

Parent Handbook 2023-2024 5784 School Year



Kehila Heschel
School

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PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome

Welcome to Kehila Heschel School. We are delighted to have you as a member of our school community. We are committed to providing a high-quality education in a stimulating Jewish environment.

Kehila

Kehila means *community* in Hebrew. Kehila Heschel School is a Jewish day school that welcomes students from all streams of Judaism. Our school provides an egalitarian Jewish experience celebrating all forms of Jewish beliefs and observances.

Mission

Kehila Heschel School cultivates academic excellence and a strong Jewish identity. We foster an environment that is socially, emotionally, and academically tailored to advance students' individual talents. We integrate Jewish teachings throughout our curriculum, embracing all streams of Judaism.

Vision

Kehila Heschel School advances academic excellence by:

- integrating experiential and project-based learning, computer technology, artistic expression, and global responsibility
- promoting educational innovation
- providing trilingual instruction
- ensuring small class sizes
- supporting professional development

Kehila Heschel builds a foundation for a lifelong capacity in critical thinking, ethical behaviour and independent achievement. Our school teaches students Jewish customs, religion, Hebrew language, Secular studies, outdoor education, French and a love for Israel. These skills, ideas and values help our graduates excel as productive members of society and active participants in Jewish life.

EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

As an Ontario Private School we use Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines as a basis for our curriculum and enrich our program above and beyond their expectations.

Integrated curriculum: Our curriculum is dedicated to the values that characterized Rabbi Heschel's life: the integration of Jewish learning, Jewish ritual and Social justice. At Kehila Heschel, the curriculum implements this educational philosophy by integrating all learning and making the crucial connection between Judaic and secular studies. It is intentionally difficult to separate the different academic expectations, as all learning is integrated, relevant and transferable to students' everyday lives.

Trilingual program

Hebrew is seen as a living language and taught by using the “Ivrit Be’Ivrit” approach (Hebrew in Hebrew). Through Immersion style Hebrew and Extended French curriculum students develop knowledge and skills to appreciate, communicate and interact in English, Hebrew and French. They learn to use these languages not only to express needs and interests but to acquire and apply knowledge in a variety of subject areas.

Gender Equality

At Kehila Heschel School we are committed to providing equal opportunities for boys and girls to develop their strengths and skills in all areas of academic, artistic, athletic, and social endeavour without regard to traditional gender-based distinctions. No activity or opportunity will be closed to members of one gender.

Kippot (head covering)

The wearing of *kippot* (head-coverings) is designed to reflect the school’s respect for diversity as well as tradition, and the range of practice found in the Kehila Heschel community. Students will learn about the *mitzvah* of wearing a kippa, why *kippot* are worn and why some Jews cover their heads throughout the day. Boys and girls will be encouraged to cover their heads throughout the school day especially during times explicitly set aside for eating, praying, or studying religious texts.

T’Fillot (Prayers)

T’fillot take place every day. Boys and girls pray together and share responsibilities for conducting rituals.

Chagim (Holidays):

All the Jewish holidays will be celebrated as a part of the school program. Please refer to the school calendar for details. Halloween and Valentine’s Day are **NOT** observed

Observing Shabbat:

Even if you do not personally observe Shabbat and religious holidays please do not email, phone or post any Kehila messages/photo’s etc. during this time. We are a school embracing all forms of Judaism and encourage respect and inclusivity.

OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL

School Hours

(Daylight Saving Time) 8:40 am - 3:40 pm Mondays to Fridays

(Eastern Standard Time) 8:40 am – 3:40 pm Mondays to Thursdays and
Fridays 8:40 am to 3:00 pm

3:00 pm dismissal on Fridays, during Eastern Standard Time is in honour of Shabbat.

Students are expected to be at school by 8:30am so that classes may begin promptly at 8:40am. Please check your monthly calendar for dismissal times on other holidays.

Attendance:

Regular and prompt attendance is essential for academic progress and achievement. Please assist us by scheduling vacations, medical appointments etc. outside school hours. If you do need to pick up your child for an appointment during the school day, **please come to the office first!**

Tardiness and Absences:

Students are expected to be at school by 8:30am so that classes may begin promptly at 8:40am.

Students arriving late (after 8:40 am) will first check in with the office before going to their classroom.

If your child is unable to attend school for any reason, please notify the office either by phone or email at office@kehilaschool.ca. Arrangements can be made to pick up class work.

School Office:

The school office will be open from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm Monday – Friday.

Inclement Weather:

In case of inclement weather causing a school closure, emails will be sent to all parents. Please understand that decisions has to be made at 6:30 am and will be based on the conditions at that time.

