

# Family Handbook 5783/2022-2023



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Shalom BBRs Families,

At BBRs, we strive to meet the educational needs of each child and family. Our goal is to help each child develop and nurture their Jewish identity, as individuals and as part of a kehilla/community. We encourage our students to develop strong Hebrew reading and prayer skills, a rich understanding of prayer as a way to communicate with God and as a means of introspection, and the ability to question the text of the Torah and the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) as a means of taking ownership. Each element forms a layer in the child's life as a Jew, as part of a tradition with a rich history and future.

Our program focuses on community-building and Jewish friendships. Guided by our staff, students learn from each other. We provide many opportunities for our students to bond outside of the classroom and to build relationships. Students also have the opportunity to learn from teachers with a wide variety of backgrounds. Our school recognizes and embraces that there are many paths to a fulfilling Jewish life, and we are grateful to have a faculty that helps our students experience a spectrum of Jewish ideas, beliefs, ideals, and practices.

I welcome you, our returning and new students, and your families, and wish you hatzlakha/success in the year ahead.

As always, communication is the key to our success. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Education Office at 973-379-1134 or me at 973-262-3717, or email me at [RabbiJulie@cbi-nj.org](mailto:RabbiJulie@cbi-nj.org).

B'shalom,  
Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald  
Director of Congregational Learning

A NOTE ON OUR NAME:

The **Blanche Bayar Religious School** is named after Rabbi Emeritus Rabbi Steven Bayar's late mother, who served as the school administrator for many years. She was a warm and caring woman who had a kind word for every student and parent. Her smiling face epitomizes the culture of our school.

## Aims of our School

As a Framework accredited school, we have adopted the Aim Statement on Conservative Synagogue Schools. This was produced by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The broad categories of the aims are listed below.

1. The students will show that their lives are informed by Jewish ethical values in the way in which they relate to others and that these values are grounded in a sense of commandment.
2. The students will understand that Judaism requires sacred deeds/mitzvot. These mitzvot direct us in our relationships between people and in our relationship to God. Students will acquire awareness that as Conservative Jews we have obligations known as commandments or mitzvot to perform. These mitzvot include all facets of our secular and spiritual life.
3. The students will have a basic knowledge of Tanakh. Students will know these four central Biblical ideas: Brit (covenant), Tzedek (justice), Am Kadosh (Holy People) and Revelation.
4. The students will be knowledgeable in Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people.
5. The students will be able to actively participate in the spiritual life of the synagogue, through their knowledge of Hebrew and understanding of tefila (prayer).
6. The students will have knowledge about and concern for Israel.
7. The students will express kinship with K'lal Yisrael by actively seeking the welfare of Jews throughout the world and acceptance of the multi-dimensional facets of Judaism.
8. The students will have a basic understanding of what it is to be a Conservative Jew.

These statements are fulfilled through cognitive and affective objectives. Throughout the student's religious school experience, they will be challenged to learn new skills and develop intellectually.



## Admission

While BBRS primarily serves families who are members of Congregation B'nai Israel of Millburn, students from the community are also welcome. All families in our school must be members in good standing at CBI or another local synagogue, or have made arrangements with the Director.

BBRS's curriculum begins in Kindergarten. During the first years, students are taught the alef-bet and exposed to basic topics in Judaism in a playful, nurturing environment. This is the foundation of their Jewish education.

A student who is beyond the third grade and has no prior years of religious school education may be enrolled in the appropriate grade, but will be evaluated by the BBRS Director who will help determine whether tutoring may be necessary to help the student to catch up with their grade-level peers. If necessary, tutoring options will be discussed with the student's family and will be available through BBRS at a reasonable expense to the family.

## Registration

Both new and returning families will be sent a link to register for school through ShulCloud. (New families need to contact the School Office for a link.) Initial data entry through ShulCloud is a one-time process. Each year you will be asked to verify that your information is correct and up-to-date. Once your registration is confirmed, you will be billed for tuition.

## Tuition

Tuition at BBRS is set each year by the Board of Trustees of Congregation B'nai Israel. Full payment is due by October 15. For information about tuition for those who are not members of CBI, please contact Rabbi Julie.

## BBRS Parents Association Fee

The BBRS-PA brings special programming to the school, funds food and snacks for our students, sponsors field trips and gives gifts to our teachers and madrichim for Hanukkah and at the end of the year. The PA coordinates class parents and helps to run the Purim carnival and other events. A \$50 per student fee is assessed to every family and included in the tuition billing for membership in the BBRS Parents Association.

# Policies

## Mask Wearing

BBRS's policy on mask wearing will be determined depending on current health conditions, following the guidance of the CDC and the Local Department of Health.

## Communication

BBRS Announcements are emailed each week via Mailchimp. If you are not receiving these reminders, please contact the school office to confirm that your contact information is correct.

Any information that is helpful to providing the best education possible should be shared with Rabbi Julie. This could include academic modifications, social-emotional concerns, medical issues, and so on.

