

OHAVI ZEDEK HEBREW SCHOOL
PARENT HANDBOOK



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I. BERUCHIM HABA'IM/WELCOME!

Dear Hebrew School families,

Welcome to the new academic year at Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School. The Jewish tradition commands us to teach our children, and at OZ we believe there is no task more important. Our program here at Ohavi Zedek encompasses pre-kindergarten through seventh grade. In addition, we provide study opportunities for high school students through the Vermont Chai School program, which is jointly sponsored by Ohavi Zedek Synagogue and Temple Sinai.

To those families who are new we say *beruchim haba'im*, welcome! We hope you will become active participants in your child(ren)'s Hebrew School experience. To our returning families we say thank you for your continued support of our program and your devotion to Jewish education. We hope you will take advantage of the various educational opportunities for families and adults offered by the synagogue.

The Hebrew School Committee, our Hebrew School Principal, our Rabbis and the entire Ohavi Zedek staff are all available throughout the year to answer your questions and address your needs. Please don't hesitate to contact us.

See you at Hebrew School.

L'shalom,

[Naomi Barell](#)

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Hebrew School Comm. Chair
(802) 860-6847

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II. ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is vital to a successful experience at Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School. Each classroom is a living Jewish community and we want to know about the well being of every student. Please let the teacher know if your child is out sick or is unable to attend.

Following an absence from school, families are expected to make up all homework and class work. Teachers are available before and after class, and by e-mail or phone, to answer questions about the material missed.

III. MEDICAL ISSUES IN HEBREW SCHOOL

A. EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

In case of emergency, we will contact the student's parents. If we cannot reach a parent, we will contact the person designated by the parent on the school application form. If permitted on the application form, we will obtain emergency medical treatment for the child until a parent or designated party arrives.

B. SICK POLICY

For the sake of the health of the class, please do not bring your child to school if he or she is sick. In particular:

1. If your child has had a fever within the past 24 hours, please do not bring him/her to Hebrew School. However, please see the note below regarding H1N1 flu at the end of this section III B.
2. If your child has a severe cough, please keep him/her home. However, please see the note below regarding H1N1 flu at the end of this section III B.
3. If your child has a minor cough, he or she may come to Hebrew School, but please remind them to cough into their elbow instead of their hands, and to wash hands frequently. However, please see the note below regarding H1N1 flu at the end of this section III B.
4. If your child has a thick discharge (green or yellow mucus) please do not bring him/her to Hebrew School. However, please see the note below regarding H1N1 flu at the end of this section III B.

We want to try to keep everyone as healthy as possible and to give our own children the chance to rest and get well more quickly if they are not feeling well. No one should be asked to focus and concentrate or be active when they don't feel well, and we don't want to spread germs to others.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING H1N1 (“swine”) flu: A resurgence of the H1N1 flu in fall/winter 2009-10 is expected by public health officials as of this writing (August 2009). With respect to this matter, please observe the following procedures:

If your child has a fever of 100°F or higher and has a sore throat, cough, or general achiness, keep your child at home because of an influenza-like illness. Please call us to let us know that your child will be staying at home; we will work together to discuss Hebrew School participation options. The current recommendation is that, if the illness is diagnosed as H1N1 (“swine”) flu, that children remain home for seven days after symptoms start, even if the child is no longer ill. If your child is still sick after seven days, they must remain at home until they are free of symptoms for 24 hours. Your child may return to Hebrew School after we receive a note from their healthcare provider. If your child has been diagnosed by a healthcare provider with a different illness -- such as strep -- follow your healthcare provider’s recommendation and call our office to discuss Hebrew School participation options.

C. MEDICATIONS

According to school policy, no employee of the school may administer any medication to a student. This includes aspirin, throat lozenges and any other medications.

D. CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Parents are encouraged to inform the school regarding all chronic medical conditions that would affect the emergency treatment of your child or impact on his/her ability to participate in school. All such information brought to the attention of the school will be kept confidential.

IV. POLICY REGARDING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The OZ Hebrew School Committee adopted the following policy in August 2006:

“We recognize that every child is entitled to an appropriate Jewish education. To meet this goal, our Hebrew School is committed to working with any family with a child requiring special accommodations or modifications within the regular Jewish educational system. We are willing to work in partnership to find innovative solutions to best meet individual needs.

