

## **Agudat Achim Religious School Schedule**

PreK: Sundays 10:00 a.m. -12:00 noon

K-1: Sundays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Grade 2: Thursdays 4:15 -6:00 p.m. and Sundays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Grades 3 – 5: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m, Sundays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00noon

Grades 6 – 7: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m

Grades: 8 – 12: Sundays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00noon

## **Mission**

The mission of Agudat Achim Religious School is to provide the foundations and framework for Judaic learning to every student through its curriculum, teachers and programming. The combined efforts of the school, synagogue, parents and students will reward our children with the knowledge and desire to pursue a Jewish way of life as contributing members of the Jewish community.

## **Goals**

- To teach our children love of G-d, Judaism and the Jewish People.
- To give our children a conceptual understanding of the values and commandments of living a Conservative Jewish life
- To provide our children with the skills they need to lead a Conservative Jewish life.
- To broaden and deepen our children's intellectual and spiritual life through knowledge of Jewish history, literature and culture.
- To enable our children to acquire increasing knowledge of Hebrew, the living language of the Jewish people.
- To strengthen our children's identification with the local Jewish community, Israel, and World Jewry. To develop in him/her a desire to share actively in the responsibilities of Jewish life on communal, national and world levels.
- To teach our children to respect the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people through the practice of Mitzvot and Tzedukah
- To become Jews who support and participate in the life of the synagogue.

## **Attendance Policy**

A student attending our school spends a limited number of days in our educational setting. With this small amount of contact time, attendance is vital. It is the goal of the School to ensure that each student successfully completes the required curriculum. To achieve a maximum level of attendance by each student, the school has adopted the following attendance policy:

A student who has been absent must bring a note from parent or guardian explaining the absence.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive day of absence:

A telephone call will be made by the teacher to ascertain the reason for absence. The teacher will contact the parent to outline the work covered during the period of absence.

**Unexcused absences during the school year:**

A letter will be sent home to inform the parents of the absence. Children with more than 4 unexcused absences will have a letter sent home, with a copy sent to the Director of Education, the School Board Chairperson, and the Education Vice President. A conference may be held with the Education Vice President, the Director of Education and the parents to discuss the problem to determine possible courses of action.

**Upon 20<sup>th</sup> absence in the school year:**

A letter will be sent home to parents informing them that the student may need to repeat the school year. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Education Director, the Rabbi, and the School Board.

**Special Needs:**

The responsibility for the education of our children is an honor and a mission that we take seriously. We believe that all students, including those with special needs, are deserving of the best education we can offer. Please us the **Registration** form to let us know of any physical, learning, emotional or behavioral needs of your child. We will then contact you to plan for your child's participation in the program.

**Tzedukah**

Please encourage your children to send tzedukah to each class session. This is a good Jewish habit we can instill in our students. They can bring in cans of food in lieu of money. Even a few pennies can go a long way. As funds accumulate during the school year the money will be donated to an organization of the class' choosing.

**Synagogue Attendance**

Synagogue skills and Tfillot (Prayer) are an important part of our curriculum. Participation in prayer as a community is also a significant part of our Jewish Tradition. Regular attendance at all synagogue services strengthens our student's Hebrew and Prayer skills. It also introduces children to the customs and choreography of the Torah Service. In addition, attending services regularly affords our families the opportunity to become an integral part of the larger Jewish community. Therefore, we encourage all families to attend synagogue services as often as possible.

**Early Dismissal**

If you would like your child dismissed early, please send a note to the School. Please go to the school office to pick up your child. **Parents should never go directly to the classroom.** If a note has been sent in advance, your child will be ready to leave when you arrive. If you need to pick up your child early, and have not sent a note, please go tot

the School Office and ask to contact the Director of Education or the Administrative Assistant.

### **Pick Up**

It is essential that children be picked up on time. Parents may wait in line, or park and wait outside the school entrance. **Children should never walk into the parking area without their parents.** Be sure to drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot. The Education Director will help facilitate dismissal procedures. If you are unable to pick up your child on time you must call the school office at 381-8983 so that special emergency arrangements can be made to supervise your child.

### **Change in Dismissal**

If someone is picking up your child other than the person/s designated on the dismissal forms the school office must be notified in writing. If your child is left for more than one hour and there has been no contact from a parent or emergency contact either the Police or Social Services will be called.

### **Snow Days**

In case of bad weather, listen to the school cancellation announcements on 810 WGY, FLY92, The RIVER or Television stations 6, 9, 10, 13 and 23. We will try to call in the cancellation announcements by 3:00 pm on a weekday and 8:15 am on a Sunday morning. A mass email will also be sent to all parents and the website [www.agudatachim.org](http://www.agudatachim.org) will have a scrolling banner. If possible the answering machine at the 381-8983 number will have the announcement as well. Should severe weather conditions develop once children are in public school, we will contact those schools and ask them to announce that Hebrew School is canceled. Whenever Niskayuna schools are canceled for a snow day there is no Hebrew School.

### **Progress Reports**

Two times per year (January and June) our students will receive progress reports. These reports are designed to inform the parent and child about progress in our Religious School. It is important to read the Report Card carefully and discuss it with your child. Both informal and formal methods of assessment will be used to track a student's progress.

### **Assembly Programs**

At various times throughout the school year we schedule special programs (holiday presentations, family dinners, guest speakers, etc.) to broaden and enrich the students' experience. Parents will be notified well in advance via the school calendar and reminder notices. We urge you to support these programs and join us for these occasions.

