

HANDBOOK



2025-2026

ADAT SHALOM - BETH ACHIM LEARNING COMMUNITY

29901 Middlebelt Road

Farmington Hills, MI 48334

adatshalom.org/education | 248-626-2153

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**Dr. Melissa Ser, CJE • mser@adatshalom.org
248-626-2153 • 248-804-3501 (cell)**

DIRECTOR OF ADULT LEARNING & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

**Jodi Gross • jgrosse@adatshalom.org
248-626-2153**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

**Caryn Noveck • cnoveck@adatshalom.org
248-626-2153**



FACULTY, CLASSROOMS, AND SUPPORT

SUNDAYS

PRE-K • ROOM 103

Alyssa Diskin

diskin.liss@gmail.com

K & 1ST GRADE • ROOM 104

Shelly Tarockoff

starockoff@gmail.com

2ND GRADE • ROOM 102

Halli Tarockoff

hallitarockoff@gmail.com

3RD GRADE • ROOM 101

Ettie Schargorodsky

ettieschar@aol.com

4TH GRADE • ROOM 107

Hilary Glaser

hlglaser@gmail.com

5TH GRADE • ROOM 108

Abbi Tarockoff

abigail.tarockoff@gmail.com

6TH GRADE • ROOM 106

Sam Arnold

supersam1266@gmail.com

7TH GRADE • ROOM 105

Tsiporah Blair

tblair.hebrewschool@gmail.com

LEADERS & SUPPORT

LOWER GRADES • PK-3

Ariel Blizzard

ariel.stollman@outlook.com

Team Leader & Educational Support

UPPER GRADES • 4-7

Abbi Tarockoff

abigail.tarockoff@gmail.com

Team Leader

Debbi Stybel

mimidebbi@gmail.com

Opening the Doors Support

WEDNESDAYS

2ND & 3RD GRADE • ROOM 102

Halli Tarockoff

hallitarockoff@gmail.com

4TH & 5TH GRADE • ROOM 108

Abbi Tarockoff

abigail.tarockoff@gmail.com

6TH & 7TH GRADE • ROOM 106

Sam Arnold

supersam1266@gmail.com

SPECIALISTS

MUSIC & PRAYER EDUCATION

Hazzan Daniel Gross

HEBREW LANGUAGE

Rochel Nachlas

SHINSHIN: ISRAEL SPECIALIST

Naveh Greiner

B'NAI MITZVAH TUTORS

Joyce Berlin Weingarten

Sam Arnold

HEBREW READING TEAM

Abbi Tarockoff (S, Z)

Cillia Kleiman (Z)

Halli Tarockoff (S, Z)

Adina Levin (Z)

Debbi Stybel (Z)

Hillary Glaser (S)

Alyssa Diskin (S)

Emily Hollenberg (Z)

Rochel Nachlas (S, Z)

Aron Kaufman (Z)

Ettie Schargorodsky (S, Z)

Sam Arnold (S)

Ariel Blizzard (S, W, Z)

Hadass Zaid (Z)

Yifat Golan (Z)

(S) Sunday groups (W) Wednesday groups (Z) Zoom

MADRICHIM

A madrich is a guide, and our school has an amazing cohort of teens who choose to continue being part of the Adat Shalom community on a weekly basis! Beginning in eighth grade, teens may volunteer or work within the school as teaching assistants, buddies, and office assistants. Teens complete regular training and learn how to best assist the classroom teachers and their students. Madrichim often work with students in small groups during Hebrew reading, help students with projects, run activity stations or games, and more.

THE BASICS

Arrival Time

We have limited time with our students, and need every minute to reach our goals! We start on time at 9 a.m. on Sundays and at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Tefillah (Prayer Services)

On Sunday mornings, students participate in grade-appropriate services with clergy and educators.

What to Wear

Boys should wear a kippah or appropriate head covering to class; girls may if they choose. We have extras in the office but have found that children tend to prefer a special one of their own that they have selected. Students and madrichim who have already become bar or bat mitzvah are encouraged to bring tallit and/or tefillin on Sundays. Please label your belongings. During the winter months, students often wish to go outside during their breaks. Students should come with appropriate gear for the weather.