Pick-up and Drop-Off:

Information to follow prior to school start

IF YOUR CHILD IS BEING PICKED UP BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF, THEIR CARETAKER OR THE PEOPLE LISTED ON THE SCHOOL'S CHILD RELEASE FORM, PLEASE NOTIFY THE OFFICE. THEY WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANOTHER PERSON EVEN IF YOUR CHILD KNOWS THAT PERSON. You may give the office a list of people who might potentially pick up your child.

“THE BALANCED DAY”

Kehila Heschel School works on a Balanced Day schedule. Please see below for more information regarding ‘recess’ and nutrition breaks.

What is a balanced day and how does it affect our students and program?

The Balanced School Day at Kehila Heschel involves dividing the instructional day into three blocks of teaching/learning time, separated by two 40 minute physical activity and nutrition breaks. The Balanced School Day does not affect the start and ending school times. Schools who are on a Balanced School Day schedule report the following:

- Larger uninterrupted learning blocks.
- An increase in students’ concentration and energy levels.
- More time for students to relax and enjoy their lunches as time is set aside specifically for eating during the two breaks.
- More time for daily physical activity/play.

What does the Balanced Day Kehila schedule look like?

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

September 5th – November 5th

8:30-8:40	School Entry
8:40-9:30	Period 1- Homeroom
9:00-10:00	Period 2
10:00-10:20	T’fillah
10:20-10:40	Nutrition Break
10:40-11:00	Recess
11:00-11:40	Period 3
11:40-12:20	Period 4
12:20-1:00	Period 5
1:00-1:20	Nutrition Break
1:20-1:40	Recess
1:40-2:20	Period 6
2:20-3:00	Period 7
3:00-3:40	Period 8
3:40 -3:45	School Dismissal

EASTERN STANDARD TIME

Friday’s Nov. 10th - March 10th

8:30-8:40	School Entry
8:40-9:00	Period 1- Homeroom
9:00-10:00	Period 2
10:00-10:20	Kabbalat Shabbat
10:20-10:40	Nutrition Break
10:40-11:00	Recess
11:00-11:40	Period 3
11:40-12:20	Period 4
12:20-1:00	Period 5
1:00-1:20	Nutrition Break
1:20-1:40	Recess
1:40- 2:20	Period 6
2:20-3:00	Period 7
3:00	School Dismissal

Nutrition Break

KEHILA HESCHEL SCHOOL follows a kashrut policy

Please pack dairy or parve lunches (i.e. no meat or meat products).

All **shared** foods (holidays, Shabbat, birthdays etc.) must be:

- ✳ sealed & packaged with a kosher symbol; or
- ✳ prepared at school
- ✳ no home baked goods

No Nut Policy:

Out of consideration for the safety of students or staff member with a nut allergy, Kehila Heschel School is a nut free environment. Please do not send any foods containing/may contain nuts.

Litterless lunches and Recycling:

Parents are to pack litter less lunches using recyclable containers and cutlery, both of which will be returned to be cleaned at home.

Physical Education:

Phys Ed activities will be held in the school or in Churchill Park (behind the school). Other special activities such as swimming, dancing and skating may be arranged throughout the year.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Please be sure to label **ALL** your child's clothing including their kippot. All articles of clothing should be marked by either a marker pen or with name tapes, to ensure they can be claimed in case of loss.

Kehila Heschel logo can be purchased and sewn on from Embroidery and Alterations evgenyam7@gmail.com or text 204-382-9892 or AndSewON 905-546-0198. Please emphasize that it is the new Kehila Heschel Logo.

TOPS: Navy blue or white tops, collared golf shirts or turtleneck with Kehila Heschel Logo. Navy blue or white pullover or sweatshirt with Kehila Heschel Logo

BOTTOMS: Solid navy bottoms

- no jeans or pants with stripes; no leggings unless worn under skirt/jumper/dress
- no clothing with logos other than Kehila Heschel

SHOES: Running Shoes must be worn to participate in all gym and outdoor activities

Crocs and flip-flops are not appropriate

HEAD COVERINGS: All students, boys and girls, are encouraged to wear *kippot* (head-coverings) while at school.

In warm weather, students may wear navy shorts but must wear a T-shirt with a Kehila Heschel logo.

In winter, all children should wear full **snowsuits (coat and pants), hats and gloves/mittens and boots, as they will be going outside during recess.**

SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

Students are expected to provide school supplies, as per a list compiled by the teachers and sent to school at the start of the school year. All necessary textbooks and selected materials will be provided by the school.

HEALTH

Medications: School policy is to administer **prescription medications** only in their original container. If your child requires medication during the school day, you will need to sign a letter of authorization, which includes information by a physician if prescription drugs are to be administered, regarding the administration of the medication. Please obtain a form from the office. The medication should be brought to and picked up from the office daily, unless other arrangements have been made with the Kehila Office.

