



Bet Shraga
Hebrew Academy
of the
Capital District

2015-2016
Parent
Handbook

54 Sand Creek Road
Albany, New York 12205

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www.hacdalbany.org

Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy of the Capital District Parent Handbook

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Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy of the Capital District receives substantial support from the United Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York and from its Endowment Fund.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Academic excellence rooted in tradition

Our Mission

In a nurturing and respectful school community that values the uniqueness of each child and the diversity of Jewish practice, Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy

Creates an outstanding integrative curriculum in General and Judaic studies, encouraging intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and love of learning.

Celebrates the richness of Jewish tradition, Torah and Israel.

Inspires ethical growth rooted in the values of justice, kindness and tikkun olam, the principle that we must each do our part to make the world a better place.

Our Educational Philosophy

Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy of the Capital District was established to provide Jewish young people with an education integrating the intellectual rigor, ethical norms and spiritual warmth of the Jewish tradition with the values of the American democratic heritage and the wisdom of the Western intellectual tradition. Our goal is to produce graduates who are:

- well grounded in Judaic and secular studies and prepared to pursue both at more advanced levels,
- sensitive to ethical and moral demands in their dealings with all persons,
- committed to the religious traditions and Zionist aspirations of the Jewish people,
- loyal to the American democratic way of life, and
- possessed of a keen sense of civic responsibility toward the various communities—American, Jewish and universal – in which they will participate as adults.

An intense love of learning for its own sake has long characterized the Jewish life style, and the Academy strives to develop this devotion in its students and to see it applied to all learning, sacred and secular. Academic excellence is expected to result from this view of scholarship as its own reward rather than from a sense of competitiveness. At the same time, the Academy's curriculum is designed to transmit the values to which the school is dedicated. Natural sciences are taught from the point of view of man's obligation to respect the world in which he lives. Social sciences are taught to foster the concern for social justice and sense of communal responsibility common to the Jewish and Western democratic traditions. The transmitting of knowledge and the transmitting of values are the two main purposes of a school, and we strive to create an atmosphere in which both of these functions are carried out simultaneously.

Therefore, we seek out faculty members not only for their skills in conveying information, but also for their ability to serve as role models. Our classes are small, allowing for an intimate teacher-student relationship. In this way, our sense of community, strong as it is, does not override our respect and concern for the individual.

The Hebrew Academy of the Capital District was established in 1962 by a group of dedicated Jewish community leaders under the guidance of its founding Principal, Mr. Shraga Arian, after whom the school was renamed as Bet Shraga.

DREAM, LITTLE CHILDREN

This is the heritage we bequeath to you.

This school was not established
to leave you untouched, uninspired.

Ours is more than an institution
devoted to pursuing excellence in
General studies and in Hebraica.

We have built this school so that you can
dream dreams, see visions, and do wonders.

~Shraga Arian, Founding Principal~

School Leadership

Head of School and Hebrew/Judaic Studies Department Chair	Julie Pollack
Social Studies/ELA Department Chair	Dan Miller
Mathematics Department Chair	Wendy Pyle
Science Department Chair	David Epstein

Governance

Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy of the Capital District (Bet Shraga) was chartered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York in 1962. It is governed by its bylaws and overseen by its Board of Trustees, composed of parents and community members. It is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Parents of current students are members of the corporation, have a voice in electing its trustees, and may serve on its committees.

The trustees are: Sandor Schuman, President; Steve Kamenir, Vice President Finance; Michele Gomez, Vice President Development; Suzanna Randall, Secretary; Moshe Binyamin, Rabbi David Eligberg, Malka Evan, Nathan Graber, Gail Kendall, Rabbi Binyamin Lehrfield, Simona Leifer, Carolyn Levine, Paul Mozer, Anna Rosen, and Stephen Wrzesinski.

Parent Organization

Our Parent Organization engages in many activities and programs for the benefit of the school's students, faculty, and parents. All parents are members; dues are included in the membership fee. Please become an active member! For additional information and to get involved, please contact the school office 518-482-0464 or Bess Wadler, 123-4567 or bess@mac.com.

COMMUNICATION

Frequent communication between parents and educators is an essential component of our school. It enables us to work together to provide for the academic, social and emotional needs of our children and to ensure their success. Please share any information that you believe will be helpful to us.

