

Augusta Jewish Community Sunday School Student/Parent Handbook

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I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Augusta Jewish Community Sunday School (AJCSS) is:

- To provide a Jewish education of the highest quality to Jewish children in the Augusta area, while instilling a sense of joy and excitement in Jewish life and practice.
- To teach children topics which are shared by all branches of Judaism, including Jewish history, Bible, Hebrew language, prayers, rituals, and Jewish values, and life cycle events.
- To promote those personal qualities that are consistent with the values and teachings of Judaism and Jewish tradition.
- To promote interaction and instill a positive sense of community among the Jewish children in the area.

II. Organization

Governance of the AJCSS is provided by the AJCSS Oversight Committee, which consists of three representatives and Rabbi each from Adas Yeshurun Synagogue (AYS) and Congregation Children of Israel (CCI) and one representative each from the Augusta Jewish Federation and the Augusta Jewish Community Center. Representatives should have expertise in the areas of education, finance, or public relations and will serve as long as willing for terms of 3 years. *Ex-officio* non-voting members of the Oversight Committee will include the Rabbis of the participating congregations, the AJCSS Principal, and the AJCSS Lead Teacher. The Oversight Committee will elect a Chair and Secretary annually from its members. Each will serve for a one-year term of office.

The representatives work on one of the teams: Policy and Procedure, Personnel, and Budget and Finance. The curriculum is monitored by the Education and Curriculum team, which is chaired by the AYS Rabbi and CCI Rabbi. The Curriculum used by the AJCSS was developed by the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life.

The Oversight Committee is responsible for ensuring the application of a high quality education program, making hiring and firing decisions based on recommendations from the Principal, developing and monitoring policies and procedures, approving the budget annually, and overseeing the spending of funds in line with the approved budget. Members of the Oversight Committee are responsible for keeping their respective constituencies informed about the AJCSS.

Staff

Staff of the AJCSS consists of a Principal, Rabbis from the participating congregations, and teachers. Madrichim (Aides) are hired, as needed. Additional teachers may be hired to address special subject areas such as Hebrew, art, music, and dance.

Location

As determined by the Oversight Committee, the AJCSS will meet alternately by semester or year at Adas Yeshurun Synagogue (AYS) and Congregation Children of Israel (CCI) Bart D. Wittenberg Religious School in Augusta. Special programs may be held at the Augusta Jewish Community Center (AJCC). Parents will be informed in advance of changes in schedule or location.

Curriculum

The curriculum that is used by the AJCSS was developed by the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life and has been approved by the Oversight Committee. Curriculum material focuses predominantly on areas of study common to all branches of Judaism. These may include prayers, holidays and rituals, history, the Bible, Israel, and Jewish values and life cycle events. Curriculum content that is unique to a specific branch of Judaism, as well as preparation for B'nai Mitzvah, will be taught during weekday classes at the respective congregations.

Finance

Parents are encouraged to contact their congregation's office to obtain tuition rates for religious school. Children from families that are not members of the participating congregations should contact the chair of the AJCSS Oversight Committee for tuition rates.

Financial aid, based on need, may be available. Please contact your Rabbi or the Executive Director of the Augusta Jewish Community Center/Federation for further information. Other special circumstances should be addressed to the Chair of the Oversight Committee.

III. General Information

Role of Parents

The AJCSS can best achieve its goals only if the home and school work together. Since parents play an essential role in helping to fulfill the dictum of our tradition, “And you shall teach them diligently to your children,” parental involvement is extremely important. Parents are encouraged to review schoolwork at home, maintain Jewish traditions in the home, and serve as role models of lifetime commitment to Jewish learning.

Please carefully review the policies contained in this handbook with your child(ren). These policies were established to provide a safe environment and an enjoyable experience for the children and staff and to ensure a respectful and effective learning environment.

Eligibility for Enrollment

Children from families that are members of congregations participating in the AJCSS are eligible for enrollment in the AJCSS. Children from families that are not members of the participating congregations (“unaffiliated”) may attend the AJCSS for a maximum of two years with the recommendation of at least one of the Rabbis of the participating congregations.

Age Requirements for Registration

Students entering the pre-kindergarten class at the AJCSS must be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year. Students entering kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the academic year. Students new to the area or to the school will be placed in the appropriate class at the discretion of the Principal/Lead Teacher, and/or the Rabbi(s).

Children registering for the monthly Bagels & Blox class must be 2 years old by September 1. A parent or designated adult must be present with his/her child during class. The class is scheduled only if there is sufficient enrollment.

Calendar

The AJCSS will meet a minimum of 25 Sundays during the school year. The Principal/Lead Teacher, with the approval of the Oversight Committee, will determine the calendar. The calendar will consider Jewish and secular holidays and the calendars of the Richmond and Columbia County Schools.

