



The Jewish Academy of Wake County

*teaching the mind...touching the heart...creating our future*

July 27, 2011

25 Tammuz, 5771

Dear Jewish Academy Families,

Welcome! It is wonderful to include you as a part of the Jewish Academy family. You could not have your children in a better environment or find a more caring staff to cultivate a love of learning. Our days are filled with academic challenges imbued with the spirit of Judaism.

This handbook is meant to ensure that everyone understands our school policies. Please read it carefully and review it with your children. Please sign and return the form on the final page that states you understand this handbook and return it to school by August 23, 2011.

I look forward to a wonderful year working together with you as partners to help all of our children reach their potential.

With Blessing,

Lev Cotlar

Head of School

## **Core Values**

As a Jewish school, tenets of Judaism provide the philosophical basis for the school's core values. It is important that our policies and philosophy of education demonstrate the most profound insights that Jewish tradition has to offer. At Jewish Academy our approach in guiding children to develop appropriate self-discipline, conduct and social skills is based upon these Jewish understandings. Throughout this handbook you will notice statements from Jewish texts that underlie our goal of shaping an environment in which students feel positive about themselves and others.

## **School-Parent Partnership**

*“It is not up to you to finish the job. Neither are you free to withdraw from it.” (Mishna Avot 2:16)* People cannot do things completely on their own. We need to work together. The school works with children only part of the day during the school year; while parents play an important and influential role during the other part of the day... and for the rest of their lives. Together we can allow a child's potential to be realized.

## **Jewish Academy Parent Educator Covenant**

*“Who is wise? The person who learns from everyone” (Mishna Avot 4:1)*

An optimal educational experience for our children requires an interactive partnership among parents, educators, and children. In acknowledgment of this relationship, Jewish Academy recognizes these fundamental principles of communication:

- Mutually respectful approach
- Ongoing and effective communication
- Resolution to gather information/data from appropriate sources prior to forming an opinion and making a judgment.
- Recognition of the power of words, avoidance of lashon hara (harmful speech)
- An agreed upon process for solving problems
- Shared commitment to work together toward a solution

## **Reasonable Expectations of Parents**

*“If there is no proper conduct, there is no Torah.” (Mishna Avot 3:21)*

Recognition that:

- Educators are trained professionals
- Educators and parental perspectives may justifiably differ.

- Educators have multiple time commitments.

Be ready to communicate with educators

- Direct concerns to educators
- Be prepared to clearly articulate the issues

Be ready to listen to educators

- Provide an opportunity for educators to work toward a solution.
- Remember that comprehensive solutions may require time.

### **Reasonable Expectations of Educators**

*“Let the honor of your students be as precious to you as your own.” (Mishna Avot 4:15)*

Recognition that:

- Parents have a depth of experience with the student.
- Parental and educator perspectives may justifiably differ.

Be ready to communicate with parents

- Ensure the concerns are well understood.
- Identify the issue.

Construct a written action plan

Confer to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Provide an opportunity for all involved to work toward a solution.

### **To Whom Do I Turn?**

This listing is designed to ensure that we meet the needs of students and parents as effectively as possible. Please use this guide as a reference when further communication is needed. The first listing is the person to turn to first (only if issues remain unresolved should the second person listed be contacted).

- Curriculum Questions - Classroom Teacher and then Rabbi Lev
- Behavior Concerns - Classroom Teacher and then Rabbi Lev
- Teacher Issue - Classroom Teacher and then Rabbi Lev
- Tuition Questions - Rabbi Lev who will in turn consult with the board

*Please note that there may be a tendency to talk about issues that come up with others who are not directly involved. We would like to urge everyone to always voice concerns right away to*

*the party involved. A school is most effective when the lines of communication between parents and staff are always open.*

### **Jewish Academy Problem Solving Process**

1. Identify concern
2. First contact educator to schedule an *appropriate* time for discussion
3. Discuss concern with educator (and child when appropriate) to clarify issue and establish plan
4. Meet to follow up and evaluate efficacy of plan

### **Contacting JAWC**

School Hours: 8:15AM-3:30PM. When Jewish Academy staff cannot be reached, the voice mail system will take your message. Faculty and staff check voice mail frequently throughout the day and will return your call as soon as possible. Please do not try to reach faculty and staff at home unless they have given you specific permission.

