Talmud Torah & TBI Youth Programs Policies
2019

The following policies are designed to keep our school community safe, happy, and effective. We appreciate your and your child's cooperation. If you have questions about these policies, please contact the religious school director, Sheri Konowitz at sheri@tbieugene.org.

I. SCHOOL & SYNAGOGUE

1. Participation

Classes:

- Students in Kita Gan (kindergarten) and Kita Aleph (1st grade) are encouraged to participate in our Sunday morning cohort class, summer camp (Camp Chaverim), and enrichment days.
- Students in Kita Bet (2nd) through Kita Zayin (7th) are eligible to take JEWL (Jewish Experience, Wisdom, and Lifestyle) and Hebrew classes as well (i.e. the "full program").
- Students involved in the full-program and working towards becoming b'nai mitzvah should take all three types of classes most terms. While students are offered some choice in the JEWL classes they get to take, it is important to sign up for something when possible, even if not drawn to the topics offered that term. Just as our day schools instruct in math, reading, science, and health even if students are only interested in some of the topics, our Talmud Torah students need to be exposed to a wide variety of JEWL class topics, even if they might not be initially interested in them.
- We would like to see all our students continue with their Jewish studies beyond seventh grade through participation in the Teen Leadership Program and other opportunities as available any given year. We also welcome Jewish teens who haven't been through the religious school or become b'nai mitzvah to participate in the Teen Leadership Program. They do not need to be members of the synagogue to participate.

Eligibility:

Cohort Class	transliterated name	approximate equivalent	eligibility rules
כִּתָּה גַּן	Kita Gan	Kindergarten	• Students may enroll in Kita Gan if they turn five before December 31st of the kindergarten year. • Some children with fall birthdays may choose to be in a Talmud Torah cohort class that is a year ahead of their day school grade. • Students that get a late start in Talmud Torah may be asked to start in a cohort class that is younger than their day school grade. • Cohort classes are for TBI member children only unless there is special permission. • JEWL and Hebrew classes are open to non-members.
כִּתָּה א	Kita Aleph	1st grade	
כִּתָּה ב	Kita Bet	2nd grade	
כִּתָּה ג	Kita Gimmel	3rd grade	
כִּתָּה ד	Kita Dalet	4th grade	
כִּתָּה ה	Kita Hay	5th grade	
כִּתָּה ו	Kita Vav	6th grade	
כִּתָּה ז	Kita Zayin	7th grade	
Teen Leadership Program		8th-10th grade	The Teen Leadership Program is open to Jewish teens who aren't TBI members.

Absences/Tardiness: Good attendance and participation is crucial to the success of our students. We hope to have every child attend regularly and feel connected to classmates, teachers, and the TBI community. Being on time demonstrates respect to teachers and fellow classmates and is a Jewish value. Please make efforts to see that your child arrives before class begins.

If your child is going to be late or absent, please email their teachers and talmudtorah@tbieugene.org to inform us before class so teachers can be aware.

Credits: Students earn credit for involvement in Talmud Torah as a way of keeping track of participation. Students who are working towards becoming b'nai mitzvah will need a certain number of credits. Please see the Becoming B'nai Mitzvah section for more information about that. In general students earn one credit per term of Sunday morning cohort classes, one credit per term for JEWL classes, and one credit per Hebrew class. Students are required to attend 75% of cohort and JEWL classes to receive credit. JEWL and cohort credit is recorded at the end of the term and year respectively. Hebrew credits are determined based on proficiency; when students advance to the next level, they receive credit for the previous level. It is expected that most of the Hebrew classes will take more than one term to master.

There are no "excused" (or "unexcused") absences for any classes. We assume that whenever your child is absent, there must be a reasonable decision behind it. If your child hasn't been present enough to earn the regular amount of credit, you may work with the teacher and/or the religious school director to make-up the credit as needed.

Students can also earn credit for Jewish summer camp (one credit per each week), enrichment days at TBI (one credit for three enrichment days), and for independent study organized with approval by the religious school director and/or rabbi.

The Talmud Torah office will keep track of students' credits and will contact parents if there are concerns. You are welcome to request a record at any time.

Classroom Visitation: Parents/guardians who wish to visit their child's classroom are welcome. Visits should be arranged in advance with your child's teacher.

