

# Limmud Parent Handbook 2019-2020 (5780)



**Temple Beth El Religious  
School**

**139 Winton Road S.  
Rochester, NY 14610**

**<http://www.tberochester.org>**

**585.473.1190**

# A NOTE TO PARENTS—OUR VIPs

You are our VIPs—Very Important Partners. You are our link to our children. For successful education, the partnership must be strong and cohesive; it must nurture itself for the growth of the student. While we do not teach dogma, we do live by “models” created by parents and teachers and emulated by children.

Prepare your child for Religious School. Impress upon him/her the importance of teaming and the influence that a Jewish Education will have on making him/her a better, more knowledgeable Jew.

Take an interest in the materials and notices that your child brings home and the emails you receive from the school. Discuss regularly the work of the class and homework that your child may have. Discuss the class work in light of your child’s everyday living.

Encourage your child to participate with you in Jewish ceremonies, i.e., saying the Friday night *Kiddush*, lighting Shabbat candles, reciting *Havdalah*, reciting the *Shema* before going to bed.

Interest your child in Jewish books. Encourage the listening of beautiful Jewish music and the viewing of special programs and films. Bring Judaism into your home by displaying works of art and ritual objects. Remember, a Hanukkah menorah can be displayed year round and it is quite thrilling to select a *mezuzah* for the front door of your home or your child’s bedroom.

Take your child with you to synagogue. Show him/her how to participate in services. Home observances are the best teachers of all. What’s important to you will be important to your child.

Take an active interest in school and synagogue projects, not just those in which your own child is involved. Come to holiday celebrations and special programs. Let us know of any particular talents or interest that you would be willing to share with our students. Please do not be modest. Your participation would be most appreciated and might further stimulate your child’s interest. Let us know of any trips or attractions of Jewish relevance. Tell us about speakers, films, and videos that you think would be helpful.

We are here to work with you. If we can assist in any way, please let us know.

# Our Vision For Limmud

Our vision for Limmud is to provide a quality, engaging, experiential Jewish educational Program that meets the needs of each child and inspires a dedication to living an actively Jewish Life.

## Limmud Goals

1. Strengthen Jewish Identity: Learn about Jewish Traditions, Values, Ethics, Culture, and Holidays
2. Acquire and practice Synagogue skills
3. Develop Hebrew language skills: ability to read, comprehend, and speak Hebrew
4. Zionism: Recognize the significance of the state of Israel to Jews around the world

## Organization of Limmud

### Length and Time of Classes

All classes of all grades meet for three hours on Sunday mornings, from 9 AM until 12 PM. In addition, in second to seventh grade, classes are also held for two hours on Wednesday afternoons, from 4:15 PM until 6:15 PM.

### Structure of Class Time

The curriculum includes the following subject areas:

K-2	3-7	8-9	10	8-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alef Bet</li><li>• Israel</li><li>• T'fillah Practice</li><li>• Shira V'Sippurim</li><li>• Jewish Values and Holidays</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hebrew</li><li>• Israel</li><li>• T'fillah Practice</li><li>• T'fillah Concepts</li><li>• Jewish Values and Holidays</li></ul>	Writing the Next Chapter of Your American Jewish Story	Confirmation Program	Madrichim In Training (MIT) Program

On Sundays, the schedule is different for different grades. In all grades, however, it includes core curriculum instruction by the Lead Madrich/a (teacher), Hebrew instruction by either the core teacher or a Hebrew language specialist, and T'fillah Practice (Prayer Services) (K and 1st have their own service, 2nd through 7th have their own).

# Limmud Code of Conduct

The goal of Temple Beth El's Limmud Religious School is to provide a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment in which students develop a positive Jewish identity. We practice the following values to promote the attainment of this goal:

- **B'tzelem Elohim:** Every person is created in the image of God and should be treated accordingly. In Limmud we create a culture of inclusion and value differences as strengths.
- **Tzedakah:** Tzedek, the root of Tzedakah, means "righteousness". In Limmud we role model and teach students the value of giving Tzedakah in the form of money, materials and time. We also practice Tzedakah by treating others in a generous manner.
- **Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh La Zeh:** All of Israel is responsible for one another. Limmud staff and students are expected to be responsible for one another, as well as for the entire Jewish Community.
- **Kavod:** Kavod means "respect". All Limmud staff and students are expected to treat one another and their environment with respect.

