

The Beit Rabban Day School Family Handbook



Jewish education, reimagined.

2018-2019 Academic Year

אין העולם מתקיים אלא בזכות הבל תינוקות של בית רبان
“The world is sustained by the pure vapors of breath
of young children of beit rabban (*tinokot shel beit rabban*).”

-The Babylonian Talmud; Shabbat 119b

“*Beit Rabban*” is the term used in classical Jewish texts for a school where youngsters encounter the wisdom of the Sages, a dynamic that was essential to rich Jewish life and the guarantee of the community’s future. Our name reflects our conviction that learning is a supremely valuable endeavor, that Jews should be fluent in the texts of our heritage, and that the future depends on the education of children to be knowledgeable, thoughtful, and responsible participants in their world.

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Beit Rabban Mission Statement and Core Values

Beit Rabban is an innovative day school, creating a model of an open Jewish learning community comprised of diverse Jewish families who are all passionately committed to Jewish life. At the heart of our education is a focus on the whole child and an interdisciplinary curriculum that empowers students to master the necessary skills for text-study and problem-solving. Children learn in small groups that emphasize critical inquiry, experiential learning, self-reflection and collaboration. Beit Rabban graduates are responsible and respectful citizens, well-equipped for rigorous academic environments and beyond as lifelong Torah learners and independent thinkers.

Core Values:

1. Beit Rabban values diversity of opinion as a tenet of the Jewish tradition and students are encouraged to honor and respect the views of others.
2. Beit Rabban is progressive in curricular orientation, constantly culling from the best of current academic practices.
3. Our faculty recognizes the spark in each child, nurtures creative expression of all kinds, and empowers students to become agents of their own learning.
4. Hebrew language is at the core of our curriculum. Beyond mastering the Hebrew of ancient Jewish texts, students learn to read, write and speak Modern Hebrew as a second near-native language.
5. Beit Rabban engages students in a dynamic relationship with Israel and emphasizes its significance to the Jewish people, our history and practice.
6. Our classroom environment encourages children to authentically respond to their learning, with teachers fostering students' moral, spiritual and intellectual growth.
7. Beit Rabban students learn the value of meaningful community service and are encouraged to create and participate in class- and school-wide service projects.
8. Beit Rabban creates a caring community and actively supports the endeavor of parenting.

The Early Childhood Center (The Gan)

Building a Jewish Learning Community in Partnership with Parents

The Gan at Beit Rabban, our early childhood program, is infused with the foundational values and mission of our entire school. It provides a meaningful and compelling early childhood environment for contemporary Jewish families seeking the highest quality education for their children. In the Gan, teachers and parents work together in partnership to gain a deeper understanding of each individual child. In a warm, creative and intellectually stimulating environment, the Gan at Beit Rabban:

- Provides an environment in which the key processes of early childhood development are nurtured, with the building blocks for growth as the primary focus of concern.

- Facilitates healthy social and emotional development, helping the children to develop confidence in themselves as competent individuals and as learners.
- Promotes intellectual development and builds the foundations necessary for learning readiness across the curriculum.
- Fosters age appropriate physical and language skills development.

Class Placement

Our goal is for optimal placement for each child's developmental level. For children returning to our program, we work with previous teachers as we carefully consider each child's intellectual, social and emotional development. For children new to Beit Rabban, the Admissions Team considers the child's age and behavior as observed during the admissions process. We place children in groupings that ensure that their needs are met, and their educational growth is nurtured.

Building Relationships in the Beginning of the School Year

Separation and Attachment

Children in early childhood classes work hard in the first few weeks of school forming attachments and bonding with their teachers and new friends. In order to ease the separation from home and the transition into the children's new classes, the Gan teachers start to develop personal relationships with the children at the end of the summer before school starts. The first day of school (Wednesday, September 5) for all Gan students is only a partial day, with a parent or caregiver. While Gan Katom and Gan Sagol start full day on the second day of school (Thursday, Sept. 6), Gan Adom does not have a full day of school until the first day of the second week (Wednesday, Sept. 12). A Gan Orientation with school administrators is scheduled for parents on the day before school, Tuesday, Sept. 4 from 6:30-7:30 pm.

New Students entering the Gan: At the end of the summer, teachers visit each new student at their home. These visits are an important feature of the separation and attachment process. At least one parent is asked to be present during home visits, which are designed to introduce the year and the relationships between the child, the parents and the teachers. During this visit, photos will be taken with the teachers for the children to keep. In this way, there will be some anticipation of the relationship with the teachers, and the children will be greeted by a familiar face when they arrive at school. The visit is also an important opportunity for the child to develop a sense of safety, trust and confidence in the relationship between the significant adults in his or her life. Children are reassured by the fact that teachers have a positive relationship with their parents and know where their home is. During this visit and associated phone calls, the teachers will ask parents to share important and up to date information about the children to ease the transition from home to school.

Returning Gan Students: Children returning to Beit Rabban are invited to a private visit in their new classroom with the teachers during the last week of August. We ask that at least one parent accompany each student to this personal meeting. This is an opportunity to ease the transition from the old year to the new, to start developing new and trusting relationships between the child, their parents and the teachers, and provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to introduce themselves and talk privately before the start of school. A photo will also be taken of the child with the teachers that he or she will take home.

Beginning of the Year Schedule

The beginning of the school year is a time when children often need extra emotional support to develop attachments with their new friends and teachers and adjust to the new environment. There is a staggered phase-in schedule for all children in The Gan at Beit Rabban. Children will come to school for shorter periods that will lengthen over the first week. This practice enables children to gradually separate from parents or caregivers and to acclimate to school routines.

Successful school acclimation requires the active partnership of parents, teachers and child. In the first weeks of school, parents and teachers spend time together reflecting and arranging an appropriate schedule for the needs of each child. Teachers are flexible and sensitive to the needs of parents and children, and they are available after class to meet in person or by phone to discuss these matters.

