



# Beth Ami Community Nursery School

## Parent Handbook 2018-2019

\* Returning parents please note that every year there are changes made to this handbook. Please read this in its entirety and note the updated changes.



## WELCOME

Founded in 1979, Beth Ami Community Nursery School is a Reggio-inspired, Jewish nursery school, dedicated to providing developmentally appropriate, open-ended experiences for all children in a joyful, safe, and rich learning environment. Our goals for each child are that they develop a positive self-image, independence, creative thinking skills, and respect for differences.

### Process vs. Product

Teachers design projects which emphasize process over product. The learning that happens within the process is more important than the end result. Here are some phrases parents can use for similar emphasis:

"You chose such vibrant colors! Which is your favorite?"

"Tell me about your project."

## REGGIO-INSPIRED CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is child-centered, with themes and activities emerging from the observations of the teachers and the interests of the children. This emergent curriculum is inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy, which emphasizes children's competence, trusting relationships, and the role of children in constructing their own understandings of the world via interactions with people, materials, and the environment.

At BACNS, children are active participants in their learning, where exploration, discovery, and invention are of primary importance. Literacy development, beginning math concepts, the scientific method, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are woven into the inquiry process.

## JEWISH CURRICULUM

We celebrate Jewish traditions by reading stories, singing songs in Hebrew and Yiddish, dancing, cooking, learning about and celebrating the holidays, and celebrating the end-of-the-week Shabbat (Sabbath) together as a school. We welcome Shabbat every Friday by singing, lighting candles, saying blessing over grape juice, and baking challah (braided egg bread).

We teach Jewish values such as *Kavod* (respect/honor), *Hesed* (loving kindness), and *Tza'ar Ba'alay Cha'yim* (avoiding cruelty to animals). These values are woven into the fabric of our everyday, and are of huge importance to children.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We view moments of struggle between, whether over a mutually-desired toy or a move to exclude one-another, as learning opportunities. Rather than jumping in and solving the problem or putting someone in timeout, we support the children as they navigate the issue and problem-solve together, so that they can gain and practice the tools (such as self-advocacy, empathy, and solution-generation) that they will need to do this independently in the long run.

When conflicts arise, teachers will reflect and validate the feelings of all involved, ensure that all sides are heard, facilitate conflict resolution, and when necessary, suggest solutions or model negotiating skills. For example, a teacher might say, "It looks like you both want to play with that toy, but we only have one. What could we do to solve this problem?"



If and when a child poses a threat to him/herself or others or needs time and/or space to calm down, s/he may be removed temporarily from the situation, classroom, playground, etc. At these times, a teacher either remains with the child, talking calmly, or a quiet space is provided for the child somewhere in the classroom. It is usually left up to the child to determine when s/he feels ready to talk or re-enter the social scene. Alternatives for future situations may be discussed, as will validation of the feelings behind the behavior. For example, a child may be told, "It is okay to be angry, but it is not okay to hurt anyone. You may..." and then alternatives may be suggested. Physical outlets may be provided for a very angry child when needed, such as foam balls to squeeze or throw, or play dough to pound.

## HOURS OF OPERATION & DAILY SCHEDULE

- 7:30 a.m. A.M. Extended Care begins on the yard or in a classroom (weather-dependent)
- 9:00 a.m. CORE school day begins. Each class follows its own schedule, but this time will include extended inquiry/play both inside and out, snack, circle time, and lunch.
- 12:00 p.m. CORE school day ends for Shorashim (our youngest class).
- 1:00 p.m. CORE school day ends for all other classes.
- 12/1-5:30 p.m. P.M. Extended Care begins: Nappers head to room 2, while non-nappers head to the play yard. The groups merge at 3:30 p.m.
- 1:00 p.m. Enrichment classes begin. They end between 1:30-1:45.
- 5:30 p.m. School closes for the night.

### CORE School Day

All of our CORE classes are offered Monday-Friday. Families may choose to enroll children anywhere from 2-5 days per week, and are asked to give a first and second choice of schedule.

### Drop-In Days/Hours

We offer drop-in days during the CORE program as well as extended care hours IF pre-arranged with the director. See our fee schedule for cost.

### Extended Day Care (EDC)

We offer EDC five days a week for students of all ages starting at 7:30 a.m. and ending at 5:30 p.m. You may choose how your hours are distributed, but they must be done so in a **schedule that is pre-arranged with the office and consistent from one week to the next.** For our nappers, we provide mats and a calm nap space with soothing music. Parents provide sheets and any other items that may help children sleep. As children wake up, they merge with the non-napping group. Our EDC program is low-key, individualized, and care based.

### Enrichment Activities

At 1 p.m. each day, we bring in specialists who teach music, art, gymnastics, etc. after our regular school sessions. Parents who choose to enroll their children in the enrichment classes pay for them directly to the enrichment program and separately from their regular monthly tuition and extended care services. Please see our website for current class offerings.

