



Danforth Jewish Circle

**Children's Jewish Studies
Program**

Parents' Manual

Calendar 2007-2008

School Dates

October 11- First day class

October 18 -Parent Orientation

November 11- Craft & Challah afternoon - **Riverdale Presbyterian, 662 Pape Avenue**

December 6 - Chanukkah party - **Ms Miriam's, 583 A Danforth Avenue**

December 21 - Last class of 2007

January 10 - Classes resume

March 15 -no class-March Break

May 8 - Last day class

May 9 - **Children's Led Shabbat**- **Eastminster, 310 Danforth Avenue**

May 17 - **B'Nei Mitzvah service** - **Eastminster, 310 Danforth Avenue**

JS PROGRAM STAFF:

Principal: **Michelle Brown**
Supervisor B'Nei program/ JS : **Jason Leizer**
Grade 1: **Jessica Acherman**
Grade 2/ 3 : **Carolina Botbol**
Grade 4: **Liat Papular**
Grade 5: **Alysse Rich**
Grade 6: **David Berkal**
B'Nei program: **Assaf Weisz**
Assistant: **Ben Plested**
Assistant: **Michelle Kahn**
Assistant: **Max Rannie**

DJC JS ADMINISTRATOR: Kathy Miller

Who We Are

The Danforth Jewish Circle

The Danforth Jewish Circle (DJC) is an inclusive and egalitarian Jewish community centered in downtown Riverdale. Our Jewish community is committed to reflecting and responding to the broad spectrum of families and individuals that make up our vibrant neighbourhood, including its many interfaith, multicultural, observant, secular and same-sex households.

Established by parents in 1998, our children's Jewish studies program is designed and dedicated to providing our children with a positive Jewish experience, an understanding of their heritage and history, and a sense of belonging to a diverse community with a unique culture. Our objective is to ensure our students learn not just the "what" but the "why" with an emphasis on arts, music, culture and fun.

Contact Us:

Jewish Studies line: 416-580-1233

Danforth Jewish Circle: 416-580-6303

E-mail: info@djctoronto.com

Contacting the DJC Children's Jewish Studies Program

You can reach us by leaving a message on the DJC children's program telephone message system. For any urgent messages: While class is in session, the principal may be contacted by dialing the **Jewish Studies line: 416-580-1233.**

Volunteers

The Danforth Jewish Circle Children's Jewish Studies Program is organized and administered by a dedicated legion of volunteers ably assisted by professional teaching, program development support and a full time DJC/ JS administrator.

Our volunteer parent Education committee members are responsible for assisting with curriculum development, interviewing and hiring teachers, filling the supply cabinets, sorting library books, fundraising, and meeting monthly.

Classroom parents and program volunteers are also an integral part of our programming. Volunteering is a great way to add to the quality of our program. Many parents have special skills we could use in the classroom. It not only provides the many extra hands and feet we need to run our program; it improves parent/school communications, and ensures our fees remain affordable. It is the combination of staff and parents working together, for the benefit of our children that makes our school a special place.

Family Programming Series: Our new programs are aimed at uniting parent/guardian and child in a Jewish educational experience while creating opportunities for quality family time. **We need you!**

Classroom parents: Want another child? How about a classroom full? Please consider becoming a class parent. Help your child's teacher with set up or help with snack or supervising a craft. As the year continues we will ask of your time to help plan some special activities.

Our team of dedicated volunteers includes:

DJC Board of Directors:

Co-Chairs: **Daphne Woolf/Lynne Raskin**
Member: **Josie Lalonde**
Strategic Planning: **Alex Lowy**
Children's Education: **Jeff Krymalowski**
Rituals & Practices: **Avrum Jacobson**
Social and Cultural/ Adult ED: **Lynne Raskin/ Rosie Beitel**

Education Committee:

Chair: **Laurie Stein**
Member: **Diane Wise**
Member: **Chantal Bassous**
Member: **Jeff Krymalowski**
Member: **Galina Vaisman**
Member: **Nadya Burton**
Member: **Daphne Woolf**

Supporters

The Danforth Jewish Circle membership generously supports our children's program by providing both core funding and tuition bursaries.

Special thanks go to the Miles Nadal JCC, and the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto whose grants have enabled our program to flourish and grow.

Bursaries

The Danforth Jewish Circle is committed to providing an accessible education program. Our mandate is that no child will be turned away for lack of funds. Both full and partial tuition grants are available to those in need. Post-dated cheques can also be spread throughout the year if that is helpful.