While we love it that some students want to share their Talmud Torah experience with friends, we generally discourage students from bringing friends to class as it creates additional challenges for the teacher. If there is an extraordinary reason for this to occur, please obtain permission from the teacher and the religious school director more than 48 hours ahead of time.

Family Volunteering: Starting in 2017-18, each Talmud Torah family has been expected to fulfill one primary volunteer role for the year. There are a lot of options featuring a wide range of time commitments and skill-sets. You will likely be asked to assist on other things throughout the year (and we hope you say yes), but this is your primary commitment. If each enrolled family takes one task, we will have many needs covered. You will have an opportunity to identify and confirm your task in the spring and summer of the preceding year.

2. Building & Behavior

Students are expected to demonstrate safe and respectful behavior in the building at all times and to alert the nearest staff member or responsible adult when they see something unsafe. **At general, TBI-wide events, as well as TT-sponsored events that include parents, parents are responsible for their own children's safety and behavior as outlined below.**

1. **Entering the building.** Students and parents are given a **door code** (- - - - #) for use during class hours (it doesn't work at other times). Please learn the code and use it rather than buzzing the office to request entrance as that puts a strain on very limited staff resources. The code is an important part of keeping our community safe. Additionally, please do not admit people that you don't know or feel comfortable admitting. If you do, please greet them and ask their names. Lastly, **do not prop doors** open.

2. Students are expected to **remain in supervised areas** when here for TT classes. More specifically, students:
    a. should be with a **supervising** staff member or responsible adult if outside between classes.
    b. should not be using the **entry hall bathrooms or other downstairs rooms** unless part of a class.
    c. are not allowed in **the courtyard** during TT hours without a supervising staff member or other responsible adult. The low height of the outer courtyard wall presents a dangerous drop to the parking lot below.
    d. Are not allowed on the preschool playground unless participating in a supervised activity with a staff member or parent. The playground is designed for children ages 2-5 and should be left in proper order and condition for the preschool's use.

3. **No running, horseplay, or climbing** is permitted in the building, unless part of a supervised activity, and especially not on the stairs or courtyard walls (no one should be on the courtyard walls for any reason).

4. **The elevator** is off limits to students without permission from the TT office.

5. Students should not bring **outside food or beverage** to class without special advanced permission (this would include medical reasons or bringing something to share for everyone as part of a class activity). Students should come to class fed and ready to learn. We serve plenty of communal snacks. Food in classrooms is a distraction from the learning environment as well as a challenge to keeping our school clean. Gum is problematic for the same reasons and should be avoided.

6. **Toys, phones, and electronics:** We want our classrooms to be focused on learning and community and so we discourage the presence and use of things which detract from this. To this end, students should not have phones, electronic devices, or toys in class unless being used as part of a teacher-led activity. Students are asked to keep such devices away and silent or put them in the class basket until the end of class. Toys, phones, or electronic devices that interrupt the learning environment will be confiscated and placed in the Talmud Torah office for pick-up by parents after class.

7. Some students (such as those with ADD, ADHD, autism and Asperger's) benefit from **fidget devices or strategies** by enabling them to pay greater attention to the teacher's intended lesson.

Talmud Torah staff will work with any student (regardless of diagnosis) who would benefit from a tool or strategy to help with focusing attention. Such a tool or strategy needs to:

a. Not distract others
b. Result in clear improvement in the student's ability to focus on the learning activity (rather than the tool).
c. Be approved by the staff. (Fidget spinners are not approved tools and are considered toys.)

3. Religious Observance

Religious services and sanctuary behavior:

- Be respectful of people's religious demeanor and needs in the synagogue and help create a space where people can daven (worship). This means that students (who are capable and old enough) are expected to avoid distracting behavior like excessive whispering, talking, and fidgeting.
- We do not put prayer books or other religious items on the floor.
- As an egalitarian synagogue, **ALL students are expected to wear a kippah/yarmulke (or other appropriate head-covering) in the sanctuary** and encouraged to do so at other times as well. Kippot are available for students to use or they can bring their own.

Shabbat and other Holy Days: Use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices is not permitted at TBI on Shabbat and other chagim (holy days); this includes the social hall and the rest of the synagogue in addition to the sanctuary. We need parental support in creating technology-free sacred time and space on these days.

