

PARENT HANDBOOK



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www.shermanecc.org

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Dear Parents,

I am filled with excitement to welcome our new and returning students to the Sherman Early Childhood Center at Har Shalom. We are pleased that you have chosen our school and we look forward to a year filled with stimulating, creative, and fun learning experiences. The teachers, support staff and myself are dedicated to providing and maintaining a safe and secure environment filled with love of learning for each child.

At the Sherman ECC we nurture our children through developmentally appropriate activities and experiences. In our program, we work on the social, emotional, physical, Jewish development and cognitive skills of each child. We understand that children flourish in a rich environment that provides opportunities for daily self-discovery and hands-on learning and exploration. Our teachers differentiate the learning to meet the needs of all children.

I look forward to a wonderful year together! Please feel free to call, email or stop by with any questions, feedback or thoughts. We are partners in the success of your child!

L'shalom,

Beth Hoch

Director of Early Childhood Education

Where to Turn For Help or Answers

DIRECTOR

Beth Hoch
301-299-7087 Ext. 235
bhoch@harshalom.org

Curriculum and Support Services / Camp Director

Mekenzie Kruger
301-299-7087 Ext. 244
mkruger@harshalom.org

To leave a message for teachers, report an illness, change a pick-up person or time or have any questions, please email Beth, bhoch@harshalom.org or Mekenzie, mkruger@harshalom.org or text using the remind.com app, which goes to Beth.

STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Rachel Wojnilower, woj.rachel@gmail.com

ROOM PARENT CHAIR

TBD



SYNAGOGUE INFORMATION

Main Office Phone Number
Rabbi Adam Raskin
Hazzan Henrique Ozur Bass
Michael Baron, President
Aimee Segal, VP Education

301-299-7087
301-299-7087 Ext. 223
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president@harshalom.org
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In case of Emergency call 301 299-7087 ext. 235. If no one answers, call Ext. 0

Calendar

A current school calendar can be found on the ECC website www.shermanecc.org

Hours of Operation: 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

Parents are encouraged to be on time for arrival and dismissal (please see Perpetual Parent Lateness Policy). Children are only dismissed from school into the care of their parents or other authorized person. Make sure that your child's emergency card includes the names of all authorized persons.

Introduction

Congregation Har Shalom Mission Statement

Congregation Har Shalom is an inclusive, multi-generational Conservative synagogue community. We inspire the lifelong Jewish journeys of individuals and families by promoting active participation in Jewish life and learning, spirited prayer, community service, and support for the State of Israel and the Jewish people everywhere.

History

The Sherman Early Childhood Center at Har Shalom (ECC) began in September 1971 as Har Shalom Nursery School, several months after the synagogue building was opened. The Congregation had planned for the incorporation of the ECEC into its master plan; therefore, the classrooms were designed specifically for young children. The Har Shalom ECEC continues to be one of the prides of Congregation Har Shalom.

Philosophy

At Sherman Early Childhood Center at Har Shalom (ECC), we believe that each child is a capable and unique individual. Our program provides learning and positive social interaction opportunities for all children through a quality, inclusive and developmentally appropriate program. Our school strives to meet the individual needs of each and every child and encourages them to explore, investigate and study their environment through meaningful, authentic and relevant, hands-on experiences.

Through an array of developmentally appropriate approaches, children develop cognitive, language, social-emotional and physical skills. In addition, our children develop spirituality and an intense feeling of pride in their Jewish heritage, as they observe and participate in Jewish customs, rituals, and holiday observances. As early childhood professionals, our aim is to give each child the opportunity to learn, develop and play to their fullest potential.

Educational Goals

To Help All Children -

- Realize opportunities to strive and succeed in the areas of physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual growth
- Begin fundamental understanding and appreciation for Jewish holidays, customs, rituals and values, and Israel by fostering a strong Jewish identity
- Learn to work and play independently, feel secure being away from home and be able to accept help and direction from adults
- Develop social competence by learning to live effectively with other children and to value one's own rights and the rights of others
- Develop a positive self-image and a view of themselves as individuals who have worth and competence
- Be curious - that is to wonder, to question, to seek answers to questions, and learn problem-solving techniques
- Grow in the ability to express inner, creative impulses in all areas
- Grow in the ability to channel inner, aggressive impulses - to turn aggression into hard work, to express their feelings, to talk, to understand the difference between feeling angry and acting angry and to begin to feel empathy for the needs of others

To Help All Parents –

- Develop a positive attitude toward their child's first school experience
- Allow parents the opportunity to create a partnership with the Sherman ECC by becoming involved in the school's Parent Association and their child's total school experience
- To be partners in their child's Jewish education

Early Childhood Curriculum: An Overview

Literacy

Reading to the children introduces them to the world of literature and instills a love of reading. They have opportunities as well to create their own stories and messages through dramatic play, and invented writing.

