



**Collaborative Religious School**  
Congregation Ohav Shalom  
B'nai Shalom Reform Congregation

# PARENT HANDBOOK

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## Mission Statement

B'Yachad is a collaborative religious school operated by Congregation Ohav Shalom and B'nai Shalom. Based in Conservative religious traditions and values, B'Yachad serves and respects the needs of children from diverse Jewish backgrounds. The mission of B'Yachad is to provide Jewish children with the tools needed for meaningful and active Jewish lives. This includes an understanding of Jewish religion, culture, traditions and ethical values; an understanding of the importance of Israel and Zionism; and fulfillment of community social needs through interaction with other Jewish children.

## Family-School Collaboration

Collaboration between B'Yachad and the families of the children who attend is essential to the functioning of B'Yachad. This includes family participation in fundraising, volunteering at programs and attending family education programs.

## Enrollment in B'Yachad

Enrollment in B'Yachad is open to any Jewish child, K-8th grade. While synagogue affiliation is not mandatory for initial matriculation, standing as a full-member or associate member with Congregation Ohav Shalom or B'nai Sholom must be verified by or before the beginning of the third year of enrollment in this religious school.

Enrollment applications and tuition are due to the family's synagogue prior to attending B'Yachad, unless alternate payment has been arranged with the individual synagogue. Enrollment forms are available on our website and will be made available prior to the end of the school year. Please see enrollment forms for tuition and payment details.

\*This requirement is subject to change.

## Attendance

Regular attendance at classes, religious services and family education programs is essential to a Jewish education, as it maximizes the potential for learning achievements. All students are expected to attend all sessions. The parent or caregiver should contact the teacher, prior if possible, to report any

absence from school. When a long-term or repetitive absence is anticipated, the student's parent(s) must discuss the circumstances with the B'Yachad Education Director to determine an appropriate plan of action. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with the classwork in the event of absence(s). Should absences impede the student's progress, the parent/caregiver may be responsible for arranging additional help to bring the student back to class level.

Our classes meet on the following schedule:

- Grades K&1: Sundays, 9:30AM to 12:30PM
- Grades 2-7: Sundays, 9:30AM to 12:30PM and Wednesdays, 4:00PM to 6:00PM
- 8th Grade: Sundays, 9:30AM to 12:30PM

In addition, students in all grades are encouraged to attend the following at their selected synagogue:

- Holiday services
- Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat services
- Family Education Programs

Check the current school year calendar, and regular emails for days school is not in session. The calendar can also be found on the school website: <https://www.byachad.org/calendar.html>.

## Punctuality

Being on time is important. Please make certain children are in class and ready for school in a timely manner.

## Fundraising and Volunteering

Your family's involvement is a vital factor in maintaining quality programming at B'Yachad. Fundraising, as well as parent volunteering, is necessary to help support the mission of the religious school. Families will be asked to volunteer during the school year to assist with snack sales, the Purim Fundraiser and other activities.

Please contact B'Yachad's Education Director if you have any fundraising ideas or suggestions.

## Derech Eretz

### Respecting Ourselves, Others and our Environment

B'Yachad expects all of its students and faculty to exhibit behavior that reflects the core values of respect for oneself and for others. This includes:

- Accepting the individuality of all members of our community;
- Treating others the way we would want them to treat us;
- Listening when others are speaking, and communicating in a kind and caring way;
- Exhibiting proper decorum in the classroom, main sanctuary and religious services;
- Refraining from behaviors that place oneself or others in danger;
- Treating synagogue property and the property of others with respect



## Behavior and Student Expectations

Students are expected to be respectful to adults, students and property, follow directions and cooperate, use appropriate language, keep their hands and feet to themselves and positively contribute to the learning atmosphere. When discipline problems occur, a student may be sent to the Director's office, a parent may be called, a parent may be asked to meet with the director or teacher to help develop a plan to encourage better behavior. A student may be removed from a class for a time to prevent disruption or for alternative instruction. Parents will be informed when this occurs.

## Tzedakah

Tzedakah—righteous giving is an integral part of B'Yachad as it is the obligation of every Jew to give tzedakah. Each class will make contributions to causes or institutions of their choice. At home, parents can encourage even our youngest students to bring their own money for weekly tzedakah contributions. We encourage the children to learn that tzedakah is a constant obligation, not a sporadic “good deed.”

## Curriculum, Special Programs and Activities

Our ambitious curriculum covers a wide variety of topics in order to create literate, skilled Jews and includes studies of modern Hebrew, prayer Hebrew, Bible, values, Israel and holidays. We work to differentiate the material so that each student can proceed at that student's own pace. Students have an opportunity to learn Hebrew in small groups commensurate with their level. Students that are either struggling or are more advanced are pulled out to work with tutors. For more information on our curriculum, please see our website, [www.byachad.org](http://www.byachad.org)

## School-Wide Programs

Students learn about Judaism with their whole bodies and not only their minds. Holiday programs where students are able to truly celebrate their religion are crucial for their education. We will have three all-school holiday programs throughout the year including a Sukkot program, a Hanukkah celebration, and a Purim program. Some of these

will be open to the wider Jewish community. Families will have the opportunity to learn together at these programs which are an integral part of the curriculum at B'Yachad.

## **Family Education Programs**

Family Education is an integral part of the B'Yachad curriculum and community and we strongly encourage your participation. Family Education programs enhance parents' and students' experiences and connections as they develop a lifelong commitment to Judaism and should not be considered optional for parent or child. Each class will have at least one opportunity to participate in a family education program every year led by one of our talented rabbis. Please refer to this year's school calendar for the schedule of programs.