### Shabbat

Every Friday, we celebrate Shabbat (the Sabbath). One family from each class brings in unbaked challah (egg bread) dough, and the children make their own challah. We have a



school-wide gathering that involves singing, movement, and stories with the Rabbi. Each child will bring home his/her challah at the end of the day.

## NEAR-YEAR-ROUND COVERAGE

### Academic School Year & Summer Session

Our academic School year operates from the end of August through the beginning of June. We offer four two-week summer sessions to accommodate summer vacation schedules. Our summer program continues with our philosophy of emergent curriculum, but with even more time spent outside, exploring the vibrant life and activity on our yard.

### School Closures

BACNS is closed on national as well as Jewish holidays. We are closed for a two-week winter break that aligns with local public schools and a one-week spring break that corresponds with Passover. We are closed one week at the beginning of summer and two at the end. We offer Yom Tov camps on some of the Jewish holidays. Please see our calendar for dates.

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

### Arrival

Upon arriving, please wait until your scheduled start time and then accompany your child to his or her classroom and sign in.

Early care begins on the yard (weather-permitting) or in a classroom. At 9 a.m., Shorashim and Shtilim begin their day in the classroom, while Anafim and Alim start their day on the yard.

### The Front Gate

Our key-coded front gate is a part of our ongoing effort to keep our children and school safe. Each family will choose a personalized code. We ask that families only share this code on a need-to-know basis. If you forget your code, buzz the office and we'll let you in.

### Authorization for Pick-Up

Only those individuals who have been previously authorized by a parent in writing (and who are over the age of 18) will be allowed to pick up a child. If the staff does not know the person who has been authorized to pick up a child, the staff person will ask for a picture I.D. Please let teachers know if someone new will be picking your child up.

Please use the AUTHORIZATION FOR CHANGE IN CHILD PICK-UP LIST form (available in the back pocket of this handbook, online, and in the office) to authorize a new person.

### Sign In & Sign Out

Preschool is governed by requirements established by the State of California. Rules of compliance (CCR, Title 22, Sections 101226.1{b} and 101229.1) dictate practices that assure the health and safety of children in our school. The sign-in/out sheets are a legal document which transfer responsibility for the child between the center and the child's authorized representative.

It is critically important that each child be signed in and out every day with a full legal signature, time of arrival/departure, and checking the boxes for nap or enrichment if applicable.



## HELPING YOUR CHILD ADJUST TO SCHOOL

To make your child's adjustment to their new setting easier, talk about it a lot before hand. Explain that you will drop them off, stay close by, and you will come back right after lunch (or nap, depending on your child's schedule). If this is your child's first school or out-of-home care experience, it can help to read books about school such as, "T'was the Night Before Preschool."

Some children need a transitional object to take from school to home. We ask all families to provide a picture of the whole family so that your child can look at it for comfort. And tell your child's teachers about what makes your child feel secure.

It can help to have a phrase that you can say to your child each time you part, something like: "Mommy's/Daddy's/etc. never gone long and s/he always comes back," and/or to have an exit ritual, such as a fence kiss on the yard. Be sure to say goodbye when you leave.

We hope that you won't be anxious or embarrassed if your child is upset and cries. It's important to leave when you way you will, even if they protest. Know that a teacher will help your child find an activity or a comforting lap, that separation upset usually ends shortly after you leave, and that we will call you if it doesn't. Feel free to call us any time for reassurance.

Sometimes, children may announce that they do not want to go to school that day. Try saying, "Now is the time to go to nursery school. Later we will be together" or "Nursery school is your work and I will be doing my work when we are apart." Your child may be fearful of missing out on special times that Mom or Dad shares with a younger sibling. Assure them of your plans to spend time together after school and your confidence of their success in school.

## WHAT WE OFFER

### Learning Environment – CORE & EDC

The school provides a creative setting conducive to curiosity and discovery. The environment is designed to foster independence and responsibility. The classrooms are organized into learning areas with a variety of rich materials. We encourage the children to make choices and follow their interests. Our yard is equipped with play and climbing structures, an area for wheeled toys, an imaginative play area, sand and water play, a musical garden, natural and human-made materials that the children use to create their own play spaces, and evolving gardens for work, observation, and interaction with nature.

Our Extended Day Care program is a continuation of our morning program in some ways and a departure in others. We maintain the same level of intentionality, nurturing, and engagement. But we are in a mixed-age setting, with even greater individualization. We try to mirror what would be happening at home: Play, snacks, naps, snuggles, and stories.

### Staff

The success of our school depends on the dedicated and skilled individuals who make up our staff. Our teachers have more than 100 years combined experience working with young children and have received their degrees and/or certifications in Early Childhood Education. Our staff is committed to on-going professional development which includes regularly training and workshops, as well as regular collaboration in teaching teams and whole staff.

The Director is responsible for supervising the day-to-day operation of the Nursery School and works closely with the teachers in developing and implementing the daily program.



## ADMISSION & PLACEMENT POLICIES

### Student Qualifications

Our goal is to best serve each child and family in the school, therefore each child must be:

- Ready for the group experiences a nursery school has to offer.
- Able to benefit from the program offered.
- On the way to being potty trained, unless placed in Shorashim (our youngest class).