On their first day at school, children participate in an orientation in a small group for approximately an hour and a half. At least one parent is asked to be present. Children and their parents may come for the whole-time period or for part of the orientation period, as seems appropriate. **Please do not bring food to this orientation.**

Most children begin to connect with the classroom and engage with classroom activities and with the teachers within the first weeks of school. It is also expected that some children will need more time. After this initial phase-in period, we will continue to work closely with families to ease any anxiety and to ensure comfort and confidence in the school environment. Above all we will ensure that the classroom environment is one in which each child attains a sense of belonging and comfort. We will work proactively to advance this process as quickly and sensitively as possible.

We ask that parents not visit the classroom unexpectedly during the day, either to see their child or to speak with the teachers. This can be unsettling for the child and for his or her classmates. It can also hinder the separation process. If a classroom door is closed it may mean that the children are engaged in learning or in a class meeting with the teachers and it may be inappropriate for you to enter immediately. In addition, please wait to be invited in for dismissal at the end of the school day. Please feel free to contact the classroom teachers and arrange for a visit; they will be happy to make a time that works for your schedule and the needs of the class.

Gan Orientation & Staggered Start Schedule for 2018-2019 School Year

Tuesday September 4th

Gan Parent Orientation: 6:30-7:30pm

Wednesday September 5th

Gan Orientation Day

Gan Adom: 8:30-10:30am

Gan Katom/Gan Sagol: 8:30-11:00am

Thursday September 6th

Gan Adom: 8:30- 11:30

Gan Katom and Gan Sagol: First Full Day

Friday September 7th

Gan Adom: 8:30-12:30

Gan Katom and Gan Sagol: Full Day

Wednesday September 12th

Gan Adom: First Full Day

Transitional Objects

Children are welcome to bring small transitional items to school that connect them to home such as photos or other small items that do not make sounds or light up. These will be kept in the children's cubbies and taken out when needed. Please remember to label these items. It is recommended that you select one item rather than several toys and that sentimental or otherwise valuable items are left at home.

Starting the School Day in the Gan

A thoughtfully planned morning routine and arrival at school is important for every child and can have a significant impact on their experience at school each day. Teachers work in partnership with parents and caregivers, paying attention to each child's needs and routines, to ensure that the day begins happily for the children.

School begins at 8:15AM for all students at Beit Rabban. Gan children must be escorted to their classrooms by an adult. Children may not ride in the elevator or use the stairs without a supervising adult. Classroom doors will be opened at 8:15AM and the children will be welcomed into the classroom environment. Teachers prepare activities for students to engage with during the arrival period so that they can play immediately upon entering school and transition easily into the school day. Please help us ensure a positive experience for your child by arriving on time.

*Please note that Gan children who arrive after 8:45AM must first stop at the Main Office with their parent or caregiver to sign in and obtain a late pass. This allows us to maintain accurate attendance records.

Your Child's Cubby

At the beginning of the year each Gan child will be allocated. Pieces of children's work, books to share at home, and reminders will be put in the cubbies to be taken home. Parents or caregivers should check the contents of the cubbies every day at dismissal. The children will be told where to place different items when they arrive at school. Anything that needs to be brought to class, including parents' notes to teachers, should be handed directly to the teachers in the morning.

Gan Dismissal

School ends at 12:30PM for those children attending the shorter day program and at 2:00PM for those attending the full day program. On Fridays, school ends at 12:30PM for children in the shorter program and at 1:30PM for children in the full day program. Families may also sign up for the Gan afterschool program Mondays through Thursdays until 3:30 pm.

Gan students who do not participate in afterschool activities are dismissed from their classrooms, parents/caregivers should come to the classroom to collect their children. Please wait outside until the teachers dismiss children one by one.

Parents picking up children at 12:30PM may come to the classroom from the lobby after 12:25PM and should leave promptly to allow the rest of the class to continue with their day.

Parents picking up children at 2:00PM or at 1:30PM on Fridays should come to the Gan floor no more than five minutes before the end of the day to collect their children.

Parents picking up children from the Afterschool Program at 3:30PM should wait in the lobby. Children will be brought to the Sanctuary and a teacher will release your child only to an adult or caregiver who has been listed on school forms.

Changing Dismissal Times in the Gan

Teachers will have the information from the forms you complete during the summer regarding who has permission to pick up your child from school. If your child will be picked up by anyone other than the individuals named on your pick-up form, we must have written notification from you via e-mail to the main office by noon. If someone named on the list that the teachers have not yet met will pick up your child, it is essential that they bring photo identification that day. It is also helpful to inform the teachers on that day. Please note that for the safety of your child, we will not release your child to anyone not listed on his or her pick-up form without express written permission. No exceptions will be made to this rule. If the list of adults who pick up your child changes during the year, please inform the school office. If your child will need to be picked up early on a given day, please notify classroom teachers as well as the main office via email as early in the day as possible. This will ensure that your child is present in the building at that time and shows respect for classroom planning and activities.

Toilet Training

We understand that young children may not be fully toilet trained by the start of school. Our goal is for children to become toilet trained as quickly as possible, and teachers will be supportive in this process.

The policy of the school is that children who are three years of age or older should be almost or fully toilet trained. Parents of children who are newly toilet trained should speak with the teachers at the start of the school year to discuss ways to support this process. While children are adjusting to school it may be appropriate for them to wear pull-ups at school.

Change of Clothes

Children in *Gan* and *Garinim* are required to keep a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing in school. Please bring this to school on the first day of school and change or replace it as necessary. Please remember to include a pair of socks. Children's clothing must be labeled with their names and will be kept in their classrooms.