Snacks at the Shalom Shuk

Students may purchase snacks and/or drinks before school. All snacks are kosher and nut free, and we always have dairy free and gluten free options available. If you would like to send a snack from home, please ensure it is kosher and nut free.

You may preorder snacks/bagels for the year at adatshalom.org/bagels

COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT

Email

Every week during the school year, we send out an email to all addresses in our system. These emails contain important highlights of the coming week, dates to remember, special notices, information about upcoming programs of interest, and any changes to our regularly scheduled programming.

If you do not receive teacher emails or messages, please contact your child's teacher directly to be sure he or she has the correct email address/phone number. If you do not receive Learning Community emails, please make sure we have your correct email address and that you have not opted-out of emails from us.

Facebook

We have a closed Facebook group, called "Adat Shalom-Beth Achim Learning Community." Please request to join! You can also "like" Adat Shalom Synagogue's Facebook page to get updates on synagogue activities and items of interest.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ASBA.learningcommunity>

<https://www.facebook.com/adatshalomsyn>

Padlet

The school's Padlet hub will have links, sign ups, announcements and more. It is updated frequently and is located [here](#).

Parent Teacher Committee

If you are interested in being more involved in the school as a whole, please contact Alan Gallatin at amg@pobox.com

Room Parents

We would love to have your support in our classrooms! Please contact your child's teacher directly if you are interested in supporting the class periodically throughout the year.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES

Sundays

Sunday classes begin at 9am.

The Kaufman entrance is staffed from **8:45 to 9:05am**.

Sunday classes end at noon.

The Kaufman exit is staffed from **noon until 12:10pm**.

The Kaufman exit is staffed again from **12:30 to 12:35pm** for students who are in small group Hebrew learning.

Wednesdays

Students in Wednesday Hebrew groups, which begin at 4pm, should come to the Canner entrance between 3:50 and 4pm.

Wednesday classes begin at 4:30pm.

The Kaufman entrance is staffed from **4:15 to 4:35pm**.

Wednesday classes end at 6:15pm.

The Kaufman exit is staffed from **6:15 to 6:25pm**.

- **Enter at Middlebelt Road**
- **Exit at 13 Mile Road**
- **Follow the traffic pattern**
- **Do not leave your car unattended**



SAFETY IN THE PARKING LOT

Car Line drop off and pick up (without parking)

Drive to the Kaufman Circle Entrance (orange star)

Pull forward as much as possible

Sundays:

Drop off: 8:45 to 9:05am

Pick up: 12 to 12:10pm

Wednesdays:

Drop off: 4:15 to 4:35pm

Pick up: 6:15 to 6:25pm

- **Enter at Middlebelt Road**
- **Exit at 13 Mile Road**
- **Follow the traffic pattern**
- **Do not leave your car unattended**

Drop off and pick up (parking required)

- Park in a designated space
- Use the Canner Entrance (blue star)
- Ring the buzzer and pull the door on the right to enter

Follow these directions if:

- You need to pick your child up early
- You need to bring your child late
- You want to have a conversation with a staff member
- Your children want you to walk them to the classroom

Late drop off or early pickup:

- Park and enter through the West Entrance (Canner).
- Security will buzz you in from the door on the right.
- Students attending Hebrew groups should use the West Entrance for Wednesday arrival only.

Do not use the fire lane at the West Entrance (Canner/School) as a drop off lane. In order to use this entrance, you must park in a designated space.

B'NAI MITZVAH

Setting the Bar or Bat Mitzvah Date

Synagogue Members: When your child turns 8 years old or enters 3rd grade, you may call Kellie Yost (248) 851-5100 to schedule a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. This date will be scheduled on or after the child's 13th birthday (12th birthday for girls) on the Hebrew calendar. Kellie will gladly assist you in determining the Hebrew birth date. There is no booking fee for members.

Non-members: You may reserve a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date two years prior to the date of your child's 13th birthday (12th birthday for girls) on the Hebrew calendar, although it is not confirmed until one year prior to the date. There is a non-member usage fee for the Sanctuary or Shiffman Chapel for the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

B'nai Mitzvah Connections

You and your child will receive an invitation to B'nai Mitzvah Beginnings with Hazzan Gross. Following that introductory session, you and your child will need to attend several additional workshops during the 12 to 18-month period leading up to your child becoming a bar or bat mitzvah. For questions, please call 248-851-5100.