General Guidelines

1. Please remember that we are partners and collaborators in the educational process.
2. The home plays an important role in helping a child achieve his/her maximum potential.
3. Encourage your child by focusing on positive experiences at school. Do not deny the negative, but accentuate the positive.
4. Keep in touch with your child's teacher. You can contact teachers by leaving a voice message on the phone at school, by sending an email or by writing a note.
5. Encourage your child to develop good work habits by reminding him/her to listen carefully, follow directions, complete assignments, work independently when appropriate, work collaboratively when appropriate, accept correction and guidance, and take pride in a job well done.

If you have a concern, question, or some information to share with a teacher please do the following:

1. Make an appointment to speak to your child's teacher either in person or by telephone. You can do this by leaving a message on the teacher's voice mail or by sending an email.
2. After talking with the teacher, if you still have concerns, please speak to Julie.

This will ensure that your concerns will be addressed quickly and in a way that is in everyone's best interest.

How to ask your children about what they did at school

Asking specific questions will often result in the most satisfying and informative responses. Some possibilities include:

1. What was the best thing that happened at school today?
2. Tell me one thing you learned today.
3. What question did you ask at school today?
4. Tell me something good that happened at school today.
5. How did you help somebody today?
6. How did somebody help you today?
7. If you could choose, who would you like to sit next to in class?
8. Who would you like to play with at recess that you've never played with before?

Meet the Teachers Night

Meet the Teachers Night is scheduled for Thursday, September 17 at 6:00PM. This is a time for teachers to explain the scope of the subject matter they will be teaching, their expectations for students, their grading system and homework policy, and their goals for the coming year. Since it is early in the school year, it is not an appropriate time to discuss an individual child's progress.

Report Cards

Your child's progress is formally communicated through report cards, issued four times a year. In addition, parents of middle school students receive interim reports.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences help to develop mutual understanding and foster collaboration between school and home. Parent-teacher conferences are held during the day in December and April. The conference dates are listed on the school calendar. All parents are scheduled for conferences in December by the school. April conferences are scheduled by request of either parents or teachers. Teachers are available to meet at other mutually convenient times throughout the year should the need arise. In order for both the teachers and parents to gain as much as possible from the conferences, the following guidelines are suggested:

Before the conference:

1. Prepare a list of what you want to tell the teacher about your child.
2. Prepare a list of specific questions to ask the teacher about your child. For example:
 - a. Which subject is my child's particular area of interest or excellence?
 - b. Does my child need any special help in a given subject?
 - c. What is the nature of my child's social interactions in the class?
 - d. In what ways can I be of any help to my child?
3. If only one parent can attend the conference, consult your spouse for more ideas or questions.

During the conference:

1. You might find it helpful to take notes.
2. Towards the end of the conference, review with the teacher the points that were brought up and the steps that were agreed upon by both you and the teacher.

Whom to Call

For questions/ information about:	Contact:	Title	Phone: 482-0464	Email
Payments/ accounts	Karen Bakuzonis	Bus. Manager	x128	kbakuzonis@hacdalbany.com
Transportation	Rachael Woren	Admin. Asst.	x100	rworen@hacdalbany.com
Community news for dissemination	Rachael Woren	Admin. Asst.	x100	rworen@hacdalbany.com
Admissions, Marketing, Recruitment	Julie Pollack	Head of School	x115	jpollack@hacdalbany.com
Development	Julie Pollack	Head of School	x115	jpollack@hacdalbany.com
Curriculum:				
Math	Wendy Pyle	Dept. Chair	x215	wpyle@hacdalbany.com
Social Studies/ELA	Dan Miller	Dept. Chair	x211	dmliller@hacdalbany.com
Science	David Epstein	Dept. Chair	x214	depstein@hacdalbany.com
Hebrew/Judaic Studies	Julie Pollack	Dept. Chair	x115	jpollack@hacdalbany.com
Overall/ general	Julie Pollack	Head of School	x115	jpollack@hacdalbany.com
Health	Justine Crisafulli	Nurse	x137	jcrisafulli@hacdalbany.com
Building safety	Mike Walpole	Bldg. Supt.	x133	mwalpole@hacdalbany.com
After School Care	Rachael Woren	Admin. Asst.	x100	rworen@hacdalbany.com
Attendance/ Absence/ Lateness	Rachael Woren	Admin. Asst.	x100	rworen@hacdalbany.com
Bus transportation	Rachael Woren	Admin. Asst.	x100	rworen@hacdalbany.com
Carpool	Rachael Woren	Admin. Asst.	x100	rworen@hacdalbany.com
IEP/ 504 plans	Julie Pollack	Head of School	x115	jpollack@hacdalbany.com
Student Records	Julie Pollack	Head of School	x115	jpollack@hacdalbany.com
School closing/ delay			See:	Emergency Closings and Delays
Classroom	Classroom teacher	See the faculty directory		www.hacdalbany.org/home/faculty-and-staff/
Volunteering	Bess Wadler	Parent Org		bess@mac.com
Hot Lunch	Rachael Woren	Admin. Asst.	x100	rworen@hacdalbany.com