Please contact Kathy Miller to inquire about any tuition assistance:

DJC: 416-580-6303

DJC JS: 416- 580-1233

E-mail: info@djctoronto.com

Curriculum

Common Themes & Goals

Our program values Judaism as a dynamic living religion. Certain themes and goals are integrated throughout all levels of our program. Our students learn to question what it means to be a Jew and how being Jewish affects our values, beliefs, and behavior. Together, students and teachers will ask the question "Who am I?" and explore what a Jewish identity means personally, within the family, the Jewish community, and the community-at-large. A key component of the program is respect for the broad spectrum of multi-culturalism, which exists within Judaism.

These issues will be explored through discussion and debate, music, drama, language, holidays, bible stories, family activity flyers, Torah, and Jewish rituals, as well as, history and current events.

Program Themes

Grade SK/1: Orientation to Jewish Life - Holiday Traditions & Rituals

- Introduction to the Jewish calendar (holidays) - the story, custom and symbols behind the holidays and Shabbat, as well as basic vocabulary
- Symbols of a Jewish home - identify objects that can be found in the home. Session/s on the mezuzot, candlesticks, wine cups, etc.
- Explore what it means to be part of a community
- Activities to include such things as making a judaica, a holiday book, and a Shabbat basket

Grade 2: Jewish Life Cycles and The Synagogue

- Learn what objects are found in a synagogue - see a Torah, ark, etc.
- Learn the people and the roles they play at the synagogue
- Introduction to Jewish life cycle rituals including Britmilah, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Weddings and Funerals.

Grade 3: Bible Stories and the Jewish Calendar

- Meet the main characters and hear the main stories in the books of Genesis & Exodus
- Understand how these bible stories form the basis of and support Jewish values and mitzvot.
- Learn the rich heritage of Jewish holidays, as they come up in the calendar, through arts, crafts, story telling and discussion.

Grade 4: Diaspora Jewry: Jewish Movements and Sects

- Explain the differences between Chasidism, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionism, Secularism and unaffiliated communities.
- Identify the issues that make each of the movements unique. Explore what the different movements say about such topics as the role of women, same sex relationships, intermarriage, Shabbat, kashrut and world issues.
- Activities to include site visits to different Jewish communities in Toronto and interviews with representatives from each of the different movements.

Program Themes (continued)

Grade 5: Jews Around the World and Ethical Decision Making

The class will be looking at the lives and customs of Jews around the world:

- Using a map of the world, identify places where Jews live
- Investigate the different countries (i.e. Ethiopia, Israel, Arab lands, China, and India) and how their cultures and locations influenced their Jewish practices.
- Sephardic & Ashkenazic traditions - how they differ
- Interact with Jewish Children around the World (via e-mail buddies)

Grade 6: Social Action

Our grade 6 students will focus on Tikun Olam. Tikun Olam is an integral part of taking on the responsibilities of Jewish Life. During the course of the year the students will:

- Consider Jewish tradition in ethical decision making
- Incorporate Jewish values such as Tzedakah and Gemillut Chasadim into life

Activities to include choosing a social action project that the class can participate in as a group

Grade 7: B'Nei Mitzvah program

- The DJC is offering a group B'nai Mitzvah program that will allow and encourage participants to explore their Jewishness and find their own, individual connection to the Jewish community. In this process, participants work closely with a group of peers, and will be expected to support each other through this process. This year-long program culminates in a group B'Nai Mitzvah ceremony during which the participants will share the results of their individual achievements and exploration, in addition to the work of the group as a whole.

Hebrew

A portion of each day is allocated to our Modern (vs. Biblical) Hebrew program. The goals of our Hebrew program are:

- Familiarity and identification with language and culture through songs, brachot and games
- Know how to recite, and know the meaning of some of the basic prayers and brachot
- Recognize the Hebrew alphabet
- Know how to decode Hebrew in preparation for bar/bat mitzvah
- Follow simple Hebrew instructions

Registration & Admission

Fees and Discounts

The fee for the 2007-8 school year: **\$600.00** per child. Various discounts may apply.

Refunds

Once you enroll your child in our program we begin making plans for the coming year such as determining the number of classes, hiring teachers and reserving space. Therefore, deposits are non-refundable. Once the school year begins, if you withdraw your child from the program during the first two weeks, 50% of the **remaining** full-year fee (total fees excluding the non-refundable deposit) will be refunded. Once the 3rd class has been held, refunds will not be given.

Late Entry

Students entering the program after the beginning of the year must meet with the Principal to assess whether or not late admission is appropriate. The Principal will assess what steps should be taken to ensure a smooth and successful integration into the class for the new student, as well as a minimal amount of disruption to the ongoing class. These may include meeting the teacher, identifying tutoring requirements, visiting a classroom or visiting an upcoming special program. Although every effort will be made to accommodate new students, there may be instances where this is not possible.