Social Competence

We help children learn to cooperate within a group, to problem solve work collaboratively, and to accept guidance from their teachers. We build self-esteem by providing tasks at which they can succeed, and we help them to be accepted by their peers and feel part of a group.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics)

Children are innately curious and learn best by doing. We follow their interests, expanding upon them, and provide, as many relevant first-hand experiences are possible.

Mathematical Concepts

The children are offered activities which teach the concepts of number (more, less and equivalents), size (larger, smaller), patterns, graphing, weight, volume, seriation, rote counting, enumeration, addition, subtraction and fractions. Through varied experiences, such as cooking, block play, and the sensory table, the children learn mathematical concepts experientially.

Physical Development

The children play outdoors almost every day. Our playground equipment affords our children to utilize both physical and social skills. Large muscle coordination is developed through running, jumping, balancing, and climbing activities available. When weather conditions do not permit us to go outside, we are able to use the Social Hall at Har Shalom. Special indoor equipment and riding toys are available for the children to use and there is ample space for them to run. Children develop small muscle coordination through a variety of activities including small manipulative toys and art activities.

Jewish Life

We provide our children with a strong Jewish identity and link to our community. Through prayers and *brachot* (blessings), pre-Shabbat and holiday activities, Biblical stories, Hebrew, and activities connected to Israel, we teach our children to identify with Jews around the world, and to enjoy the life experience of being Jewish.

Ta'am shel Shabbat (A Taste of Shabbat)

Friday is a special day in all our classes as we celebrate Ta'am Shel Shabbat in our classrooms. Grape juice and challah are served for this festive occasion. There is an opportunity to be a Shabbat parent that day and read a story or share a fun activity with your child's class via Zoom. Every week we have an all school Shabbat Sing led by Hazzan Ozur Bass. In addition, the Hazzan and Rabbi meet with the children via Zoom for Shabbat and/or special programs.

Tzedakah and Mitzvot

We incorporate the values of helping others, giving charity, and feeling compassion into our everyday classroom life. Children are encouraged to accomplish special deeds at home and bring small change for tzedakah which we acknowledge in class. Each week when Shabbat is observed in the classroom, tzedakah coins will be collected and given to a designated charity. In addition, there may be times during the year linked to our curriculum when we have specific activities such as collecting food, clothing, books or toys. We also emphasize Jewish values such as Hachnasat Orhim (extending hospitality) and Gemilut Hasadim (doing good deeds for others).

Music

Music is part of our daily program. The children experience the joy of making music together, listening to and creating songs and rhythms, and responding to music through movement. Our music teacher, Ms. Ellie, will join the children once a week via Zoom.

Art

Developmentally appropriate, open-ended art activities are provided for the children daily. Art activities are specifically designed to introduce a variety of media to the student and are coordinated with our areas of study. We encourage process, not product.

Pets

Pets, approved by the director, may live in the classroom to encourage respect and empathy towards animals and nature. The children learn the commitment required to maintain a healthy pet, interaction, safe handling, and care.

Holiday Celebrations

The cycle of the year offers many opportunities for our holiday celebrations. Traditionally, these special times include Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Purim, Passover, Yom Ha'Atzmaut and Shabbat. We will be exploring ways to include parents in these celebrations. We do not observe Halloween, St. Valentine's Day, or St. Patrick's Day.

Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated in special ways in each classroom, including birthday crowns, books created by the class, and other birthday rituals. Parents may, if they wish, provide peanut-free kosher snack for the special day. Treats should have a kosher symbol and be in their original packaging. Fresh fruit, popsicles, and ice cream and welcome too.

Here are some good suggestions:

- Entenmann's donut holes or brownie/muffin bites
- Krispy Kreme donut holes (Shady Grove location)
- Giant Grocery mini-cupcakes IF labelled kosher and nut-free.

Please ensure that all treats are identical for each child and make sure to be aware of any specific allergies in the class. **Balloons, toys, peanuts or candy are not to be sent as treats for the children.** Please do not send foods prepared at home. Please check with your child's teacher regarding birthday celebrations, as each class has its own unique procedure. Treats will be served one time during the day.

Parent Participation and Involvement

An effort has always been made at the Sherman Early Childhood Center to involve parents in their child's first school experience. The Parent Association coordinates volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Several parent education programs are planned for the school year. A questionnaire regarding topics of interest to the parents is sent as part of the ECC annual survey. The responses received help with the decision of topics for the following year.