Email and Website

Faculty and staff can be reached via email at [First initial Last name @ hacdalbany.com]. For example, Julie Pollack's email address is jpollack@hacdalbany.com. Faculty and staff will communicate with you via email. **Please make sure that the office is notified if you change your email address.**

The faculty directory, school calendar, forms, and other resources can be found on our website, www.hacdalbany.org.

Kiddie Mail

"Kiddie Mail" is our affectionate term for paper-based communication from your child's teacher or school administration. Please make a daily check of your child's backpack or school bag to look for kiddie mail.

Wednesday Updates and Shabbaton

Weekly updates will be emailed from the main office on Wednesdays and will include information about upcoming events and school calendar changes.

The *E-Shabbaton*, our school's newsletter, informs parents, students, donors, and friends of school and community events. The *E-Shabbaton* is published every other week throughout the school year.

If you have information for the *E-Shabbaton*, it must be submitted to the office by Wednesday morning of the week it is to be published. In the interest of cost and time in producing the *E-Shabbaton*, the editor will determine the size and frequency of articles. All information should be submitted in Microsoft Word and emailed to Rachael Woren at rworen@hacdalbany.com.

DAILY ROUTINES AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Drop off and Pick up

Classes begin at 8:00 am. Children may be dropped off by their parents or by bus, starting at 7:45 am. Please **do not** drop off children earlier than 7:45 or later than 8:00 am. Elementary children are supervised in the small gym or a designated classroom until 8:00 am when they go to their classrooms. Middle school students are allowed to go directly upstairs to their classrooms.

A student arriving between 8:00 and 8:30 should go directly to their class. Students entering after 8:30 am should go to the nurse to sign in.

*If your child must leave the building for any reason before dismissal he or she must be picked up in the office and signed out. Children will be called from class when you arrive in the school office. This way, we avoid disrupting classroom learning. **Please do not go to your child's classroom unannounced.***

Early or Changed Dismissal

Our top priority is to maintain the highest level of safety and security for our children. If your child must leave school during the school day or before the usual dismissal time, you must adhere to the following:

- You must send a note or call the school office if there is a change in your child's normal mode of transportation. A pad of Dismissal Notices is provided to each family for ease of providing written notes about dismissal arrangements. If the change affects more than one child, please send a separate note for each child. Changes must be to the office **no later than 2:00pm** in order to be successfully carried out. Be sure to include the name of the person who will be picking up your child and the time that they will be picked up.
- Students will be dismissed from class **after the arrival of the child's ride at school**. All children must be signed out in the office. If your child returns to the building, please sign him/her back in at the office.
- **Children will not be dismissed from the main office at the end of the school day. If you are picking up your child at dismissal you must do so from the carpool line.**

Emergency Closings and Delays

Announcements will be made starting at 6:00 am via the following media outlets:

WRGB (CBS)	Channel 6	www.cbs6albany.com
WTEN (ABC)	Channel 10	news10.com
WNYT (NBC)	Channel 13	www.wnyt.com
WXXA (FOX)	Channel 23	www.fox23news.com
YNN (TWC)	Channel 9	www.twcnews.com/nys/capital-region.html
Times Union		www.timesunion.com

An automated phone tree will also be used in case of emergency and weather related changes.

The announcements are the best way to determine whether or not classes are in session. Parents should not call the school office or school personnel at home regarding school closings or early dismissals.

If there is a delayed opening:

- It will always be a two hour delay and classes will begin at 10:00 am
- Find out if your school district is providing bus transportation and if there are any schedule changes.
- Do not drop child(en) off earlier than 9:45.

If school is already in session and we must have an early or emergency dismissal, parents will be notified by phone, in addition to the media announcements. Contact the office if your student/s will be going home in a different way than usual. Parents must indicate on the emergency forms where they can be reached in case of an early dismissal. We must also have the name and telephone number of an alternate person to call, such as a neighbor or relative, who can be notified if the parents cannot be reached.