Kashrut: In keeping with TBI's kosher policy, no meat or non-kosher fish (any fish without fins or scales), lard, gelatin, or other un-kosher animal product may be used in the synagogue or as part of a synagogue event. You can read a more detailed description of the food policy here: https://www.tbieugene.org/new-member-faqs.

4. Health & Safety

Food: Talmud Torah offers snacks to students on Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons, typically challah, bagels and cream cheese, and juice, and occasionally something special on holidays or other occasions. Students are served in class on Sundays and before and between classes on Wednesdays. If your child has special dietary needs, you are welcome to bring an alternative snack.

Peanut-Free Zone: We have life-threatening allergies among our student population. No foods with peanut ingredients may be served or present in the Talmud Torah area of the building or in conjunction with a Talmud Torah event unless the staff has made special arrangements to take all necessary precautions.

Pick-up: Please make sure that your student is picked up **on time** (no later than 5 minutes after class). If a parent/guardian anticipates being late for a student pick-up, the office should be notified and the student will be asked to wait in the office until he/she is picked up.

- **Kita Gan and Aleph (K and 1st grade):** Students will be released by their teachers to their parents/guardians unless a note has been received authorizing release to someone else.

- **Kita Bet (2nd grade) and older:** All students in Kita Bet (2nd grade) and above are responsible for knowing who will be picking them up from Talmud Torah and are released at the end of class to meet that person.

Parking Lot Safety: Keep our parking lot safe by following these rules:

- Consider parking and coming in, but not in the temporary spot next to the back door.
- Enter from E. 29th St. and exit on University St.
- Avoid idling your car.
- The students (2nd -7th) will wait at the TT side entrance or in the hallway next to it.

Illness: If your child is ill and/or has a fever, please do not send him/her to Talmud Torah. If your child feels sick while at school, we will call you to arrange a pick up and keep him/her in the office.

Inclement Weather Policy: Talmud Torah follows the 4J School District closure policy. If 4J closes, you may assume that we are also closed. If inclement weather arrives on the weekend, Talmud Torah will make every effort to announce the closure through email and the website. In any event, please do not attempt to get your family to TBI if you feel it is unsafe to do so!

5. Addressing Challenges

All our students have the right to a quality Jewish education. Therefore, students are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that promotes a positive learning environment and shows respect for themselves, others, and the temple environment.

Kavod (respect): This central Jewish concept is also an important quality for an effective school.

- **Self-respect** is gained through developing pride and confidence in one's work and personal relationships. Students are expected to pay attention, put forth their best effort, and to ask for help when needed.
- **Respect for others** includes treating peers, staff, and other with courtesy and kindness at all times, supporting the feelings and rights of others, respecting individual differences and ideas, and resolving differences and conflicts appropriately.
- **Respect for the school environment** includes keeping the temple facility tidy, taking good care of school property and equipment, and adhering to the customs pertinent to a synagogue.

All of us from time to time, fail to demonstrate the "kavod" we should. When this happens, our goal is to have parents, students, staff, and administration work together in partnership to address the problem. Whenever possible, challenges are handled in the context of the classroom by the teacher. However, a student who is unable to respond appropriately to the redirection by the teacher, and whose presence is detrimental to the learning of others, will be removed from the class for a short period of time. If a student is unable to re-engage with more positive behavior, the student's parents may be called and asked to take their child home.

If challenges with a child's behavior continues, the parents and child will be asked to meet with school director and/or teacher (and in certain situations, the rabbi) to discuss the situation and work towards a solution. In severe cases, such as chronic disruption of classes, actions which threaten the safety and well-being of others, or actions detrimental to the school property or morale, suspension or expulsion may be necessary.

Likewise, if students or parents have concerns about the learning environment, the first step is to communicate respectfully with the staff member responsible, assuming the best in each teacher as a starting place. If that is ineffective, please bring your concerns to the religious school director.

II. ENROLLMENT & TUITION

The registration process starts in early summer. Parents of returning students receive an electronic Student Information Sheet to review information on file with the school and are then invited to complete the online registration form for the following school year. **It is the parents' responsibility to make sure the school has accurate up-to-date information through this process.** Families also need to have renewed their synagogue membership to complete the Talmud Torah enrollment process (with the exception of non-members taking classes, see chart below).