Hours of Operation

The school meets from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to attend all scheduled AJCSS classes. Although make-up work may be requested by the parent for occasional and unavoidable absences, regular attendance allows the child exposure to all learning experiences.

Students should be in their classroom by 10:00 AM as late admission is disruptive to the learning of the rest of the class. If a student is tardy three times in one semester, parents will be asked to

meet with the Principal prior to the student returning to class. To be fair to both the students and staff, it is important that students be picked up on time at the end of each session.

Report Cards and Grades

Report cards will be issued two times a year. The grading system to be used will be determined by the Principal with the approval of the Oversight Committee.

Behavioral Expectations

We look forward to having your child(ren) in class and we hope to make the AJCSS experience enjoyable, successful, and fulfilling. Students, however, are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with religious and learning environments. They are expected to show respect and consideration for themselves, others, and school property at all times. Students are expected to exhibit cooperative behavior with peers and school personnel. Parents are asked to reinforce the importance of good behavior. Should students demonstrate inappropriate behavior, teachers will use acceptable strategies to correct the situation. Multiple disruptions will result in parental conferences with the teacher, Principal, and/or Rabbi to discuss a plan of action to help ensure the student's success.

Parents will be expected to reimburse the AJCSS for any items of property that are lost, damaged, or defaced by their child. The payment will be made in a timely manner. The payment must be made prior to the child being enrolled for the next school year.

Conferences with Teachers

Parents are welcome at any time to make an appointment to speak with school staff to discuss their child's performance in school. Please avoid discussions with school staff during school hours, as this takes away from learning time for the children.

Classroom Guests

Parents, grandparents, and other congregants are welcome to visit classes and to volunteer in the AJCSS. Parents should contact the classroom teacher *in advance* if a student would like to bring a guest to school. This will assure that adequate materials are available for the guest. AJCSS students and their guests are to check in with the Principal before going to class.

Dietary Rules

Kashrut will be observed in the AJCSS. The following rules must be followed:

When the school meets at AYS, all foods brought into the AJCSS must be certified kosher and must be verified kosher by the Rabbi of AYS or his/her representative. Any questions regarding kashrut or the preparation of foods that require cooking while at AYS should be directed to the Rabbi of AYS.

When the AJCSS meets at another location, such as CCI or the AJCC, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and pareve products may be used without a hechsher; fish must be kosher. Rabbis of both AYS and CCI provide oversight using the guidelines for this situation. However, meat, poultry, and meat/poultry products must have hechshers and must be used in consultation with the Rabbis of both AYS and CCI or their designated representatives.

Food or drink will not be allowed in the classroom except during the time scheduled for snack or if otherwise sanctioned by the teacher.

Head Coverings/Kipot

The AJCSS recognizes that the participating congregations follow different ritual practices regarding head coverings for males. Thus, the AJCSS adopts the following policy:

- When the AJCSS meets at Adas Yeshurun Synagogue, all males will be required to wear kipot.
- When meeting at Congregation Children of Israel or other locations (e.g., AJCC), males will follow the custom of their respective congregation regarding head covering.
- The wearing of kipot or head covering by females will be optional in all locations.

Tzedakah

Students are encouraged to contribute to the AJCSS Tzedakah Fund each Sunday. Collection of tzedakah is to teach the mitzvah of sharing with the needy. Money (or other items) collected will be donated to charities (either Jewish or community-based) recommended by the Principal and voted upon by the students.

Dress Code

Students and staff must dress appropriately for an educational institution and in a manner that is conducive with the learning process or educational activity. Shorts/skorts may be worn; however, gym-style shorts, oversized shorts, biker-style shorts, or excessively tight or skimpy shorts are not permitted. Shoes must be worn at all times. Tank tops, muscle shirts, spaghetti straps, torn jeans, halter tops (i.e., resulting in bare midriff) are not allowed. Clothing containing symbols advertising or advocating drug or alcohol use are not allowed. Final decisions on the appropriateness of attire rest with the Principal.

Fire and Safety Policy

Each teacher and student will be aware of the emergency exit route for the class. There will be occasional unannounced fire/safety drills. Fire extinguishers will be well displayed, and their location will be shown to the students. A first aid kit will be available at all times. The Principal will maintain a record of emergency drills.

Holiday Celebrations

Jewish holidays will be studied in our school. However, secular holidays with non-Jewish religious origins (e.g., Halloween and Valentine's Day) will not be observed in the AJCSS.

Inclement Weather/Emergencies

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency issues requiring cancellation of school, the Principal will notify the parents using whatever means is reasonable at the time (e.g., e-mail, telephone, electronic phone tree).

Website: <http://ajcss.weebly.com/>

We are excited about your child's participation in the AJCSS. Feel free at any appropriate time to offer suggestions, ask questions, make observations, and express concerns. Contact the School Principal, or your Rabbi, or anyone on the AJCSS Oversight Committee.

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