Attendance

It is particularly important for parents to communicate to students a sense of responsibility with regard to attendance. **Parents of students with frequent absences and or tardiness will be asked to meet with administration.** Please refer to the school calendar in planning vacations and family trips. **Parents are urged not to schedule vacations while school is in session.**

Regular school attendance is vital to a student's academic achievement and social and emotional growth. Absence from class is a learning opportunity missed. A student who is absent from class for any reason must make up work and learning missed during the absence. **It is the responsibility of the student and parents to make arrangements for the learning and work to be made up. Students who have a pattern of absence may be required to repeat a class or may be denied credit for the class.** When a pattern of absence is noted, parents will be notified, a conference that includes the parents, teachers, and administration will be held, and local authorities (social services, school district truant officer) may be contacted.

Kashrut Policy and Lunch

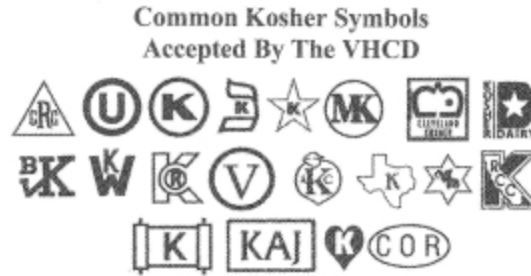
We strictly observe Jewish dietary laws, *kashrut*. Students are to bring *kosher* dairy or *parve* (neither meat nor dairy) lunches. Milk is available each day at a nominal fee which is due when tuition is billed. Hot lunch is available Monday through Thursday.

Our school serves the entire Jewish community and always strives to be sensitive to the needs of its families. In school we observe a strict *kashrut* policy in accordance with the standards of the *Vaad Hakashruth* of the Capital District (www.vhcd.org/). We ask that you be equally sensitive when inviting students to your home or to birthday parties outside your home.

Please follow these rules:

- All lunches and snacks must be dairy or *parve* (neither meat nor milk). Meat may not be brought into the school. If this presents particular nutritional concerns for your child please contact Julie.
- **Sharing or trading of food between students is not permitted.** This is due to the issues of health, restricted diets, and individual family practices of *kashrut*. While faculty attempt to enforce this rule at lunch, it is imperative that parents reinforce it as well.
- **All food for school and/or classroom celebrations must arrive in school in the original, sealed containers with an acceptable kosher certification symbol.** Check food in at front office before bringing it to the classroom. Foods prepared at home are not acceptable for classroom celebrations.
- **Nothing is to be brought into the kitchen without permission from the office.**

- There will be no food purchases on official school trips except at designated venues. All the necessary meals and snacks will be provided, either by the parents or by the school unless indicated otherwise.
- The school facilities may sometimes be available for private rental, subject to approval by the office. Use of the kitchen requires approval from the *Vaad Hakashruth*.
- The following indicates the acceptable symbols of *Kashrut* Certification according to our *Vaad Hakashruth* of the Capital District



Birthday Parties and Celebrations

Our school year is filled with happy occasions including birthday parties. Teachers in each grade have developed age-appropriate ways to celebrate. Please check with your child's classroom teachers regarding the individual class policies for in-school birthday celebrations. **We strongly suggest that parties outside of the school include the entire class or at least all classmates of the same gender.**

Please remember: All food brought into the school must be *kosher* in accordance with our *Kashrut* Policy, and checked at the office before being brought to the classroom.

Outside Recess

Elementary school children go outside daily before or after lunch. We consider this opportunity for some vigorous outdoor activities to be very important. If your child is unable to participate in recess, please send a doctor's note to the school nurse. Without a doctor's note, we will expect children to participate in outdoor recess. Make sure that your child has proper outdoor clothing for all seasons. During inclement weather there will be no outdoor recess. Children will have time in their classrooms for games or relaxation. Every effort will be made to provide time for the children to be physically active.

Holiday Observances

Holiday observances and special events offer an opportunity for parents to join students and faculty in school activities. We will invite you to a number of holiday observances throughout the year. We celebrate all Jewish holidays as well as Thanksgiving and Martin Luther King Day. Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day or other religious based days are not celebrated in any manner in our school.