## Arrival

Students are expected to arrive on time for school. **For safety and security reasons, drop-off is only in the circle at the side/back of the building.** An adult, usually the Director, will be there to greet students from 10 minutes before the start time until 5 minutes after. Those students arriving later than that will need to be escorted to the School Office by an adult. **Late arrivals must buzz at the school door and wait for Susan or Rabbi Julie to meet you. Drivers should not leave until student(s) have been admitted to the building.** If you are aware of a problem that will cause ongoing tardiness, such as carpool problems or school bus connections, please email Susan in the School Office.

## Dismissal

At the conclusion of school, an adult, usually the Director, will bring all students downstairs to the hallway at the school entrance. Children will be escorted to their parents/guardians by the Director or a Teacher. Please drive safely and be aware of people around the cars.

## Early Pick Up

Please adhere to the following procedure for early pick up:

1. Note or email: if a student must leave school early, please send a note to the School Office. The note must specify the name of the adult who will be picking up the student and the time they will be leaving.
2. A student leaving early must be picked up by an approved adult. The adult must buzz at the School Door and the student will then be brought to meet the adult.

3. A student leaving school early is expected to make up all missed work.

## Cell Phone Policy

At the teacher's direction, students are often encouraged to use their cell phones for research, activities, and projects. Cell phones should not, however, be used otherwise during BBRS time. Adults are discouraged from texting, messaging, or calling students during BBRS hours. Information about changes in dismissal/pick up must go through the School Office for security reasons, and that information will be shared with the students as soon as possible. All other communication should wait until after dismissal so that students can focus on their learning.

Students who have difficulty following school procedures to use cell phones only as directed will have the phones held by the Director until the end of class, when it may be picked up by a parent/guardian. Adults are encouraged to discuss this policy with students and to bring any extenuating circumstances to the attention of Rabbi Julie.

## Weather Cancellation

BBRS follows the Millburn public schools in making weekday cancellation decisions. Families will be notified through email, the BBRS Facebook group, and text notifications. Should the public schools:

- Have a delayed opening: BBRS is open
- Close before opening: BBRS is closed regardless of the weather at 3:45 pm
- Have an early dismissal due to weather: BBRS is closed
- Have a full day but cancel afternoon activities: BBRS is closed

For Sundays, a decision will be made by the Director in consultation with the School Board Chair, by 8:00 am. Families will be notified through email, the BBRS Facebook group, and text notifications.

## Attendance

While we recognize that there are many activities in the lives of youth, we expect BBRS to be a family priority. Achieving educational goals is dependent on attendance. When your child is unable to attend Religious School, please contact the school office. We will notify their teachers and provide any necessary makeup work. In addition, please contact the school in advance when you know that your student will miss 3 or more consecutive days of school.

For those students who must miss a block of school due to sickness, sports, drama or other outside commitments, we can recommend private tutors (for a fee) to help your child catch up on what they miss. Please contact Rabbi Julie for more information.

## Student Progress

If the teacher or adults are concerned about a student's progress, a conference may be requested either by the teacher/Director or adults. Teachers may be contacted through the school office.

## Assessment/Projects

In-class assessments include a variety of formal and informal evaluation techniques including games, class work, and projects. Each provides us with the information needed to assess the effectiveness of a particular instructional strategy and our curriculum program. While there are no homework projects outside of class, students may be asked to bring in items relating to curricular topics or to reflect on ideas at home. Practicing Hebrew reading/prayers for 10 minutes a day is strongly encouraged to develop fluency. Students will receive a Hebrew Reading Chart to track their progress and work towards a gift from the Director.

## Supplies

Each student is strongly encouraged to have a separate bag/backpack for BBRS to facilitate the "grab and go" each day. The bag should contain:

- Pencils or pens
- Markers
- Makhberot (notebooks and folders given out by the school)
- Kippa (yarmulke) – required for boys; strongly encouraged for girls
- Tzedakah money
- Textbooks and Siddur

Parents/guardians should go through the bag each week to look for information sent home and to clean and restock as needed. Many books are used from year to year. No books should be thrown away without checking with the teacher or Director.

Religious School tuition covers the costs of books, copying, and art supplies. Students will receive books during the course of the year. If a book is lost, a replacement may be purchased through the School.

## Classroom Management

Students are responsible for maintaining appropriate classroom behavior at all times.

It is the policy of the school to emphasize and give positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. In the instance that a student demonstrates inappropriate or disruptive behavior, our teachers have been trained to handle the situation using "quiet" clues. These are non verbal cues that will be

arranged between the teacher and the student as the need arises. If a student is unable to correct their behavior, they will be sent to the Director's office and parents will be notified of the problem. A child may be sent home for consistent misbehavior. In extreme cases, a parent/teacher/Director conference is required prior to the student being allowed to return to class.

If at any time you have any concerns, please CALL THE SCHOOL as soon as possible - early discussions and prompt attention to what might appear to be little things can avoid major misunderstandings at a later point in time.

## Bullying Policy

**DEFINITION OF BULLYING:** Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms including physical, verbal, gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organized, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

BBRS will not tolerate bullying. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the BBRS community have a right to work and learn in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

We work to promote positive interpersonal relations between all members of the BBRS community and adhere to the following precepts:

- Students have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.
- Pupils who feel bullied will be listened to.
- The needs of the victim are paramount.

### PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Steps will be taken to support and respond to the needs of both bullied and bullying pupils. Actions which may be taken include:

1. Contacting parents/caregivers of all students concerned in the bullying incident. Contacting the Rabbi and BBRS School Board Chair to keep them informed and solicit advice.
2. Investigation by the BBRS Director to determine if the action constitutes bullying and what further action is required.
3. Feedback to those concerned.
4. Involvement of the teachers, Clergy, Board Members if necessary.
5. Monitoring and reviewing to insure that the situation is remedied.

## Kashrut Policy

As a Conservative religious institution, we observe the mitzvah of KASHRUT. Only food in unopened packages, which bears a clearly indicated kosher marking (see examples below), may be brought into the school; all fresh and uncut fruit and vegetables are permissible. Food prepared in private homes may not be brought into the building for any reason.



For your convenience, please note that many ShopRite cookies are certified Kosher, as well as most common Hershey and Nestle products. We appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact either the Director or the Rabbi.

## Allergy Policy

Please be aware that there are students in the school who have severe allergies, including nut, dairy, and gluten. Exposure to these products could be life threatening. To ensure a safe classroom environment, students may not bring any foods which are not clearly labeled into the building. If your children have snacks prior to school, whether at home, in a restaurant or in the car, please have them wash their hands before entering school.

## Hesed/ Social Action

We spend time in each grade working to make the world a better place. We collect food for the hungry, we make cards and gifts for those who are sick, we raise awareness about environmental issues, and we strive to treat each other with Derech Eretz/respect for all individuals. In keeping with the Jewish value of Gemilut Hasadim/deeds of loving kindness, we encourage our students to play an active role in their community and involve themselves in social action projects.

## Tzedakah

Students are encouraged to give tzedakah each school day in their classrooms. In the interest of teaching the true meaning of giving tzedakah, we ask that you encourage your children to give of their own money.

## BBRS Family Workshops

Each class will have 1-2 Family Workshop sessions with combined adult/child learning opportunities throughout the year. These workshops are designed to bring families together to create a community for each grade, to show the students that adults are committed to their Jewish education and identity, and to foster further conversations and ideas in the homes of our BBRS families.

## Madrichim

Students who have completed Kitah Zayin and are currently enrolled in a post B' Mitzvah program of study are invited to serve the school as teacher assistants, storytellers, shadows, and office assistants. Students explore teaching techniques to help them become effective assistants to the classroom teachers to whom each is assigned and/or learn office management skills. Madrichim are paid a nominal salary or can request community service hours in lieu of pay.

## Trips

Classes may have an opportunity to go off campus for a hands-on day of learning. These trips are part of our regular curriculum and hold the same importance as a normal school day. These include trips to the Jewish Museum, the Museum of Jewish Heritage, and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.

# Shabbat Services

Shabbat services are a way for the community to come together, to develop social and spiritual connections, and to have a meeting place for our common Jewish interests. Having students participate in and lead their Shabbat services builds their confidence and comfort in the synagogue and reinforces the Hebrew reading that they are doing at school.

## Service Attendance

Ganon – Kitah Bet (PreKindergarten-2nd Grade) are encouraged to attend a minimum of 3 Shabbat services at CBI throughout the year. This may be completed by attending services Friday night, Shabbat morning, or Mincha/Maariv/Havdalah.

Kitot Gimel - Hey (3rd-5th Grades) are encouraged to attend a minimum of 7 Shabbat services at CBI throughout the year. This may be completed by attending services Friday night, Shabbat morning, or Mincha/Maariv/Havdalah. They can also attend weekday morning or evening Minyan. Two

weekday Minyanim will count as one Shabbat service attendance. Please check the synagogue weekly announcements for exact times.

Kitot Vav-Zayin (6th-7th Grades) students are encouraged to attend a minimum of 10 Shabbat services at CBI throughout the year. This may be completed by attending services Friday night, Shabbat morning, or Mincha/Maariv/Havdalah. They can also attend weekday morning or evening Minyan. Two weekday Minyanim will count as one Shabbat service attendance. Please check the synagogue weekly announcements for exact times.

## Shabbat Youth Services

**BIM BAM SHABBAT** (for children from birth to kindergarten and their families)

Monthly Fridays, from 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Sing songs and prayers, hear a story and play games! Bim Bam Shabbat will be led by Rabbi Julie and special guests. Bring moms, dads, grandparents, neighbors, friends... all are welcome!

**SHABBAT SHELANU** (for kindergarten-7th graders and their families)

7 Saturdays during the school year, from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm

Replacing Sundays for those weekends, Shabbat Shelanu has two parts. Each grade cluster will learn about a Jewish value or ethic through drama, discussion, and other activities. Then they will participate in a vibrant Shabbat service filled with singing and storytelling, including a special up-close look at the Torah as we read part of the weekly parsha. Children take an active part in leading prayers and chanting Torah. Following services, we welcome families to stay for kiddush with the entire congregation.

A full schedule can be found online at [www.cbi-nj.org](http://www.cbi-nj.org).