When a teacher feels that a student has gone beyond reasonable bounds of classroom behavior, the following procedure will occur:

1. The teacher will give the student a verbal warning.
2. If the behavior continues, the teacher will call upon an available adult to supervise the class so that the teacher can discuss the situation privately with the student. The teacher will also share specifics about the behavior with the Director of Limmud.
3. Should this behavior not improve, the teacher (with the support of the Director of Limmud) will contact the student's parents to jointly problem solve. There may be strategies that the student's parents can share with our school staff that would provide a path towards a solution.
4. If things do not improve after going through this procedure, we will discuss further consequences which may include, but are not limited to, suspension or termination from the program.

The following behaviors will not be tolerated and will require a discussion with the student's parents, the Director of Limmud and the Executive Director of Temple Beth El as appropriate:

- Bullying (as defined by the Dignity for All Students Act - DASA\*)
- Inappropriate physical contact between students or between a student and a teacher
- Vandalism of school or personal property

Cell phones and other personal technology devices are not to be used during Limmud. If a phone is brought to Limmud, it needs to remain turned off and stored away. Students whose phones and other devices are visible during Limmud will be asked to put them away. If a child is non-compliant his/her parents will be called. If parents need to be in communication with their child during Limmud, they should contact the office at (585) 473-1190.

\*Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) makes it the official policy of New York State that all students in New York State schools have the right to an education free of discrimination and harassment. For more information on DASA please visit: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>

# Limmud Policies

## School and Office Hours

School office hours are Monday-Thursday, from 9 AM to 5:30 PM, Fridays 9 AM to 3 PM, and Sundays from 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Generally, these are the hours that the school administrative and support staff are available. While in school, the teachers' time is totally devoted to instructional activities. Therefore, unless it is an emergency, it is difficult to contact a teacher during school hours. If you would like to speak with a teacher, please call the office (585-473-1190) and we will arrange for the teacher to return your call.

Weekday classes end at 6:15pm. We ask that you make every effort to be prompt when picking up your child or a carpool. Many students become anxious when their parents are late. If you know you are going to be late, please call the office and let us know. You are required to pick up your child from their Lead Madrich/a at the end of classes. Should you wish to speak with or meet with administrative staff, schedule an appointment or stop by the Limmud Office.

## Attendance

As our vision and goals reveal, we have much to accomplish in only a few hours a week. **Our excellent curriculum requires ALL of the given class time. To carry it out, we rely on the commitment of everyone in this partnership: our Madrichim (teachers), our parents, and our students.**

We expect our students to be in school at least 80% of the time, barring extended illnesses or other extenuating circumstances. We understand that there may be times when the student is unable to attend school, or must arrive late or leave early. Illness or being out of town, for example, are certainly unavoidable. But we ask that you make every effort to keep other interruptions to a minimum. We would be grateful if you schedule appointments or extracurricular activities so that your child does not need to miss school.

We also expect our students to be in school the grade-appropriate number of days per week. Students must attend school in its entirety, and may not attend just selected days of the week (for example, 2-7 graders may not regularly attend only one out of two days). If you have done your absolute best to schedule other activities **AROUND** Religious School, and you feel it is truly impossible to avoid missing classes on a certain day of the week for an extremely limited duration, you must speak with the Director of Limmud, who will attempt to work out something that meets everyone's needs.

## Tardiness or Early Departure

Madrichim (teachers) have been instructed to begin their classes on time, in order to be able to cover the curriculum by year's end. **Please have your child(ren) here punctually.** If a student is to leave early, a parent must contact the office via email or phone. The parent must pick the student up from their class and sign the student out. At least once each month, teachers will review attendance and notify the school office of students with excessive tardiness. The school office will then contact the parents to remind them of our policies, find out if there is some issue, and to request compliance with our policies.

# Limmud Policies Cont'd

## Supplies

Boys are **required** to wear a Kippah. We encourage girls who choose to do so to wear a Kippah as well. **Parents are asked to make certain students bring the necessary books, materials and Kippah to each class.** On occasion, students may be asked to bring additional items to class for special projects. In such instances, parents and students will be notified in advance. If a schoolbook is lost, the family will be responsible for the cost of replacement.

