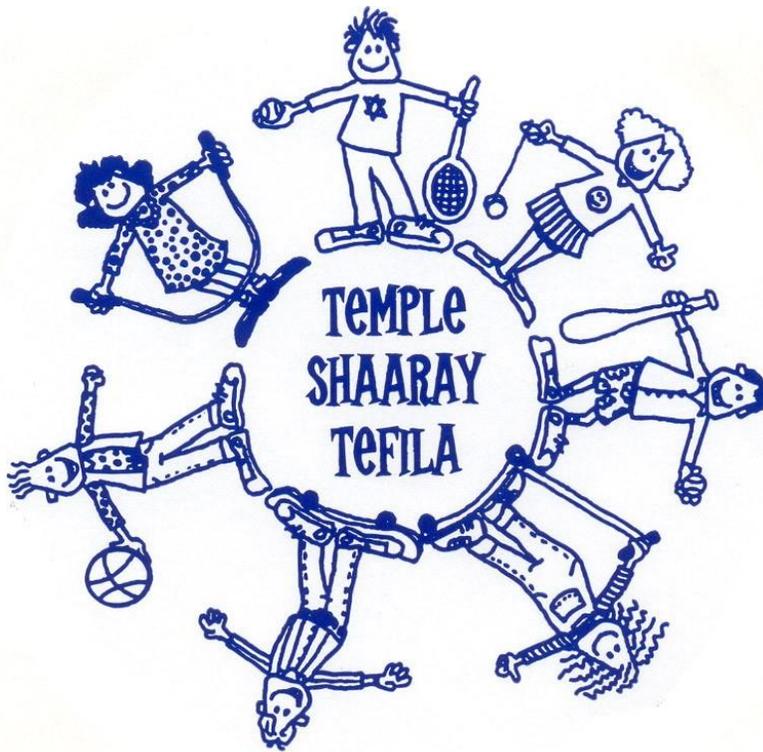


Temple Shaaray Tefila Nursery School

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**Parent Handbook
2018-2019**

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Temple Shaaray Tefila Nursery School. This handbook is an introduction to how our school works. Please read it in its entirety before school starts and use it as a resource throughout the year.

As you read through this handbook, please keep in mind that each of our classes is set up to encourage every child to participate fully; to create a caring, interactive community; and to let independence flourish as appropriate.

Each classroom has a carefully constructed teacher-to-student ratio. All groups have their classroom teachers plus a few specialists who teach movement, music, cooking or Hebrew on a weekly basis. There are various activities throughout each school day; some are more structured, others are purposefully more open. There is some time everyday to do what is most important for them: to explore, to tinker, to experiment. The children work with art materials, blocks, puzzles, etc., for extended time. Teachers facilitate the children's individual and/or cooperative goals. There are tangible lessons and more subtle ones as the children develop skills in many important areas: cognitive, physical, emotional and social.

Our goal is to foster a sense of community and to help all of the children appreciate each other's strengths. We look to you, the parents, to help support us in these goals.

We look forward to this school year and the opportunity to work with your child and family.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Blanco
Director

CONFIDENTIALITY

We see each child in our school as an individual. While we try to set up systems that foster comfort, thinking, and creativity for all children, we realize that there are particular factors that impact on each child differently. We know that different children have different strengths and different areas that may need extra support.

We want to be able to work openly with parents toward the goal of helping their children do well in our school. We want to reassure parents that we do understand the importance of confidentiality. We do not talk to parents about children other than their own in our school. We use the information we observe or have been told from parents about their children to help us be better teachers. That relationship exists between the parents and their child and the teachers and administration only. If there is a desire for more input or if there is personal trauma that the family is experiencing, we would ask the family if they would like to talk to the rabbi or to our social worker for extra support or guidance.

If the family has outside support from for example, an occupational therapist or a speech and language specialist, we ask that you please sign a paper that gives us permission to talk with that person or persons for the purpose of gaining information about how to best to help your child proceed in our classroom as well as to help the specialist know which areas need the most support in our classroom. Those conversations would only be shared between the family and the staff.

The results of any standardized testing would also not be shared with anyone but the parents of the child who took the test. We would also ask parents not to tell to other parents about their test scores so as not to create anxiety and competition. Come to us if you have any questions.

A breach in confidentiality would be considered a grave mistake and would open a staff person to the possibility of termination.