Parents are encouraged to offer constructive comments at any time to our Director, Beth Hoch, at 301- 299-7087, Ext. 235.

Room Parents

Each class has two room parents. Room parents are responsible for the following:

- To make phone calls and emails to other class parents on school business
- To assist teachers when needed or secure volunteers for the class
- To encourage other class parents to become involved in the school
- It is suggested that at least one room parent participate in monthly Parent Association meeting via Zoom. If neither room parent can attend a committee meeting, the room parents should try to find a representative from their class to attend the meeting.
- For obtaining volunteers for ECC programs and events.

Parent Association

The Sherman ECC Parent Association is comprised of parents that meet about every 6 weeks along with the Director. The PA discusses issues concerning the wellbeing of our children and the school. They review the status of activity and fundraising planning, as well as new ideas for future events. It's a wonderful way to become active in your child's education and a fun way to get to know the educators and other parents! All parents are invited and encouraged to attend the meetings. Parents need not be Har Shalom members in order to attend and volunteer.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is comprised of Har Shalom members who oversee the early childhood education program at Har Shalom. This committee acts as an advisory board to the Early Childhood Director and liaison between the congregation board and the ECC.

If you have a concern, we suggest that you speak to your child's teacher. If you are not satisfied or comfortable with this, we suggest speaking with the Early Childhood Director. If that is not satisfactory, you may contact the Steering Committee Chairperson.

Parent Conferences

Each family has two individual conferences during the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact the teachers by phone or email at any time during the year if they have a question or concern regarding their child. Conferences may be scheduled at any time during the year when a teacher or parent has concerns. Progress reports will be issued at Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Our professional ethic requires that each employee maintain the highest confidentiality concerning individual children, their families, and the school's business. To maintain this professional confidence, no employee will disclose parent information to outsiders, including other parents or third parties.

Shabbat

Ta'am Shel Shabbat (a Taste of Shabbat) Sing

Every Friday morning each classroom joins together with Hazzan Ozur Bass for a lovely Shabbat sing-along via Zoom.

Ta'am Shel Shabbat Visitors

An opportunity is provided for each family to participate as the Shabbat family of the week during the year. Parents and siblings, as well as grandparents and visiting relatives are encouraged to participate in this facet of our program. The parents assist with the program for the class by reading a story, aiding in reciting the blessings for wine, candles and challah and helping to enrich the meaning of Shabbat to the children.

Parent Association

The Parent Association sponsors a Friday evening Shabbat dinner for the entire ECC community, as well as a Saturday evening Pajama Havdalah program.

Policies

Admission Policy

The Sherman ECC accepts students of all races, religions, national origins, or sexual orientations. A child must be 16 months of age before entering our regular preschool programs.

Inclusion and Special Needs Policy

We have a Support Services Specialist and accept children with a full range of abilities and special health care needs. We work in partnership with families to find innovative solutions to best meet the individual needs of each child.

Allowance is made for modification in schedule, program, materials and expectations to meet individual needs. Where necessary, the school or parents in collaboration may provide additional support, such as a

facilitator in the classroom, at the parent's expense. The families must also be responsible for outside consultations, evaluations and professional services.

For children who are attending another program prior to enrollment in the Sherman ECC, we may request parent permission to conduct an observation in the other setting to see how we can best meet the child's needs.

We will serve as a resource and support to families on referral to Child Find, Child Link, private therapy, and other services available in the community.

Any relevant information that can be provided to us, including, but not limited to consultations, evaluations and reports written by other professionals, IFSP's (Individual Family Service Plan) and IEP's (Individual Education Plan) and school reports must be shared for collaboration to be successful. This information will be held in strictest confidence.

Being an inclusive community is something we truly value and we will do our best to meet the needs of all students.

Class Size and Ratios

We maintain an age-appropriate student to teacher ratio.

	Maximum # of Children	Staff/Child Ratios
Toddler class	9	1:3
2 Year Old classes	10	1: 6
3 Year Old classes	10	1: 7
4 Year Old classes	14	1: 7

Licensing and Staffing

The Sherman Early Childhood Center meets the requirements of Jewish Life and Learning of the Federation of Greater Washington and of a non-public early childhood school established by the Maryland State Department of Education and Montgomery County. Both certificates are on display in the Director's office. The MSDE COMAR regulations can be found on the MSDE website.

Communication

- A school roster will be provided to parents. This roster is for use within the community only. It cannot be used for solicitation outside of school functions.
- The school newsletter will be emailed weekly.
- Teachers will send class updates daily through our communication App.
- Check your child's bag and read the daily updates in our communication App to keep current on all announcements and events.