Field Trips

At every grade level, class trips are planned as part of the curriculum in general studies and Judaic studies. These trips enhance the children's understanding of academic subjects and promote learning through experience. Students visit local museums, theaters, synagogues and other significant sites. Longer trips are taken in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

Conduct and Discipline

Students

We are dedicated to promoting a climate of respect, kindness, and sensitivity based on Jewish values in our school. We recognize that children learn from the examples set by their parents, teachers, and fellow students and we do our best to model good behavior at all times. At the beginning of the school year, teachers and students discuss appropriate classroom behaviors and expectations, why the behaviors and expectations are important and possible consequences for not following the behaviors.

The Bet Shraga Code of Conduct specifically outlines values, expectations and our philosophy as a school community. Please see the Code of Conduct for a thorough overview and explanation of our expectations.

Parents, Guardians and Family Members

Parents, guardians and family members are expected to:

1. Recognize that the education of your child(ren) is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
2. Ensure your children attend school regularly and on time and that absences are legally excused.
3. Insist your children be dressed in a manner consistent with the student dress code.
4. Help children understand the importance of *derech erez*.
5. Know school expectations and help your children understand them.
6. Help your children deal effectively with peer pressure.
7. Inform school administration of changes in the home situation which may impact student conduct or performance.
8. Seek support services and assistance for your child when requested by administration.
9. Dress appropriately when attending school functions.

Appearance and Attire

We seek to create an environment that is safe, conducive to learning, and in keeping with the Jewish value of modesty. With those ideals in mind, students are free to express their own style and individuality through their dress while following these requirements in our building or on school-sponsored trips:

- Every day, students should arrive in school clad in clothing that is neat, clean, and without holes or rips. Major damage to an item of clothes may be temporarily resolved through a spare item kept at school, a call home or, if available, a loan from the office.
- On Fridays, all students are to wear a white or blue Hebrew Academy polo shirt or a solid white or blue collared shirt. If a student must be provided a shirt, a \$10.00 fee will be charged.
- The *kippah* is one way to signify our awareness of the sanctity which surrounds us. In addition, it can serve as an important symbol of identification with Judaism and with other Jews. In recognition of the school's status as a *beit midrash* (house of study), girls and women are encouraged to wear *kippot* when studying and praying, or throughout the day, if they choose. Due to the strong tradition of *kippot* for males, boys and men must wear *kippot* at all times. It is recommended that parents see that their child carries one kippah and leaves one in school in the desk or locker.
- Baseball caps and other hats are not permitted indoors for males or females and are not acceptable alternatives to a *kippah*.

- No distracting messages on clothing. Profanities, advertisements for alcoholic beverages or other intoxicants, insults, or sexually suggestive language or pictures are examples of unacceptable elements. (This includes brand names that are themselves suggestive.)
- No inappropriate exposure. No bare midriffs. No skin may be visible between the shirt and pants/skirt. No low cut necklines. Shirts must at least cap the shoulder. Shorts, skirts and dresses must reach the child's mid-thigh or lower. (Exceptions may be made by the administration on exceedingly hot days and on Purim, where costumes or unusual dress might be worn. Please contact the school in advance to avoid confusion.)
- No flip flops in school at all. Students scheduled for science lab must wear closed toed shoes for lab; all students must wear sneakers for physical education.
- Students may be kept indoors during recess if, in the teachers' judgment, they have insufficient cold weather gear.

We will contact parents when their child is out of dress code. We may ask for replacement clothes, or when available, supply a loaner so that the student may return to class and participate fully. Issues regarding compliance the dress code will be resolved by the Head of School or her assignee.

Personal Belongings

Please be aware of what your children bring to school. A teacher or administrator will confiscate items deemed inappropriate for school and parents will be required to retrieve them. See Code of Conduct for more specific details.

- Students may bring in small games to use for car pool or bus waiting time with the understanding that these games must remain in the students' backpack during class time.
- Cell phones for **after-school** parent communication must remain off and in the student's backpack during the school day.
- Electronic equipment, such as MP3 players and video games are not permitted to be used during the school day.
- Water pistols, pocket knives, or toys or tools that can be used as weapons are not permitted on the bus or in school.
- Money is not to be brought to school, unless it is for tzedakah or a specific requested purpose.

