



Religious School  
Parent Handbook  
2019-2020/5780



Temple Shalom  
475 Winthrop Street, Medford, MA 02155  
781-396-3262  
[www.templeshalommedford.org](http://www.templeshalommedford.org)

## Table of Contents

Contact information.....	2
Our educational philosophy.....	3
Eligibility requirements.....	3
Enrollment process.....	3
Grade by grade curriculum.....	4
Homework requirements.....	7
Attendance requirements.....	7
Service attendance.....	8
Parent/Teacher communication.....	8
Code of conduct.....	8
Classroom rules.....	8
Class schedule and locations.....	9
Weather policy.....	9
Parent volunteering.....	10
Family programs.....	10
Health & Wellness.....	10
Tikkun Olam.....	11
Bar/Bat Mitzvah planning.....	11
Religious School Committee.....	11
School calendar—key dates.....	12

## Contact information

Andrea Katz, Religious School Director  
rsdirector@templeshalommedford.org.....781-396-3262  
ext. 107

Judy Rabinowitz, Religious School Committee Co-Chair  
Judy.rabinowitz@gmail.com.....617-680-6526

Rabbi Braham David  
rabbi@templeshalommedford.org.....781-396-3262

Laurie Lydon, Office Manager  
Office@templeshalommedford.org.....781-396-3262

Religious School Committee: Rebecca Kurowski, Yair Mega,  
Beth Linker , Jennifer Pectol (Co-Chair), Ben Varat

## Our Educational Philosophy

Temple Shalom Religious School will:

- Prepare students to engage in Jewish life by teaching the “building blocks” of Judaism – Ivrit (Hebrew), Hagim (Holidays), Torah (Five Books of Moses), Tefillah (Prayer), Yisrael (Israel), Historiah (History), Middot (values), and Mitzvot (Obligations).
- Instill a love for Judaism through various learning modes, including creative and experiential activities.
- Provide a comprehensive Jewish education in Hebrew language, including the reading and significance of prayers, as well as modern Hebrew.
- Foster identification with and love for Israel, the Jewish homeland.

## Eligibility Requirements

- The Religious School welcomes all children wishing to learn about their Jewish heritage. The Temple Shalom Bar/Bat Mitzvah program requires that children be Jewish according to the standards of the Conservative movement.
- The Religious School welcomes students with special needs. Parents of special needs students should speak to the Director about any necessary accommodations as early as possible. Temple Shalom is a member of the Gateways Consortium.
- No student will be denied access to our school for financial reasons. If financial assistance is needed, please contact the Religious School Chair.

## Enrollment Process

- Our registration forms are available on our website [www.templeshalommedford.org](http://www.templeshalommedford.org) or by contacting the Religious School Director beginning in mid-June each year. The form must be filled out and returned to the office with a check to secure enrollment.
- Parents of new students should contact the Religious School Director with questions about enrollment.
- Temple Shalom Religious School is open to non-members through first grade (Kitah Aleph). Temple membership is required for enrollment in higher grades.

## School Curriculum

### ***Gan Katan (Preschool)***

- Learn about Jewish holidays and customs through stories and activities, crafts, song and movement
- Explore Jewish values, e.g., listening to parents, showing kindness/sharing with others
- Introduction to prayer through snack time blessings
- Familiarity with Hebrew words and phrases incorporated throughout program
- Value *Tzedakah* and create class fund donated at the end of the year (continues for all grades)

### ***Gan Yeladim (Kindergarten)***

- Recognize Hebrew letter shapes and sounds using “Alef-Bet” folders, singing, and yoga
- Learn modern Hebrew phrases/words, especially during snack time conversation
- Participate in experiential holiday activities utilizing the 5 senses, e.g., **seeing** and **hearing** the *shofar* and **tasting** apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah; **feeling** the *lulav* and **smelling** the *etrog* on Sukkot, etc.
- Appreciate the synagogue as a place of worship, study and celebration, with a focus on learning the *Shema* prayer

### ***Kitah Aleph (Grade One)***

- Learn Hebrew letters and vowels, as well as key words that begin with each letter
- Build classroom vocabulary, e.g. *kitah (class)*, *morah (teacher)*, *talmid/talmidah (student)*, etc.
- Explore *Mitzvot* curriculum including, *Tzedakah* (Helping the Needy), Visiting the Sick, Feeding the Hungry, Taking Care of the Earth, Welcoming Guests, Guarding Our Tongue and *Talmud Torah* (Jewish Studies)
- Focus on Bible stories and holidays through stories and discussion, games and craft projects

***Kitah Bet (Grade Two)***

- Engage in Hebrew reading curriculum, focusing on decoding using letter and vowel cards and building fluency through oral reading, games and exercises
- Learn about modern Israel through stories and explore the country's contributions to the world through art, music, medicine, technology, and inventions
- Discover Jewish holidays, traditions and customs