In following the Americans with Disabilities Act, please discuss your child's needs with the Director so that we are aware of any special circumstances. Full disclosure before admission is critical in order for us to best meet your child's needs. Admission may be reversed if the information submitted is found to be inaccurate or incomplete and this results in our inability to provide for your child's needs.

In the case of repeated and severe behavioral issues, a cooperative home-to-school plan will be devised collaboratively by teachers, director, and parents. It may include regular check-ins, at-home and at-school strategies, benchmarks for improvement, a modified schedule, and/or a requirement that someone (i.e. an aide) provide regular one-on-one support for your child. Should the need arise for an aide, continued placement may depend on the family providing one.

#### Low Ratios/Small Classes

We offer both low ratios and small class sizes so that we can get to know our students very well and foster deep relationships.

- Shorashim: 4:1 ratio ( max of 8 students, 2 teachers per day)
- Shtilim: 6:1 (max of 12:2)
- Anafim/Alim: 7:1 (max of 14:2)

are made by staff.

**Tuition** \* See page 17

#### Class Placement

The staff works thoughtfully and diligently at the complex process of determining placement of the children in each classroom. Multiple criteria are considered in making these decisions which include, but are not limited to: What's best for each child and the group, age and development of each child, gender and personality balance, friendships, and schedule. We will try to honor parent requests. However, final decisions

## DAILY NEEDS: FOOD

### Lunches

Lunchtime has both learning and social opportunities and can be an important part of the school day. Since lunchtime is included in our Nursery School program, you will need to provide this meal in a lunch box or bag, with a drink. We are a kosher and a peanut-free facility (tree nuts are okay, but must be labeled). We recommend sending small amounts of a variety of foods. The list below should help you figure out what you can and cannot send to BACNS.

#### Sorry. Please save these foods for home:

- \* No meat, poultry, or shellfish (per kosher rules)
- \* No peanuts or peanut butter due to allergies

#### YES! Definitely Send Foods on this List!

- \* Yoghurt
- \* Cheese, cheese sticks
- \* Fruit (Melon, peaches, seedless grapes, bananas, pineapple, clementines, apple slices, figs, persimmons...)
- \* Vegetables (carrots (sliced), celery, broccoli, cucumbers, peppers, snap peas, peas, frozen mixed veggies, cherry tomatoes (sliced),...)

### Snacks

Please discuss any food allergies that your child



**may have with your child's teacher.** The director will post a list of all children with food allergies in the kitchen visible to all staff, subs, and all others engaged in snack preparation.

We offer wholesome and nutritious snacks each morning and afternoon. Sometimes, snacks are reflective of the Jewish holiday or the subject area being explored on a given day. All snack foods are appropriate for our kosher facility and peanut-free.

Snacks primarily include cheese sticks, fruit, and whole grain crackers.

If you have a surplus harvest from your garden or orchard, this would be a wonderful gift to the school. Please speak to your child's teacher about arranging to bring in a special cultural dish or a birthday snack or to come in and cook with the class.

## DAILY NEEDS: CLOTHING/BEDDING/EMERGENCY KITS

### Clothing

Appropriate clothing for play is extremely important. Children need to feel comfortable, free to fully explore the school environment, and be self-reliant during their school play. If children worry about getting messy, it could potentially interfere with creative experiences. Rugged, washable play clothes and tennis shoes are ideal for Nursery School. Please...

- Make sure clothes are easily laundered. Preschool paint containers state that they are washable, but certain fabrics launder better than others.
- Garments should be easy for little fingers and hands to manage. This helps lead to the independence the children strive for. Overalls are not recommended.
- A sweater or jacket should be provided even on sunny days. We recommend sunscreen and waterproof shoes/sandals (please, no flip-flops) for outside play on warm days. Additionally, children should bring rain boots and a raincoat during rainy weather.

It is recommended that all clothing be **labeled with the child's name**.

### Changes of Clothes

Children need multiple articles of labeled clothing to be kept in their cubby. This will help tremendously in the case of potty accidents, water play, spills, etc. We find that, while we have extra clothes here, children often prefer to wear their own. This should include:

- Socks
- Underwear, pull-ups and/or diapers
- Pants and shorts
- Long- and short-sleeved shirts
- Extra pair of shoes if possible
- Sweatshirt or jacket



Please check regularly (and especially when your child is wearing different clothes at pick-up than they were wearing at drop-off) and replenish as needed. Whenever your child changes sizes, please refresh as well.

### Items from home

A Unless you have been notified that it is a “sharing day,” we ask that you leave your child’s toys at home. Please check with your child’s teacher about the appropriateness of any books, music, or toys you wish to lend to the class. Toys of violence, war toys, and masks should not be brought to school.

### Extended Day Care Bedding

For afternoon nap time we provide a padded floor mat. Your child will need to bring a labeled light blanket and a crib-size sheet. Please provide a clearly labeled cloth bag or backpack to contain the afternoon bedding. A small comfort soft toy could also be part of the EDC kit.

