

Religious School Parent Handbook



2024-2025/5784-5785

Welcome to

Congregation Kol Ami's Religious School Educational Team

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Vision Statement

We are a dynamic, inclusive and nurturing community and find holiness in being fully present for one another through life's ordinary and extraordinary moments. We seek to find bold purpose and deep connections through the creative exploration of Avodah (prayer), Talmud (Torah learning), Tikkun Olam (repairing/healing the world), and acts of G'milut Chasadim (loving kindness). The wisdom of our Jewish tradition empowers us to re-imagine our lives, inspiring personal growth and encouraging a deeper understanding of who we are as individuals and as a congregational family. We are truly stronger together.

Philosophy

The purpose of Congregation Kol Ami Religious School is to develop students into motivated, engaged students who are involved in hands on learning, love of being Jewish, and feel a strong sense of community.

- We want our students to develop understanding of and appreciation for their Jewish Heritage.
- We want our students to have the ability to participate actively in the Synagogue and home Jewish rituals.
- We want our students to be ethical, socially responsible members of the Jewish community.
- We believe in a comprehensive, sequential curriculum taught by devoted, caring, and committed teachers.
- We believe that a creative atmosphere infused with ruach (spirit) will stimulate students' interest and promote personal connections with learning.
- We believe in a teaching-learning process that varies and differentiates instruction to meet the needs of learners with diverse learning styles, multiple intelligence, and varying family backgrounds.
- We believe that successful accomplishments of our goals and objectives require a partnership between students, teachers, and parents. Only through collaboration can we bring all children to develop a deep personal Jewish identity, to experience pride and joy in their Jewishness, and to commit themselves to lifelong learning and growth.

School Schedule

Religious School	Sunday	9:15-11:30 AM
Hebrew School	Tuesday	4:15-6:15 PM
Hebrew High	Tuesday	6:30-8:30 PM (dinner included)

Pre-Kindergarten:	Meets approximately 2 times a month (See below)
Kindergarten - 2 nd Grade:	Sundays
3 rd - 6 th Grade:	Sundays and Tuesday Afternoon
7 th Grade:	Tuesday evening and 1 Sunday per month for Family Track (See below)
8 th -12 th Grade:	Tuesday Evening

Pre-K dates for 2024-25

September 8 th	January 26 th
September 22 nd	February 9 th
October 6 th	February 23 rd
October 20 th	March 9 th
November 3 rd	March 23 rd
November 24 th	April 6 th
December 8 th	April 27 th
January 12 th	May 4 th

7th Grade Family Track Dates

September 15th	November 17th	January 26th
February 23rd	March 23rd	April 27th

Religious School Tuition Rates

Pre-K	\$350	Seventh Grade	\$950
Kindergarten	\$720	*Eighth Grade	\$950
First Grade	\$720	*Ninth Grade	\$950
Second Grade	\$720	*Tenth Grade	\$1,300
Third Grade	\$1,590	Eleventh Grade	\$850
Fourth Grade	\$1,590	Twelfth Grade	\$850
Fifth Grade	\$1,590	Madrichim Team	\$118
Sixth Grade	\$1,590	Ezer Team	\$36
		Youth Group Dues	\$36

PLEASE NOTE: Congregation Kol Ami Membership is required to enroll in the RS.

***The Starlight Foundation:** The Starlight Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation that was established many years ago at Temple Emanuel as a permanent endowment for the primary purpose of enhancing programming for Jewish education. The Foundation is proud to be able to continue its primary mission of supporting education for our unified congregation. The Board of Directors of the Foundation is pleased to announce the first of its kind, "Pay What You Want" program for rising 8th-12th grade students' religious school tuition at Kol Ami. For the 2024-2025 religious school year, the Starlight Foundation will fund any monetary difference between the suggested tuition contributions and actual payments received for this group of students. We hope this program will eliminate any financial constraints which may deter parents from continuing their child's Jewish education at Kol Ami and help encourage students to remain enrolled post Brit Mitzvah through confirmation and beyond. Our youth represents the future of our faith; the Starlight Foundation is honored to help support the future of our unified congregation.

To find out more or make a monetary contribution to support the mission of the Starlight Foundation, please contact **Andy Weiner** at andy@wbresorts.com.

Madrichim Team: For Grades 9-12 who want to take part in our Madrichim program focusing on leadership development and classroom management.

The NEW Kol Ami Ezer Program (KAE): For Grades 7-8 who want to work with children and earn community service hours!