### **E-Mail**

Jewish Academy staff can also be contacted via e-mail. Staff e-mail addresses will be available in the school directory. When sending an e-mail message, please do not expect an immediate response. This is especially true in the evening, when e-mail is sent after school hours. We will endeavor to respond to all mid-week e-mails within 36 hours of their receipt.

## **BEFORE SCHOOL CARE & DROP - OFF/PICK-UP**

### **Arrival**

Between 8:00 AM and 8:10 AM each day, students should be dropped off. Please park your car and walk your child into school so that we can be sure that a staff member has taken responsibility for your child.

Regular morning supervision is provided beginning at 8:00 AM. The school day begins at 8:15 AM and classes dismiss at 3:30 PM.

### **Tardiness**

It is very important that parents make every effort to get their children to school on time. The way we begin our day can have an effect on the outcome of that day. Our classes begin on time with everyone being able to participate fully in the day's activities. It also allows us to model responsible behavior to our children.

Excessive tardiness is of great concern. Teachers will notify the office after five late arrivals have been recorded for a student. At that time, parents will be contacted about the concern. Although some unexpected occurrences such as heavy traffic or personal delays may cause occasional lateness, students need to be taught the importance of promptness both at school and at home.

### **Dismissal**

School is dismissed at 3:30 PM. Please arrive promptly at dismissal time and park in the designated area. Teachers will then dismiss students when parents pick them up from the classroom.

**Written permission from a parent/guardian is required to allow a child to go home with anyone other than a parent/guardian or regular carpool.** In emergencies, parents may call the office to inform the school of changes in dismissal routine for their child. Students may only utilize the school phone in the main office for emergencies.

### **Adverse Weather Conditions**

In case of inclement weather, we will follow the decision of Wake County Public Schools. If weather closing goes beyond one day, we reserve the right to make our own decisions as to closing or delayed opening. Parents will be notified through phone calls and e-mail.

## **ACCEPTANCE POLICY**

Jewish Academy is committed to making every effort to support the academic and social progress of each child. However, due to the size and unique nature of our school, each student is admitted on the provision that he/she is able to function academically and socially within the particular educational setting that is provided. Jewish Academy reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of the educational setting for each student on a case-by-case basis. We work closely with our families to make educational decisions in the best interests of the child and

Jewish Academy. If at any time a student is unable to function satisfactorily within the Jewish Academy environment, either academically or emotionally, the administration reserves the right to take action up to and including requiring that the student leave the school.

### **PROCEDURES FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN ON SCHOOL GROUNDS**

Keeping disruptions and distractions to a minimum is important for learning to take place. Parents may not go to the classrooms to deliver lunches, homework, money, etc. If a child forgets something, the parent/guardian should bring the item to the office.

Volunteers and visitors are always welcome; however, prior arrangements should be made before going into the classroom. All visitors should notify the office before beginning their visit.

### **BOOKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

All books are supplied by the school and are the property of the school. Should a book be lost, another will be issued at replacement cost to the family. Other school supplies vary according to grade level. Teachers will inform students of any specific needs.

### **LUNCH AND SNACKS (Kashrut Policy)**

As a school that respects the Jewish dietary laws (Kashrut), we recognize that families vary in their practices. In this spirit, Jewish Academy encourages the experience of eating as a community in an environment that shows sensitivity to Kashrut.

- We ask all parents to send lunches that are dairy or pareve (no meat/poultry products or derivatives). Each child should eat from his/her lunch only – sharing of lunches is not permitted.
- We are also cognizant of food allergies that other students may have. We will inform all school parents if a student has severe allergies to nuts or other foods – and ask for the help of the school community in being respectful of individual student needs.
- Refrigeration and heating of foods will not be provided by the school. Children should bring lunches in lunch boxes or small igloo type coolers. We request that foods packed in flip top metal containers be opened and repacked before they are sent to school since

they are difficult to open and have unsafe, sharp edges.

- All food and baked goods served in school and at official school functions (on or off campus) by faculty, students, parents or the PTO must come from Kosher sources. If you are in doubt about the Kosher status of an item for a school function, please check with a Judaics study faculty member or leave a message in the office in order to receive clarification.
- In addition to lunch, please send a snack with your child to be eaten mid-morning. Candy or sweets are not permitted at snack time. Examples of appropriate snacks are: nuts (shelled), fruit, fruit juice or vegetables, or crackers.
- We feel it is appropriate to mark the occasion of a child's birthday at school. If you wish to supply a birthday treat for the class, you may purchase easy to eat fruit like grapes or clementines, OU Pareve pretzels and/or OU Pareve cookies (such as Stella Dora cookies).
- In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, we suggest using the school Kashrut guidelines when arranging home birthday parties.