For health and hygiene, we ask that parents take bedding home for laundering once a week.

### Emergency Preparedness Kits

Upon arrival on your child’s first day of school, we will collect the emergency preparedness clothing kits to store at school in the event of an emergency. The instructions for the kit are in the back pocket of this handbook. You may collect your child’s previous year’s kit at our year-end potluck picnic. If your child is staying for the summer program, you may update your kit at that time.

## COMMUNICATION

### Daily communication between teachers and parents

Along with our commitment to the children’s development, we value open and ongoing communication with parents. In addition to yearly scheduled conferences, teachers are available for informal conversations. We hope that you will feel free to contact staff members if you have any need to talk about your child’s progress.

In addition to verbal check-ins, each classroom has notebooks for you to write anything that teachers may need to know that day (perhaps your child didn’t sleep well the night before or someone out-of-the-ordinary will be picking up today). Teachers will also communicate with you via documentation around the classroom. Look for written documentation by the sign-in and –out sheets that list the happenings of the day, and documentation panels around the room that show pictures and descriptions of children’s thought processes, and a written list of what happened in class that day.

Please respect classroom hours as the teachers’ time for the children. If you need to communicate with a teacher and they are busy, you can always request a phone call from the teacher or request a scheduled appointment.

Feel free to call the nursery school director or stop-in at the office at any time as well.

### Weekly E-Mail Newsletter and Photo E-mail

Our Friday afternoon newsletter is our primary method of communication with parents regarding school closures, school policies, upcoming events, and important dates. You are responsible for the information in the newsletter, so please make sure that each parent or guardian provides us with an e-mail address that you check regularly.





At the end of most school weeks, you will receive an e-mail of photos and videos that are tailored to your child. They may include photos of your child engaged in learning, and may also include photos of classroom and/or school-wide projects and happenings.

### Phone Calls/E-mail

The Nursery School welcomes your comments and questions. Please feel free to call or e-mail us. Since the teachers' first priority is your child, they may not be able to come to the phone during class hours. The teacher or director will call you back as promptly as possible.

#### **NS Office Contact Info**

Phone: (707) 360-3030

E-mail: [NS@BethAmiSR.org](mailto:NS@BethAmiSR.org)

#### **NS Director Contact Info**

Office Phone: See above

Cell: (707) 291-5873

E-mail: [HYPERLINK](mailto:HYPERLINK)

"mailto:NSDirector@BethAmiSR.org"

[NSDirector@BethAmiSR.org](mailto:NSDirector@BethAmiSR.org)

#### **Congregation Beth Ami Contact Info**

Phone: (707) 360-3000

E-mail: [Office@BethAmiSR.org](mailto:Office@BethAmiSR.org)

### Automated Emergency Phone Calls

In the event of an emergency or a last-minute school closure, you will receive an automated phone call from the director. Please make sure that your mobile and home phone numbers are up-to-date in our records so that we will be able to contact you.

### Information Requests

Any parent of a child attending Beth Ami Community Nursery School has the right to review documentation concerning his or her child, so long as this review keeps confidential the records of other children.

In the event that two parents are separated or divorced and sharing custody, and one parent requests information, that request shall be granted, and both parents shall receive copies of the information requested, unless BACNS receives a court order or valid legal objection from one parent to bar the other from receiving the information.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Family involvement in the Nursery School is an integral component of our program. Our community is made up of our families, and the more we get to know each other, the more involved we are in each others lives, the more we celebrate together and work together and lean on each other, the stronger we become. Please contribute to our warm, vibrant community by being an active part of it: Reach out to a new family so that they feel welcome and included, look at photos around the classroom with your child so that they can see how much you value what they are learning, volunteer at an event so that you can get to know other parents and see first hand what is happening at school.

We thank you for making our school a richer place by being a part of it, and by participating in the following ways:

**Challah:** If your child attends on Fridays, on a rotating basis, each family will sign up to bring unbaked challah dough for the class to bake in celebration of Shabbat (about once every 2-3 months).

#### **Parent Work Hours**

- The activities that count towards work hours should benefit the morale, the physical environment, and the well-being of the school. Here is a list of activities that count toward the five work hours:
- Working in the garden
- Chaperoning field trips
- Cleaning/organizing classrooms/supply rooms, etc.
- Fixing/building structures in and out of the classroom
- Making food for teacher meetings or special school events (you will be notified when cooking for particular events is requested)
- Set up/working during event/clean up for any of the Jewish Events for our Nursery School Community (i.e. Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah)



**Field trips:** We rely on parents who are able to chaperone/drive on field trips.

**Participating in one of our working groups:** We have wonderful families who are fully engaged in our school community. If your schedule allows, we hope that you will consider joining our parent club, our advisory council, and/or helping to organize our annual fundraiser.

**Parent Work hours:** Families are responsible for volunteering a total of five hours per year. All work hours must be completed by the end of the school year. If the hours are not completed, we will approach you about donating \$20 per unfinished hours in lieu of time.