Future Placement & Kindergarten

At Beit Rabban, we appreciate that each child develops in an individual manner and that chronological age is not always the most appropriate indicator to determine placement for current or future years. We also very much value the experience that children have in the Gan and know that for many, an additional year in the Gan can be a gift that will last a lifetime, ensuring that the child is fully ready, not only for the opportunities of kindergarten, but also for subsequent academic years.

In the winter, parents of children who will turn five anytime between June 1 and December 1 will be contacted to discuss placement for the coming fall. Depending upon the child, a decision about placement with the incoming kindergarten class may be postponed to see how the second half of the school year unfolds.

We do invite all parents in the Gan to schedule a time to visit our wonderful kindergarten program.

The Elementary School (Kevutzot)

The Elementary School is comprised of student units called *Kevutzot*, or groups, which share a common classroom community. Across the Kevutzot there are flexible small groupings tailored to the educational needs of each child in different subject areas such as math and Hebrew. Children participate in both large group and small group learning throughout the day at Beit Rabban.

The names of Kevutzot classes capture the different stages in the growth of a tree, starting with the seed (*garin*), the sprouting of the root (*shoresh*), the growth of the shoot (*shatil*), the extension of the branches (*anaf*) and the blooming of the buds (*nitzan*). For the 2018-2019 school year, the Kevutzot will include *Garinim* (kindergarten), *Shorashim* (first grade), *Shtillim* (second grade), *Anafim* (third grade), *Alim* (fourth grade) and *Nitzanim* (fifth grade).

In the early elementary grades the children are introduced to the dispositions, attitudes and interactions central to the school's vision of education – shared discourse and interpretive discussion, problem solving, respect for one another, love of learning, the joy of development and mastery of basic skills. They are engaged in a unique natural language program in Hebrew and they read and write in workshop settings, which allow for a shared literacy experience while enabling each child to move ahead at a pace appropriate for him or her. In the later elementary grades, a mixture of single grade classes and smaller, mixed age learning groups create a dynamic social learning community in which students can learn from one another, be role models for each other, take on varied leadership roles and responsibilities within the classroom, and recognize and appreciate their own talents and strengths as well as those of others.

A full guide to the Beit Rabban Day School Curriculum is available on our website at <http://www.beitrabban.org/education/our-curriculum/>.

Placement in Learning Groups

During the first few weeks of school, students will participate in assessments in math, reading, writing, and Hebrew. The children will be assigned to small groups according to their level and learning style. These groups are often cross-grade and are flexible. You will receive a letter informing you of your child's learning group teachers. Over the course of the year, students will be reassessed in a formal manner on a periodic basis and may be moved to a different group that better serves their educational needs. The findings of these assessments are shared with parents twice a year through written progress reports and during parent-teacher conferences.

Separation and Attachment and Forming New Bonds

During the first few weeks of school, children work hard adjusting to a new class or school and bonding with their new teachers and classmates. Teachers design specific activities for building community in their classrooms. Children in *Garinim* will begin the year with an orientation day that ends at noon. All other grades start with a full day on **September 5, 2018**.

We ask that parents do not visit any class unexpectedly during the day either to see their child or to speak with the teachers. This can be unsettling for the child and for his/her classmates. If a classroom door is closed it may mean that the children are engaged in their learning and it may be inappropriate for you to enter immediately. Please feel free to contact the classroom teacher and arrange for a visit.

Starting the School Day

A thoughtfully planned morning routine and arrival at school are important for every child and can have a significant impact on their experience at school each day. Teachers work in partnership with parents

and caregivers, paying attention to each child's needs and routines to ensure that the day begins happily for the children.

School begins promptly at 8:15AM. Children in the Kevutzot who arrive early either on buses or with their families can enter the school from 8:00AM and are welcomed into the Sanctuary by staff members who supervise "Early Drop-Off." These children are escorted to their classrooms at 8:15AM. We ask that children do not go to their classrooms prior to the beginning of the school day at 8:15AM, as teachers are engaged in early morning preparation.

Parents and caregivers are asked to ensure that they arrive with their child in time to enter the classroom promptly at 8:15AM, so that they can participate in morning routines and activities.

Attendance is taken each day at 8:25AM. All children who arrive after 8:25AM must stop at the Business Office to get a late pass, which will be given to the teacher. Accurate attendance and Late Passes are vital tools to ensure that the Beit Rabban staff knows who is on site in case of an emergency. Please note that children may not ride in the elevator at Beit Rabban without a supervising adult. Children who arrive to school late must either walk up to their classroom or be accompanied by the adult who brought them to school.

Punctuality

Lateness, both at the start of school and when picking up your children, can cause distress and disruption to the child, to classmates, and to the classroom community. It sends a message that can establish a sense of insecurity for the child, as well as patterns that stay with the child. One of our goals is to instill in the children a sense of responsibility and we ask parents and caregivers to model this always.

If you know that your child will be unavoidably late for school, please call the school by 8:15AM and let us know or leave a message on the voicemail. Additionally, Kevutzot children who arrive after 8:25AM and Gan children who arrive after 8:45AM must first stop at the Business Office with their parent or caregiver to sign in and obtain a late pass. This allows us to maintain accurate attendance records.

Please make sure that your child is also picked up promptly. This ensures that your child feels safe and secure and also respects the needs of the teachers.

Ending the School Day

Dismissal Hours

School ends at 3:30 PM Monday through Thursday for children in Kindergarten through Third Grade. On Friday school ends at 1:30 PM for all students. Students in Fourth and Fifth Grade will stay until 4:30 on Tuesdays. This time is added so that students can expand their text studies to allow the inclusion of the study of Navi and Torah Sh'b'al Peh. There is an afterschool program Mondays through Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:45.

