



ביחד B'Yachad

**COLLABORATIVE
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**

CONGREGATION OHAV SHALOM

B'NAI SHOLOM REFORM CONGREGATION

PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026



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MISSION STATEMENT

B'Yachad is a Congregation Ohav Shalom (Ohav Shalom) and B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation (B'nai Sholom) collaborative religious school. The mission of B'Yachad is to provide Jewish children with the education and community they need to establish a strong Jewish identity. This includes a knowledge of Jewish religion, culture, history, traditions, and ethical values, fostering a connection to and love of Israel, and understanding the importance of Israel and Zionism. Based on traditional Judaism and Jewish values, B'Yachad serves and respects the needs of all children from diverse Jewish backgrounds.





ENROLLMENT IN B'YACHAD

Enrollment in B'Yachad is open to any Jewish child in kindergarten through 7th grade. Registration forms are available on our website at Byachad.org; hard copies are available at the synagogue offices at Ohav Shalom and at B'nai Shalom. Completed applications and tuition should be submitted to the family's synagogue before the first session of B'Yachad, unless alternative payment arrangements have been made.

For questions about enrollment please contact B'Yachad Director, Ruth Malka, at byachaddirector@gmail.com. We kindly request that you register by August 20th.

For non-members of Ohav Shalom and B'nai Shalom, an additional unaffiliated fee is added to tuition. By or before the beginning of the third year of enrollment at B'Yachad, we do ask for full or associate membership to either synagogue.



ATTENDANCE

We love having you and your child as part of our community! We believe that attending classes, religious services, and family education programs regularly is important for a meaningful learning experience. If your child is going to be absent, please email their teacher as soon as possible.

Additionally, if you anticipate any long term absences or scheduling conflicts, please contact the B'Yachad Director, Ruth Malka.

- "We're here to help in any way we can!"

Students in all grades are encouraged to attend the following at synagogue:

- Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat Services
- Holiday Services
- Synagogue programs and activities





CLASS SCHEDULE

Kindergarten and Grade 1:
Sundays from 9:00AM to 12:00 PM.

Grades 2 - 7:
Sundays from 9:00AM to 12:00 PM and
Wednesdays from 4:30PM to 6:00PM.

Please make every effort to have your child arrive on time and stay for the entire school day in order to maximize student learning. If you need to pick up your child early, please contact the teacher and B'Yachad Director via email in advance. Please note that faculty may not always be able to check email during school hours.



CURRICULUM, SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Our ambitious curriculum covers a wide variety of topics to establish a strong Jewish identity in our students. It includes the study of modern Hebrew, prayer Hebrew, Torah, Jewish values, the history of the Jewish people and Israel, Zionism and modern Israel, and Jewish holidays. We work to differentiate the teaching of the material so that each student can proceed at their own pace. Students have an opportunity to learn Hebrew in small groups commensurate with their level.

There are tutors to provide enrichment and additional support to those who need it. For more information on our curriculum, please see our website:

www.byachad.org





WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS

The Wednesday curriculum will include a diverse range of enrichment classes aimed at broadening our students' experiences and education. This will encompass engaging activities such as art, music, culinary arts, Israeli dance, Hebrew games, and Israel-themed activities.



BOOKS & MATERIALS

The supply fee charged with tuition is expected to cover supplies for that school year. Donations toward the school's material needs are always accepted.



SCHOOLWIDE FAMILY EDUCATION AND CELEBRATIONS

Our Schoolwide family education hands-on programs are a crucial part of the B'Yachad curriculum and community. These programs aim to enrich the experiences of both parents and students and foster a lifelong commitment to Judaism. We strongly encourage your participation.

Each class will have multiple opportunities to take part in family education programs led by the Director and our talented rabbis. Please refer to this year's school calendar for the schedule of programs.

Students learn about Judaism not just with their minds, but also with their whole bodies. Students need to be able to fully celebrate their religion through holiday programs as part of their education. We have planned three all-school holiday programs for the year, including a Sukkot luncheon, a Hanukkah celebration, and a student-only Purim Megillah reading and party.





INCLUSIVE SUPPORT

B'Yachad's dedicated staff prioritizes inclusion, respects the 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.



SNACKS

B'Yachad program is a completely Kosher and NUT-FREE environment. Students may bring kosher, nut-free dairy snacks as there is a designated snack time during class. Please do not send in soda or fast food snacks. Please see below a list of acceptable hechshers (kosher symbols). There is to be no sharing of food between students.