PARENTS VISITING THE CLASSROOM

Parents are invited to come visit their children's classrooms for their birthdays, to be library parents and to be *Shabbat* parents. In addition, parents are invited to come to celebrate *Purim* and *Chanukah* with us at school. Occasionally, there will be some other event for which you will be asked to join us, sometimes as a helper on a field trip. If you would ever simply like to visit, we will welcome you. We only ask that you plan ahead and let us know before that day.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Individual conferences are scheduled twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. The dates are noted on the Nursery School Calendar. You will be notified of the specific time for your conferences a couple of weeks in advance. If you have a specific time request, please send it to your child's teachers prior to the conference day. At the conference, your child's teachers will sit with you and discuss your child's growth and development. Where there is a need, additional conferences may be arranged. The teachers will not hesitate to call in the parent(s) if that is the case. You are encouraged to meet with your child's teachers any time you have a question or concern about your child's progress. Appointments can be made with the teachers directly or you can leave messages for them in the Nursery School Office (see below).

Communication Facilitation-

As much as we all try to have open, constructive communication between teaching staff and parents, it is possible that there will be a situation in which the parents might feel that they need to get more support.

When parents have any questions or concerns about their children in our school, about the teaching staff, about the administration or about the building, in general, we suggest the following procedure. First, parents should go to the teachers with their questions and concerns. If an understanding cannot be reached the parents should go to either the Director or the Assistant Director. If there still is no resolution, Isabel Schein, our consultant, is available for further help.

If no resolution is made within the context of the school, the school administration recommends going to the head rabbi, Rabbi Joel Mosbacher, or the president of the congregation, Barri Waltcher. Messages can be left for either of them through the main office, 212-535-8008.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

You can call the Nursery School Office (212-535-2146) when you want to speak to your child's teacher, leaving the times when your call can be returned. The teachers cannot be called to the phone unless it is an emergency, as this would disrupt the classroom program.

In addition, contact with teachers is limited to the warm, professional exchange we have about children in school. There is to be no employing of teachers outside of school for babysitting, tutoring, etc. Teachers are also not permitted to attend children's birthday parties, to "friend" parents on Facebook, or to visit families outside of school except as is part of our program, i.e., for beginning of the year home visits or as the result of winning an auction prize that includes an event for your child and his/her teachers. Thank you for your cooperation.

CONSULTANT AND VISITING TEACHERS

We have an early childhood consultant, Isabel Schein, MSW, who is at school each week. She visits all of the classrooms regularly, meets with the Nursery School staff, holds occasional group talks on topics of interest to families with young children, and is available to meet privately with parents to discuss any areas of concern. To schedule an appointment with Isabel, leave a message for her in the Nursery school Office.

We also might have student teachers or visiting teachers who work in the classrooms regularly. Occasionally, one of the visiting teachers will be visiting on a regular basis to help a particular child completely integrate into the class. This teacher, the Special Ed Itinerant Teacher (SEIT), is seen by us as a gift to the whole class. In helping one child to become more a part of the group, the SEIT is helping each child better develop the ability to make clear his/her needs to each of his/her friends. While we see the SEIT as a gift, there are parents who are reluctant to share the fact that their child might have been awarded a few hours of SEIT help each week, even though they have understood how wonderful this is for their child and the class. We thank you for respecting their desire for confidentiality.

ADJUSTMENT / PHASING-IN

There is a schedule for the first few weeks of the phasing-in process. Occasionally, a child and a parent will need more time for separation and adjustment than the schedule allows. Teachers will work with each child and parent individually, as necessary, to ensure a smooth transition. All children are required to have a parent/guardian in the school during the adjustment period.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable, washable clothing. Comfortable clothing includes shoes and coats that are appropriate and safe for running and climbing. Party shoes, open back shoes, and flip-flops are not good choices for school. Although we supply plastic smocks and our paint and glue are mostly washable, we still ask you to send your child to school in washable play clothes. Occasionally your child will get messy. Furthermore, it is important that your child not feel restricted from using materials because he/she is worried about getting clothes dirty.

Each child needs to have a change of clothing kept at school in his/her cubby. Even older children occasionally have accidents or spill juice on themselves. All clothing needs to be clearly labeled with your child's name. Children will use the roof playground in all types of weather (except for rainy or dangerously cold days). There are lovely, cold, snowy days when children would benefit from playing outside, but they must have appropriate clothing, including boots, snow pants, hats and mittens.