“If you have special concerns or if your child has special needs, please contact the Principal to schedule a conference in order to plan for your child's education. Please bring any relevant information, including reports written by professionals, IEP, school reports, etc. With your consent, we will be happy to contact your child's school to review successful accommodations and adaptations that could be utilized by our staff. We will do our best to meet your child's needs, but we recognize our limitations. If your child's needs cannot be met by us, we will attempt to work with you to find an alternative solution.”

We welcome contributions to the Ohavi Zedek Synagogue Hebrew School Stern Scholarship and Special Needs endowment fund to assist us in continuing to provide these essential services in accordance with the policy set forth above.

V. SCHOOL CLOSINGS

A. WEEKDAY CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES

Hebrew School classes and/or activities on weekdays will be cancelled when the Burlington or South Burlington Schools are closed for the day or have early dismissal due to inclement weather. If we need to cancel when public schools are open, all families will be called and e-mailed by 2:00 p.m., either directly by Hebrew School staff or via a parent phone chain to be set up at the start of the Hebrew School year. Please note that for e-mails we will be using the “Constant Contact” service through which we send out weekly parent bulletins. Therefore, please be sure you are signed up to receive the Hebrew School Parent Bulletin via Constant Contact. (Please contact [Naomi Barell](#) or [Tari Santor](#) if you have any question about whether you are signed up to receive the Hebrew School Parent Bulletin.) In addition, we will update the OZ website (www.ohavizedek.org) and the OZ outgoing voicemail message to announce that Hebrew School has been cancelled for the day.

You know the conditions of the roads in your area best. Always use your discretion when driving. It is better to be safe than stuck in a snow bank. The teacher will be able to update you on materials missed.

B. WEEKEND CLASSES AND PROGRAMS

1. Hebrew School classes and/or activities that may be scheduled for a **Shabbat (Saturday) morning** may be cancelled, due to incipient inclement weather, by the Principal after consultation with the Hebrew School Committee chairperson and/or the Senior Rabbi **if and only if** this determination is made by noon on Friday with all families called and e-mailed **by 2:00 p.m. Friday**, either directly by Hebrew School staff or via a parent phone chain to be set up at the start of the Hebrew School year. Please note that for e-mails we will be using the “Constant Contact” service through which we send out weekly parent bulletins. Therefore, please be sure you are signed up to receive the Hebrew School Parent Bulletin via Constant Contact. (Please contact [Naomi Barell](#) or [Tari Santor](#) if you have any question about whether you are signed up to receive the Hebrew School Parent Bulletin.) In addition, we will update the OZ website (www.ohavizedek.org) and the OZ outgoing voicemail message to announce that Hebrew School has been cancelled for the day.

2. Hebrew School classes and/or activities scheduled for any **Sunday** may be cancelled due to inclement weather by the Principal after consultation with the Hebrew School Committee chairperson and/or the Senior Rabbi. In such event all families will be called and e-mailed by 8:00 a.m., either directly by Hebrew School staff or via a parent phone chain to be set up at the start of the Hebrew School year. Please note that for e-mails we will be using the “Constant Contact” service through which we send out weekly parent bulletins. Therefore, please be sure you are signed up to receive the Hebrew School Parent Bulletin via Constant Contact. Please contact [Naomi Barell](#) or [Tari Santor](#) if you have any question about whether you are signed up to receive the Hebrew School Parent Bulletin.) In addition, we will update the OZ website (www.ohavizedek.org) and the OZ outgoing voicemail message to announce that Hebrew School has been cancelled for the day.

VI. SUITABLE CLOTHING

Appropriate dress is important in maintaining an atmosphere of learning and respect in the class and in the school. Please dress your child in a manner appropriate for school and for a religious institution.

Each student will receive a *kippah* on the first day of class. Please remind your child to bring the *kippah* to school each day. As is consistent with synagogue policy, boys are required to wear a *kippah* or other appropriate head covering during Hebrew School, while girls are encouraged but not required to do so. Click [Here](#) For more information about the practice of wearing a *kippah*.