### **DRESS CODE**

Judaism places great value on modesty and humility. In Jewish teachings, our inner beauty is given more significance than the external clothing that we might wear. With this in mind, Jewish Academy has adopted a dress code that reflects these important Jewish values.

Girls:

- Navy or khaki skirts, pants, or jumpers (no jeans or sweats)
- White or light blue collared shirts or blouses.

Boys:

- Navy or khaki pants or shorts (no jeans or sweats)
- White or light blue collared shirts

- Closed shoes or sneakers must be worn by all students. Sandals or backless shoes are not acceptable.
- Kippot: The wearing of kippot is required for boys.
- If children attend school with clothing that do not meet the dress code, they will be given clothing to wear that meets school requirements. A note reminding parents about the school dress code policy will be sent home with the child.
- Exceptions to the dress code will be made in case of special activities. Parents will be notified in advance regarding these special days. Even on these occasions, we ask parents to be mindful of our goal that students be dressed appropriately. Therefore, midriffs must not be bare and tank tops may not be worn. Skirts or shorts should be mid-thigh or below in length.

### ABSENCES

Students are required to make up any work missed. While teachers will find ways to bring children up to speed upon their return, there may be skills or projects to be worked on at home. Together, the school and family will work in partnership to help our students feel successful in their learning. The time to complete missed assignments will be at the discretion of the teacher.

- If the parent/guardian would like to pick up assignments in the office, please call the school office prior to 9:00 AM and assignments will be ready to be picked up at 3:00 PM.
- If a student has more than 20 absences in a school year, the Head of School and classroom teacher will determine if the child is to be retained. Students with documented chronic health problems will be exempt from this policy.
- We strongly encourage all family trips to be planned during school vacation time. If, however, it is absolutely necessary for your child to miss school, it will be the responsibility of the parents to make sure that the student is assisted in making up the work missed upon his/her return. Teachers will furnish the necessary materials and

outline of the work covered in the student's absence. Make up work should be completed as quickly as possible, and no later than a week following the student's return.

### **LEAVING THE SCHOOL PREMISES AND EARLY DISMISAL**

The following procedures should be followed:

- Pupils may not leave the school premises unless they have special permission from the school office to do so and are accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- A parent/guardian should inform the teacher and office in advance regarding early dismissal. A student who needs to leave early *must* bring a note to the office at the beginning of the day (24 hours advance notice would be appreciated). In addition, a parent/guardian must come to the office to sign students out and in.

We recognize that emergencies may occur that require exceptions to this procedure. In case of unavoidable need to remove a student from class before the school day ends, the following procedure should be followed:

- A parent/guardian should report to the school office and sign the early dismissal release form before the child may be dismissed from class. A parent/guardian is required to come to the office and sign the child in, upon their return.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Home parties should be planned with consideration for all families. Please avoid scheduling parties on Shabbat and on Jewish holidays. In order to have every child participate, please keep in mind Kashrut considerations in planning the menu. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask our staff.

**Invitations to a private party may be given out at school only if all class members are invited.** Please remember that our school is small. Whenever a child is excluded, hurt feelings may result.

## HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Jewish Academy requires that all health and immunization record forms be kept in each student's individual file in the school office. Your pediatrician can provide the necessary immunization and health record forms to you. Jewish Academy adheres to all North Carolina State regulations and laws.

- Medications sent to school must be in the original containers with directions for administration. All medicines must be brought to the school office and will be kept there. Students may not keep any medications with them.
- When your child is ill, he deserves the comforts of home to recuperate. When a student has a fever (or other symptoms of illness such as vomiting and diarrhea) the child should be kept at home for 24 hours after the symptoms abate, in order to diminish the possibility of spreading illness to others.
- When an ill child comes to the office, the staff follows this procedure:
  - A. Child's temperature will be taken.
  - B. Degree of illness will be assessed by a staff member.
  - C. A school staff member will make the decision, if a parent should be called. As a rule, if a child has a fever the parent will be called and the child must be picked up as soon as possible.
- When a parent/guardian is notified that his/her child is ill and resting in the office, arrangements must be made to transport the child home. We appreciate your cooperation in getting your child home in an expedient manner. When picking up your child, please report to the school office first and sign your child out.