Visitors

Our priority is, first and foremost, preservation of a safe and secure learning environment. **When you visit the school, please sign the visitors' book and obtain a visitor's pass in the Main Office.** With prior approval, graduates of our school are welcome to visit during lunch hour. **All visitors must wear a visitor's badge.**

Parking

When visiting the school, please use the parking lot across the street on Sand Creek Road. Handicapped people may be dropped off at the door adjacent to the parking lot next to school. Please do not park your car on Russell Road where the buses park at dismissal time. **Students will not be dismissed onto Russell Road at the end of the school day.**

Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in various school activities. Please check with the administration and your child's teacher, as they may have projects specifically suited for volunteer parents. The Parent Organization provides additional volunteer opportunities. Please contact Bess Wadler for more information (bess@mac.com).

Payment and Refund Policy

A student's enrollment may be withdrawn upon written notice to HACD on or before September 1st, which will result in a forfeiture of the Registration and Membership fee as follows:

Before July 1:	All but \$100 will be refunded
On or after July 1 but before August 15:	All but \$200 will be refunded
On or after August 15 but before September 1:	All but \$300 will be refunded

Tuition is refundable based upon the day of withdrawal of the student. One tenth of tuition becomes an obligation on the first day of each school month - September through June - regardless of the number of school days actually attended. Tuition is not pro-rated on a daily basis.

The **Building Fund** obligation is a one-time payment of \$500 upon enrollment. For families whose first child is entering Kindergarten, this obligation will not be due until the child enters first grade. This payment may be paid in full or added to your FACTS payment. If your child is no longer going to attend HACD, the full amount is due, except when the withdrawal is at the request of the school administration for educational reasons or when the family relocates out of the Capital District.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Books and Workbooks

Jews are often referred to as the "People of the Book". Not only do we value the Torah, but we value all books so we expect them to be treated with care. Students are responsible for maintaining their books and workbooks in good condition and having them in class as needed. **Students will have to pay for lost textbooks or workbooks.**

General studies books and workbooks for children living in the **Albany School District** and **districts covered by BOCES** are kept in our building. We distribute them at the beginning of the school year and collect them at the year's end.

The following applies to children in **all other school districts**:

General studies books and workbooks must be picked up by parents prior to the start of school at their public school districts. (For children living in the Albany school district and districts covered by BOCES, see above.) Public schools will notify the parents of pick-up time and place. **Parents should write their child(ren)'s name(s) in every book they receive from their school district.** The office will distribute any Judaic books that do not come from the district.

At the end of the school year, all textbooks (not including workbooks) must be returned to their respective public school districts. Elementary teachers will send home the books and a copy of the original book order the last week of school. Middle School students will receive a copy of the original book order the last week of school. Teachers will help them find the correct books to take home.

Supplies

A school supply list with *most* items needed by students in class is distributed during the summer. Parents are responsible for providing these supplies.

Homework

In a school with a dual curriculum, students are expected to do homework in increasing amounts as they progress through school.

General Philosophy

Homework is an integral part of the educational process in our school. It is assigned to give students the opportunity to reinforce or extend skills, engage in critical thinking and develop good work habits. It is also an important means by which instruction can be individualized to meet the needs of each student. It is designed to contribute to our goal of creating life-long independent learners, capable of producing a good product and with the skills to pursue interests and research ideas. Homework can also serve as a means of communication between the teacher and the family and can be an additional way of assessing a student's competence in a particular skill.

Student's Responsibilities

1. To listen to directions and ask any necessary clarifying questions about an assignment.
2. To gather all materials necessary for completing assignments.
3. To complete all assignments to the best of his/her ability.
4. To return materials and submit assignments on time.
5. To make up any missed homework as requested by the teacher.

Teacher's responsibilities

1. To provide purposeful and meaningful homework.
2. To provide clear directions and instructions.
3. To implement a system for routinely checking homework and providing feedback.
4. To communicate with families when students are not completing or submitting assignments.

Family Responsibilities

1. To provide a routine and quiet space that is conducive to doing homework.
2. To offer assistance if needed, but not do the actual assignment.
3. To notify the teacher when homework presents a problem.
4. To nurture the student's organizational skills through regular backpack checks and clean-ups.

Each teacher will establish homework routines and procedures that are appropriate for the subject matter and the needs of the student. These procedures will be communicated by the teacher to the students and parents at the beginning of the school year. Written homework will not be assigned when it can only be completed on *Shabbat* or a Jewish holiday.

Computer Use

We are pleased to provide students **supervised access** to our computer network and the Internet. Accessing the Internet to help perform academic work, explore educational topics, and conduct research projects is a privilege. The privilege of using computers in school may be revoked at any time if a student fails to comply with this policy. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in the event of violations of this policy.