For students taking JEWL or Hebrew classes, the fall, winter, and spring term class offerings and schedule will be communicated in September, December, and March respectively. Families should assume for scheduling purposes that their children will be taking classes as they are able during the following periods on Wednesday afternoons: 4:05-4:50 pm and 5-5:45 pm.

Tuition for 2019-20	Member	With sibling discount	Non-Member
Sunday Cohort Class Only	$515/year	$465/year	NA
Full Program: • Sunday morning cohort class • Hebrew classes • JEWL classes (as many as you choose)	$855/year	$770/year	NA
Individual JEWL or Hebrew class *(Hebrew classes meet twice a week, students who are only able to come once a week pay the same as students who come twice a week)*	$136/term	NA	$150/term

There is non-refundable $75 registration and materials fee, included in your tuition.

Starting part way through the year: Families who start mid-way through the year will pay a pro-rated amount rounding up to the number of terms participating in Talmud Torah. So a student who starts in mid-fall, pays the full year tuition, starting at the beginning of or during winter term would pay 2/3 tuition, and starting at the beginning of or during spring term would pay 1/3 tuition.

Tuition refunds are as follows:

- Prior to the first day of class, full tuition is refunded, less the $75 non-refundable registration and materials fee. At that time, we've hired teachers, bought supplies and established class sizes based on the numbers we expected.
- Prior to the first day of winter term, 50% of the tuition is refunded, less the $75 non-refundable registration and materials fee.
- There is no refund after the start of winter term. If you are being billed monthly, you will continue to be billed for the remainder of the year.

Families with students who have special needs or other special circumstances may discuss exceptions to this policy with the religious school director or the executive director.

III. BECOMING B'NAI MITZVAH

Most of our students choose to become b'nai mitzvah at TBI. Our goal is for our b'nai mitzvah students to be able to confidently declare "Hineini!" ("Here I am!") and understand and demonstrate what it means to them personally to be counted as a Jewish adult. During the Kita Vav and Zayin years (typically 6th and 7th grade), these students and their parents participate in the b'nai mitzvah preparation program. Parents are invited to a meeting in the spring of a student's Kita Hay (5th grade) year to learn more about the program and requirements. You'll receive a B'nai Mitzvah Program Family Handbook at that time. (You can view the whole handbook any time at www.tbieugene.org/education/bnai-mitzvah as well.) The following are the key policy matters regarding the b'nai mitzvah program:

To become b'nai mitzvah at TBI, students should:

- **be at least 13.** The ritual will not be held before the student turns 13 (either by the secular or Hebrew calendar). There is nothing wrong with postponing the date until the student is sufficiently ready, even if that is far past 13.
- **have earned a minimum of 36 credits from the following** (see information about credits in section I):
    - **Cohort classes**
    - **Hebrew classes**
    - **JEWL classes**
    - **Independent study arrangements** with the rabbi and/or religious school director, and/or **participation in other Jewish activities** (camp, Rosh Hodesh, enrichment days, Purim shpiel, etc.)
- **Take a minimum of 12 total credits in the two years before becoming b'nai mitzvah.** This means that even students who have acquired many credits in elementary school, are still expected to be actively engaged in Talmud Torah leading up to becoming b'nai mitzvah.
- Meet the **attendance/participation expectations for services and programs** as identified in the B'nai Mitzvah Program Family Handbook.

It is not possible to accrue the credits necessary to become b'nai mitzvah at TBI in fewer than three years. New students to Talmud Torah will not start in Kita Vav or Zayin, regardless of age (unless they have participated in religious school elsewhere).

Families may request dates for b'nai mitzvah services in the summer prior to Kita Vav (6th grade). Students are assigned dates for their b'nai mitzvah services by that late summer/early fall after meeting with the religious school director and submitting the necessary paperwork. We do not accept requests or assign dates before that time. More information about this process is available in the B'nai Mitzvah Program Family Handbook.

The Talmud Torah office tracks student progress and communicates this to parents three times a year during Kita Vav and Zayin. Students who are not making appropriate progress and/or showing committed participation will likely be asked to postpone b'nai mitzvah dates.

We believe in the importance of a Jewish education for all children. Students who are not going to participate in the b'nai mitzvah life cycle process (or are not going to go through it at TBI) are still encouraged and invited to continue taking Talmud Torah classes for the sake of learning in general.