Confidentiality

Please know that all child and family information is kept confidential here at the school and only shared with the parents of the child, appropriate Har Shalom employees, the Maryland Department of Health and emergency response personnel. If custody is an issue, we must have a notarized court order or separation agreement on file outlining the custody arrangement.

Discipline Policy

Har Shalom is dedicated to providing the best in early childhood education for young children. Our policy is to ensure a safe and secure environment for each child. Positive, age-appropriate discipline techniques are incorporated into our program. Cooperation between parents and our educators is vital in guiding the social and emotional development of our children. Through positive guidance, children learn that certain types of behavior are not acceptable. To minimize the need for disciplinary action, a few simple, understandable rules and expectations are established. These rules set the limits of behavior for the safety and protection of the children. Adults are supportive and consistent in their approach. Our goal is to teach appropriate forms of behavior, not to punish the child for his/her inappropriate behavior. To accomplish these goals we use the following techniques on a daily basis:

- Prevention – The right combination of materials and equipment, time and space and a healthy emotional climate works wonders in creating an environment that keeps conflict at a minimum and is conducive to a child’s positive development.
- Positive Redirection – When applicable, our teachers redirect unacceptable behavior to a positive alternative.
- Modeling – Teacher-modeled appropriate behavior and communication are provided to help children learn responsibility for their actions.
- Limit Setting – We have a few clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children. The teachers explain to children what they can do in a caring, positive tone and encourage the child’s efforts when he/she complies.
- Problem Solving – We appeal to the preschooler’s growing intellectual and moral reasoning by using natural and logical consequences and asking questions to encourage problem-solving. Teachers help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives and choices. We provide cues and give children “scripts” to use when necessary.
- Managing Behavior – When a child has a physical or emotional outburst, we provide comfort and privacy. This allows the child to regain composure and insures the safety of other children and staff. We may briefly separate the child from the group to allow him/her a “cool-down time” – a time to calm down and relax so that he/she can quickly return to the group. Cool-down time is not punishment. It is just what it sounds like: a quiet, relaxed, neutral break; a cooling-off period for the child to regain self-control. With help from a caring teacher, the child is encouraged to return to the group as soon as the child indicates he/she is ready to participate.

If undesirable behavior continues, it may be necessary to communicate with parents to discuss joint methods of addressing this problem. If a behavior problem becomes severe, or potentially dangerous, parents may be required to remove the child from school until a plan of action can be decided on, or an alternative placement can be made.

Biting

Biting is a common behavior among young children. Children who bite usually do so out of frustration. They may be responding to another child's aggression or to defend his/her possessions. Usually children who bite have not developed the language skills necessary to express themselves. In most cases, once the child is able to use words effectively, the biting behavior ceases. The educators at Har Shalom handle a problem of biting as follows:

- Comfort the injured child and care for his/her needs immediately. If possible, involve the biter in comforting.
- The wound is washed immediately with soap and water. Ice is applied if necessary.
- The teacher discusses the incident with both children.
- If biting should occur again, the biter is removed from the room by a teacher to discuss and cool down.
- An incident report is completed and sent home with both the injured child and the biter and if the skin has been broken, both parents are notified.
- We recommend parents of the injured child consult with their child's pediatrician, especially if the skin is broken.
- If biting is a recurrent problem, consultation between the biter's parents and teachers will be held to recommend strategies to implement, to prevent the behavior from continuing.

Termination of Enrollment

The school reserves the right to terminate your child's enrollment if it is judged that your child is a danger to himself/herself or others; or if the program is unable to meet the specific needs of a child.

Perpetual Parent Lateness Procedure

The ECC Director will provide the parents with a written warning if the child is picked up late twice. After such warning, parents will be charged for late pick up. After 5:30pm, parents will be billed for each additional minute the child stays at school. Please respect the valuable time of our educators. If a parent, in the opinion of the ECC director, abuses the late policy, the family may be asked to leave the school.

Screen Time Policy

Screens are only to be used infrequently, for educational purposes and only when directly related to help facilitate learning experiences, for limited amounts of time (up to 15 minutes), for children 2-5.

Tuition Policies

Activity Fee

An activity fee is included in tuition for all students. The activity fee covers supplies, hearing and vision screening for three and four year olds, special events, and family programs.

Billing and Payments

The school bills are computerized along with those of the Congregation. For those children whose parents are members, the school billing will be added to the regular bill. Parents are responsible for the full tuition regardless of withdrawals. Tuition and deposits are nonrefundable. NO REFUNDS OR MAKE-UP DAYS WILL BE ISSUED due to inclement weather closings.