What is possible?

Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums, and other repositories around the world. Some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. While the purposes of school are to use Internet resources for constructive educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages.

What is expected?

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in the classroom or on a school playground. School expectations of derech erez apply. Users are responsible for complying with school standards and the specific rules set forth below. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources. Viewing of inappropriate content such as pornography is prohibited. Students will not access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

What are the rules?

Monitoring: Network administrators may review students' communications and files to maintain system integrity and ensure that students are using the system responsibly.

Downloading software: Students should never download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks, unless they have permission from the teacher/network administrator.

Copying: Students may not copy other people's work or intrude into other people's files.

Inappropriate materials or language: Profane, abusive or impolite language must not be used nor may materials be accessed that are not in line with the rules of school behavior. A good rule to follow is never view, send or access materials that you would not want your teachers and parents to see. Should students encounter such material by accident, they should report it to their teacher immediately.

HEALTH

School Nurse Hours

The school nurse is provided to us by the South Colonie School District. Specific hours will be set by the district at the beginning of the school year.

Absences

Please notify the school nurse (482-0464 x137) of any illnesses or extended absences. All communicable diseases are to be reported to the school nurse as soon as the parent knows the diagnosis.

In order to facilitate the proper keeping of attendance records required by New York State, parents are asked to observe the following procedures:

- Call the school nurse the morning of your child's absence and leave a message on her voice mail stating the reason for their absence. This is necessary so that we can monitor any contagious illnesses and avoid potential problems.
- When your child returns to school, provide a written note giving the date and reason for his/her absence from school. Your child should bring this note to his/her teacher on the morning that he/she returns to school.
- Send a written excuse to the school one day before necessary absences for a day or part of a day, such as for medical appointments.
- For longer absences which are known in advance, please notify the teachers, office and school nurse. Teachers are not required to prepare materials for your child to use during the absence. They may, however, apprise you of the work that will be covered during that time.

You must keep your child at home when ...

If your child complains of or shows the following symptoms at home, you must adhere to the following:

- **Rash or eye inflammation** - Any child with an unexplained rash or eye inflammation should be kept at home until the condition is diagnosed and treated by a physician.
- **Fever** - If a fever is present for any reason, a child should be kept at home until the temperature is normal for at least 24 hours and all symptoms have disappeared.
- **Cold** - A child with acute early symptoms of a cold should stay at home to prevent serious developments and to protect classmates and teachers from exposure to infection. Following this practice will result in fewer absences due to respiratory illness.
- **Stomach ache** - Any child who is nauseated or has vomited during the night should be kept at home for observation. Occasionally a young child may experience a stomach ache before the bus arrives. Parents are asked to use their judgment as to whether this is simple anxiety or an actual illness.

Medication in School

No medicine may be given in school unless a written note is on file from both the doctor and the parent. The parent must either deliver the medicine to the school, or call the school to let the nurse know to expect it. Aspirin, Tylenol, or similar products **will not** be given without **both** the doctor and parent's notes. The parent must provide the product. If you anticipate that your child might need these products, please send in the two required notes and the product you wish, labeled with your child's name. **This is required by New York State law for either prescription or over-the-counter medication.**

Immunizations and Health Forms

Health appraisals are required for all children in kindergarten, second, fourth, and seventh grades. Please submit completed forms to the health office no later than two weeks before the start of school.

New York State Law requires that all children attending school must be immunized against **Polio, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Measles, German measles, Mumps, and Hepatitis B.** Proof of this with a physician's signature must be on file in the child's permanent school record.

Allergies

Information regarding allergies or specific health needs must be discussed with the school nurse.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus Information and Procedures

Students residing in the Albany, Schenectady, and Cohoes city school districts, and students residing more than 15 miles from the school are not provided transportation by the public school district. If you are not eligible for District transportation, please refer to the sections on carpool information and procedures.

Parents of students who are eligible for transportation provided by their public school district, must file a transportation request form with their public school district before April 1st of each year. For families new to the area, this form must be completed within one month of arrival.

As a general rule, public school districts do not provide transportation when their classes are not in session. It is the parents' responsibility to contact their district to determine if transportation will be available and to arrange for alternate means of transportation when necessary.