Dismissal Authorization and Changes in Plans

Teachers will have the information from the forms you complete during the summer regarding who has permission to pick up your child from school. If your child will be picked up by anyone other than the individuals named on your pick-up form, even if your child will be going home with a classmate, we must have written notification from you via an e-mail to the main office by noon. If someone named on the list that the teachers have not yet met will pick up your child, please inform the school on that day and

make sure that the person brings identification. Please note that for the safety of your child, we will not release your child to anyone not listed on his or her pick-up form without express written permission. No exceptions will be made to this rule. If the list of adults who pick up your child changes during the year, please inform the school office of these changes in writing.

Early Release Procedure

If your child will need to be picked up early on a given day, please notify us of your plans in writing by noon that day. This will ensure that your child is available to leave; it gives us time to update our dismissal rosters and shows respect for classroom planning and activity. Parents should go to the Business Office to pick up their child. **This is important for security and in the case of emergency when we need to know that every child is accounted for.**

Self-Dismissal – 4th and 5th Grade Only

Students in the 4th and 5th grade can self-dismiss with the permission of parents/guardians, the permission of the school, and the signing of a release by the parents/guardians. Students who self-dismiss join their classmates in the regular dismissal process and then notify the teacher responsible for the group dismissal of their departure. Once the student has self-dismissed, she or he must leave the building and is no longer the responsibility of the school. For more information and a copy of the release form, email.

Dismissal Procedure for the Kevutzot

Children Picked-up at School

Students are brought to the Sanctuary at dismissal time. Children picked up by a parent/caregiver will sit together on the other side of the Sanctuary. Parents or caregivers who will be picking up their children at dismissal are invited to wait in a designated seating area in the Sanctuary until the students are dismissed. The staff member in charge will call each child to the door of the Sanctuary and dismiss him or her when an authorized adult arrives to pick up the student. It is essential that no child leave the building until the staff member in charge dismisses him or her. Please do not pick your child up in the lobby.

Children Going Home by School Bus

Children who travel home by bus will sit together on one side of the bus groups. Children will be supervised in the Sanctuary until the bus comes and then escorted to the bus.

Homework

The main purpose of homework is to provide an opportunity for the children to review, practice, or extend what they have learned in school. In older grades, students will also need homework to follow through on research projects. Homework also offers children an opportunity to develop skills for being responsible for their materials and their work, studying independently, and planning their time. Given these goals, Beit Rabban does not believe homework should not consume too much family or play time nor create a stressful home experience.

Beit Rabban teachers assign homework with these goals and principles in mind. We ask that parents keep these goals in mind as well when supporting your child's work at home, and we hope you will be in touch with your children's teachers should issues arise.

At Beit Rabban, children receive homework Monday through Thursday beginning in *Shorashim* (First Grade), with approximately 10 minutes per night of written homework, 20 minutes per night for *Shtillim*

(Second Grade), and 30 minutes per night for *Anafim* (Third Grade), *Alim* (Fourth Grade) and *Nitzanim* (Fifth Grade). Each student will receive a homework folder with items to be returned to school on one side and items that have been checked and to remain at home on the other; please remove those items to remain at home on a regular basis. If your individual child is finding that homework assignments are taking significantly more time or less time than these guidelines, please speak to your child's teacher. Reading in Hebrew and English should occur nightly and is in addition to the times listed above.

Here are some guidelines that we suggest you adapt to your family and children's needs:

- 1) **Children should have a set time to do their work.** This time should be scheduled in advance, preferably in consultation with your child. This will not only ensure that homework gets done without being rushed or squeezed in, but also will make it clear to the child that homework is an important activity. If you have other children, it may be a good idea to have a family work time, during which all school-age children do homework and other family members read or draw quietly.
- 2) **Children should have a set place to do their work.** For young children, materials such as pencils may have to be prepared by parents, while older children should be expected to organize their own materials. The work area should be as free of distractions as possible.
- 3) **While children should attempt to work independently, if help is needed, age-appropriate provisions should be made to support each child.** Different children need different amounts or kinds of support in getting started and sustaining homework, so it is important to look closely at your child's needs. In general, an older child might be expected to do all the work, which s/he can do independently before a parent comes home, and to ask the parent about any questions or difficulties later. A younger child might need to have work time when a parent is home, so that difficulties can be cleared up as they arise. A still younger child might need a parent to help him/her begin work by going over the instructions and helping to read the questions or problems. If you are not sure how much and what types of support to provide, please be in touch with your children's teacher.

It is important to remember that independence and responsibility are long-term goals. Children can only achieve these if parents at first share in the task and then gradually give them more and more independence and responsibility for their work. Parents of all elementary school-age children should expect to be involved in their child's homework nightly, even if only to look at it once it is completed. Parents should keep track of how much and in what way they are actually needed and should work toward gradually giving their child more and more independence. Please note that, even once a child can do homework independently, it is still valuable for a child to have a parent help with studying vocabulary, spelling, math facts and other such skills and information that need to be practiced.

While we do recommend light parent involvement in children's homework, parents should not do the homework for their children. If a certain assignment seems inordinately difficult or if homework is taking considerably longer than it should, please try to work with your child on figuring out where the problem lies and email the teacher to explain the difficulty so that the teacher can help the child learn the material or, if appropriate, adjust the expectations. The child should still do whatever parts of the assignment are in reach and should hand in the assignment with the note to the teacher. Such an approach helps the teacher help the child while also emphasizing to the child his/her own responsibility for his/her work and learning. Teachers will consult with parents whose children may need ongoing support with homework.

What happens to your child's homework after it is returned to school?