## Synagogue Attendance

Students learn best when they have a chance to utilize what they have learned in a practical manner. What better time and place to use and practice what they have learned in the classroom than in the Synagogue on Shabbat? **Therefore, our school requests that each student attend at least 10 Shabbat or holiday services per year.** This can be met through attendance at Shabbat morning services, Friday night services, or services for Sukkot, Pesach, and Shavuot. We will keep track of children who attend our own special programs (see the following paragraph).

We strongly encourage you to bring your child(ren) to Shabbat services with you. While children are always welcome in the main sanctuary, we have wonderful special children's programs as well. Once a month we offer Tot Shabbat (a family service for children in preschool through 1st grade), and a Family Service (a family service for children in 2nd grade-7th grade).

## Bar / Bat Mitzvah

At Temple Beth El, we view a Bar or Bat Mitzvah as a major milestone in the entire context of the educational process, not simply an isolated event. We expect our B'nai Mitzvah to complete a course of study which begins no later than 2nd grade (although we highly recommend beginning in Kindergarten), and lasts until at least the end of 7th grade. If a student enrolls here after 3rd grade, the parents must show us evidence of prior Jewish education or the student must have mastery of the grade appropriate material. If one of these two conditions is not met, it will be the parents' responsibility to hire a tutor, at their own expense, so that the student gets caught up with his class. It is Synagogue policy that a child must be enrolled in a program of Judaic studies (not just "Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons") during the year of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in order to have the ceremony at Beth El. The course of study may be through a religious school, a Jewish day school, or privately arranged tutors approved by the Rabbi and the Director of Limmud. It should also include regular attendance at Shabbat services during the year of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Information about the actual preparation for this important rite is presented later in this manual, as well as in the B'nai Mitzvah Family Guide you will receive when your child is in 5th grade.

# Limmud Policies Cont'd

## School Closings Due To Weather Or Other Emergencies

The majority of our students attend school in the Brighton or Pittsford school districts. In general, if either or both of those school districts are closed due to inclement weather, Limmud will not be open either. If students are already at their secular schools and a decision is made to close Limmud, we will notify our students' secular schools and ask them to make an announcement at school. In addition, we will send an email. On Sundays we will send an email to parents and families.

If Religious School is being cancelled due to weather or other emergency, our closing is called into 13Wham TV (this will be listed on their website as well as on the television). In addition, we will send an email.

## Kashrut, Snacks and Drinks

Please remember that as a Conservative Congregation, our synagogue policy is adherence to Kashrut. Homemade or restaurant items, even if dairy, are not allowed in either the school or synagogue buildings. If you do send in food, whether just for your child's snack or for the whole class, please make certain you send only manufactured, packaged items that bear a Kashrut label, or baked goods that come from establishments under Kosher supervision. While you may send your children in to Limmud with snacks, please consider the following:

On both Sundays and Wednesdays TBE provides snack for our students. This is due to an increasing number of students/staff with food allergies. We want to make sure that all of our students feel safe and included here, so we provide snack for each class, which is determined by the dietary requirements of the students in the class. Madrichim are aware of these allergies and choose snack guided by them. This way everyone has the same snack portions and opportunities, and helps prevent snack from becoming a distraction during the day.

We ask that students not eat, drink, or chew gum in class without the express permission of the teacher. Snacks and drinks should be consumed before Limmud starts, or during the designated snack times.

Birthdays should be special – especially here at Temple Beth El, where we love a Simcha (joyous occasion). Please feel free to celebrate your child's birthday with his/her schoolmates. To send treats into the classroom, please make the appropriate arrangements directly with the child's Lead Madrich/a (teacher).

# Limmud Policies Cont'd

## Homework

We know that children's lives are busy ones. We know that children can often get a great deal of homework from their secular schools. We honestly empathize with the stress many children are under, trying to meet their various and growing responsibilities. That is why we try our hardest not to add to the stress by giving a great deal of homework.

However, we also know that you have entrusted us to teach your child how to read Hebrew, an essential skill if we are to achieve our joint objectives. It is a complicated language with sounds that do not occur in English, and a character set that not only bears no relationship to English, but is actually read in the opposite direction. Therefore, for your child to be successful, he/she must practice. Please make sure you and your child allot 15 minutes at least two or three times per week for Hebrew practice. The more your child practices, the more fluent and comfortable he/she will become with their reading.