There are also other ways to get involved at the school. We welcome all interested parents to join in as often as they want and are able to.

## Special Events

Over the course of the school year, we celebrate special events such as Jewish Holiday celebrations, our annual fundraiser, and our year-end potluck picnic. These celebrations are for all our nursery school families. We welcome and encourage your participation in preparing and organizing for these events. Your support and participation is highly valued in helping to create a strong sense of community. Many of these dates are on the calendar, some will come later in the newsletter, and we hope that you will plan to attend.

## Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is comprised of current and alumni parents, as well as experts in Early Childhood Education and other fields from the broader community. They meet monthly with the director to provide guidance on the direction of the school. Topics are dependent on the immediate needs of the school and range from revising the parent handbook and school policy to tuition plans and more.

## Parent Club

The Nursery School's Parent Club is comprised of all parents of children attending the nursery school who wish to be involved in creating and supporting Nursery School activities and goals. The Parent Club acts as a liaison between parents and the Nursery School Administration.

The purpose of the Parent Club is to increase benefits provided by the school to the children and their families and to facilitate parent's greater involvement in the Nursery School and in their children's education. We hope that all interested parents will join this club and know that they are truly valued as an integral part of the Nursery School community.

The club meets monthly or more often when needed. Anyone wishing to attend a committee meeting is welcome to do so. It is recommended that there be representatives from each class attending the committee meetings. If you wish to make a presentation to the Parent Club, please contact the Chairperson five days in advance of the monthly

### Parent Club Roles & Goals

- Raising funds for the school, including organizing the annual auction.
- Assisting with Jewish holiday celebrations and other major events for the Nursery School community
- Inspiring and fostering family involvement in the school
- Organizing class field trips and mom's/dad's nights out.
- Identifying concerns and suggestions of parents and facilitating communication between home and school
- Welcoming all new families and supporting each other in joyous and difficult times (birth, adoption, illness, death, family stress)



meeting to discuss your thoughts for placement on the agenda.

### **Parent Education Workshops**

We occasionally offer parent workshops throughout the year on a variety of topics, including Triple P Parenting classes, Judaism 101, etc. Your ideas and suggestions for workshops are always welcome. We will alert you to special parenting and family events in our community.

### **Fundraising**

Fundraising is an important part of making our school run well and keeping us current and of the highest quality. We work hard to keep tuition costs as low as possible while maintaining our low ratios and supporting our wonderful teachers, and keeping our classrooms stocked with rich materials. In order to close the gap between tuition and the cost of a high quality program, the Parent Club works on a variety of fundraising initiatives each year and families are encouraged to participate in any way that they can.

### **Donations**

Donations to the Nursery School are always appreciated. Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible contribution may do so via the Director or Congregation Beth Ami office. Traditionally, families in our community have made contributions to the school in honor, memory, or recognition of others and in celebration of birthdays and anniversaries. All cash donations and donated materials directed to the nursery school benefit the children at Beth Ami Community Nursery School and are tax-deductible.

### **Scholarship Donations**

In recent years, we have created the Jill Tager Scholarship Fund so that our school can be accessible to all. We appreciate the help of anyone who wants to give the Gift of Beth Ami by giving a tax-deductible donation to our scholarship fund.

## **SPECIAL EXPERIENCES**

### **Birthdays**

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at school. Each teacher invites you to bring a healthy birthday treat for your child's birthday. Please speak to teachers about appropriate snacks and make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance.

If you are hosting a birthday party for your child outside of school, please do not hand out party invitations at school unless the entire class is invited. Please mail them instead.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips offer the three- and four-year-olds a unique opportunity to experience an environment away from school. Much thought and planning goes into developing curriculum for these trips. Children are prepared with information and what to expect. Afterwards, all subject areas are integrated to educationally capitalize on the learning stimulated by the outing.

Excursions may include visits to farms, parks, museums, markets, and neighborhood walks into the community. Each child will need a signed permission slip that will be kept on file. We encourage all parents to participate in the program by volunteering to drive on trips or accompanying us to increase our adult-to-child ratio for these events. All children must travel in car seats. We ask the parent to secure the seat when possible. The law requires all



drivers to have a copy of their current insurance on file at the school specifically listing the driver(s) by name.

## Shabbat

Although the Sabbath officially begins at sundown on Friday and lasts until three stars are sighted on Saturday evening, we celebrate Shabbat at school every Friday morning with an “Oneg Shabbat,” when we sing songs and recite blessings over the candles, the grape juice, and the challah (egg bread). We encourage and welcome families to join us in our celebration at 12:00 noon, when we sing together and read a story with Rabbi Miller.

Families take turns bringing in a double batch of challah dough so that the children can braid their own loaves each week. Each family provides the challah dough several times a year. You may also bring flowers and/or tablecloths to decorate the room when your turn to bring challah dough comes around. Recipes for challah dough are available in the classroom or Director’s office, and on our website.

## Non-Jewish Holidays

As a school, we do not celebrate Halloween or Valentine’s Day. Both celebrations are related to the Christian Saint Days calendar and are not compatible with our Judaic focus or with Congregation Beth Ami as an institution.