If you have any tuition or billing problems, please contact the synagogue office.

Credit Card Authorization Requirement

All ECC families are required to submit an authorization for credit card billing. This credit card will be billed ONLY in the event that your monthly bill is not paid by the end of the month.

Sibling Discount

If a family has more than one child attending the ECC, a 10% discount will be applied to the tuition of all additional children.

Health

Immunizations and Health Inventory:

All children must have their health inventory forms completed by both parents and physician prior to their admittance into the Sherman ECC at Har Shalom. Effective August 1, 2015, Congregation Har Shalom requires that children participating in our Early Childhood Center (ECC), Religious School be up to date on immunizations recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding immunization against childhood diseases, as listed on the Maryland State Health Inventory.

Background:

Congregation Har Shalom of Potomac, Maryland, expresses its full support for the evidence-based recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding immunization against childhood diseases, including measles. The scientific evidence clearly supports the benefit of these childhood immunizations.

Har Shalom believes that we have a duty to provide a safe environment for our congregants, particularly our children, as well as to protect the public health. Please refer to our Health and Safety Guidelines. We also perceive a duty to advocate based on accurate scientific data. Parent autonomy is not absolute when it has

the potential to compromise both individual and public health. Thus, we establish this policy to embrace the sound preventive medicine practice of recommended childhood immunizations.

State Law (Maryland):

The state of Maryland permits families to exempt their children from recommended immunizations based on “bona fide religious beliefs”, but does not permit “philosophical” or “personal” exemptions. Similarly, the state of Maryland permits institutions to require recommended immunizations for participation in the events sponsored by those institutions.

Exemption:

*Children whose immunizations are not up to date, but who are actively engaged in “catching up” with the recommended immunization schedule, as documented by a physician (MD or DO) who is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics or the American Board of Family Medicine, may be considered for inclusion in an educational program of Har Shalom, if in that physician’s opinion the child’s “catch-up” immunization status results in that child being unlikely to be at risk for contracting or communicating a contagious illness that is prevented by recommended immunization.

Children for whom immunization is medically contraindicated may be exempt from this requirement if their medical contraindication is documented by a physician (MD or DO) who is board certified by a certifying board which is a member of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

Conservative Jewish Halakhah (law)

In addition, this decision comes both from the best practices of today’s medical community, as well as the Talmudic admonition to practice pikuach nefesh, to value human life and well-being above all else. As Maimonides writes: “One must avoid those things which have a deleterious effect on the body, and accustom oneself to things which heal and fortify it.” (Rambam, Hilkhhot Deot 4:1)

HM 427:8.2005, Compulsory Immunization in Jewish Day Schools, Rabbi Joseph H. Prouser:

Timely administration of vaccines with a proven record of effectiveness and safety is “a basic and necessary requirement for appropriate pediatric care.” Unless medically contraindicated for specific children, in extraordinary and compelling cases, parents have an unambiguous religious obligation to have their children immunized against infectious disease. By effectively removing their children as potential sources of contagion, and simultaneously contributing to “herd immunity,” parents fulfill a related religious obligation to remove hazardous conditions which imperil the public’s health and safety. Failure to immunize children against vaccine-preventable disease is a serious, compound violation of Jewish Law: there is no basis in Halakhah to support a parent’s request for a religious exemption from state-mandated immunizations.

דעת אביו ואמו לא מעלה ולא מבריד... ולא מצינו בכל התורה כולה שיש לאב ואם רשות לסכן נפש ילדיהם ולמנוע הרפא מלרפאתם.

“The opinion of the father and mother has no effect one way or the other... We do not find anywhere at all in the Torah that parents have a right to endanger the lives of their children by preventing the doctor from treating them.” [Melamed L’ho’il 2:104]

Furthermore, the obligation to remove hazardous conditions which place the public in mortal peril is also incumbent on Jewish educators, as well as on the administrators and trustees of Jewish Day Schools, such as those under the aegis of the Solomon Schechter Day School Association. Local schools fulfill this religious duty in part by requiring that children be immunized against infectious disease, and by shielding their students from those who are not. Unless a specific immunization is medically contraindicated, and so documented by a reliable physician, unvaccinated children -- even those who, in violation of Jewish Law, have secured a religious or philosophical exemption from the state -- are properly denied admission to Jewish Day Schools.”

Allergies

All parents must provide to the school information on any allergies their child may be experiencing. We are a nut-free school. All snacks and foods served to children are peanut and tree nut-free. Allergies must be documented by the child’s physician and procedures that need to be followed must be discussed with the Director and the child’s teachers. Parents must provide an allergy action plan and sign off on all snacks for those with food allergies. If prescribed, 2 Epi-pens are to be provided by the parent with a Medication Authorization form. One Epi-pen will be kept in the Director’s office and one will be kept in the child’s classroom.