***Kitah Gimmel (Grade Three)***

- Begin Bible curriculum with stories from Creation to Exodus by reading interpretations of the text and personalizing them with their own midrashim (explanatory stories) and identifying core Jewish values
- Read Hebrew blessings and Shabbat/Festival prayers, learning key vocabulary words
- Sing *Hatikvah*, Israel's national anthem
- Participate in leading prayer services

***Kitah Dalet (Grade Four)***

- Explore the Jewish prophets, through reading and discussion of Bible curriculum, from Sinai to the Nation of Israel
- Expand knowledge of *Shabbat* morning prayers
- Practice conversational Hebrew with peers
- Discover Israel and the sacred texts and enjoy visits by *Shinshinim*, Israeli young ambassadors

***Kita Hey (Grade Five)***

- Examine Jewish History from Ancient Israel to the 1880's with opportunities to compare life today with our ancestors, and explore how Judaism has evolved and adapted over time
- Learn about the Holocaust and Israel, maturing their understanding of our history
- Master Shabbat prayers, including reading, chanting and discussing the significance of the Torah and *Mussaf* Services
- Practice writing cursive Hebrew

**Kitah Vav (Grade Six)**

- Examine Jewish History from the Birth of Zionism to the present, using discussion prompts that develop critical thinking skills and an understanding of the historical timeline
- Research and present project on noteworthy Jewish role models
- Learn the prayers led upon becoming a B'nai mitzvah in the Torah and Mussaf service
- Enrich Hebrew fluency through the creation of short Hebrew conversational skits

**Kitah Zayin (Grade Seven)**

- Learn about the establishment of the state of Israel, more in-depth understanding of modern Israel, as well as our relationship as American Jews
- Learn the structure of the Torah and how the Haftarah relates to the weekly Torah portion
- Master B'nai Mitzvah prayers
- Participate in B'nai TELEM, a *Tikkun Olam* (Improving the World) curriculum focusing on social justice and volunteer during site visits
- Study American Jewish history in an interactive *hevruta* style (in partners) artifact discovery program, designed by the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia

**Teen Initiative (Grade Eight - Ten)**

- Engage in informal dinner and discussion sessions on various Jewish themes, such as Jewish music, Talmud, the Holocaust, Jewish cooking, Israel, etc.
- Strengthen understanding and commitment to *Tikkun Olam* (Improving the World) through monthly volunteer service visits using the TELEM (Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston) curriculum
- Participate in the monthly *minyan* (prayer service)
- Serve as *madrichim* (classroom helpers) for younger grades (optional)

## School wide programs

School wide programs will include a Chanukah song presentation, a Tu B'Shevat seder, a Purim carnival and a Passover model seder.

## Homework Requirements

Students are expected to complete homework assignments and be prepared for their classes with the appropriate books, school materials, and a back pack/book bag for each school session. Notices and homework assignments can be found in the red Take Home Folder after each class session. Please check the Take Home Folder promptly after class in order to stay in touch with your child's Religious School experience. Some teachers may choose to communicate with parents via email as well.

## Class Attendance Requirements

It is very important that students arrive to class on time. We understand that sometimes a student must be dismissed due to special circumstances, but we ask that these disruptions be kept to a minimum. For educational continuity and knowledge, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Please send an email message to [rsdirector@templeshalommedford.org](mailto:rsdirector@templeshalommedford.org) by 9:00 a.m. if your child is going to be tardy or absent on Sunday, and by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday.

## Shabbat Service Attendance Requirements

All students are encouraged to attend Friday evening and Saturday morning services. Students should attend at least the number of services corresponding to their grade year **per semester** (September-January and February-May).

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Service</u>
Aleph	1
Bet	2
Gimmel	3
Dalet	4
Hey	5
Vav	6
Zayin	7

Temple Shalom offers a variety of age appropriate Shabbat morning service options as well as a family Kabbalat Shabbat. For more information and schedules please visit [www.templeshalommedford.org](http://www.templeshalommedford.org).

## Parent Teacher Communication

Parent conferences (for grades 3 and up) will be offered mid-year, and progress reports will be sent out at the middle and end of the year.

We encourage parents to contact their child's teacher directly at any time to discuss issues related to the classroom experience. Teachers will provide their email address and telephone number at the beginning of the school year. Parents may also contact the Religious School Director to set up a meeting, if preferred.

Parents should feel free to let us know anything that will help their child have a positive educational experience in Religious School. We would like every child to flourish in our school and enjoy their Jewish education.

## Code of Conduct

All children are expected to be respectful of other people and property. If a child consistently has trouble with appropriate classroom conduct, parents will be contacted by either the teacher or the Religious School Director.



## Class Schedule and Locations

All Religious School classes meet in the school building next to Temple Shalom. Classes also make use of the library, the sanctuary and Singer Chapel in the synagogue building. Classes meet according to the following schedule. A full calendar is posted at [www.templeshalommedford.org](http://www.templeshalommedford.org).