BRINGING THINGS FROM HOME

If your child would like to bring things from home to school, he/she may do so if he/she is ready to share them with others, or is willing to keep them in the cubby. Help your child choose one item. If your child brings one item, he/she is more likely to value it, play with it and keep track of it. The only exception has to do with weapons: your child may not bring swords and guns into the class. It is also recommended that you do not send expensive or fragile items to school with your child as we cannot be responsible for loss or breakage. It is also a good idea to label the items your child brings to school with his or her name.

HEALTH AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

Please do not send your children to school if they are not completely healthy. If your child is begging to come to school but had a fever the night before, or was up all night with a cough or stomachache, or has a cold or a lot of mucus, please let him/her know there is a rule at school that he/she must wait one more day at home. Sometimes a child will appear to get sick at school and we will call you to pick him/her up. We will call you if your child has a rash, diarrhea, a pink or goopy eye, excessive coughing, green mucus from a runny nose, a fever, is nauseous or is simply not him/herself. Even if you feel that your child could make it through the day with us, we will ask you to pick up your child because we are not only concerned about his/her welfare, but the welfare of everyone in the class. While it is important to listen to your child's perceptions on whether he/she is well enough to be in school, there are times when we have to overrule. Please notify us if your child is home with a contagious disease (i.e. stomach flu, strep throat, etc.) so that we can tell the other parents and the Board of Health. Please let us know if your child has any physical difficulty (eye-sight, allergies, etc.) so we can best meet his/her needs. Make sure we have your emergency cards on file so that we have a contact person other than yourself. In case of an accident, we will try to locate you before we call your pediatrician, unless there is an emergency in which case we will call 911.

BIRTHDAYS

Please let your child's teachers know in advance about plans for your child's birthday. We recommend a simple party during snack time with cupcakes, fruit salad, or some other festive treat. Remember, we are a nut-sensitive environment. Summer birthdays are usually celebrated together at the end of the school year. Instead of giving favors to each child, we suggest that you give a present to the class, such as a book. This is entirely voluntary. Please consult the teachers if you are interested.

If you are having a party for your child outside of school and you invite more than one or two children from the class, then please invite the whole class. Children will find out if they have not been invited and will be very upset. ***This rule is very important.*** Please feel free to talk to the Director or Assistant Director about this. We can somewhat enhance the in-school party if you choose not to have an out-of-school party. We also ask you to be sensitive to the fact that having birthday parties on a Saturday may create an awkward situation for families who observe *Shabbat* by going to synagogue and/or by not traveling. Also, please keep in mind other school or Temple events that might be taking place at the Temple when choosing a date for your party.

FOOD

Kashrut

The Temple is not strictly kosher. However, it is kosher-style. Pork products and shellfish are **not** allowed in the building and we ask you not to send in food that mixes milk and meat. Likewise, we will be providing snacks and baking/cooking foods that are kosher-style.

Lunch Information

If your child stays for lunch, please send a kosher-style lunch in a bag with your child's name on it. If your child's lunch requires refrigeration, please send the lunch in an insulated bag with an ice pack. And since we are trying to build independence, please send a manageable lunch.

Snack Time

Snack time is meant to be a time for children to relax together, to take the time to take a breath and drink a cup of water and have a small snack. On Fridays, the snack will include eating *challah* and drinking grape juice as part of the celebration of *Shabbat*.

Meal Time Protocol- Snacks are provided to the children each morning some time between the hours of 10am and 11am. The children are asked to wash their hands before eating. The teachers place the snacks on plates or napkins for the children as well as serve them water. The children who have longer days bring in their own lunch which is kept at room temperature or with an ice pack. Lunch is eaten between the hours of 12pm and 1pm depending on the class.

Suggestions

- Sandwiches are popular. Also, leftovers in a small container with a spoon or fork are fine.
- It is nice to provide more than one item such as cut-up fruit or vegetables or pretzels (in addition to a sandwich or leftovers) but do not provide too many choices
- Please send a drink – Water, a thermos of milk, juice, or a juice box is popular (the foil juice packets are hard to use)

The Don'ts

- Please do not send **too much food** – only send what you really think your child will eat
- Please **do not send candy**
- Please **do not send any pork products or shellfish products** into the Temple building (for example, no ham sandwiches or shrimp salad)

- Please understand teachers cannot leave the classroom to microwave any food – if you'd like to send hot food, please warm the food at home first and then put it into a thermos (this should keep the food warm until lunchtime)

Food Allergies

Due to the rising number of children coming to us with dangerous nut allergies, Temple Shaaray Tefila Nursery School is a nut-sensitive environment. Please do not send your child to school with any nut or peanut products. We understand that this makes preparing lunch for peanut butter lovers more challenging, however, we all need to work together for the safety of our children. Do be diligent and check ingredients. Some products have peanut oil and should not enter the classrooms.