Prior to joining the class the new student and his / her parent must agree to the classroom code of conduct.

Receipts

The Danforth Jewish Circle will issue receipts for school fees.

Admission:

Pre-Registration for Returning Students

Returning students and their siblings are allowed (and encouraged) to pre-register for the following year at the end of the prior school year. This ensures a spot for your child before open registration begins.

Parent Agreement to Terms of Policy Manual

All parents will receive a copy of the Danforth Jewish Circle Children's Jewish Study Program policy manual. Enrollment in the school means that parents and students agree to abide by these policies. Policy may be revised from time to time as deemed necessary. Parents will be advised of such changes through the school newsletter.

Code of Conduct / Consequences

At the beginning of the year each class will cooperatively develop a classroom code of conduct that the program coordinator, teacher, and students, will agree to.

When problems arise that hinder the rights of students to dwell in a positive learning environment, the person(s) creating the problem will be approached and the behaviour dealt with appropriately. Students are always given the opportunity to change their behaviour before additional steps are taken.

Our approach to discipline is a stepped approach with steps in proportion to the level of misconduct. Outlined below are examples of the progressive steps that might occur:

- **Minor incidents** (repeated interrupting, inattention): Dealt with by the instructor at the time of the incident. The child may be withdrawn from the group and given a firm, friendly verbal warning. Should the same interruptions halt the instruction plan of teacher on more than two occasions, parents will be made aware of children's behaviour.
- **Nuisance Behaviours** (intentional interrupting, deliberate inattention): Child temporarily withdrawn from group and discusses behaviour with program coordinator. Parents will be made aware of behaviours that recur. Child and teacher will draw up contract to negotiate appropriate consequences to behaviour. Parents will be made aware of situations.
- **Serious Misbehaviours** (repeated nuisances, talking back, refusal to cooperate with group / instructor, roughhousing, pushing, chronic late arrival, chronic absenteeism); Child discusses behaviour with program coordinator and may be asked to prepare a written action plan to remedy behaviour. Parents notified and involved in solving problem. If behaviour recurs child may be asked to leave program without refund.
- **Major Offenses** (theft, vandalism, leaving group unescorted, violence or verbal abuse -especially that of a discriminatory nature): Child discusses behaviour with program coordinator. Parents notified immediately. Reparation to property made and police involved if necessary. Child may be immediately and permanently removed from the program without refund.

We will make every effort to work with children and parents to find a solution to behavioral problems whenever possible. Parents are encouraged to contact the program coordinator if a child raises concerns about the program.

School Operations

ARRIVAL TIME AND DROP OFF:

Class meets Thursday afternoon from **4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.** Please ensure your child is dropped off and picked up on time.

***All parents/caregivers are urged not to drop off your children before 4:10 PM. Only at this time, will classroom doors be opened.** Teachers need this essential time to prepare the classroom before class begins.

Students in Kita SK/1-4: If by chance your child arrives before 4:10 PM, parents or caregivers are required to supervise their children until they enter the classroom - no running in the hallway, coats off, knapsacks on hooks and kids sitting by their classroom door. _

Students Kita 5 & 6: As many kids of this age may be unaccompanied by parents, please instruct all children to go directly to their classroom, but please remind them to time their after school walk **to arrive by 4:10 PM.** Please be sure to provide—In Writing permission for your child to walk to Ms Miriams Nursery school or teacher cannot dismiss child.

Thanks everyone for your attention to this and we appreciate your cooperation!

Washrooms

Please encourage your child to use the washroom before class starts. Your child's teacher will encourage them to use the washroom during the class break.

Tardiness...Disruption of Class

We have a full and exciting curriculum planned for your child. Therefore classes must start punctually at 4:15 p.m. It is imperative that you make every effort to ensure your child arrives in class on time.

If you know in advance that your child will be late, please leave a message on the school voice mail.

In the event that your child must be late please stress with him/ her, the importance of joining the class in a non-disruptive manner. Chronic late arrival is considered a serious misbehaviour and will be addressed according to the guidelines outlined in the program code of conduct.

Safe Arrival

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child arrives safely to class. Although attendance will be taken, we are not in a position to make safe arrival phone calls.

Absences

If you know in advance that your child will be absent please leave a message on the school voice mail. If your child misses two weeks of class in a row your child's instructor will phone you.

Pickup

Class is over at 6:15 p.m. Every effort should be made to be punctual. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child knows whom they may go home with, if you are not picking them up personally.

When picking up your child at the end of the day parents have 2 choices:

- If your child has your permission (communicated by returning a permission form) your child will be dismissed on their own at 6:15pm
- Otherwise parents must come up to pick up their child(ren)

Late Pickup

If you are delayed unavoidably, please notify the school so that your child can be reassured and that alternative arrangements can be made.