## **Specials/Electives**

Students will be able to choose an elective class in addition to the regular curriculum to complement their studies. Some past offerings have been Israeli dance, student newspaper, Hebrew enrichment/classroom activity, arts and crafts, drama and cooking.

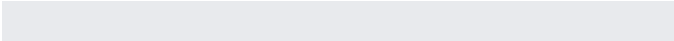
## Learning Support

### Remediation and Enrichment

We currently assess our students according to proficiency levels for their Hebrew instruction. Participation in remedial or advanced Hebrew is generally based on the recommendation of the classroom teacher. However, if you think your child requires alternate Hebrew instruction, please contact B'Yachad's Education Director.

### Inclusive Support

B'Yachad's dedicated staff prioritizes inclusion, respects diversity of our Jewish community and believes communities benefit when people of all abilities learn, grow, and celebrate together. During your initial meeting with B'Yachad's Director, please take the opportunity to discuss your child's specific learning styles and accommodations to maximize your child's success at B'Yachad.



## Books and Materials

One set of your child's textbooks is covered by your school tuition. The supply fee charged with tuition should cover most supplies.

## Snacks

Prior to each Wednesday class (beginning approximately 15 minutes prior to class), students may purchase snacks. Snacks will may also be available for purchase on some Sundays.

Your child may wish to bring in a kosher dairy or pareve and nut free snack from home. If you would like to share a treat with your child's class for a birthday celebration, please make sure that it is packaged with a kosher symbol (hechsher).

See below for approved kosher symbols.

Please contact the Education Director if you are unsure about a kosher symbol or the kashrut of a particular food for class and/or individual use.

The B'Yachad program is a completely nut-free environment. It is essential that all snacks sent to and served to our students are completely free of any peanut, tree nut and nut-related ingredient (e.g., peanut oil).



## Allergies

Advise the school of any food or other relevant allergies a student may have. B'Yachad may not be able to accommodate every student's allergies but any allergies should be brought to the attention of the Director and classroom teacher, in writing, at the beginning of the year.

## Dress Code

In keeping with the teachings of Conservative Judaism, boys must wear kippot while in the synagogue. Girls who would like to wear kippot will be supported in their decision to do so. We expect our students and faculty to dress appropriately. If students are participating in sports immediately prior to or after class, uniforms will be allowed. However, cleats and in-line skates are not to be worn inside the synagogues.

## Cell Phones

Cell phones and other electronic devices are not to be used in class or between classes by students or staff, without the permission of a teacher or administrator.

## Progress Reports & Parent Meetings

Teachers will report to you about your child's progress a minimum of twice a year, at the end of the Fall and Spring Semesters and there may be other communications from time to time. If you are interested in discussing your child's progress, you may schedule a meeting with your child's teacher.

## Classroom Visits

We are delighted to have you visit your child's class during the school year. However, to avoid unscheduled interruptions or other disruptions we require advance notification of a visit. Please contact the school office to set up a specific time to visit. *Please note: Class time is not appropriate for a conference with your child's teacher. You may make arrangements with the teacher for a conference.*

## Homework

Homework may be assigned as appropriate. Please discuss any homework concerns with classroom teachers or the Director.

## School Cancellations

In the event of an unscheduled cancellation of classes due to weather or other emergency, every attempt will be made to notify parents by email. Parents should also check the closing listings on the local news stations and the B'Yachad website. In general, B'Yachad will not operate when Albany City School District is closed or has early dismissal due to inclement weather.

## Pick Up & Drop Off

For the safety of our children, please take care of our children and obey all traffic laws and each synagogue's established traffic pattern. Parking, standing or idling in fire lanes or spaces designated for the disabled is prohibited. Please do not stand or park in the fire lane to pick up or drop off your children. Cars in the fire lane create a hazard for



others. Please be respectful and exercise caution when picking up and dropping off your children.

Parents are asked to be at B'Yachad at least five minutes prior to dismissal. Please respect the time and commitment of the school staff as they wait with your children. Let us know if you expect to be late by calling the Education office (Congregation Ohav Shalom: 518.489.4706 ext. 17) No child will be left at school unattended.

If your child needs to leave B'Yachad early, please notify the student's teacher. The adult should pick up the child at his/her classroom at the appointed time.

## Continuing Jewish Education

### Madrichim

Young adults ninth grade and above can apply to become madrichim, or classroom aides as volunteers or as paid staff.

## Mifgash

All B'Yachad graduates are encouraged to attend our community's Jewish High School, Mifgash. Students choose from a wide variety of courses, including current events, text study, ethics, Israel studies, history, art, music, and cooking. For more information, please see the Mifgash website, [www.mifgashcommunity.org](http://www.mifgashcommunity.org) or contact your synagogue.

## B'Yachad Board

The B'Yachad Board meets regularly to set policy, review the budget, and monitor the educational programs in our school. The Board evaluates the Religious School Education Director and makes recommendations to the member congregations. The Board is made up of representatives from each of the three synagogues and any congregant in good standing may seek to be a member of the

Board of Education and is nominated by the member's respective synagogue.

Board meetings are open to parents and synagogue members, except for executive session matters.

Board members and meeting times will be posted on the website.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide general information. If there are questions, please contact the Education Director or the Board.

[Congregation Ohav Shalom](#)

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[B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation](#)

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**B'YACHAD COLLABORATIVE  
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**

<http://www.byachad.org>