DRESS CODE

Students should dress in a manner that shows respect for the sanctity of the synagogue. They should also dress in a manner that enables them to participate safely in all religious school activities. In line with the teachings of Judaism, boys are expected to wear kippot while in the synagogue. Girls who wish to wear kippot will be fully supported.



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.



BEHAVIOR & STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

B'Yachad supports a safe and supportive learning environment. Faculty establish classroom routines that foster community building and respect. The teacher will support student behavior in ways that have been deemed appropriate for the child, in partnership with the child's parents and B'Yachad staff. If student behavior becomes disruptive to the learning environment, the B'Yachad Director will discuss the behavior with the student and their family, and will help develop a collaborative plan that ensures that all students are able to learn and feel supported.

B'Yachad has a strict no cell phone policy. Students are expected to turn off all electronic devices while attending the program. Smart watches are allowed but should be placed on 'do not disturb' or airplane mode. Students who need to contact their families for emergencies while B'Yachad is in session will be given access to the school phone. If you need to contact your child while B'Yachad is in session, call the school at (518) 489-4706 ext.17



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

At B'Yachad, we believe that working together with the families is vital to the success of our children's Jewish education. Volunteerism is an important part of this. Some volunteer opportunities at B'Yachad include:

- Classroom parents
- Fundraising
- Volunteering for Holiday Programs
- Volunteering for Family Education Programs

Please contact the B'Yachad Director with any suggestions or concerns on family engagement.



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



TZEDAKAH

Tzedakah is more than just good deeds or charity. It is a fundamental teaching in Judaism. We encourage all students to participate in tzedakah projects throughout the year. Tzedakah boxes will be in each classroom and children are encouraged to bring Tzedakah on a regular basis. As part of their Jewish learning, classes will decide which organizations they will support.





PICK UP & DROP OFF

For the safety of our children, please 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. A security officer is contracted to be on-site during B'Yachad hours.

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 and the B'Yachad director so that they can escort the child to their parent/guardian. Please make every effort to provide as much notice as possible if your child needs to leave early. If someone other than the parent will be picking up your child, let us know that as well.



CLASSROOM VISITS

We are delighted to have you visit your child's class during the school year, however we require advance notification. 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.



ALLERGIES

Advise the school of any food or other relevant allergies a student may have. B'Yachad is diligent to every student's allergies. Any allergies should be brought to the attention of the Director and classroom teacher, in writing, at the beginning of the year.



PROGRESS REPORTS & PARENT MEETINGS

Teachers will report to you about your child's progress 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.



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 @ The J

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 visit our website:

albanyjcc.org



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 two synagogues, nominated by their respective synagogue, and any congregant in good standing may seek to be a member of the Board of Education.

Board meetings are open to parents and synagogue members, except for executive session matters. Current board members and meeting times will be posted on the website.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide general information. If you have specific questions, please contact the B'Yachad Director or the Board.





CONTACT INFORMATION

B'YACHAD BOARD 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

OHAV SHALOM

Linda Mandel-chairperson lmandel79@hotmail.com

Laurie Sasson Dafnap@aol.com

Nancy Cavillones nancy.byachad@gmail.com

Jim Hendler-Ohav President hendler.home@tetherless.org

Rabbi Dan Ornstein rabbidan@ohavshalom.org

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Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot rabbi@bnaisholomalbany.org

Ruth Malka byachaddirector@gmail.com



Board Meetings

B'YACHAD BOARD MEETINGS 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

All meetings are the 4th Monday of the month, at 7pm. We will have a mixture of in person and zoom meetings.

July 28, 2025, 7pm, in person at Ohav Shalom's library

September 8, 2025, 7pm, via Zoom

October 27, 2025, 7pm, in person at Ohav Shalom's library

November 17, 2025, 7pm, in person at Ohav Shalom's library

December 15, 2025, 7pm, in person at Ohav Shalom's library

January 26, 2026, 7pm, via Zoom

February 23, 2026, 7pm, in person at Ohav Shalom's library

March 23, 2026, 7pm, via Zoom

April 27, 2026, 7pm, via Zoom

May 18, 2026, 7pm, via Zoom

June 22, 2026, 7pm, in person at Ohav Shalom's library



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CONGREGATION OHAV SHALOM

113 Krumkill Rd. Albany, NY 12203

(518) 489-4706, Ext. 17

www.ohavshalom.org

B'NAI SHOLOM REFORM CONGREGATION

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www.bnaisholomalbany.org

www.byachad.org

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