Illness

If you have any doubts about your child’s state of health in the morning of a school day, please keep your child at home. We are all exposed by coming in contact with a sick child and a sick child feels more comfortable in his/her own home. (*All families must fill out the Health Questionnaire before arriving to morning curbside drop off.?)

The following are reasons for you to keep your child home:

- COVID-19 symptoms (see Health and Safety Guidelines for Covid on our website)*
- Has a fever or had one during the previous 24-hour period.
- Has colored nasal drainage or a constant cough.
- Has crust on the eyes or mucus discharge from the eyes.
- Has undiagnosed rash.
- Is fussy, cranky, or generally not himself/herself.
- Diarrhea (more than one loose stool or increased number of stools).

- Vomiting (one or more times)
- Has symptom of possible communicable disease. These are usually sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headaches and/or abdominal pain accompanied by fever.
- Respiratory distress (asthma that may severely restrict the child's activities, severe cold, chest congestion).

A child who has been prescribed an antibiotic for treatment of an illness should not return to school until at least 24 hours after the first dose of medication has been given.

A child must be fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT medication before returning to school.

A child must be vomit-free and/or diarrhea-free for 24 hours BEFORE returning to school.

Teachers have the responsibility to notify parents or emergency contact, if a child appears sick so that someone can pick up the child as soon as possible. This is to prevent the spread of illness and for the health of the child. In the case where a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact on the emergency form will be called to pick up the ill child. Please help us maintain a healthy, safe environment for your child and others by complying with this policy.

If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease or becomes ill with a communicable disease, it is imperative that you inform the school office as soon as possible. Examples of communicable diseases include: chicken pox, conjunctivitis, impetigo, fifth disease, and streptococcal pharyngitis. When warranted, a letter will be distributed to other families of children in the class informing them of the situation.

Please inform your child's teacher if he or she is on medication of any kind. See policy below for any prescription/non-prescription medication to be administered during school hours.

Whenever a child is absent for more than a week of school, a physician's note is required when the child returns. The school will make all accommodations that we can, to meet your child's health needs.

Medication, Diaper Cream, and Sunscreen

In order to administer over-the-counter or prescription medication to your child while in school, a Medication Authorization form must be completed and signed by the parent and by your child's pediatrician. Without written authorization from your child's physician, we will be unable to dispense any medication. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medication. All medications other than Epi-pens will be kept in the locked medication box in the ECC office.

The Office of Childcare allows diaper-creams, sunscreen, and insect repellent to be administered without physician authorization. A lotion/sunscreen/repellent authorization form must be on file to allow the teachers to apply these products.

Toilet Learning

The Sherman ECC accepts children who are still wearing diapers. We recognize that the toilet learning process may be challenging for both children and parents. When to begin helping a child learn to use the toilet should be a decision made largely by parents and based on signs of readiness from the child. Beginning too early often leads to frustration and power struggles between the child and adults. The importance of individualizing the age at which children learn to use the toilet cannot be overstated. We do not recommend that children be taken out of diapers before they exhibit signs of readiness. They must be able to control both their urine and bowel movements and be ready both physically and emotionally. Every child develops at his/her own pace. If you are helping your child at home with this developmental task, please let us know so we can assist your child while in school.

The school recognizes that occasionally children have “accidents.” Children will be treated positively and encouraged to participate in cleaning themselves. Parents will be informed of any accidents. Please keep several labelled changes of clothes at school (including an extra set of shoes). Parents or their emergency contact may be asked to pick up the child at the director’s discretion, as repeated accidents or loose stools may indicate the child has an illness.

Vision & Hearing and Speech & Language Screenings

The Sherman Early Childhood Center at Har Shalom feels that early detection of vision and hearing problems is of vital importance. As a result, all three and four year olds enrolled in the school are given both a vision screening test and a hearing screening. The cost is included in tuition. Parents will be notified of the results of these screenings.

A list of recommended licensed speech and language therapists can be provided upon the recommendation of the teacher or request of the family. These screenings often occur at the ECC at no charge. Recommendations for further testing will be made, when appropriate.

Head Lice

It is important that you let us know if your child has head lice. Head lice occur commonly among children. Having head lice is not a reflection on a child’s hygiene, living conditions or cleanliness. Any child identified with head lice will be sent home from school immediately and will not be readmitted until treated and nit-free. Your pediatrician is your best guide. According to Montgomery County Health Department guidelines, one treatment may not be sufficient to kill all the eggs.