Gan Katan & Gan Yeladim

Weekly on Sunday, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Kitah Aleph & Kitah Bet (grade 1 & 2)

Weekly on Sunday, 9:30 a.m. - noon

Kitah Gimmel, Dalet, Hey, Vav & Zayin (grade 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7)

Weekly on Sunday, 9:30 a.m. - noon and Wednesday, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

## Dismissal Policy

Students in Gan Katan - Kita Bet can be picked up in their classrooms. Students in Kita Gimmel, Dalet, Hey, Vav and Zayin can be picked up right outside the front door of the school, or in the hallway in the case of inclement weather. If someone besides a parent will be picking your student up, please let the teachers know ahead of time. Please pick up students promptly at the end of class. Teachers must remain until all students have been released to their parents.

## Weather Policy

If classes are cancelled on Sunday due to inclement weather, the Religious School Director will make the decision by 7:30 a.m. and parents will be notified by telephone by their classroom teacher. If Medford Public Schools are cancelled on a Wednesday, the Religious School Director will assess the weather conditions by 1 p.m. to make the decision to cancel Religious School and will contact parents by phone.

## Parent Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the school in the following capacities:

- to cover classrooms when substitute teachers are unavailable
- to prepare and give out snacks to students
- to assist with special projects in class as well as family programs
- to share a talent with the students (music, story telling, cooking, etc.)

Parents may indicate their availability at the start of the school year on the registration form or contact the Religious School Director at any time during the year. Parental assistance and participation are critical to the success of our Religious School.

Religious School parents are expected to work a shift for the Chanukkah and Purim parties. More information will be sent out as those events approach.

All parents who volunteer in the classroom will be required to fill out a CORI form. Forms will be available from the Religious School Director on the first day of class and throughout the school year.

## Family Programs

The Religious School Director plans two family programs each year. All grades are invited unless otherwise noted and each student is encouraged to attend with at least one parent. More information about family programs will be sent home during the year.

## Health & Wellness

- Please do not send sick children to school.
- If a child becomes ill during school we will call parent's home and cell numbers, then emergency contacts. The parents must provide transportation home as soon as possible.
- During each class session a snack of is provided by the school. If your child has a food allergy, please contact the Religious School Director to make other arrangements.
- Temple Shalom Religious School is a nut free and Kosher building.

## Tikkun Olam

We model Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) in all of our classrooms. We ask that families participate in these activities to the best of their ability.

- Bring change to give to the class tzedakah collection. At the end of each year, each classroom chooses a Jewish organization (local, national or international) to receive the donation.
- Bring a non-perishable food item to donate to a local Medford food pantry. There is a donation box in the lobby of the synagogue building.
- Bring in redeemable cans and bottles. All of the money collected from their sale goes towards buying books and supplies and paying for educational programs. Donations can be left in front of the Custodian's Closet across from the synagogue office.

## B'nai Mitzvah Planning

One of the goals of our school is the eventual Bar/Bat Mitzvah of each of the children. Parents of children in who finish grade 4 will be given a copy of the Temple Shalom B'nai Mitzvah handbook.

## The School Committee

The Religious School Committee is responsible for hiring and negotiating contracts with the Religious School Director. The Committee works with the Director and the Clergy to determine school policy, set goals for the school, and create and monitor the school budget. Volunteers from the Committee also assist with school run family programs. If you would like to get more involved with your child's Religious School experience, consider volunteering for the School Committee.

## 2019-2020 Religious School Calendar

(All dates are subject to change; Please check the Temple Shalom website for most up to date schedule)

Sunday, September 8: **First day of classes**

**Welcome Meeting for all grades 9:30 a.m.**

Wednesday, September 11: **First day of Wednesday classes**

Sunday, September 29: No classes - Erev Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday, October 9: No classes—Yom Kippur

Sunday, October 13: No classes - Columbus Day weekend

Monday, October 21: Kabbalat Torah Ceremony/Kital Gimmel

Sunday, November 10: No classes—Veteran's Day weekend

Sunday, November 17: **Family Education Program**

Wednesday, November 27: No Classes - Thanksgiving

Sunday, December 1: No Classes - Thanksgiving

Sunday, December 22: No Classes - Winter Break

Wednesday, December 25: No Classes - Winter Break

Sunday, December 29: No Classes - Winter Break

Wednesday, January 1: No Classes - Winter Break

Sunday, January 5: **Mitzvah Day**

Wednesday, January 8: No Classes - Intersession Break

Sunday, January 19: No Classes—MLK Day

Sunday, February 16: No Classes - vacation week

Wednesday, February 19: No Classes - vacation week

Sunday, March 15: **Family Education Program**

Wednesday, March 22: No Classes - Mid-Term Break

Wednesday, April 8: No Classes - Passover

Sunday, April 19: No Classes - Spring break

Wednesday, April 22: No Classes - Spring Break

Sunday, May 3: **Last day of classes - Closing ceremony and picnic**

### **Shabbat Mishpacha Dates:**

Friday, September 20: led by Kita Zayin

Friday, October 18: led by Kita Vav

Friday, November 15: led by Kita Hey

Friday, December 20: led by Kita Dalet

Friday, January 17: led by Kita Gimmel

Friday, March 20: led by Kita Aleph & Bet