Even though your children do not share lunches, some allergic children will react severely from only inhaling a nut product in his/her surroundings. Thank you for your cooperation.

HOME AND CLASS VISITS

A home or class visit will be arranged so that your child can meet his/her teachers before he/she comes to school. All children new to Shaaray Tefila will have his/her teachers visit his/her home except for the Gesher & Boker 3 Day classes who will have classroom visits. All returning students will visit their classrooms where their teachers and perhaps a classmate or two will be present.

You will be notified of your child's home or class visit appointment via phone and/or email during the first week following Labor Day. Please try to accommodate the teachers' schedule. If, however, it is impossible to do so, notify the teachers and they will do their best to arrange another time.

The visit will last about 15-20 minutes. Either a parent or other very close caregiver needs to be there with the child during the home or class visit.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival: Bring your child to his/her classroom each day. It is very important to be on time. It is not that your child will be missing material for a chemistry exam. It is not even for the sake of establishing a routine (although that could be a reason). It is because it is often difficult for children to enter a room full of classmates who have already become engaged with their friends and their play/work. If the class has already gathered on the rug to discuss the events of the day or to hear a story, it may be disruptive for other children and the teachers as well. If you are late, we will be as accommodating as possible. We know that sometimes there are delays that can't be helped. Please note that beginning the last week of September, we will be offering an early morning drop-off option (Breakfast Club) at 8:00am for \$15 per session. More information will be sent out after the start of school.

Dismissal: Likewise, it is difficult for your child if you are not there when the school day is over. Please try to arrive at school a few minutes before dismissal to make sure you are there on time. Again, it may happen that occasionally you are delayed. We will keep your child as comfortable as possible, in the Nursery School Office, until you arrive.

If your child is to be picked up by a new person, or is to go home with a friend, give a written note to teachers or the Nursery School Office and give us the names of the people involved. We are very careful and will only dismiss a child to someone whom you have authorized. **If a change becomes necessary at the last minute, please call the Nursery School Office (212-535-2146) so that we can notify the teachers and the security guard at the Temple's Front Desk.**

SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

TEMPLE SECURITY

You will receive 3 ID badges in September to be used by parents and caregivers for the school year. **ID badges must be shown to the security guards upon entering the building.** Even though you will be here on a regular basis and feel that the security guards will come to know you, it is the policy of Temple Shaaray Tefila that everyone, without exception, *must* display their ID badges at the door. Please make sure that all babysitters and/or relatives who are authorized to pick up your children from school have their ID badges with them – otherwise, they will not be allowed to leave the lobby until someone from the Nursery School escorts them upstairs. *****Information on how to obtain your ID badges will be sent out prior to Parent Orientation*****

BUILDING SAFETY

Under no circumstances will anyone be allowed to enter our school building with firearms of any kind. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in immediate dismissal.

EVACUATING THE BUILDING

In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation of the building, the red fire alarms in the hallways next to the stairwell doors will be activated. All children and staff will exit as indicated on the exit maps posted outside each classroom door and the following procedures will take place: Teachers will take their first-aid packs (containing the families' phone numbers and other supplies) and the children to the nearest staircase. They will count the children to make sure everyone is present and then proceed downstairs as quickly as possible while still being safe. When they get downstairs and are told that this is not a drill but a real emergency, classes will go to the following apartment building lobbies:

- Adom and Kachol: **301 East 79th Street (Continental Towers)**
- Tzahov , Katom, Lavan, Boker Twos, & Gesher : **239 East 79th Street**
- Yarok, Sagol, and Kesef : **308 East 79th Street**

Teachers will call parents from the lobbies and will stay with their children until they can be picked up. General Security is provided by the Temple, including a guard at the entrances and surveillance cameras. Please alert someone in the Nursery School Office or the Temple Office if you notice anything or anyone suspicious in the building.

SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURE

In case of severe weather, the Nursery School typically follows the New York City Public Schools. Please listen to your local weather reports; an email will be sent by 6:30am if we are closed.

QUESTIONS

**If you have any questions or concerns,
please do not hesitate to contact the Nursery School Office:
212-535-2146.**