Child Abuse Reporting

The ECC educators are required by law to report all suspected incidents of physical or emotional child abuse to the proper authorities.

Safety and Security

Parking

We make every effort to provide easy and safe access to the parking lot at Har Shalom. Please observe the following policies:

- There is no parking in front of the building, along the curb of the school. “NO PARKING” signs are posted conspicuously at the curbing. Montgomery County Police have been directed to ticket any illegally parked cars in the restricted fire lanes.
- Note that the lane is a one way road.
- Drive slowly while in the parking lot.
- There are reserved spaces for the handicapped. These spaces are for those cars with handicap plates or special handicap permits. Please honor this access for those with this special designation.
- Refrain from using cell phones while driving in the parking lot.

Drop Off Procedure

Please screen your child at home to make sure that are healthy to attend school. Slowly pull into the carpool line and wait for the teacher to bring your child in.

Pick Up Procedure

Teachers will dismiss children individually to authorized adults. If someone other than a parent or authorized person is picking up your child, a written notification should be given to the teacher. The non-parental person picking up the child must provide a picture ID when they pick up the child, if the school is unfamiliar with that person.

Parental Custody & Family Difficulties

If you have sole custody of your child and the other parent or their family members are not authorized to pick up your child, you must inform the school of this information and share the relevant documents such as a certified copy of the court order or separation agreement awarding custody solely to you or denying custody to the other parent or family member. If you are experiencing custody difficulties, we strongly urge you to keep school educators advised of circumstances that might affect the school. In addition, please make your child’s teacher aware of any changes that might affect his/her behavior at school.

Intoxicated Driver

If, in the opinion of the senior staff member present at the school, a parent or authorized person arriving to transport a child home appears to be in an intoxicated or drugged condition, the staff member will:

- Notify the other parent or guardian of the situation.
- Ask the person to leave their car at the school and take the child using another means of transportation.
- Offer to call a relative, friend, or taxi (at parent's expense) to drive person and child home.

Building Access for ECC families will not be permitted at this time. Please refer to our Health and Safety Guidelines.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency where evacuation is necessary, we will meet at the fire station across from Har Shalom parking lot. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child. Parents will be notified of all other accidents and incidents by phone, email or through our communication APP. A full copy of the ECC Emergency Preparedness plan is available in the ECC office.

Food Policies

Snacks

Each class will have a dairy or vegetarian kosher snack. There will be two items offered daily. All snacks are peanut and tree nut free. The school provides milk and fresh fruit daily.

Lunch

Eating lunch together is a vital part of our program. It provides a chance for children to eat together in a relaxed social setting. Each child should bring in a dairy/vegetarian, nut-free lunch. Lunch time is from 12:00-12:30 p.m. The Parent Association sponsors optional hot lunch a few days a week.

PLEASE SEND:

- A dairy or vegetarian lunch
- Fresh fruit
- Healthy food
- Lunch containers that a child can open on his or her own
- Lunches will be refrigerated.






Please refrain from sending:

- Meat, chicken, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, nut products (such as peanut butter).

- Candy, gum or sweets
- Large portions
- “Lunchable” type meals that include meat of any kind
- Hard candy, nuts, whole grapes & balloons because they are choking hazards.
- Food that needs to be warmed as we do not have facilities for heating food safely. We suggest sending warm foods in an insulated thermos container.

Please remember that lunchtime should be a positive experience for your child. The educators encourage, but do not demand, that your child eat the “healthy” food first. Therefore, if you send in sugary snacks, you are giving permission to your child to eat it. A list of dairy lunch ideas is available in the ECC office.

Kashrut (Jewish Dietary Laws)

Due to strict observance of Kashrut regulations, no home baked items may be brought and served for class consumption. Baked items from accepted stores will be permitted (please see Birthday Policy). Canned or packaged food must be clearly marked with a kosher symbol such as: , , , . Plain “K” and  are not reliable hechshers (kosher symbols) and are therefore not allowed. Please ask at the school when in doubt.

Baked goods purchased from Moti’s Market, Max’s, Shalom’s, Siena’s, Goldberg’s, and Krispy Kreme in Falls Grove are Kosher. Prepackaged goods, such as Entenmanns, Sunshine and some Pepperidge Farm are also usually kosher. This is not an exhaustive list. Feel free to check with the Director for other kosher labels.

Peanut and Tree Nut Free Policy

The ECC and Religious Schools have an increasing number of children with peanut allergies, some of which are life threatening. In order to ensure the safety of our children, the Synagogue has declared a peanut and tree nut free policy. This will mean that the entire Early Childhood Center and Religious School wings are **PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE ZONES**. We are asking for your cooperation in this matter. Please do not send in any lunch or snack food that contains or may contain peanut or tree nut products. Such foods are not allowed in the ECC or Religious School wings.