Mitzvah Project (Community Service)

In the year leading up to bar/bat mitzvah, each student is expected to volunteer for a minimum of 8 hours, with a goal of 18 (chai!). These hours may be part of volunteer opportunities that we organize for you or opportunities that you create on your own. We ask that you find volunteer activities which will connect you to another living being, a true giving back to your community. Many students engage in a Mitzvah Project, a single project aimed at helping the community, based in a core Jewish value or commandment. Jodi Gross, Director of Adult Learning and Youth Engagement, coordinates group activities available through Adat Shalom.

SPECIAL NEEDS & MEDICAL INFO



Opening the Doors

We welcome children with differentiated needs into our classrooms.

An Opening the Doors specialist works with students who have learning challenges and/or special needs, as well as with their teachers and madrichim on methods of inclusion and integration and differentiated learning strategies. Opening the Doors is a program of Jewish Family Services.

IEP and 504 Plans

We request that if an IEP or 504 plan (or similar) exists, that families provide those to us so that we can aim to achieve the same benchmarks and understand the specifics of your child's needs.

Buddies

Students who need a teen buddy/shadow are provided with one at no cost to the family. These teens are specially trained to work one-on-one with students with special needs, and often work with the same child for multiple years. In cases where an adult paraprofessional is needed, please contact the office to discuss arrangements and costs.

Allergies & Medical Conditions

If your child has an allergy or medical condition, we must have an emergency protocol and current emergency medications, epi-pens, and/or inhalers in our office. Our school environment is nut free (you may not bring food that "may contain tree nuts or peanuts" or are "processed on shared equipment with tree nuts or peanuts"). We have students in the school with airborne nut allergies.

Thank you for keeping all our children safe.

WELLNESS

Please keep your child home if ill! If your child or anyone in your family tests positive for COVID-19, the flu, or any other contagious illness, please consult with your family doctor as to who needs to stay home. We strongly encourage everyone to remain up to date on flu and covid boosters as well as other vaccines.

SECURITY

There are GABRIEL alarm systems installed throughout the main level of the Synagogue. These are emergency devices that alert the police in case there is an active threat in the Synagogue. These are ONLY to be pressed and activated in case of emergency. Please make sure you and your child(ren) do not lean on or play with these devices.

In addition, security cameras around the building keep us secure. Additional security measures are in place throughout the year, including security personnel on site.

Fire and Emergency drills will take place throughout the year.

Adat Shalom contracts a specific security team, Shamar Services, LLC. They are on site for each school day and special events and programs. Additionally, on Saturday mornings and when deemed advisable, officers from the Farmington Hills Police Department are on site.

Our security team and education team carry walkie-talkies.

KNOW WHERE TO GO

Accessibility

The school is located on the ground floor of the building. We have an elevator located at the far end of the building, across from an accessible and gender-neutral bathroom. Families who need to access the building without stairs should call the school office to have the doors near the elevator unlocked.

All Gender Restrooms: On the lower level near the Kaufman Entrance/Exit there is an accessible and unisex restroom. There is an additional all-gender restroom upstairs in the Breakfast Room.

Bathrooms

There are single-stall bathrooms in/adjacent to rooms 102, 103, 104 and 105. Men's and women's restrooms are also located in the lower atrium (near the bottom of the circular stairs), inside the lower level kitchen, and on the mid-level outside the Israel Room, in addition to the main restrooms upstairs by the clergy wing and the sanctuary.

The restroom in Melissa's office has a supply of menstrual products and additional personal hygiene items that are available to anyone who needs.

Changing tables

There is a changing table in the Mini Minyan room, as well as in the handicap stalls of the men's and women's bathrooms on the main floor of the building.

CURRICULUM

Pre-K

The curriculum focuses on the story of Creation, Hebrew vocabulary through movement and music, and Jewish life basics. Students learn about holidays as they appear on the calendar, with an emphasis on Shabbat. They also learn about Israel as the Jewish homeland and the importance of being a good community member and caring for the earth.