Please support us by telling your children that our costume holiday with treats is Purim, when we dress up and distribute *mishloach manot* (gifts of food). Please also support us by the following:

- Do NOT bring candy to school, in lunch or to distribute to the children (at any time, but specifically) for Halloween and Valentine’s Day
- Do NOT send your child wearing a costume to school for Halloween
- Do not bring Valentine’s Day or Halloween cards or other related items to school

### Celebrating home culture at school

As a part of our multicultural focus and honoring the whole child, we welcome families with other traditions and celebrations to bring us information and materials about them. As an example, we have had parents visit classrooms during Lunar New Year to introduce the children to that holiday. Please speak to teachers about the appropriateness or desirability of activities or treats for celebrations other than Jewish holidays.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Healthy Children at School

Your child’s health is of major importance to all of us. Prior to enrollment, you must complete and return your child’s health form signed by a physician and your child’s immunization record, including tuberculin clearance.

We understand that many of you send your children to BACNS both because of our educational philosophy AND because you rely on us for childcare. However, our illness policy is strict for the well-being of your child, of other children, and of our teachers. Each morning, please assess the health of your child. **Please wait until a teacher greets and**

#### Please keep your child home if s/he:

- Has a fever (temperature over 100.4°) or has had a **fever during the last 24-hour period**. If you have used fever-reducing medicine in the last 24 hours to stave off a fever, please keep your child home another day.
- Has vomited or has had diarrhea **within the past 24 hours**.
- Has another symptom of a communicable disease:
  - red dripping eyes
  - runny nose
  - fever



**accepts your child before leaving the premises.**

We ask that you keep your child home if they are sick, and understand that we will call you to pick them up if they develop an illness while at school. See the gray box on the right for the full list of symptoms and illnesses that necessitate staying (or going) home.

Also keep in mind that suppressing an illness with decongestants, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and cough syrup, will not remove the contagious nature of the illnesses. Please do not send your child to school if they require these medications.

If your child has a bacterial infection, s/he must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

In the event of head lice, please inform the office immediately. We require that children be free of all nits before returning to school.

We may require a doctor's note for your child to return to school (such as in the case of a rash or a diagnosis of allergies rather than pink eye).

### **When children become sick at school**

In the event a child becomes sick at school, **we will first call the parent(s)** and then, if unable to contact the parent(s), proceed to the list of emergency contacts. The child will be isolated until the parent or an authorized adult arrives for pick up. Parents are asked to arrive within 30 minutes of receiving the call or make arrangements for others to supply care. We feel that children who are too sick or tired to play outside or fully participate in our program should be at home. Children with non-contagious medical restrictions, documented by a physician, will be kept inside during inclement weather at the parent's request or the teacher's discretion.

We appreciate your support in this situation, as our staff all strive to provide optimal care at all times for individual children and meet the needs of the group, at the same time.

Per licensing requirements, every family needs to maintain a list of viable emergency contacts as well as phone numbers where we can reach the parents at all times.

If you have an additional child (i.e. sibling of student) who is ill, **PLEASE DO NOT** bring the sick sibling into the classroom when dropping off your student.

### **In Case of Accidental Injury**

The staff will administer necessary first aid treatment to your child. For other minor injuries we will make an attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot reach you or a contact from your emergency list, we will call the child's physician or one of the school's consulting physicians. When necessary, we will call an ambulance. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any incurred expenses. There is a requirement that a signed consent form about this policy be in each child's file.

Whenever first aid is given, teachers fill out an "Ouch Report" and place a copy in your child's cubby and in their file.

## **EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL DISASTERS**

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, the Director and/or Executive Director, based upon all available facts at the time, will determine school closure. The Nursery School serves a large part of Sonoma County, and if an area in the county is affected by the natural disaster and many staff members are affected, the school may have to make an emergency



closure or operate with only a skeleton staff. Parents will be notified as soon as possible, via telephone communication, if an emergency closure is necessary. There will not be any tuition refunds if the school is forced to have an emergency closure.

### **Emergency Procedures**

If an emergency does arise at Congregation Beth Ami the following will occur:

1. Should there be a reason for closing the Nursery School on any given day, staff will call the Executive Director, Nursery School Director, and the first scheduled nursery staff teacher.
2. After further assessment and feedback, the director will inform all families of any closure or delay in school operation **via e-mail AND automated phone call.**
3. In addition, we will inform families if we will remain closed until further notice.

If an emergency occurs while children are in attendance, the Director will assess the need for early pick-up, and parents will receive an e-mail and an automated call. If we can't get in touch with you, we will continue calling (from your "Identification and Emergency Information" form) until someone is reached for pick-up. Rolling blackouts do not always cause the school to close. If a blackout occurs, we check with PG&E and other emergency information to assess our safety to remain on site. Should we need to evacuate, our temporary relocation site is **Spring Creek Elementary School across the street from Congregation Beth Ami.**

## **ADMISSION POLICIES**

### **Application**

Application and registration is ongoing and begins in early February. New and returning families wishing to enroll for the next school year should submit a completed application form and non-refundable application fee for each child returning or new to the school. Applications are preferred before April 1 so that we may place students in classes appropriately. We will continue to accept applications after that date however, and place students in classes if there is space. Once we are full, new applicants will be placed in a wait pool.