### **School Board Meetings**

The School Committee will meet at regular times throughout the year. See the Agudat Achim Bulletin calendar for meeting dates. All meetings are open to all School families. We urge everyone to get involved.

### **Homework**

Our philosophy is to give as small amount of homework as possible. However sometimes we need to reinforce the classroom material. It is important that these assignments be completed. If a student is absent, please make certain that your child obtains all missed assignments from the teacher.

### **Parental Involvement**

Participation of parents in their child's Jewish education is encouraged and greatly appreciated. Teachers cannot teach all there is to know about being Jewish in a few short hours per week. Teachers and students need the support and encouragement of parents in the home setting. The Education Director and the other teachers have access to lots of Jewish resources if you would like to learn more about raising Jewish children and how to help supplement your children's Jewish education. Our events will only be as successful as the people who help make it great. Please consider volunteering for one or two events in the upcoming year to make all our school events fun and educational. Parents who have questions or concerns should contact the Education Director at 381-8983.

### **School Supplies**

Our goal is to keep supplies to a minimum. A supply list will be distributed during the Open House or sent home by the teacher on the first day of class if needed.

### **Kippot**

All males **MUST** have their heads covered during Religious school classes. (Please, no "baseball" caps). Since this is an egalitarian synagogue, we encourage our girls to take on the obligation to cover their heads if they want.

### **Kashrut**

The students may bring only parve or dairy food into the school for snacks. This food must bear a symbol K, U, OU, or have a parve identification on the label. Absolutely no prepared foods may be cooked at home and brought into the school. Snacks will also be sold at the snack cart from 3:30pm to 4:15pm on Tuesday and Thursday only. On Sundays a breakfast snack will be provided to everyone including parents please feel free to help yourselves.

### **Allergies**

Because of the potential severity of nut allergy reactions, we have developed a [Nut Allergy Policy](#) for the school. The school will not serve snacks in the classroom that contain nuts. They may be purchased on the snack cart by your child. We will have a sign stating which products contain nuts or nut products on the cart.

### **Gum Chewing**

Gun chewing is strictly prohibited at all times.

### **Visitors**

If your child would like to bring a friend to school, please write or call the School in advance.

### **Lost and Found**

Please check in the School Office for lost items.

### **Behavior**

Our motto is **RESPECT PRACTICED HERE**. This is reciprocal for teachers and students. In each class, at the beginning of the year, teachers and students working together will set up a discipline program. Students will then know their teacher's expectations. If there is a continuing issue either the teacher or the director will contact parents personally.

### **Junior Congregation**

Junior Congregation, an integral part of our educational program at Agudat Achim, serves a number of important purposes that cannot be realized during Hebrew School hours. First and foremost it provides an environment in which our students can develop the skills and confidence to lead various parts of the service. The Junior Congregation service is structured to maximize the participation of each child. In addition, the discussion of the weekly Torah portion is a dialogue between the Junior Congregation leader and the children as they ask and answer pertinent questions. Also attendance at Junior Congregation Shabbat morning services helps your child develop a sense of belonging to our synagogue as an extended family. It fosters a sense of enjoyment of the prayer experience in the context of a pleasurable social setting.

#### Junior Congregation Attendance Requirements:

Grades 3-7

12 Sessions Required. Eight of which must be at a service where the Torah is read and four can be other occasions such as Friday night Family Shabbat dinners.

#### Other options for fulfilling the requirement:

1. Attendance at Shabbat service- attendance will be taken in the next class following that Shabbat by the Religious School Administrative Assistant.
2. Attendance at holiday services excluding Rosh ha Shannah and Yom Kippur (such as Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot).
3. Attendance at services where the Torah is read: Monday and Thursday morning minyan, Rosh Chodesh, or Shabbat Minchah Service. A note from home should be brought in and given to the Religious School Administrative Assistant.
4. Attendance at Shabbat Services elsewhere (such as Bar/Bat Mitzvah). A note from home by a parent should be brought in and given to the Religious School Administrative Assistant.
5. Attendance at a Jewish summer camp experience where Shabbat services are conducted. Written confirmation of the number of attendances at qualifying services from parents would be appreciated prior to the start of the new school year and given to the Religious School Administrative Assistant.

## **Special Events:**

### **Consecration**

Children in the second grade Hebrew School are formally inducted into our Hebrew School program. Children will receive a siddur to help highlight this event at the end of the year.

### **Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Both boys and girls become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah during their 13<sup>th</sup> year. Parents of 5<sup>th</sup> graders attend a special meeting held in the fall to receive their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date and explanation of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program.

Students need to meet the following requirements and standards:

1. Attendance in Religious School (or an equivalent program of Jewish Education) for a minimum of five years. Children who enroll in our school beyond the age of eight will need to establish a remedial program of study set up by the Education Director. In certain cases, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may have to be delayed beyond the child's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.
2. Attendance at Shabbat services in the adult congregation for a minimum of six (6) months prior to the ceremony is encouraged. This familiarizes the child with the synagogue, the services, and the people who attend.

### **Confirmation**

A Confirmation service is held on Shavuot for students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade who have completed the Hebrew High School requirements. Tenth graders write their own creative evening service and are honored at a special Kiddush.

### **High School Graduation**

Students who have successfully completed all courses in the Hebrew High School are eligible for graduation at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Should you have any questions or concerns about any school issues please contact the Education Director Jack Mintzer either by phone: 381-8983 or by email at [aguprinc@nycap.rr.com](mailto:aguprinc@nycap.rr.com)