In addition, we have a very full curriculum to teach and an extremely limited time frame. We also want to keep the students' interest and help them to develop independent study skills. Therefore, teachers may periodically assign other homework projects. Please make sure you ask your child(ren) about homework assignments, and help ensure that they get completed.

## Field Trips And Other Activities

As part of our curriculum, individual classes, grades, or the entire school may be involved in one or more activities and field trips. Parents may be asked to serve as chaperones or drivers for these events, and we would greatly appreciate any assistance you could provide.

The school also holds a variety of assemblies and special programs throughout the year. When parents and others are invited, these events will be publicized through fliers, in class, and in emails. We often need parental assistance during these events, and may call on parents to assist with these events.

In addition, the school sponsors several family education programs throughout the school year. Usually, they take place on Sundays during the normal Religious School Time. Since these programs are designed with child/parent interaction in mind, it is important for parents to make every effort to participate. You will be notified by flier or email well before the program.

# Youth Programs

## Youth Groups

Temple Beth El is extremely proud to be the sponsor of two award winning youth groups, with very positive local, regional, and national reputations. While there is a small element of socialization within Limmud, it's primary focus is educational, not social. Recognizing the tremendous importance of socializing with Jewish peers, our youth groups serve an important purpose, as the focus is primarily on



social activities within a Jewish framework. Obviously, Religious School and our Youth Groups are complementary parts of a single whole. Therefore, we strongly recommend that our students join the age appropriate youth program and participate to the fullest.

Our Kadima program is available for students in grades 5 – 8. Some of the great programs members have enjoyed in the past include picnics, bowling, skating, trips to amusement parks, Purim carnivals, tie-dye lessons, and slumber parties at the Synagogue. We hope your child will join in the fun this year!

We also are proud to sponsor one of the oldest Jewish Boy Scout Troops in the country! We encourage our boys in grades 5 and higher to join the scout troop. There's nothing quite like a weekend camping experience where kashrut and Shabbat are observed.

#### Scholarship Opportunities for Jewish Education/Living

Thanks to the generosity of many contributors over the years, the school and synagogue have a fund earmarked for scholarships. In addition, we can sometimes access community scholarship funds through the Jewish Community Federation.

Students whose families are members may apply for these scholarships to be used for Jewish educational programs. These include such programs as Camp Ramah, USY and Kadima summer learning programs, Israel programs, and more. Scholarships for school tuition, based on need, are also available.

Applications are reviewed and scholarships are approved by a Scholarship Committee. For more information, please contact the school office.

#### Bar And Bat Mitzvah

This is an extremely important milestone in the life of every Jew, signifying the child has matured to the point that he/she is now responsible for his/her own deeds, and takes on the obligations of a Jewish adult. In order for this life cycle event to be meaningful, a child must be educated about what these deeds and obligations are, why we do them, and what they mean.

Students are assigned a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date when they are in fourth grade. Temple Beth El's B'nai Mitzvah who are attending our own Religious School complete a three year B'nai Mitzvah Curriculum. Individual lessons with the Hazzan begin in sixth grade.

#### Fifth grade students:

- Learn Torah trope and the blessing before and after the Torah
- Read and chant Friday night and Shabbat morning prayers and blessings
- Read their Torah portion in Hebrew
- Regularly attend family and Shabbat services
- Help lead a Friday night and a Shabbat morning service
- Participate in class specific family programs and community service activities
- Are partnered with an 8th grade mentor

#### Sixth grade students:

- Learn Haftorah trope
- Read and chant Friday night and Shabbat morning prayers and blessings
- Study and use tallit and tefilin

- Read their Haftorah portion in Hebrew
- Study their parsha and prepare their d'var Torah
- Develop and work on a mitzvah project
- Regularly attend family and Shabbat services, particularly b'nai mitzvah
- Help lead Friday night and Shabbat morning service
- Participate in class specific family programs such as the Yad Workshop, Yad Vashem Bar Mitzvah Twinning Program and the Worldwide Wrap

Seventh grade students:

- Read their Torah and Haftorah portion in Hebrew
- Deliver a d'var Torah
- Lead Friday night and Shabbat morning services
- Explore the Machzor, festival prayer book
- Continue working on their mitzvah project
- Engage in community service projects and activities
- Study the Holocaust

Questions regarding Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates, service options, the entire process, availability of private tutors, and any other related matters should be addressed with the Rabbi or the Hazzan, who are accessible by calling the main synagogue office at (585)473-1770.