Children will engage in a regular routine as they arrive at school to ensure that work is unpacked and put in the appropriate place. Most often, the first few minutes of a period are spent discussing (not going over!) the homework. For example, in math, the teacher might choose a problem and ask different children to share their approaches to solving it. In *Chumash*, the teacher might ask children to share the interpretive questions which they have written on their homework and lead the class in a discussion of those questions. In any subject, if there is a common mistake that the teacher has noted, the teacher will work with the children to clarify the material. Completed work that the teacher will keep for assessment and records will remain in the classroom; work that is no longer needed by the teacher will be moved to the side of the folder for materials that are to be kept at home. If students are required to redo or improve upon a homework assignment, the work will be sent home again with a message from the teacher. However, in most cases, homework will not be returned home again with comments or corrections.

The Afterschool Program

Beit Rabban offers a range of after-school programming for the Gan and Kevutzot. Each class and instructor are selected to provide our students with opportunity for engaging sessions that will stimulate their minds and bodies after a full day of regular study. Supervised and coordinated by the school, these programs enhance the children's day with the opportunity to pursue a special interest, to interact with peers from a range of age cohorts, to acquire new skills, and to have a great time! Each program is run by a knowledgeable and qualified instructor and all instructors are covered by the appropriate insurance carried either by the program provider or the school.

Gan After-School Activities

Programming for the Gan students is offered from 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (snack, bathrooms and transition time in the class from 2:00 – 2:30 and then the activity from 2:30 -3:30).

Kevutzot After-School Programming

The after-school programming for the Kevutzot begins at 3:45 PM. Students participating in After-School classes will be provided snack prior to the start of each class immediately following dismissal. The school staff will ensure that the participants are supervised until the after-school program instructor arrives. Each student will be provided with instructions prior to the beginning of the course as to the necessary equipment and clothing. Courses end at 4:45. Children should be picked up in the lobby.

More information regarding after-school, can be downloaded from the Beit Rabban website at <http://www.beitrabban.org/programs/after-school-programs/> Registration takes place via trimester through webforms on the parent portal.

The School Bus

Office of Pupil Transportation

The Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) of the NYC Department of Education provides busing for students who turn 5 years old by December 31st based on specific policies related to the grade of the child, the distance from the home to the school and the overall distance traveled on a bus route. Beit Rabban works with the OPT on behalf of the families to facilitate this service but is unable to set specific bus stops, order of pick-up/drop-off, or the timing. The OPT also determines if specific routes will serve more than one school and makes changes to the bus schedule on a periodic basis and does not always

inform parents or Beit Rabban of these changes in a timely manner. While the school is committed to advocating for our students and families to the OPT, we also encourage parents to intervene directly with the OPT when there are challenges. Beit Rabban also maintains communications directly with the various bus companies that are contracted by the OPT to provide bus service to try to solve problems within the framework of the OPT's plan. The Customer Service number for the OPT is 718-392-8855 and the Beit Rabban School Code is 03709.

The Bus Dismissal Procedure

- Children are escorted to the bus by a member of our staff.
- Every child must secure his or her seat belt before the bus leaves. The duty administrator confirms that this has been done.
- If the bus leaves after 3:50 PM (1:50 PM on Friday) parents of students on the bus will be contacted via our platform.

Bus Safety and Appropriate Behavior

Beit Rabban has developed a process to facilitate the transfer of students on and off the bus. However, the responsibility for the students transfers to the bus company and the OPT once the students are no longer at school. Beit Rabban has limited options regarding responding to behavior on the school bus. Students traveling on the bus participate in a meeting about bus safety and expectations at the start of each semester. Further meetings of this nature take place, as the Principal deems necessary. It is essential that families reinforce the messages of bus safety to their children to teach responsibility and to assist in the highest possible level of safety. If a child does not comply with guidelines for bus safety, he or she may be suspended for a period of time or in extreme cases for the remainder of the school year.

Bus Behavior Expectations

- Remain seated with seat belts fastened at all times
- Speak in quiet tones
- Behave kindly towards other children
- Behave respectfully towards the bus driver
- Use appropriate language at all times
- Students are not permitted to eat or share food on the bus

Bus Suspensions

If it comes to the attention of the Principal that a student has not been wearing a seat-belt during the journey, has been moving about the bus, or behaving in any way that disrupts the safe and appropriate environment of the bus ride, this child and his/her parents will be informed and given one further chance to travel safely on the bus. If a child cannot cooperate, the parents will be asked to bring their child to school and collect their child from school for one week. If a child continuously neglects to wear a seat belt, or continues to engage in inappropriate behavior, there will be a meeting with the parents (and the child if appropriate) to consider whether the child is able to continue traveling on the bus.

Communication about Bus Safety and Behavior

Parents and children are encouraged to speak to the Principal should they have concerns about safety or behavior on the bus. If there is a problem or incident concerning the bus, the school will ensure that parents are informed.

Communication Between School and Home

While we try to share as much as possible in this handbook, we know that it is impossible to cover everything. Our goal is to ensure that you feel welcome in the school and community, informed and connected to your child's experience, and comfortable reaching out to the administration and staff at any time.

We try to make the learning that is happening in your child's class, as well as in the entire school visible in a variety of ways.

Daily Journal

Teachers in all grades email parents a Daily Journal at the end of each school day. The purpose of the Daily Journal is to help you engage your child in their learning, which is difficult to do without having a sense of what they are doing during the school day. Likewise, teachers use the Daily Journal to provide a taste of what the children are learning and doing each day and to share reminders and deadlines. **The Daily Journal is not meant as an individual record of any specific child or as a summary of all the day's learnings and experiences.** Should you want to know more about anything referenced in the Daily Journal or about your child in particular, please email your child's teacher directly.

Daily Journal in the Gan: Daily Journals in the Gan tend to provide more information than in later years, because as preschoolers may be less inclined or capable of sharing with their parents at the end of a day or may go to sleep before a parent's work day ends. Daily Journals in the Gan also include important reminders and requests. On Fridays, Daily Journals include a link to photos from the week on the school's Flickr account.