### **Required Paperwork**

A complete and current individual file on each child will be maintained at the Nursery School.

### **The file will consist of:**

- Identifying information
- Child's social and developmental history
- Child's medical history
- A physician's pre-admission report
- Required immunizations
- An emergency release form
- A general field-trip permission slip
- An Admission Agreement signed by a parent
- Payment plan information



- Child's Ages and Stages Questionnaire

**This file will also contain three statements signed by a parent indicating that he or she has read:**

- This Parent Handbook
- The Personal Rights sheet
- The Parents' Rights sheet.
- All of these documents must be on file before a child begins school.

**In the event of full enrollment, priority in registration will be as follows:**

1. Continuing students (those in current classes)
2. Siblings of a concurrently enrolled student
3. Siblings of previously enrolled students
4. Members of any Sonoma County Synagogue
5. New students who have at least one Jewish parent
6. New students

## FINANCIAL POLICY

### Application Fee

Each application (for each child, each school year) must be submitted with a non-refundable application fee.

### Placement Guarantee

Upon notification of admission to the program, each family must submit a **non-refundable placement guarantee payment equal to 10% of the annual CORE tuition** for each child no later than **May 15<sup>th</sup> to reserve this spot**. The placement guarantee payment will be applied to the last month of the annual tuition and will be forfeited for withdrawal prior to the end of the school year.

### Payment of Tuition and Fees

Tuition and enrollment is for the full school year. Two tuition payment plans are available.

#### 1. Payment in full:

A 3% discount is available to families paying tuition in on or before August 1<sup>st</sup>. Families enrolling or paying tuition after August 1<sup>st</sup> are not eligible for the discount. Pay in full discount is **ONLY** available for CORE tuition fees.

#### 2. Installment payments by credit/debit card:

Annual tuition (minus the placement guarantee) will be paid in monthly installments through credit/debit card on file. Monthly payments will be automatically charged to the card on file on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month from August-April. You will not receive a bill or an invoice. If you would like an invoice/receipt of payment, you may request this at the main office in



person or via e-mail. EDC is paid in 10 equal payments on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month from September-June.

Please note that nursery school tuition and childcare fees may be tax deductible for working parents. Please consult your tax professional for more information. Our Federal Tax ID number is 94-156 6549.

### **Insufficient Funds/Late Payment Fee**

There will be a charge of \$25 if your credit/debit card is declined. Your card will be charged again on the next business day with the additional charges included. If your account is not current by the last business day of the month in which an installment is due, you may be asked to withdraw your child from the school until the situation is resolved. Should your account remain delinquent, you will be responsible for any attorney fees and collection costs that may be incurred in addition to the amount outstanding.

Please update the office with new account numbers and expiration dates as soon as changes occur to avoid this situation.

### **Refund Policy**

Refunds will not be given for:

- Holidays, vacation, and teacher in-service and professional development days
- School closure due to natural disasters or emergency
- Picking up your child early from class or after-school care
- Days your child missed due to illness—including days out because of contagious illness such as chicken pox, head lice, whooping cough, flu, etc.
- Days your child missed due to family plans, including vacations, visiting relatives, etc.

### **Program Changes**

If you wish to change your child's regular schedule, or extended daycare, you must request this in writing by filling out the Change in Schedule Form, located in the back of this packet, and by obtaining Director approval at least **one week prior** to the beginning of the month for the schedule change to take effect on the first of the month. The signature of the director is needed for approval, and you will be notified if there is room prior to assuming any schedule request change.

30 days notice is required to drop scheduled school days or extended day care hours, so that we may make an attempt to fill those days/hours. If the request is made with less than 30 days notice, you will be charged for the full 30 days.

### **Early Withdrawal**

30 days written notice is required when a child withdraws from our program. Notice of withdrawal must be provided by US Mail attention Nursery School Director, 4676 Mayette Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95405 or by e-mail to [NSDirector@BethAmiSR.org](mailto:NSDirector@BethAmiSR.org). Tuition will be charged for the period from the date of enrollment until 30 days after the notification has been received.

**The placement guarantee, application fee, and tuition fees prior to the 30 day mark are non-refundable.**





### **Late Pick-Up**

Late pick-up is NOT the same as drop-in extended care. Drop-in care is scheduled with the director at least three school days prior to the day in question.

#### **Being late for pick-up time will result in the following charges:**

1) The first time, there will be a 15-minute grace period, followed by a \$10 charge for each additional 15 minutes late.

The next time and beyond, there will be a \$10 charge for every 15 minutes (with no grace period).

Please keep in mind that your child's safety is our priority, and we schedule our afternoon staff based on the number of children we expect to have with us after CORE hours.

If you find that you are not able to get to school reliably by your scheduled pick-up time, feel free to schedule additional EDC hours to give you more wiggle-room.

