, conscientious Jewish adults.

To register for one of Temple Sinai's Youth Groups, please contact Hilary Yohlin Waller, Youth and Programming Coordinator, at [hywaller@tsinai.com](mailto:hywaller@tsinai.com).

### **MAKOR (Grades 3, 4, and 5) and KADIMA (Grades 6 and 7)**

Makor (Hebrew for source) and Kadima (Hebrew for forward) provide social and *tzedakah* activities for children and pre-teens beginning their Jewish journeys. Kadima is the pre-teen division of USY.

### **USY - UNITED SYNAGOGUE YOUTH (Girls and Boys Grades 8 through 12)**

TS USY: TS USY is the Temple Sinai chapter of USY. USY brings 8th-12th graders together for activities promoting camaraderie, responsibility, leadership, learning, and of course, fun both in and outside the synagogue.

EPAGESH: TS USY is part of the EPAGESH region of USY. By joining our chapter, you earn access regional programming like weekend-long overnight events, dances, and community service activities, that bring together teens from across PA and South Jersey.

### **ROSH HODESH: It's A Girl Thing! (Girls in Grades 6 through 12) THE BROTHERHOOD (Boys in Grades 7 through 12)**

These groups meet monthly and provide "guy space" or "girl time," offering an engaging, relevant, and cool way to participate in the Jewish community. Adult mentors facilitate discussions in a relaxed and social atmosphere. Meetings include an exploration of Jewish ethics and culture via activities, games, and food.

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

**Are you interested in volunteering your time? The Religious School could use your help to create a program that's second to none. You can assist in numerous ways:**

### **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

Our school is changing - and we've got some incredible programming on the horizon. We need your help to produce a Jewish educational experience for our students that's engaging, meaningful, and fun. It's easy. All you have to do is volunteer to help out with one thing every year. PTO is simply a network of parents who pledge to help out throughout the academic year. By joining the PTO, you can help Temple Sinai to instill a sense of Jewish pride and identity in your child, creating fond and positive memories of Religious School that will last a lifetime. Please contact the school office for more information.

### **RELIGIOUS SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Temple Sinai has a Religious School Committee that provides guidance, assistance, and ideas for the successful operation of our school. This committee seeks to expand and provide support for the Religious School. Please contact the school office for more information.

### **HEBREW TUTORING**

Our Religious School is dedicated to Hebrew learning. We have top-notch Hebrew teachers dedicated to providing instruction and enrichment for a variety of Hebrew levels. We are always seeking to engage new individuals to work with students one-on-one and in small groups.

### **SPREAD THE WORD**

Tell your fellow congregants all about the exciting changes at the Religious School. Let people know that Temple Sinai is dedicated to providing its Religious School families, and all of its congregants, with first-rate, stellar educational programming.