Daily Journal in the Kevutzot: Daily Journals in the Kevutzot are intentionally shorter than in the Gan, because less extensive summaries should be sufficient for purposes of starting a conversation in older grades. **While the Daily Journal in Kevutzot provides a helpful window into your child's day, it is not intended to provide a full picture of their experience or their learning.** On Fridays, Daily Journals include a link to photos from the week on the school's Flickr account.

Garinim (Kindergarten), Shorashim (1st Grade), Shtillim (2nd Grade):

- Homework is included in Daily Journals for in Garinim, Shorashim and for the first half of the year in Shtillim.
- Brief updates by subject are included each day, with Parshah (weekly Torah portion) conversation highlights on Fridays.

Anafim (3rd Grade), Alim (4th Grade), Nitanim (5th Grade):

- Homework is not included in Daily Journals for 3-5th grades. Students in their grades are expected to record and keep track of their homework without parental support.
- A preview of the week's learning is included in Monday's Daily Journal.
- Bullet-point updates by subject area are included on Tuesday-Thursday.

A review of the week's learning, with a couple of highlights, is included on Friday.

Kevutzot: The Home -School Folder

First through fifth grade Kevutzot students will have a homework folder that they will be given at the beginning of the year, which they will take home each afternoon, and bring back to school every morning. All homework, projects, activities, books, "buddy" call reminders, and letters to parents will be

brought home in these folders. **Anything that needs to be brought to class, including parents' notes to teachers, should be sent to school in the folders.** This allows children to be responsible for bringing items home and to class and to have a simple way of keeping track of their work.

Please check the contents of the folder with your child each evening and remove items that have been moved to the "remain at home" side. Return anything that needs to go to school to the folder and make certain it is packed up so that it returns to class.

The teachers will work with the children to set up systems for unpacking their folders and placing each item, including homework, in the correct place when they arrive in their classroom each day. Time is set aside between 8:15-8:25AM each morning for these activities. When appropriate, teachers will consult with parents whose children may need ongoing support in using the folders.

Email

To enhance communication between families and staff, Beit Rabban faculty and administrators have all been assigned individual Beit Rabban email addresses. Staff are expected to check their Beit Rabban email at least once per day and reply, if necessary, within 24 hours. Email can be used to ask for practical information, to request a phone or in person meeting and to share information with the teachers. All substantive issues or concerns that require a conversation, whether it be about curriculum, teaching and learning, behavior or social and emotional development should be dealt with in meetings or on the phone.

Telephone

Beit Rabban's office phone number is (212) 595-1386. The school office can be reached by dialing 0 or selecting Extension 100. Messages are checked frequently. If the voicemail picks up, please leave a message.

Beit Rabban's phone will be answered Monday through Thursday from 8:00AM until 5:00PM and Fridays until 2:30PM. In the event of an emergency after hours, parents and caregivers should call or text the Beit Rabban **emergency phone number at (646) 362-7444.**

The outgoing message you will hear is as follows: "Thank you for calling the Beit Rabban Day School Emergency Number. If you require urgent assistance, please hang up and dial 911. Otherwise, press 1 to leave a message for the emergency coordinator." If you send a text, you will receive the following automated text back: "Your message has been sent to the emergency coordinator. "When you call or text this number, the administration will be immediately notified and will return your message within minutes.

Beit Rabban Day School uses the Ren Web Alert platform to communicate with parents during emergencies and to send urgent information. Parents will receive an email, phone message and text message from the Beit Rabban RenWeb Alert system for registration purposes; after adding basic contact information, parents can determine all the ways they wish to be contacted in an urgent or emergency situation: by email, voice mail, text. The school uses this platform only when there is an urgent message such as the closing of school due to snow, a late bus, an urgent deadline, or if the phone system is down. We encourage parents to select the maximum numbers of ways to be contacted to ensure these messages get through in a timely manner.

Ta Shma: The Weekly Newsletter

On a weekly basis, you will receive an email update which will inform you about school events, describe aspects of our school's approach, and tell you about teaching and learning that has been occurring throughout the school at key moments during the cycle of the year. *Ta Shma* also provides a rolling calendar of important deadlines and noteworthy community events and holidays that are on the near horizon.

Facebook

We invite all parents to like the school's Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/beitrabbandschool/> and to join the parents group on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/beitrabbanpa/>. Both provide good opportunities to in and outside of the school. The parent group page also serves as a place where parents can post information to other parents regarding non-Beit Rabban community events of interest, tzedakah opportunities, requests for childcare, etc.

Meetings between Parents, Teachers and Administrators

Open, honest and respectful communication is essential for a successful partnership. Teachers and members of the administration are happy to make time to meet with you on any subject as the need arises. You should feel free to email classroom teachers and administration at any time. We believe that sensitive conversations are best to have in person, and we encourage you to take those offline and setup. We strongly encourage you to share your concerns and ask your questions by making an appointment either in person, by phone or via email.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for mid-fall and for mid-spring. At the first conference, the focus is developing shared goals for the students learning experience, understanding any concerns, and an initial assessment of the start of the year. At the second conference, the teachers will be able to provide more details as to the social and academic growth of the child.

Progress Reports

The Progress Reports come out in the mid-winter and at the end of the year. They include information about the child's growth in a wide range of areas, including social-emotional growth and content areas. These reports also include comment sections to further explain the student's development in different subject areas. **The Progress Report is used exclusively as a means of communication between the school and the parents and as a shared record of progress.** When children prepare for exmissions to another school, Beit Rabban prepares a more formal report outlining specific assessments.