Accidents or Unexpected Illness during the school day:

In the event of any accident or if your child is taken ill during the school day every effort will be made to contact you or your identified representative. If in the opinion of school staff urgent treatment is required, an ambulance will be called at your expense and your child will be taken to the Emergency Room at Hamilton Health Science Corporation-McMaster Site. A signed consent form covering this situation is included in the Registration Package.

Sickness:

Out of fairness to all our students, we ask you to keep your child at home if he or she has a condition which may be contagious. Please notify the school of any communicable diseases such as chicken pox, measles etc.

Allergies:

Information on any child who has an allergy should be included on the health form. If your child may need to use an EPIPEN at any time, one should be left in the school office and one should be kept in a fanny pack with the child at all times.

Lice: Please notify the school when detected and keep your child at home until treated.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Kehila Heschel School is committed to provide a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment where everyone – children, students, staff, parents and the community – feels welcome, safe and respected. Our Safe Welcome Program includes locked outside doors, security cameras and buzzers to ensure only authorized visitors enter the school.

Please help us keep the school safe by strictly following our school security protocols – including reporting any suspicious activity, ensuring doors are firmly closed and not allowing anyone to enter the building without using the intercom system. Please always clearly announce who you are at the door.

Kehila Heschel staff has a protocol in place for safety and emergency procedures, including lockdown drills and safe entry procedures. All teachers have been taught the security protocol that would be applied in the school in the event of suspicious activities or a breach of security in the building. This is reviewed twice a year with all Kehila Heschel staff.

CIJA (The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs) is evaluating security measures of all Hamilton Jewish organizations including Kehila Heschel School and the Temple Anshe Sholom as well as providing safety and security training for our staff.

Use of technology in the classroom – Computers are used to support learning in our classrooms. Teachers are always present and monitoring computer use.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition Payment Policy

Payment to the Kehila Heschel School can be made by cheque (**made payable to The Kehila Jewish Day School**), e-transfers or credit card (3% administration charge on all credit card payments). A deposit is required with the application form and will be deducted off the last tuition payment for the year. Postdated cheques should be dated for the 1st of each month beginning September 1st. Other arrangements can be made with the office.

A deposit of \$650.00 is required with application.

All deposits are non-refundable unless the school cannot accommodate your child.

(See bursary applications below)

Tuition Obligation and Refund Policy:

When a student leaves Kehila Heschel during the school year, the following tuition obligations and refund policy apply.

Fees to be reimbursed minus the non-refundable deposit of \$650.00 will be calculated according to the following formula:

- when written notification is received prior to August 1st - 100%
- when written notification is received prior to September 1st – 90%
- when written notification is received prior to October 1st – 75%
- when written notification is received prior to November 1st – 50%
- when written notification is received prior to December 1st – 30%
- when written notification is received after January 1st - 0%

Any balance owing will be due when the student is withdrawn.

If a student is expelled from Kehila Heschel School and tuition refund due will be paid without interest.

Bursaries

Kehila believes that no child should be denied a Jewish education because of financial needs. Bursaries are available and are allocated according to objective criteria set and implemented by the Bursary Committee. Applicants for bursaries are invited to submit the bursary application form (on the Kehila Heschel website) through the office to the Bursary Committee at the time of re-enrollment. All information related to bursary applications is strictly confidential. A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required at time of registration.

Fundraising:

Fundraising is an essential undertaking which extends throughout the school year. **All parents are asked to assist in any fundraising.** A 'Fundraising Events Committee' will meet early in the school year to create the event calendar (meeting date and time will be announced in advance in the newsletter).

Donations

In order to enhance our Kabbalat Shabbat and other holiday programs, each family will be asked throughout the course of the year to donate supplies for these programs. The Kehila Heschel office will notify and guide you through the process.

Kehila Heschel welcomes donations for the purpose of ordering classroom supplies, computer equipment (hardware and software), art supplies and books for the School Library as well as contributions to the school's capital fund. Tax receipts will be provided

PARENTS AS PARTNERS AT KEHILA HESCHEL

Kehila Heschel encourages parents to play an active role in the school, or on the Board of Directors, volunteering at school events, to supervising lunches, or accompanying students on school trips. Consider becoming actively involved and sharing your expertise on the Board and school committees!

PARENT-SCHOOL communication

Keep abreast of important information and school activities by regularly checking:

- The parent bulletins in the schools hallway
- Weekly news communication (sent by email)
- Monthly Newsletter, which includes theme and academic preview for the month.
- Monthly calendar and note special events

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

General Communication:

Please check your child's backpacks/messenger bags daily. Also, please check your email ***daily*** for messages and announcements.

Agendas: (Grades 1-5)

This tool will be used ***daily*** to communicate homework, due dates and messages. Please check and initial daily so that your child's teacher will know that you have seen and followed up on the note.