# Limmud—Parent Partnership

It is our sincere belief that parents are our partners in the education of their children. A successful partnership has many elements, but among the most important is excellent communication. Only by communicating openly and freely can we achieve our shared objectives.

The school communicates with parents through phone calls from teachers or other staff (as needed), email, fliers, formal parent-teacher conferences, letters from teachers/administration; and other means, both formal and informal. *The best and quickest means to communicate is through e-mail, so please make sure the school has your accurate e-mail address.* In fact, in all grades, the teachers send parents an e-mail, at least monthly, about what has been going on in class since the last update. In addition, the Director of Education sends a weekly e-newsletter each Tuesday which highlights upcoming school events and is a vital communication tool.

Parents are strongly encouraged to communicate with the school staff and faculty. We are available and eager to answer any questions you might have, listen to concerns and develop solutions together, hear any suggestions you might have, and to celebrate any of our successes together.

Teachers may be contacted via email or by calling the school office. The office will inform the teacher of the call, and the teacher will call the parent back when he/she is able. The Education Directors, of course, are available and accessible to you as well. In fact we welcome the opportunity to meet each family, and to work with you to ensure that your child's Religious School experience is a meaningful one. Meetings with the Education Director can be arranged by calling the school office. Informal meetings can sometimes be had by just stopping by the school office and seeing if the Education Director is available. And please say hi and introduce yourself if you see the Education Director or any other faculty before or after school!

In addition, the chairs and members of the Temple Beth El Education Committee would be happy to answer questions and listen to your concerns, suggestions, and comments.

## Annual Registration Form

Each year, certain important information must be communicated to school administration and faculty. Therefore, we ask that parents complete a form for each student every single year. Filling out this form accurately and honestly is an important step in forging a link between parents and the school. All information on this form is kept strictly confidential, except for address and phone number, which is published in a school directory. Parents may request that their address and phone number be left out of the directory.

## Report Cards/Progress Reports

Progress Reports are sent home twice, at the end of each semester. In between, if a teacher feels that a student has some performance issues, the teacher will discuss these issues directly with the parents. Parents are encouraged to reach out to teachers to discuss their child's performance.

# Student Safety

## Medical Emergencies/Services

If a student becomes ill or is injured, staff will use reasonable judgment in determining what first aid measures can be administered. Every effort will be made to contact parents. The school cannot dispense even over-the-counter medication – Tylenol, aspirin, etc..., without the express written consent of a parent. Therefore, please note on your annual registration form whether we may give your child(ren) pain/fever medication if needed, what type, and what dosage. If your child needs to take prescription medicine during school, we need both the signature of the parent and the physician. Finally, if your child has a medical condition that may require attention or special consideration, please note this on your annual registration form as well. If necessary Lead Madrichim (teachers) will carry inhalers and/or epipens with the class so it is near to the student in case of an emergency.

## Fire Safety/Building Evacuation

The school and Synagogue are equipped with fire detection and alarm systems. Each classroom is provided with a map that shows the appropriate exit for that class to use in the event of fire or other emergency situations. A fire drill will be conducted during the first month of school, to make certain everyone knows the proper evacuation procedures early in the year. At least one more drill will be held during the course of the school year. There will also be at least two Lock Down drills during the course of the year. Additional safety note: A security guard will be present during Limmud hours on Sundays and Wednesdays.

## Drop-Off And Pickup Of Students

The safety of our students is our utmost concern. Therefore, we have carefully devised a specific plan/route for dropping off and picking up your child(ren). The plan helps ensure our children's safety, when you cooperate fully.

Children in Kindergarten and first grade must be walked to the classroom at drop off time. Older students may be escorted by a parent or enter independently. If you are dropping your child off please pull up to the curb and have them walk along the sidewalk. Parents and students must enter the building through the synagogue entrance. A security guard will be positioned at the door and will let you into the building.

Children in Kindergarten through Seventh grade must be picked up from the classroom and signed out of the class. They will not be allowed out of the room without a parent or an adult who has been authorized to pick them up.



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