VII. TZEDAKAH

A beautiful new *tzedakah* box featuring a different “recipient of the month” each month is set to be unveiled during fall 2009 and will be placed in a prominent position in the front hallway of the synagogue. For classes and other activities taking place on days other than Shabbat or major Jewish holidays, students are encouraged to bring any sum of money to place in it as a way of fulfilling the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, which is defined as righteousness through charity and kindness. During the 2009-10/5770 school year we expect to institute increased coordination between the Hebrew School and the “Ohavi Zedek Interfaith and Social Action Committee” regarding *tzedakah* drives and other *tikkun olam* initiatives. If you would like to be a Hebrew School parent representative on the OZ Interfaith and Social Action committee to help spearhead these connections, please email [Naomi Barell](#) or Interfaith & Social Action Committee chairperson [Jeff Potash](#). You can also call Jeff at 802-862-0917.

VIII. FOOD AND KASHRUT

Only kosher food may be served from the Ohavi Zedek kitchen. All food brought into the kitchen must be marked with a *hechsher* (i.e. O-U, the letter Kaf, or other kosher symbol). The following bakeries have been checked by Rabbi Joshua and have been given an okay to be brought into our kitchen:

Bagel Market (for bagels only)
Myer's Bagels (for bagels only)
Stewart's (for Challah)

The bakeries that are not on this list either have not yet been checked, or use the same trays, and silverware or utensils to cook meat products and their baked goods.

Hebrew School families take turns providing snack at Hebrew School. Specific dates and details will be arranged at the beginning of each school year.

(Special note regarding snacks on Shabbat: If you are responsible for providing snack for a class or activity taking place on Shabbat, please bring it to the synagogue before sundown Friday. In keeping with the synagogue's policies on Shabbat observance, snacks should neither be purchased on Shabbat nor brought from outside the synagogue into the synagogue on Shabbat. Thank you for your cooperation with this requirement.)

IX. HOMEWORK

Teachers are encouraged to assign a small amount of homework to their students. It is a valuable opportunity for students to spend some time at home, working at their own pace, reinforcing what is being studied in class. It is also an opportunity for parents to work together with their children. This small investment at home has the potential to produce tremendous results in terms of achievement and self-confidence.

X. LOST AND FOUND

It is helpful to have backpacks, coats, gloves, boots and hats marked with your child's name. We will hold on to lost and found items in our lost and found box in the main office and in a box in the coat room for the duration of the year. Items unclaimed by the end of the school year will be donated to charity.

Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School cannot be responsible for jewelry or other expensive items.

XI. DISCIPLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

The Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School is committed to developing our students' social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual knowledge and understanding based on Judaic values and principles, such as *Tikkun Olam (repairing the world)*, *G'milut Hasadim (acts of loving kindness)* and *Derech Eretz (behaving appropriately)*. Creating positive relationships among students, teachers and parents allows for positive and productive results in the learning process. It is our philosophy that a successful Hebrew School experience combines the following:

1. A safe environment
2. High expectations of student learning and behavior
3. Maximizing learning time
4. Total family/school partnership
5. Professional staff development

To ensure an educational environment which promotes high expectations for learning, the Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School has adopted a discipline policy covering behavior throughout all of our facilities. This is intended to be a proactive policy which strives to develop and maintain positive relationships between teachers and their students.

Our three basic premises of discipline are 1) All children are good, but behaviors sometimes need to be discussed; 2) Discipline should be a learning experience, not a humiliating one; and 3) Sometimes appropriate behaviors need to be taught, modeled and practiced.

Many discipline problems can be avoided as preventive discipline strategies are incorporated into the program. Preventive discipline involves rules, informing children of the consequences of their choices, follow-through, consistency, humor, reminders and redirection. Teachers will refrain from using sarcasm or personal criticism when addressing potential or actual discipline problems.

Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School rules encompass safety and respect; safety of oneself and those around him/her; and respect for other people and their property, as well as for materials and equipment. Whenever possible, children discuss and help develop classroom rules. Rules will be few in number and written in a positive manner. Rules are posted in an appropriate area where children can see them.

B. SPECIFIC SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINARY RULES

This policy is inspired by the Torah's teachings:

“Vayivra Elohim et ha-adam btzalmo.”/ “God created humanity in God’s image” (Gen. 1:27)

And

“V’ahavta lereyakha kamokha”/ “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”
(Lev. 19:18)

These teachings from Torah lead us to establish the following school-wide rules:

- I. Respect yourself and others
- II. Always try to do your best
- III. Behave in a safe way.
- IV. Take care of our school and synagogue.

These standards will be posted in all classrooms and throughout the school building.