### **Enrichment**

Enrichment classes are optional and happen immediately following the CORE school day. Registration and payment goes directly through the third party that runs the class.

If your child is signed up for enrichment and EDC on the same afternoon, EDC hours are counted for billing purposes starting at 1:30.

**If your child is signed up for enrichment only, please be outside the classroom as the class ends to avoid late pickup fees.**





April 15. Extended Care payments are billed on the first of the month starting on September 1 and continuing through June 1.

## JEWISH HOLIDAYS 101

### Jewish Holidays

The following Jewish holidays, listed in chronological order as they are celebrated during the school year, are an important emphasis in our preschool curriculum. The dates of these holidays differ from year to year as we follow the lunar calendar. Jewish holidays are observed from sundown to sundown like Shabbat.



**Rosh Hashanah**, the Jewish New Year, begins the ten-day period known as the High Holidays or “the Days of Awe.” Rosh Hashanah is also known as the “birthday of the world,” the “day of remembrance,” and the “day of the shofar.” Rosh Hashanah celebrates the ability of people to change and grow, as it is a time for deep thought, self-examination and prayer.

**Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement, is the holiday in which the Jewish people ask for forgiveness and forgive others. Yom Kippur, the most solemn and holy day of the Jewish year, is the last day of the ten days of awe and marks the end of the ten-day period of the High Holidays.



**Sukkot** is a fall harvest festival. Sukkot is also known as the “Festival of the Booths,” as it commemorates the time that the Jewish people lived in temporary huts (sukkot) during their wandering and during their time of harvest in the fields. Sukkot is a time of feasting and of giving thanks for the harvest.



**Simchat Torah**, meaning “rejoicing with the Torah”, is a happy holiday celebrated with gaiety and festivity. On Simchat Torah, the last portion of the Torah in the book of Deuteronomy and the first verses of the book of Genesis are read in the same Temple service, signifying that the Torah has no beginning and no end.

**Hanukkah**, a joyous holiday celebrated for eight days, commemorates the victory of the Jews over the Greeks, and the right to once again, practice Judaism. Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Temple after the victory over the Greeks. Hanukkah is also called the “Festival of Lights” in remembrance of the tiny amount of oil that miraculously burned in the Temple





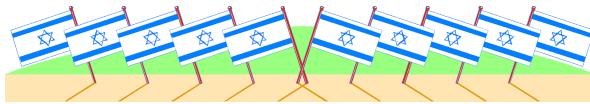
menorah for eight days at the time of the rededication of the Temple.

**Tu B'Shevat** celebrates the "Birthday of the Trees." This Jewish holiday validates the importance of nature and stresses the need for people to care for trees, plants, and objects in nature. It is customary to plant trees on Tu B'Shevat.



**Purim**, a time of merriment and great fun, is one of the happiest of Jewish holidays. The festival of Purim derives from the biblical story of Esther and commemorates the Jewish people's success over Haman, who tried to destroy them. It is a holiday celebrated by retelling the story, dressing up in costume, and making and shaking groggers (noisemakers) whenever Haman's name is mentioned.

**Pesach** celebrates the most important event in Jewish history, which is the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt. This holiday recalls the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, their eventual freedom and their arrival in the Promised Land in Canaan. Pesach is celebrated for eight days with a special meal, special foods, and specific traditional practices. Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot comprise the cycle of festivals spanning the Exodus story.

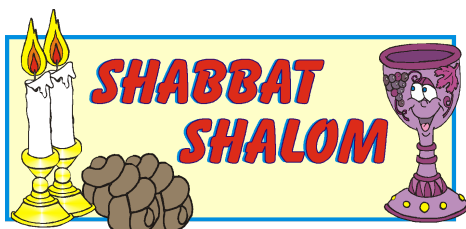


**Yom Ha-atzmaut**, the "Day of Independence," is the Jewish holiday celebrating Israel's attainment of

statehood. Israel's Independence Day commemorates its establishment once again as the homeland of the Jewish people.

**Lag B'Omer** is a minor Jewish holiday that focuses on the importance of study and learning. Lag B'Omer is celebrated on the 33rd day of the 50 days of the counting of the "omer," or the measure of the newly ripened barley. Historically, the Lag B'Omer holiday provided a break from this serious harvest time.

**Shavuot** celebrates the day the Jews were given the Torah, the guidelines of Jewish life, on Mount Sinai. It is also a celebration of the time of harvest and the offering of the first fruits of the new harvest. On Shavuot the Jewish people decorate the synagogue with greens and flowers, wear white clothing, and eat dairy dishes.



**Shabbat:** The Jewish holiday of Shabbat is a joyous occasion celebrated every Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. Shabbat commemorates the creation of the world in six days and the seventh day of rest. Shabbat is a special time for people to come together



each week to be with family and friends, to rest, to think, to share, to sing, and to have a good time. The observance of Shabbat begins with a traditional ritual that includes blessings while lighting candles, drinking wine, and eating challah (twisted egg bread).