Kindergarten / First Grade

Students learn about the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah, and the Tower of Babel. They continue to learn Hebrew through movement and music and expand their understanding of Jewish life vocabulary. The curriculum includes blessings, a strengthening relationship with God, and a focus on Rosh HaShanah and Pesach. Students also learn about Israeli food and symbols and what goes into a sanctuary.

Second Grade

The curriculum covers Genesis through Exodus, with a focus on the Ten Commandments. Students begin decoding and reading Hebrew. The class explores how to communicate with God and their partnership with God. Holidays are taught through practices and actions. Students learn about the Diaspora, where Jews come from around the world, and Aliyah. The values of welcoming guests, feeding the hungry, loving your neighbor, honoring parents, and observing Shabbat are emphasized. Students also learn about Jewish people in their neighborhood.

CURRICULUM

Third Grade

Students study the Torah and learn to apply its teachings to their own lives. They continue to work on decoding and reading Hebrew. The curriculum includes lessons on the Siddur, Keva & Kavanah, and deep dives into major holidays like Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Hanukkah, and Pesach. The class also explores Biblical history, considers the question "Who are Israelis?", and learns about mitzvot such as kashrut (keeping kosher) and tzedakah (charity). Additionally, they are introduced to the Jewish lifecycle, with a specific focus on birth.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, the curriculum covers the stories of Jonah, Esther, and Ruth. Students focus on developing fluency with the prayer book. The class explores spiritual themes such as struggling with and searching for God, and the importance of blessings in everyday life. They also take deep dives into the holidays of Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Purim, and Shavuot. The curriculum includes studying the geography of Israel and its neighbors, as well as the cultural influence of immigrants on the country. Students also learn about prayer obligations, disability justice, and the lifecycle events of birth and conversion.

Fifth Grade

In fifth grade, students study the stories of leadership after Moses, including Joshua, Deborah, Yael, Samson, and King David. Reading focuses on prayer book fluency, and students learn Shabbat morning prayers and different names of God. The curriculum also includes a deep dive into Shabbat and other holidays through the arts. Students study Biblical history, Israeli art, and mitzvot such as bikkur cholim (visiting the sick) and lashon hara (guarding one's speech). The class also explores lifecycle events connected to marriage and Jewish weddings.

CURRICULUM

Sixth Grade

The curriculum for sixth graders focuses on prayer fluency and a deeper understanding of the Torah, its commentaries, and midrash. Students explore the Torah service, grappling with challenging questions like its origins. Holidays are taught through their connection to liturgy. The class also delves into American Jewish history, Israeli pop culture, the formation of Zionism and the state of Israel, and social justice. Students gain hands-on experience by exploring the practices of tallit and tefillin. The curriculum also covers Conservative Judaism, the B'nai Mitzvah process, and lifecycle events such as weddings and divorce.

Seventh Grade

In seventh grade, students are introduced to the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, while continuing to develop their fluency with the prayer book. The curriculum includes learning the Mourner's Kaddish, reviewing the Shacharit service, and exploring spiritual topics such as finding a personal connection to God and grappling with difficult questions like why bad things happen to good people.

The class also studies significant historical and contemporary subjects, including the Holocaust, Israeli current events, and environmental justice. Other key topics include Jewish perspectives on death and dying, as well as an exploration of the various denominations within Judaism.

HEBREW READING & PRAYER GOALS



In second and third grade, our students use the Aleph Champ program to develop fluency in decoding Hebrew. Students earn white, red, orange, yellow, green, and blue medallions, building their reading confidence and fluency.

By fourth grade, most students move on to Hebrew prayer reading in Level 1, and all students develop facility with prayers through hands-on experiences and classroom discussions. If students attend regularly and work with their tutors, they can be expected to learn the following prayers throughout their time at Adat Shalom:

Level 1:

Bar'chu, Ma'ariv Aravim, Yotzer Or, Sh'ma, V'ahavta, Mi Chamocha, Modeh Ani, Hatikvah, Blessings for mitzvot, foods, shabbat, and holidays, Kiddush, Mah Tov

Level 2:

Morning Blessings, Avot v'Imahot, G'vurot, K'dushah, Hoda'ah, Shalom Rav, Sim Shalom, Oseh Shalom, L'chah Dodi, V'shamru, Shalom Aleichem, Ein Keloheinu, Havdalah

Level 3:

Ein Kamocha, Av Harahamim, Ki Mitziyon, L'cha Adonai, Birchot Hatorah, Birchot Hahaftarah, V'zot Hatorah, Eitz Hayyim Hi, Al Shloshah D'varim, Aleinu, Kaddish, Adon Olam, Hashkiveinu

Level 4:

Ashrei, Weekday Amidah, Birkat Hamazon, the Haggadah, the full Shema, the full Aleinu. Some students begin to learn Modern Hebrew.