## CONFERENCES

Individual parent/teacher conferences for all students are mandatory for the first conference and by appointment for additional conferences. If you wish to discuss your child's progress with a teacher at any time other than scheduled conference periods, please call the school office to

request an appointment. If you are unable to attend a scheduled conference, please call the school office to reschedule.

## GRADING SCALE

### Kindergarten

M = Mastery of Skills; exceeds Grade Level Standards

G = Good Progress; meets Grade Level Standards

DS = Developing skill; but does not yet meet grade standards

N/A = Not Applicable

### First and Second Grades

E = Outstanding; exceeds grade level standards

S = Satisfactory, meets grade level standards

NS = Progressing; making progress but not meeting grade level standards

U = Unsatisfactory; not making progress, not meeting grade level standards

### Third, Fourth and Fifth Grades

The grades for subject areas in grades 3-5 are as follows:

**5 = Outstanding Achievement.** Student has mastered the objectives in the subject area, shows initiative, applies knowledge gained to new situations, and accepts responsibility for learning. 94-100 %

**4 = Above Average (High) Achievement.** The student has mastered most of the objectives in the subject area, is above average in initiative, application of knowledge, and accepting responsibility for learning. 85-93 %

**3 = Satisfactory Achievement.** The student has mastered the basic objectives in the subject area and with direction and stimulation by the teacher is progressing in application of knowledge and accepting responsibility for learning. 77-84 %

**2 = Below Average (Needs Improvement in) Achievement.** The student has mastered few of the basic objectives in the subject area. 69-76 %

**1 = Unsatisfactory Achievement.** The student has not mastered the basic objectives in the subject area. Below 69%

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

### **Purpose of Homework**

We believe that homework should accomplish the following objectives:

- Foster independent study
- Reinforce learning
- Challenge students to enhance or enrich their learning opportunities
- Prepare students to meet performance standards
- Provide differentiated learning tasks designed to meet individual student learning needs
- Provide opportunities for students to prioritize their activities and manage their time
- Provide extra practice time needed in order to develop reading, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar essential to learning a second language

Students in Kindergarten will receive some homework from time to time.

Students in grades 1-2 are expected to accomplish homework that is developmentally appropriate.

Students in grades 3-5 will have regularly assigned homework in a variety of subjects.

### **How Can Parents Help?**

- Communicate in a positive manner your expectation that homework is the child's responsibility and will be completed.
- Provide a specific time in your child's day to complete homework.
- Provide a specific and appropriate work space and necessary supplies.
- Help your child understand that the teacher is interested in seeing what students can do on their own.
- Take an interest in your child's ideas and projects.
- Support and partner with the school to teach your child the importance of responsible and independent completion of assigned tasks.
- Avoid power struggles. When you believe that your child has given the task adequate effort and attention and the task is still incomplete, contact your child's teacher and explain the circumstances.

### **JEWISH ACADEMY BEHAVIOR POLICY**

*“Derech Eretz (proper social behavior) precedes learning Torah” (Talmud)*

At Jewish Academy, we believe in the value of each individual. According to Jewish tradition, every person is created in the image of G-d and deserves to be treated as such. In order to create the best possible learning environment it is important that both students and adults conduct themselves in ways that reflect and model this and other Jewish values.

#### **Reasonable Expectations of Student to Student Interaction:**

*“Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:18)*

#### **Students will:**

- Respect and treat other students as they would want to be treated.
- Preserve the self-worth of others by not shaming, embarrassing, or teasing.
- Work and play cooperatively guided by the spirit of teamwork.
- Do their part in assuring that everyone feels physically and emotionally safe.
- Have compassion and empathy for other students.
- Help other students in need of assistance.

- Be a positive influence on their peers and become role models within the classroom, school, and community.