Please leave at home:

- All electronic games and music players, rollerblades, hockey sticks, Soccer Balls, etc.
- Pets are not allowed in the school.

Cancellation / Severe Weather

In the event of an unscheduled school closure a message will be left on the school voice mail system. Every effort will be made to send you an email.

Visiting the School

Many opportunities and special events exist for parents to visit and volunteer in the school. If you wish to sit in on one of our classes please call to arrange an appropriate time. Parents can also arrange to meet with their child's teacher from 6:30 to 6:45 or at their mutual convenience.

In the event that out-of-town cousins or friends (etc.) wish to attend class with your child please leave a message for the administrator at least a week in advance. Every effort will be made to accommodate your guest.

Please call **Kathy Miller: 416-580-1233** or e-mail: info@djctoronto.com to arrange a visit.

First Aid, Emergencies & Special Needs

First aid will be available for minor cuts and scrapes.

Please ensure the administrator is aware of any special medical conditions, learning requirements, allergies, or food restrictions your child may have, as well as the recommended course of action or subsequent treatment that may be required.

In the event of an emergency, first we will attempt to contact you, followed by your emergency contact. If deemed necessary, 911 will be called. Please make sure we have your latest numbers, addresses and emergency contacts.

Food

Light snacks are provided for all Students at Ms Miriam's in the SK/1- 4 grades.

Children in grades 5 & 6 (at Riverdale Presbyterian) are required to snack before class begins.

PLEASE NOTE: Some students in our school have life threatening peanut and or nut allergies!!! Please help our school remain nut free.

Field Trips

Field trip permission forms will not be sent home for walking field trips in our neighborhood.

Field trips requiring the TTC or car will require a special form. In the event your child has not returned their signed permission forms **he / she will not be permitted on the trip.**

Communications / Information: Roles & Responsibilities

Confidentiality

All communication between parents, school staff, and the Jewish Studies Education Committee is confidential.

Principal

- To ensure a safe and stimulating environment to the students and teachers
- To ensure that all children are accounted for in the program
- To Liaise between the ED committee in terms of expectations, program requirements and staffing issues, teachers and teaching assistants
- To submit invoices and expenses to Finance Department in a timely manner
- To keep within limitations of the budget
- To communicate any parental concerns, needs and requests with the ED committee_
- To attend monthly ED committee meetings
- To plan and implement a successful and stimulating Children's Judaic Studies program
- To ensure support and training of all program instructors_

- To maintain a safe and accessible learning environment for all students; seeking support from outside sources where possible
- To liaise between Mercaz and the ED committee
- To keep the parent body of the school informed in collaboration with the DJC JS Administrator of all upcoming events
- To communicate with the parents as needed to keep them included in the school environment (via newsletters throughout the year) _
- To coordinate enrichment programs where applicable to help children further their understanding of Holidays and rituals
- To ensure that all children are recognized as fully entitled to access our school
- To ensure that our Education program is free of all discrimination
- To acknowledge and celebrate all the families of our children participants
- To be present during school hours when/where possible and within reason
- To be a committed and supportive staff person to all parents, teachers and students

Teachers

- Call students to introduce themselves and welcome students prior to start of class
- Contribute class summaries for inclusion in school newsletter
- Communicate with parents by telephone at least twice a year (e.g. November and March), regarding student feedback and issues or concerns
- Call parents to discuss student absences if absent two weeks in a row
- Provide written classroom progress reports at year end
- Participate in assemblies and special activities
- Be available to parents and participate in parent-teacher conferences as required
- Strengthen co-operation between home and school

Parents

- Check child's back pack
- Check e-mail
- Read newsletters
- Complete and return appropriate informational forms on student and family so that records remain up to date and accurate. Notify school immediately of changes
- Return field trip permission form
- Check DJC school voicemail for schedule changes
- Keep teachers and/ or administrator informed of issues or concerns that relate to your child

DJC JS Administrator

- Be available to parents who may call, or request an interview to discuss the program, teacher, or student's concerns. **Parents please note:** matters directly affecting the education or well being of individual children should be directed first to the teacher. Matters directly affecting the school may be raised with the administrator.
- Develop / distribute newsletters
- Maintain Student Records
- Maintain Distribution Lists
- Maintain and Distribute parent's manual and calendar

Education Committee

- Set program objectives

- Develop policies regarding program objections, communications, marketing, and operations
- Provide opportunities for open and ongoing feedback, and ensure program is evaluated on a regular basis
- Meet with parents regarding special circumstances, which may arise from time to time.