Informal Communication

Teachers will always try to share anecdotes and let you know about anything important that is going on. Please understand, however, that impromptu meetings in the classroom or hallways are not effective. Please do not expect to enter discussion with the teachers when they are with the children, at arrival or dismissal, or when they are preparing for the school day. Out of respect to the children, to other members of the school community and to the teachers, please be sensitive as to when a moment is conducive to productive conversation.

Our faculty and administration model collaboration and cooperation in an atmosphere of mutual respect and partnership, both in the classroom and around the school. All adults are encouraged to

model appropriate, dignified and respectful discourse in the classrooms and in all communal spaces. **Out of respect for our students please do not discuss concerns and issues in their presence or in areas where you may be overheard.** Appropriate space and time can always be made for these conversations.

Multi-Home Families

It is important that Beit Rabban be made aware of any situation where a child is living in different homes with different parents or guardians so that our communication is with the correct adults and within the framework of any legal arrangements. If your child is in a situation like this, please contact the Head of School to discuss the arrangement and to share any relevant documentation if contact, communication, pick-up or any other interactions with one parent or guardian is to be authorized by a different parent or guardian. Our goal is to work closely with all families to support children in these situations.

Who's Who at Beit Rabban or Who Do I Contact?

Our team of administrators support the school community in various ways. If you have a question or concern, please use the information below to guide your communication. If you are not sure who to connect with, always reach out to Stephanie Ives.

- **Stephanie Ives - Head of School**

Stephanie leads the team at Beit Rabban, working closely with the senior staff and the Board to help guide the school through the days, weeks and year. Specific responsibilities including supervising the educational and administrative leadership, medium and long-term planning as the school grows, managing the middle school launch process, ensuring the financial resources to support the school, and interacting with community and organizational leaders. Go to Stephanie when you have concerns, questions or suggestions about the direction of the school, wish to raise a private concern, or are not certain who is the right person on the staff with whom to speak.

- **Ingrid Goldfein - Principal**

Ingrid is the school's instructional leader. She is responsible for the curriculum and the supervision of the faculty. Ingrid also works with the children to help them make good choices and to build a caring and thoughtful educational community. Ingrid frequently meets with parents to discuss concerns regarding challenges at school or opportunities for enrichment. Go to Ingrid when you have concerns, questions or suggestions about academic studies, including math, literacy, science or social studies; if you're concerned about a learning issue or a social dynamic in the classroom; or if you wish to share a concern or some positive feedback about your child's teacher.

- **Nicole Weiss - Chief Operating Officer**

Nicole oversees the administrative areas of the school, including tuition contracts and payments, invoices for various programs and services, payments to vendors, and reporting to the Finance Committee. Nicole also oversees payroll, provides for the human resource needs of the school employees and assists with marketing and development. In addition, Nicole supervises facilities and office staff to ensure a smooth implementation of our administrative needs. Go to Nicole when you have concerns, questions or suggestions regarding communications from school, payments, receipts for tax purposes of flexible spending accounts, need a copy of a contract or need help with FACTS for financial aid or tuition.

- **Sara Cohn – Director of Student Support**

Sara works primarily with our students and faculty, providing support for individual children or groups that need new strategies for behavioral, social or learning challenges. Sara is also the point person who coordinates additional services that individual students receive, such as speech or occupational therapy. To do this, she will often help parents identify a specific resource or participate in a phone call with a specialist or the Department of Education. Go to Sara if you have concerns, questions, or suggestions regarding your child's learning experience, or if you are looking for suggestions for outside resources that can help your child as a student or you as a parent.

If you would like to learn more about the backgrounds of our administration, teachers or staff, please take a quick look at [their bios on our web page](#).

Derech Eretz – Mutual Respect

Derech Eretz is a classic Jewish ideal of promoting respect and positive social relationships in society. At Beit Rabban we work with children to foster the ideals of *derech eretz* - respect for oneself, for one's family, for one's friends, for one's teachers, and for one's school. It is our belief that children can only take the intellectual risks associated with learning when they are in a safe and caring environment, which requires that all staff members also conduct themselves with *derech eretz*.

In pursuit of a school community that embodies the values of *derech eretz*, Beit Rabban employs a methodology to guide character development and behavior management called Positive Discipline. Positive Discipline is a program developed by Dr. Jane Nelson "designed to teach young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. Positive Discipline teaches important social and life skills in a manner that is deeply respectful and encouraging for both children and adults." Positive Discipline aligns with Beit Rabban's core values, including helping children to feel a sense of belonging and significance; inviting children to discover their strengths and capabilities; spending adequate time teaching social and life skills to students; devoting ourselves to understanding the root of misbehavior and looking for long-term solutions to misbehavior rather than offering short-term rewards or punishments. Positive Discipline informs our practice with regard to social emotional learning, classroom management, and community building. Teachers and staff facilitate regular "community meetings" to teach valuable social and life skills. In addition, teachers and staff utilize Positive Discipline tools and language to help create a respectful, kind and caring community. Beit Rabban's behavior management system is based on Positive Discipline methodology and allows for reflection, collaborative problem solving, and deeper understanding of misbehavior. All teachers have been trained in Positive Discipline methodology and classroom practice and engage in ongoing professional development to hone their facility with this practice. Please find the Positive Discipline website attached here which includes information about the program as well as books and other resources for parents: <https://www.positivediscipline.com/>

Creating a Positive Classroom Community

In order to build a sense of classroom community, time is dedicated in every classroom during weekly community meetings and as opportunities organically emerge to facilitate the development of a caring and respectful school community. Some of the ways that teachers promote a positive classroom community are:

- Responding to and reinforcing positive behavior
- Developing a strong relationship with each child

- Helping children develop positive relationships with one another
- Validating children's accomplishments and progress
- Establishing classroom rules and guidelines that will enable daily routines to run smoothly and learning to occur.
- Reading and reviewing Beit Rabban's code of conduct

Responding to Challenging Behavior

In maintaining a positive classroom community, we aim to reinforce prosocial behavior rather than "punish" inappropriate behavior. However, there may be instances in which inappropriate behavior must be addressed directly. In particular if the learning of other children is disrupted, or if children in the classroom are not emotionally or physically safe, then the school will intervene very quickly to resolve challenging behaviors. The circumstances of the incident and the needs of the child will determine the exact nature of the intervention.