Youth Group Dues: This is an optional fee that will include Youth group membership and discounts for events.

Youth Group Programming

- Youth Engagement is a top priority for our unified congregation. We are committed to providing students of all ages with high quality youth programming, complete with opportunities to socialize and deepen their understanding of what it means to be part of a Jewish community. We will be celebrating the holidays together, exploring our Jewish identities in creative ways, and most importantly... having fun! Our calendar will be filled with fun and engaging events for the following age groups:
 - Club Katon 1 (Kind -2nd)
 - Club Noar 2 (3rd – 5th Grade)
 - KAFTY Junior (6th - 8th grade)
 - KAFTY Senior (9th-12th grade)
- We encourage everyone to join our youth groups by becoming a dues-paying member. Dues are an optional \$36 yearly contribution that helps support youth programming and provides you with a discounted price for events.



Inclusion

Our goal is to make Judaism accessible to all, regardless of ability or disability. We pride ourselves on being a “house of prayer for *all* people” (Isaiah 56:5).

- **Madrichim Team** – This program introduces the educational strategies that are most effective with diverse learners. Once a month training is given to the team.
- **Tutors** - These teachers will be part of our Hebrew School to provide individual or small group instruction for those students who need extra support beyond the regular classroom.
- **Inclusion Coordinator**- Adam Roth, Inclusion Coordinator, works with the teachers to ensure they have the tools needed to make each child successful in the classroom.

Policies

Attendance: Prompt and regular attendance and participation are key components for getting the full benefit of Religious School. If your child will be absent, please call the Religious School office (856-489-0035) and we will inform the appropriate teacher. Your child is then responsible to make up any assignment missed due to absence. If there is going to be a long-term absence, please contact the Director of Education so we can determine the best way to proceed.

Early Dismissal: For security reasons the parent or guardian **MUST** come to the Religious School office to sign out your child. Once you sign them out an administrative assistant will retrieve your child from the classroom.

Illness/Injury: Should a child become ill during school hours, the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up the child. A first aid kit is available in the school office. If your child carries an Epi-Pen, please have it in your child's school bag along with clearly written instructions including your child's name. In fairness to all, please keep your child at home if they have signs of cold or other illness (such as fever, headache, nausea, etc.)

Phones/Electronics: We understand the need for cell phones, especially in today's world. However, the use of cell phones in class is **PROHIBITED**, unless needed for a class project. If there is an emergency, call the office at 856-489-0035. Should a student not adhere to this policy, the device will be handed to the teacher or the Director until dismissal.

Dress Requirements: Students entering the building must be clothed in a respectful and acceptable manner befitting a religious environment.

Private Tutoring: Should your child require tutoring to maintain grade-level placement or if your child has missed many classes, we offer private tutoring for an extra fee. These tutoring sessions are not related to the Brit Mitzvah tutoring. Contact the Religious School office if you are interested.

Homework: We understand that students have demanding schedules in their daily lives. Homework will only be given when it serves a clear, educational purpose. We suggest students practice 5-10 minutes a day at home. Our goal is to provide our students with every available outlet for success and confidence and we believe practice is the key to this outcome.

Tzedakah: Caring for others is an important part of Jewish life. It is a Mitzvah of the highest order. One way we show we care for others is by giving Tzedakah. Contributions which will be collected at the start of class on Sundays. We encourage children to give their own earnings in order that their Tzedakah can be truly their contribution. At the end of the school year, the class will decide where they would like to donate their accumulated funds.

Inclement Weather: In case of inclement weather, it may be necessary to cancel school. Cancellations will be communicated via email and our Facebook page.

Snacks: Each student is allowed to bring their own water bottle to keep in class with them. Philly soft pretzels will be sold during dismissal on Sundays and before school on Tuesday afternoons.

Progress Reports: Twice a year you will receive a detailed summary of what has been taking place in the classrooms as well as the progress of your child. To discuss your child's progress please contact their individual teacher.

Security and Safety: Congregation Kol Ami is always concerned about the safety of our congregants and our students. There will be an armed security guard while school is in session. Additionally, teachers will be trained in security awareness training and students will have the opportunity to practice this throughout the year. Our school will periodically have fire/evacuation drills in the unlikely event of a fire or the need to leave the premises. Additionally, all classrooms have a posted evacuation map near the classroom door.