Public school districts, or their transportation contractors, will inform parents of pick-up and drop-off times and locations. On the first few days of district-provided transportation, delays in pick-up and drop-off of the students should be expected. Parents should wait for buses with young children until the schedules are normalized.

Questions or concerns about bus transportation, such as location of the bus stop or a late arrival, cannot be addressed in the school office. Please call your school district's transportation office or its bus company. It is helpful to keep this number handy.

Students cannot get off at a different bus stop unless you make such arrangements in advance with the bus company. This is necessary because of the insurance restrictions with which each bus company must comply. If you make such an arrangement, you must send a note to the school office in the morning.

Procedures

It is important for the safety and well-being of all our students that each student follows bus rules. Help your child by encouraging them to follow sensible, kind, and responsible behavior. Students must observe these rules:

- Sit down in a seat after boarding the bus and remain seated. Keep your arms and head inside the bus.
- If the bus is equipped with seat belts, the child must use the seat belt.
- Be respectful to the bus driver and other children.
- The driver is in charge on the bus. Follow her or his instructions.
- Talk in a normal, not loud, voice.
- Don't eat on the bus. Keep the bus clean.
- Behave in a safe manner at the bus stop. Be aware of the traffic near your stop, even before the bus comes. Never throw snowballs or other things at the bus or any vehicle. Cross the road safely after leaving the bus.
- Students must use their assigned bus stop to get on or off, unless parents have made special arrangements for the day.
- Parents should be aware that a serious violation or repeated minor violations can result in the child's removal from the bus for a period of time. In such cases, the parent becomes responsible for transportation. Such actions are at the discretion of the bus company and/or Head of School.

Carpool Information and Procedures

In order to expedite dismissal, we have instituted a carpool system for the students residing in districts that do not provide transportation and for students who are picked up on a frequent and/or consistent basis. **The school does not make carpool arrangements**; however, upon request, we will try to provide you with the names of potential carpool members. Please advise the office in writing of any changes in your existing carpool.

If someone other than a parent is picking up student(s) on a regular or temporary basis, you must inform the school. The school will require this individual to establish their identity by showing a photo ID and verification from the parent(s) that they are authorized to remove students from the school.

Carpool procedures are continued on the next page.

Morning Drop-Off

All students being driven to school in the morning are to be dropped off at the school entrance in the small parking lot on Sand Creek Road.

- Drop off children close to the path.
- Do not get out of your car. Teach your child to unbuckle car seats and belts, or wave to the teacher on duty for assistance.
- Have children exit your car by the passenger side door.
- Do not pull around another car that is unloading students.
- Do not park in the drop off lot.
- For the safety of all, please be patient.
- Make sure anyone who drops off your child knows these procedures.

Afternoon Pick-Up

To ensure the safe and efficient dismissal of our students, please follow these procedures:

- Approach the school on Sand Creek Rd from the east (Everett Rd or Russell Rd).
- Enter the main school parking lot on the right and drive around to face Sand Creek Road and the school.
- If the pick-up area is **not** full, pull into it.
- If the pick-up area **is** full, stay in the main lot and line up cars in double file.
- After you cross Sand Creek Road, drive completely around the pick-up area to allow in as many cars as possible. Come to a complete stop and wait until the lot is full. Only when the lot is full and all the cars have stopped will children be dismissed.
- Do not get out of your car.
- Do not pull out of line. Wait until all of the children have entered their cars and the car in front of you moves.
- You may only make a right turn out of the small lot.
- If, for any reason, your child has to re-enter the building, drive out of the pick-up area, park your car in the main lot, and walk your child back into the building.
- If you need to come into the school, use the main office door.
- Share the rules with temporary drivers (spouse, guardian, grandparents, friends, etc.).

After School Pick-Up

- After school program drivers must park in the large parking lot, enter the building through the main door, retrieve their children and carefully walk them out of the front door and across the street.
- Please be patient with us as our new families learn these procedures.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL POLICIES

Our sexual harassment policy and drug and alcohol policy are available for review upon request from the office.



SIGNATURE FORM

Parent Handbook 2015-2016

Please sign and date this page and return to the school office.

I have reviewed this Parent Handbook and agree that I and my family will abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that the policies herein may be changed or supplemented, in which case I will be notified.

Student/s Name(s): _____

Classroom(s): Parparim Nesharim Dolfinim Middle School

Parent or Guardian I:

Parent or Guardian II:

Print Name:

Print Name:

Signature:

Signature:

Date:

Date:
