

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2016-2017



Nancy Kovacs, Director
Cara Harms, Program Coordinator

Pamela Bain, President
Amy Kass, Preschool Liaison

WELCOME!!

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are pleased to have you join the Temple Sha'arey Shalom Preschool and our team of professional early childhood educators committed to young children and their families. Our Preschool is a nurturing "home away from home" for the young children of our community. We provide an environment where children are encouraged and respected, and where they have the opportunity to explore and grow every single day.

This Family Handbook is designed to familiarize you with our philosophy, and policies and procedures specific to our school. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with this handbook, as it was designed to address many of the questions that you may have concerning the operation of the Temple Sha'arey Shalom Preschool. If you have any questions that are not answered by this handbook, please discuss them with the Preschool Director. This handbook is not inclusive of all policies and procedures, and may change at any time.

Again, we welcome you to the Preschool "family" at Temple Sha'arey Shalom. We are happy to have you with us, and look forward to working with you to provide a place of enchantment and learning for your children!

Nancy Kovacs
Preschool Director

Cara Harms
Program Coordinator

Philosophy and Objectives

The Temple Sha'arey Shalom Preschool is designed to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment where all children are given the opportunity to have fun while growing and developing through a play-based approach to learning.

We believe that children are most successful in an environment offering both teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities. Daily structured activities will include circle time (calendar, weather, stories, finger plays,) interest centers (blocks, creative art, dramatic play, library, manipulatives/table toys,) and gross motor activities (outdoors daily weather permitting, or multi-purpose room.)

All activities are planned to challenge, not frustrate, the children based on both their individual needs and overall needs as a group. Our program follows the guidelines of the Union for Reform Judaism which focuses on integrated Jewish learning. Additionally, our themes are consistent school-wide to foster a sense of community in learning and celebration with exciting culminating activities.

Safety and Security

Your child's safety and security is a top priority. The doors to the Temple remain closed and locked throughout the day. Our Preschool staff will greet every family and child daily at the glass doors. The children will be escorted by their teachers to and from their classrooms, and be signed in and out daily upon arrival and departure.

Children will be released only to those people so designated, in writing, by the parent/guardian. Photo identification will be required when someone other than the parent or guardian will be picking up. In the case of a discrepancy, your child will be detained with the Preschool Director until satisfactory resolution is reached between the Preschool Director and the parent/guardian.

Open Door Policy

Parents or guardians are welcome to visit unannounced at any time.

Enrollment and Registration Information

Enrollment is open to all children ages 18 months through 6 years, and is granted without discrimination in regard to sex, race, color, religion, or beliefs. All required paperwork, including current medical information, is due, before your child's first day of attendance. All information in your child's file must be kept current at all times.

Attendance

We request that parents/guardians call/email the Preschool Office to report a child's absence or late arrival on any given day.

Preschool Weather-Related Closings

We follow the Springfield schools for closings, delays, and early dismissals. Please tune in to your local weather reports for up-to-date information.

Child Health

Our Preschool maintains a strict health and wellness policy as determined by the State of New Jersey, Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing.

Under no circumstances may we serve or admit any child who has any illness, symptom of illness or disease that a health care provider has determined requires the child to be: confined to home under a health care provider's immediate care; or admitted to a hospital for medical care and treatment.

The following provisions relate to illness and/or symptoms of illness:

We may not permit a child who has any of the illnesses or symptoms of illness specified below to be admitted to the Preschool on a given day unless medical diagnosis from a health care provider, which has been communicated to the Preschool in writing, or verbally with a written follow-up, indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children. Such illnesses or symptoms of illness shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

- i. Severe pain or discomfort;
- ii. Acute diarrhea, characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within a period of 24 hours, or bloody diarrhea;
- iii. Two or more episodes of acute vomiting within a period of 24 hours;
- iv. Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over or axillary temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over in conjunction with behavior changes;
- v. Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness;
- vi. Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin;
- vii. Red eyes with discharge;
- viii. Infected, untreated skin patches;
- ix. Difficult rapid breathing or severe coughing;
- x. Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes;
- xi. Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a health care provider;
- xii. Mouth sores with drooling; or
- xiii. Stiff neck.

Once the child is symptom-free, or a health care provider indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children, the child may return to Preschool. We will require a written clearance from the child's health care provider.

When a child who has already been admitted to the Preschool manifests any of the illnesses or symptoms of illness specified in above, we will remove the child from the group of well children to a separate room or area until:

- i. He or she can be taken from Preschool; or
- ii. The Director or her designee has communicated verbally with a health care provider, who indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children, at which time the child may return to the group.

The Preschool may exclude a child whose illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, or results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children at the preschool.

The following provisions relate to excludable communicable diseases:

We shall not permit a child or staff member with an excludable communicable disease, as set forth in the Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work-Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, revised July 2011, and available at http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf, incorporated herein by reference, as amended and supplemented to be admitted to or remain at the school, until:

- i. A note from the child's or staff member's health care provider states that the child or staff member, respectively, has been diagnosed and presents no risk to himself, herself, or to others;
- ii. The preschool has contacted the Communicable Disease Program in the State Department of Health, or the local health department pediatric health consultant, and is told the child or staff member poses no health risk to others; or
- iii. If the child or staff member has chicken pox, the preschool obtains a note from the parent or staff member stating that all sores have dried and crusted.

Administering Medication

We will not administer medication except in the case of an extreme emergency. Please be sure to discuss this with the Preschool Director should the need arise so that proper paperwork and procedures can be put into place.

Behavior Management and Discipline

At Temple Sha'arey Shalom Preschool, we manage behavior through gentle guidance and in a non-punitive, age-appropriate manner. All staff members receive ongoing training in this area, and learn to focus on positive discipline. This helps guide the children in what to do rather than what not to do. For example, "Please use your walking feet in the hallway."... rather than "No running in the hallway." Our youngest children will be encouraged to express themselves both verbally and by using sign language. This will help to ease their frustration in difficult situations. Our older preschoolers will be encouraged to learn problem-solving skills and be self-correcting. They will be guided to make better choices and participate in more socially acceptable manners.

No child will ever be subjected to any form of corporal punishment or humiliation. They will never be frightened, verbally abused, denied food, use of the bathroom, or threatened in any way. Any violation, or suspected violation, of this policy should be reported to the Preschool Director immediately.

Mandated Reporters

The State of New Jersey, Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, requires that any staff member shall verbally notify the State Registry Hotline whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect by a staff member or any other adult, including the child's parents or other family members pursuant to the Child Abuse and Neglect Law.

Termination of Services

Temple Sha'arey Shalom Preschool reserves the right to discontinue services when: a family's financial commitment is not met; a child's file is incomplete; end of day pick up is habitually tardy; it is determined that the program is not equipped to meet a child's needs; there has been physical or verbal abuse of other children or staff on the part of a child/family member; there are excessive outbursts and/or biting incidents; there is ongoing disruption of the learning environment.

Families will be given a one-week notice prior to termination of services, unless it is determined that a child's behavior may result in harm to him/herself or others. In this case, termination will be immediate.

Notice of Withdrawal

We require a 30-day written notice of withdrawal.

Clothing

Every child should bring a shoebox with at least one full change of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks and shoes. Those who are learning to use the toilet should bring additional; and those in diapers should send enough diapers and wipes for that day. We do change diapers at least every two (2) hours, or more often as necessary. Over the counter diaper ointments are fine.

Daily programming oftentimes involves messy/dirty activities, both indoors and out. In order for your child to be a joyful, active participant, we suggest simple play clothes that launder easily. Most of our supplies are washable; but even so, some stains are more challenging than others to remove when washed. All shoes must fit securely and not have open backs, strap backs, or open toes. Crocs in any form are also not permitted. We highly recommend sturdy shoes--- either sneakers, or other rubber-soled shoes.

Children do play outdoors daily, weather permitting. So, send outer wear that will accommodate puddles after the rain, drizzle or light showers (without thunder and lightning,) snow and cold without ice and dreadful wind chill.

Please be sure to label all clothing with your child's name and last initial. We cannot be responsible for lost/mixed up clothing.

Family Partnership

There are many opportunities for families to be involved in their child's Preschool experience at Temple Sha'arey Shalom. In fact, we encourage and invite participation! Below, are listed some examples of ways to be involved:

- Be a Shabbat family on Friday
- Attend Tot Shabbats on Friday late afternoon/evenings
- Join the "Challah Club"
- Volunteer your time with celebrations
- Be a "Secret Reader"
- Share your special talent
- Share your vocation/avocation
- Chaperone on a field trip

- Share objects for theme explorations

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Individual conferences will be scheduled twice per school year to enable families to meet privately with their child's teacher to review progress in our program. Of course, interim conferences and meetings are always welcome and encouraged as necessary.

Birthday Parties

Birthdays are an exciting time, and we want to help make your child's birthday special. Please feel free to bring a small treat for your child to share on a date agreed upon between you and your child's teacher. Remember that any food brought in to be shared must be store-bought and in its original wrapping with ingredients listed. NUT FREE products are a MUST.

We will be happy to distribute outside party invitations via backpacks **only** when all classmates are invited.

Shabbat with Your Child

It's such a wonderful tradition to celebrate Shabbat together as a "family!" We are very excited to include this wonderful tradition as a culmination to our weeks' activities and adventures.

Our Shabbat families are welcome to join their child's classroom at 10:00 a.m. to read your child's favorite book to the class and then help him/her share their poster of their favorite things. This is always a special time for our "Shabbat Princes and Shabbat Princesses." After this special time in individual classrooms, everyone will join together in the Sanctuary at 10:30 a.m. for a Shabbat get-together. The Shabbat families and their children will enjoy a special honor with Rabbi Renee and Cantor Daniels. Additionally, the Shabbat family will bring two sliced challahs and a bottle of apple juice for everyone to enjoy together during the Oneg following our brief Shabbat gathering.

Please know that it would be our pleasure to have grandparents, aunts and uncles, Nannies, or any other special people participate when parents are unable. Sign up will be available on an interactive Google doc throughout the school year.

Snacks and Lunch

NUT FREE PRODUCTS ARE A MUST.

Families are responsible for providing a complete daily snack for their child. Lunches must also come from home daily for those children participating in our Lunch Bunch program. Meals must be not only healthful and in compliance with USDA standards relative to portions and components, but also Kosher-style (per Temple Sha'arey Shalom dietary restrictions.) Kosher-style includes no pork or shellfish, and no mixing of dairy and meat products. Please ask the Preschool Director should you have any questions.

Please be sure to label all individual food containers and bags with your child's first name and last initial. When children eat together, it is common for their individual components to move around the table as they navigate their space. All unopened food will be returned home daily.

What to Bring on/before Your Child's First Day

We ask that every family kindly donate the following items:

- 1 child-friendly hand sanitizer
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 1 container of wipes
- 1 box/sleeve of 5-ounce paper cups
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- 1 over-sized t-shirt to be used as a smock
- 1 water bottle that will be returned daily to be washed

“There are no seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child.
There are seven million.”

~Walt Streightiff