Communication: School/Parents communication is a cornerstone of the learning experience. We strongly encourage you to communicate with the school and the faculty so that we can better serve our students. We use the following means to communicate with our families:

- Weekly newsletter sent out via email every Friday from the Education Team
- Our Kol Ami Religious School Family Facebook page. Please contact the Religious School office if you would like to be added to this private page.
- Flyers and handouts about school programming and youth group events may be given to your child at dismissal.
- Evaluations detailing your child's progress will be handed out mid-year and end of the year.

Pick Up/Drop Off Procedures:

- **Drop Off:** As you enter parking lot follow the signs labeled *Student Drop off*. Pull car up to the car drop off area, have your child quickly exit the car and enter the side door of the Religious School. The teachers and Directors will be in the hallway guiding the students where to go.
- **Pick Up for Sunday and Tuesday Afternoon**
Please park your car by the Sanctuary doors and wait outside under the Rotunda for the teacher to excuse your child to their parents or guardian. Each door will be labeled with your child's grade level so you will know where they will exit from. Please take extra caution when walking back to your car.
- **Pick up for Hebrew High Only:** Park your car in the lot by the Religious School doors. Students will come out to you once excused from class by their teacher. Please remind your child to use extra caution when exiting the building.

Overview of Specials

T'filah (prayer): In preparation for a lifetime of active participation in the synagogue, students in all elementary grades will come together to practice grade-appropriate prayers in the Sanctuary with the Clergy. On Sunday mornings we will have Shira U' T'filah (song and Prayer) and on Tuesday afternoon we will have a more formal T'filah where the students will have the opportunity to lead the congregation with what they have been learning in class.

Family Education Day: This program offers families the opportunity to engage in Jewish learning and celebration with the Kol Ami Clergy as well as the teachers. Programs will take place during our regular Sunday School time.

The “Shabbat Experience”: Once a month a grade level will be honored during Shabbat. They will have the opportunity to enjoy a Shabbat dinner with family and friends and take part in their very own Shabbat service.

Other Amazing Specials: Art, Music, Library/Storytelling, Mitzvah projects, Yad Workshops, Trips, Shin Shinim program, No Place for Hate Initiative, and so much! We are excited to offer new and innovative programming.



Shabbat Attendance: Our students are expected to attend a minimum number of Shabbat services each school year so they may master the words and meaning of the prayers and experience the joy of celebrating Shabbat as part of a community. Parents are always welcome to join our Shabbat Mishpacha Family Services where they can learn and pray alongside their child. Although we highly encourage attendance at Congregation Kol Ami, we also count attendance at another Synagogue.

3rd Grade: 1 Family Service, 2 Friday Night Shabbat Services

4th Grade: 1 Family Service, 3 Friday Night Shabbat Services

5th Grade: 1 Family Service, 4 Friday Night Shabbat Services

6th Grade: See The Kol Ami Brit Mitzvah Program Packet for requirements

Code of Conduct

To help foster a positive educational climate in our school, we have developed a discipline plan that affords each student the opportunity to accept responsibility for his/her own behavior. Everyone in the school community must play a role in contributing to a positive educational environment.

Discipline Procedures: Please keep an open line of communication between you, your child, and the teacher and do not hesitate to call should any problems arise.

First Time: Student is warned by teacher for their inappropriate behavior.

Second Time: Student loses class privileges and meets with the teacher or Educational Director after class.

Third Time: Parent is notified by the teacher.

If the problem persists: Parents will be notified by the Director of Education and a conference with all parties present will be called.

Severe Clause: A student who engages in fighting, defies a teacher, is disrespectful, destroys school property, or leaves the school grounds without permission will be sent to the Educational Director immediately and not return to class until a conference with his/her parent takes place.

Anti-Bullying Policy – Zero Tolerance

Congregation Kol Ami's Religious School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying against any pupil on school property or at any school sponsored activity.

Examples of bullying and harassment may include:

- Verbal abuse including name calling, teasing, racist remarks, etc.
- Physical attacks including pushing, hitting, punching, hair pulling, scratching, etc.
- Social exclusion including ostracism, ignoring, alienating, etc.
- Psychological abuse including acts that has the effect of insulting, demeaning any individual or group of individuals in such a way as to cause distress, a reluctance to attend school, a decline in work standards or problem behaviors.

Bullying incidents will be treated accordingly:

All reports of bullying will be brought to the attention of the teacher and director immediately.

After a period of verification, the Educational Director and Rabbi will meet with parents of offender to discuss appropriate consequences.

Depending on the circumstances, consequences may include a period of suspension and/or expulsion from school.

Family and bullied child will meet with the Senior Rabbi for counseling.