Any foods that have an allergen warning on their label, such as "may contain traces of peanuts" on the package will not be served to the children. Challah for Shabbat is provided by the school. For birthdays and special occasions, parents of the child with allergies will provide an allergy-safe snack to keep on hand in school.

The peanut allergic child's parent will sign off on all food to be given to their child and will keep a box of food for his/her child in the classroom for use as needed.

This policy has been put in place to ensure the safety of our children. Although it may be an inconvenience for some, it may save the life of an allergic child. We appreciate your diligent cooperation in this matter.

LABELS MUST BE CHECKED EACH AND EVERY TIME TO BE SURE THE MANUFACTURER HAS NOT CHANGED INGREDIENTS. Please note it is impossible to create a list of “safe” snacks as manufacturers can change ingredients at any time. Labels must be checked EVERY time.

Weather Policies

Snow and Inclement Weather Closings

1. In the case of an emergency weather event, the ECC will make an independent decision that we feel is best for our school community.
2. If any teacher feels that it is unsafe to drive, he or she may take unscheduled leave.

Kindly check your email, the Remini APP, or you will get reminders on Remind.com regarding our plans for the day. If there is to be an early dismissal, this announcement will be made as early as possible. We try and give at least a two hour window of time.

NO REFUNDS OR MAKE-UP DAYS WILL BE ISSUED DUE TO WEATHER-RELATED CLOSINGS.

IF YOU FEEL THAT THE WEATHER IS UNSAFE FOR DRIVING, PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME. REMEMBER TO WEAR SEAT BELTS AT ALL TIMES!!

Heat

We want to do everything possible to keep your children cool, comfortable and safe during the warmer months. As you know, we provide a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. We encourage you to apply sunscreen, dress your children in light colored, loose-fitting, light weight clothing and send a reusable water-bottle labeled with his or her name. When children are outside, we provide shade, plenty of water, and keep the children outside for a limited time. We also encourage children to wear hats in the summer.

- When the heat index is between 90 and 97, and/or there is an orange air-quality alert issued by the county, we will limit outdoor play to early morning (before 11 am) or afternoon water play only and will have an indoor, gross-motor play room available.
- When the heat index is 98 degrees or higher, and/or there is a red-air quality alert, children will be kept inside, with a gross-motor playroom set up in one of our social halls.

Other Outdoor Policies

We value children's opportunity to be in nature, regardless of the weather. In a light rain, or in lower wind-chills, the children may go outside for a limited time. We encourage you to send rain and snow gear as appropriate. There is no bad weather, only bad clothing!

Appropriate Clothing

Closed shoes with rubber soles must be worn. Crocs, clogs, sandals, open-back and smooth-soled shoes and boots inhibit a child's play and are a safety hazard on the playground and in the playroom.

Play clothes are appropriate attire for school. Jeans, t-shirts and inexpensive clothing are suggested so that all children may engage in the total educational program of the school. The child should feel free to move and not be concerned about harming clothing with paint, clay, sand, water and dirt. While we offer smocks, art materials often attach themselves to children in their exuberance to participate. Certain pigments are difficult to remove from clothes, so new or good clothes are not advisable. Thrift stores, clothing swaps, and hand-me-downs are good sources of clothing for school.

When purchasing new clothing, please remember that snaps, zippers and buttons should be easily managed by the child. This will add to his or her growing sense of independence and responsibility.

All clothing, especially coats, sweaters, hats, boots and mittens should be clearly marked with the child's name.

As stated in our outdoor policies, we will go outside in light rain, snow, and muddy conditions. Please send appropriate rain and snow gear.

Community Clothing For Emergencies

Extra clothing items are kept at the school to provide for emergency situations when there is not a change of clothes for a child. Soiled items are sent home and the community clothing items are to be laundered and returned to the school as soon as possible. If you have underpants, pants, tee shirts, shoes and socks that are in the 2T - 6 size ranges and you would like to donate them to the community reserve, we would be very grateful.

ECC PARENT HANDBOOK SIGN-OFF

Student name(s): [Click here to enter text.](#)

I, (please print your name) [Click here to enter text.](#) have read and understand the policies within the ECC Parent Handbook. This completed form serves as an acknowledgement of policy and a digital signature.

Parent Signature

Date

Please complete this document as soon as possible, re-save as *(Your Child's Name) Parent Handbook Sign Off*, and return via email to bhoch@harshalom.org. If necessary, you may print and return the completed form and return it to Beth at carpool.