**Reasonable Expectations of Student in Interactions with Adults:**

*“Let the reverence for your teacher be like your reverence for Heaven.” (Mishna Avot 4:15)*

**Students will:**

- Conduct themselves in accordance with school standards and guidelines.
- Find an appropriate time and respectful manner to express their feelings.
- Respect the learning, experience, and judgment of their teachers, school administrators and other adults.
- Be truthful and accept responsibility for their own behavior.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Understand that adults make mistakes.
- Conduct themselves with Derech Eretz as ambassadors of Jewish Academy within the larger community.

**Reasonable Expectations of Adults in Interactions with Students:**

*“Let the honor of your student be as precious to you as your own.” (Mishna Avot 4:15)*

**Adults will:**

- Utilize their learning, experience and best judgment in their interactions and decision making.
- Be positive role models.
- Provide a caring and nurturing environment where everyone feels physically and emotionally safe.
- Treat students with fairness and respect.
- Respond in a consistent manner.
- Understand that students make mistakes.
- Be trustworthy and honest.

- Conduct themselves professionally, recognizing appropriate boundaries.
- Have age-appropriate expectations of students.
- Be attuned to the different learning styles and individual needs of students
- Facilitate problem solving.
- Put the students' well-being first.

We believe that every school experience is an opportunity for learning. Students who experience consistent, logical and realistic consequences learn that they themselves have positive control over the results of their behavior.

**MINOR OFFENSES:**

Definition: Minor offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Excluding peers from games, lunch, centers, and other activities
- Use of derogatory names or profane language.
- Running or screaming in school
- Physical or verbal behavior that disrupts classroom activities.
- Interfering with the learning of others
- Violating playground rules.

Most offenses are handled on the spot in class, playground or other areas of the school.

Appropriate responses might include:

- Speaking with the child
- Helping children problem-solve together (conflict resolution)
- Time-out with supervision
- Requiring the child to fill out a “think” paper describing the misbehavior and how this behavior could have been handled differently.
- Requiring the child to spend Community Service time
- A note home
- A phone call home

Habitual infractions of this type will be handled under the serious offense procedures defined in this policy.

**SERIOUS OFFENSES:**

Definition: Serious offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Striking, biting or hitting a peer or staff member
- Bullying or threatening
- Defiant behavior or language
- Threatening to use any object as a weapon
- Destruction of property

Process: Serious offenses will be handled by Administration.

1. Student and parent will meet with Administration to review behavior and devise protocol for modification. A written behavior plan will be completed.
2. A written behavior plan will be placed in student's permanent file.
3. Appropriate consequences will be determined. These could include:
  - Removal from class for a designated period of time.
  - Removal from school wide activities for a designated period of time.
  - Other designated consequences defined in meeting with parent and administration.
4. For the third serious offense during a school year:

The student is excluded from the classroom for part or all of the day

Upon discretion of the administration, the student may be sent home for a defined period of time.

An individual parent conference is schedule to develop further behavior modifications, obtain further assessment, and possibly seek consultation support from outside resources.

Goals will be established along with frequent review and monitoring procedures.

*If serious offenses continue to occur and continued review and planning do not produce a desired change in behavior, the school retains the right to recommend that the child be withdrawn from school.*

*In some instances if a first offense is considered serious enough in nature, it may immediately be dealt with as if it was the third offense.*

#### **ZERO TOLERANCE OFFENSES:**

Definition: Zero Tolerance Offenses could include but are not limited to:

- Possession of weapons at school or school sponsored events
- Possession of controlled substances or tobacco at school or school sponsored events
- Use of the Internet for illegal or inappropriate purposes
- Possession of "Adult Media", magazines, music or materials at school or school sponsored events
- Threats of, or implied violence
- Violence

Process: Zero Tolerance Offences will be handled by administration.

1. Student will be immediately removed from school.
2. Parents will be contacted and an Individual Planning Meeting will be scheduled.
3. Major and Zero Tolerance offenses could result in suspension or expulsion from school.
4. A Behavior Discipline Incidence Report will be placed in student's permanent school file.
5. A copy of the Individual Planning Meeting notes will be placed in student's permanent school file.

Behavior issues are best handled between the parent, teacher and the Administration. Parents should address any questions, comments, or concerns about their child's in-school behavior directly to the teacher and Head of School.

*Please read, sign and return to the Jewish Academy office.*

**Handbook Agreement**

I understand and will comply with all the rules and policies in the handbook. I have read and discussed these rules with my child(ren).

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

Date

I understand these rules and policies and will comply with them.

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

Date