HOME ENRICHMENT

Grades PreK, K, and 1:

Ask your child to tell you a story from the Torah that he/she has learned. Find Jewish objects in your home. Do something special on Shabbat. Read a Jewish book together. Come to the synagogue as a family when possible and bring your child to MiniMinyan and other family programming. Build a Torah story out of Lego!



Grades 2 and 3:

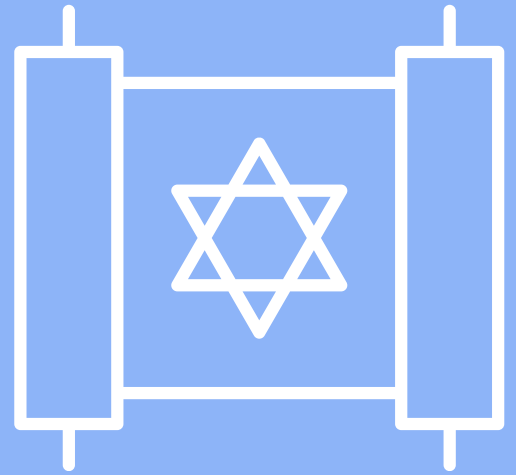
Encourage your child to complete his/her 20 minutes of reading each night using PJ Library Jewish books. Encourage your child to practice Hebrew reading for five minutes a day, three days a week. Ask your child to teach you Hebrew if you do not read it. If you need resources, we can help! Bring your child to MiniMinyan and other family programming and learn together. Come to (or stream) Shabbat services as a family. Celebrate holidays together and have your child help lead blessings and prayers at home.

Grades 4 through 7:

Encourage your child to complete each day's 20 minutes of reading using PJ Library or PJ Our Way Jewish books. Encourage your child to practice Hebrew reading skills for five to ten minutes a day, three to four times per week. Come to (or stream) Shabbat services as a family. Celebrate holidays together and have your child help lead blessings and prayers at home.

OUR MISSION

We are committed to enriching the lives of students and families within our congregation in a nurturing environment through diverse Jewish educational experiences according to the values of Conservative Judaism as they relate to God, Torah, holidays, prayer, history, the Hebrew language and the State of Israel. Our school promotes connections between and among families, the synagogue, the community and the State of Israel, creating a path to a happy and meaningful Jewish life.



OUR VISION

Our students take pride in being Jewish through an education focused on age-appropriate, experiential learning that enhances each student's appreciation for lifelong learning and living as Jews. As an important part of our synagogue community, students gain an understanding of the way Conservative Judaism is practiced at Adat Shalom Synagogue. They have a strong sense of Jewish values, ethics, Torah, traditions, Israel, and tikkun olam (social action) and have the opportunity to lead as well as participate in tefillot (communal prayer). Their understanding of Judaism gives them a sense of who they are and an appreciation of their role in the larger Jewish community that will last a lifetime.



OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Our school is warm and nurturing. Students feel safe and free to express themselves. Our learning environment is one of mutual honor and respect. Dedicated, creative and enthusiastic teachers guide our students using different learning modalities while meeting the needs of each student. They create a student-centered, active learning environment that extends beyond the classroom into the lives of our students and their families.



OUR FAMILIES



Our families are part of a diverse, engaged and motivated community. They are connected to each other, to Adat Shalom Synagogue, and to the larger Jewish community. By offering meaningful experiences, celebrating holidays and Shabbat, our school provides students and their extended families with opportunities for ongoing spiritual growth.

OUR CONGREGATION

The Rabbis, Hazzan and other professionals have an active and visible role in the school. Having developed meaningful connections with our clergy and staff, our students and families feel valued in the greater congregation and are motivated to be involved in all aspects of Adat Shalom Synagogue.