C. APPLICATION OF SCHOOL-WIDE RULES TO INDIVIDUAL CLASSES

Each new teacher will receive in service training in the school’s discipline philosophy and policy. Every teacher will review the acceptable standards of behavior with his/her students at the beginning of the school year and review them periodically during the course of the year. Individual teachers may wish to develop with their own classes more detailed lists of rules based on the above general rules which they can post in their classrooms.

D. ENFORCEMENT OF DISCIPLINE POLICY

Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School staff implement our progressive discipline policy when behavior expectations are not met. Listed below are the steps that will be utilized: (Note: Where the word “classroom” is used below, this should also be read as including other places where the students are gathered as a class, including the gym during recess/*hafsakah* and including either sanctuary during *tefillah/shirah*.)

- 1) A verbal or non-verbal reminder is given in the classroom, with minimal interruption of the flow of the lesson. (Teacher will make the effort to remind and redirect students if they begin to get off track.)

- 2) A verbal warning is given with an explanation of why the behavior is inappropriate. (This warning should be given privately to the student if at all possible.)
- 3) If behavior persists, and if logistically feasible, the student may be sent to “take a break” in another classroom for a short period of time (e.g., 10 minutes) in order to convey to the student and to the class that disruption of learning will not be tolerated.
- 4) If the behavior still persists, the student will be removed from the activity and sent to see the Principal or the Senior Rabbi. This will be followed by a written communication between parent and Principal and a meeting of the Senior Rabbi, Principal, teacher, student and parents. The student may not re-enter class until this meeting has been held. For the younger grades (*Ganon* through *Kitah Aleph*), the teacher may at his or her discretion send the student to his or her parent rather than to a school official if the parent is in the synagogue building at that time.
- 5) If the behavior persists, suspension for one week will be implemented and a written contract drawn up. The student will sign the contract agreeing to acceptable behavior and alternative solutions. Parent, Teacher and Principal will also sign.
- 6) If the contract is broken and prolonged disruptive, unsafe or otherwise unacceptable behavior continues, the student will be dismissed from the Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School. The school will endeavor to assist the parents to locate a tutor to be paid for at the parents’ expense.

NOTE: We have zero tolerance for unsafe behaviors which could include, for example, bullying, harassment, physically aggressive behaviors or verbally abusive behaviors. Steps 1-6 may be omitted if the Principal deems that the behavior is physically or emotionally hurtful to self or others.

E. AVAILABILITY OF SUPERVISION/ SPECIFIC POLICIES WHEN IN THE GYM

Teachers are required to arrive at school no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of school. Please do not drop off your child(ren) more than 15 minutes prior to the start of school unless you yourself stay with them to supervise them.

No balls should be used in the gym on Shabbat or after school has been dismissed for the day.

During recess/*hafsakah*, balls may be played with only on the north half of the gym (i.e., away from the half of the gym where snack is being served).

XI. PARENT PARTICIPATION AND FAMILY EDUCATION

Please do your best to ensure that your children arrive at Hebrew School on time, with all materials they need (including completed homework). Check their folder right after school for flyers, homework assignments, and any other information of a timely nature. Parents are asked to assist the school by serving at least two hours per year as volunteers. Volunteer opportunities include (by way of example), serving as a class parent, sharing a special interest or talent, or helping at school events. There is a convenient sign up list of specific volunteer opportunities on the Hebrew School registration form that parents complete each year.

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. As a courtesy, please let the teacher know in advance if you will be visiting your child's class.

Parents are partners in the school's efforts to educate the children. Please express interest in your child's work, encourage him/her and offer your assistance whenever possible. Many parents find it helpful to set aside a special time (often on Shabbat) to discuss what their children have learned in the previous week.

Shabbat celebration at home and in the synagogue is a focus of the family education component of the school curriculum. Families are encouraged to strengthen the Ohavi Zedek *kehillah* (congregation) by learning and participating in the celebration of Shabbat through participation in Hebrew School and community Shabbat services and programs.

Hebrew is the historical language of our people, a language common to Jews all over the world today, a vehicle for conversation and for transmitting our unique culture. The ability to read Hebrew also facilitates participation in ritual aspects of Judaism. Parents are encouraged to learn Hebrew, both for themselves and their children. Hebrew language classes are offered through Adult Education programming, or on a one-on-one basis upon request.

Naomi Barell, is Principal of Ohavi Zedek's Hebrew School. Please feel free to contact her regarding any aspect of your child's education.

***Todah Rabbah (Thank you very much) for being part of our
Ohavi Zedek Hebrew School community.***