Communications with Teachers:

Parents are encouraged to keep regular contact with the teachers. This can be through written notes, personal meetings, telephone calls and by email.

What if a Parent has a concern:

There may be times when classroom issues arise that are of concern to parents. When this occurs, the first step should be to contact your child's teacher so that the issue can be presented and answers received. If this does not result in an acceptable response, the parent could then approach the principal for his/her follow-up. Please note that our Principal is a teaching principal and will be instructing students during school hours. Parents wishing to speak to the principal should book an appointment beforehand with the office. If after this second step is taken and there is still no resolution, the parent may wish to notify the board of the concern. The concern will then be shared with the Education Committee who will investigate further to recommend a course of action to be taken. This process is included as a part of the **Kehila Progressive Discipline Policy**. (Posted on the Kehila Heschel's website)

Report Cards:

Report cards will be issued three times a year and will conform to provincial standards. The report cards will be placed in your child's messenger bag. Parent-teacher conferences will follow report cards in 1st and 2nd terms. Parents may request a conference at any time during the year.

KEHILA HESCHEL SCHOOL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Code of Conduct

Kehila Heschel is committed to providing an environment where students, parents and staff feel welcomed and safe. We aim to foster in our student body, a philosophy of mutual respect towards themselves, fellow students, teachers and other adults. At Kehila Heschel we focus on creating a community, a Kehila, which values social inclusion and diversity. Bullying and exclusion is not acceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. Any such incidents will be addressed quickly and with sensitivity.

Consistent with this school policy all adults, including teachers, staff, parents and visitors to the school are expected to conduct themselves according to these values. The school principal is empowered to request that any adult determined to be behaving contrary to school values leave the school premises.

Birthday Celebrations

The school and its staff work hard to create an environment where each child feels a sense of belonging and acceptance. It can be very damaging to a child's self-esteem if he or she feels excluded when not invited to a party. We ask that you help your child to be sensitive to the feelings of others and to plan their parties accordingly.

For birthdays that are being celebrated away from school and if the whole class is not invited we ask that invitations be sent by mail or by phone. If the whole class is invited you may distributed in school!

It is our hope that families will observe kashrut and Shabbat when planning parties so as not to exclude any child from attending.

Homework Policy

The purpose of homework at Kehila Heschel School

- Reinforcement of skills learned in class
- Revisiting and reviewing material previously taught for consolidation and connection
- Mastery of basic skills
- Homework is also viewed as an opportunity to have students develop ownership for their own learning.
- Research for a project may be assigned for homework, however all project work will be completed at school

Homework Procedures and Guidelines

- Weekly homework will be written in the agenda by students in Grade 1-5
 - All subjects and language homework will be assigned on Mondays for completion by the following Monday. Each Monday students will be expected to present a book report.
 - Students are expected to read nightly in at least one language, keeping in mind that all three languages require reading practice for fluency. It is suggested that 10 minutes daily in second language learning would be optimal.
 - Opportunities are encouraged for parents to provide real life applications
 - For all subjects, assignments are not due the next day; thus, dividing homework into manageable parts throughout the week is highly suggested.
 - Kindergarten will not be assigned homework, but reading to your children daily is strongly encouraged to build a love for reading.
 - Homework will be collected and checked by the teacher each Monday
 - Each Language will send home a homework folder for completion
- Homework will not be assigned on Jewish Holidays or on Shabbat.

Suggested Time Guidelines

Grade 1 – 10- 15 minutes per day

Grade 2 – 10—30 minutes per day

Grade 3/4/5 – 15 to 40 minutes per day

Real Life Application Suggestions for Supporting and Extending School Learning

- for math and science concepts – use of fraction in cooking, measurement of height, weight and space, data management surveys of household chores and favorite foods or activities.
- For language exposure and usage – set aside a meal or activity each week where all can speak Hebrew or French; use audio books in French or Hebrew

Homework Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers help students establish a routine of regular, independent study by:

- Clearly communicating the purpose, benefits, and expectation of all homework.
- Coordinating homework with other team members to avoid overloading children with work.
- Using homework that is purposeful, challenging, and directly related to class work and appropriate to students' learning needs.

Students take ownership of their own learning by:

- Accepting responsibility for the completion of homework tasks within set time frames,
- Seeking assistance when difficulties arise.
- Organizing their time to manage home obligations, participation in physical activity and sports and recreational and cultural activities.

Parents/Guardians can help with their child by:

- Allowing students to work independently but being available to answer questions or assist with directions.
- Dividing homework into shorter time periods with frequent breaks if this works better for the student and assisting the child with portioning long-term assignments into manageable chunks.
- Creating a home schedule that includes dedicating time for homework every day.