Appropriate measures will be taken in response to physical or verbal aggression and other severe acting out behavior and may include: clearly setting out expectations to the child, working collaboratively with parents to resolve issues, and providing additional support in the classroom setting, whether covered by the resources of the school or requiring additional resources from the family. Well-being of other students, disruption to learning, excessive demands on the teachers' time, and the level of parental support will be taken into account when determining how to handle any situation. A clear action plan will be put into place with the family with specific benchmarks to monitor progress. In the rare circumstance that this is insufficient to sustain the child in the school, the administration will work with the parents to find a more suitable school placement for their child.

Cell phones

We ask that parents and caregivers are mindful when using their cell phones to talk or text during arrival and dismissal times. Cell phone conversations can be noisy, disruptive and distracting at moments when all attention should be focused on the children.

If a parent or guardian chooses to have his or her child carry a cell phone for safety purposes, then the following conditions must be met:

1. Any smartphone data plan should be disabled so that students cannot access the internet either at school or during travel time on the bus;
2. Parent or guardian must send a note to school explaining the circumstances;
3. Cell phone must be turned off during school hours, including bus time, and left in the child's book bag

If these three requirements are not followed, then the cell phones will be held in the main office for pick-up by parent or guardian.

Student Support for Academic Needs

When Your Child Needs Additional Learning Support in School

At Beit Rabban we are committed to meeting the learning needs of our students to the best of our ability. We are also committed to working with parents to resolve any specific learning issues and opportunities. Our Director of Student Support and our Learning and Enrichment Specialist provide support and strategies for learning differences. Beit Rabban has guidelines for when children need additional learning support in the school. There are three stages for ensuring that the child's needs are being met:

Stage One: Class teacher, Director of Student Support, and other members of the educational administration observe the child closely and discuss recommendations for teaching approaches to address any issues. Parents may be approached if a collaborative approach to addressing issues is needed.

Stage Two: If the issues remain unresolved, then a consultation is set up with the parents and a plan is devised and followed with clear targets to measure progress.

Stage Three: Parents are advised to seek an external assessment or additional support from experts to help resolve the issues that cannot be reasonably addressed with the resources available in the school

In the event that the school is not able to appropriately meet a child's individualized needs, the administration together with the parents may decide that the school is no longer an appropriate setting for the child. During this discussion we will consider primarily the child's needs and achievements but will also review the family's willingness to work collaboratively with the school and the degree to which the child's individual needs impacts the class as a whole.

When Your Child May be Eligible for Public-funded Academic Support Services

The school's Director of Student Support assists parents in applying to the New York City Department of Education (DOE) for academic support services, which may include occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, as well as professional and paraprofessional direct academic and behavioral support. If a child is determined eligible for support, the Director of Student Support will work with parents to set up services and will provide the family with a brief document to assist with applying for support from the DOE. It is the parent's responsibility to give all DOE documents and contact information for private service providers to the Director of Student Support, and to update information as necessary.

Food and the Communal Standard for Kashrut

The school has developed the following policy regarding food:

"At Beit Rabban, we understand that thoughtfulness about food is both inherent to our Jewish tradition and an element of our educational philosophy. To that end, Beit Rabban strives to offer the children wholesome, natural foods that will help them build strong minds and bodies and provide them with knowledge and practice regarding food choices. When the school offers food in the classroom as a part of our program, we emphasize use of whole grains and nourishing foods, and when possible, look for local, seasonal and organic foods. We also try to avoid the use of processed or sugary foods and drinks, and artificial preservatives, colorings and other unnecessary additives.

Food choices and the definition of healthy food can be a very personal matter, and as a school, we are equally committed to creating an environment for children that is judgment-free about food. In implementing our approach to food, we therefore work with our Food Committee, the school administration and parents to set the right balance between our collective practices and individual family's needs and approaches. If the school is serving a snack, holiday or birthday food that is challenging to a family's food practices, the school will work with the family to identify an appropriate alternative that the family can provide to be distributed in a caring and appropriate manner. Beit Rabban encourages our parents to contribute ideas, sources, and learning opportunities about healthful and

mindful eating. If you would like to discuss this further or identify useful resources regarding nutrition, please contact the school."

In order to be an inclusive community and to accommodate the various approaches to *Kashrut*, we have identified the following *hekshers* and consider these the "communal standard." We ask that you only purchase products with the following certifications for snacks or food for the entire class or for whole school events:



Please do not bring in homemade food for a class event. If you plan to bring food from a kosher bakery or restaurant for a class party, please check with the school's administration before purchasing the items.

Lunch and Pizza Fridays

Children bring their own lunches to school each day, and families have the option of buying pizza through the school on Fridays. We have selected Sabas Upper West Side to provide us with pizza and we include a side of fruit.

Lunches brought from home must be dairy or parve. **Please send nutritious foods and limit dessert or snack foods.** We do not permit children to share the food that they bring to school because of differences in each child's eating requirements. Please make sure to discuss with your child what he or she enjoys eating at lunch and send in food that your child will like to eat.

Children are asked not to bring candy to school. Parents who do not want their children to eat sugar should let the school know in writing at the start of the year. They may also be asked to assist teachers by providing alternative snacks for their children during celebrations so that they can enjoy participating.

Snack in the Gan and in the Kevutzot

Teachers order snack each week for the entire class based on foods that connect to the Gan Hebrew curriculum.

In the Kevutzot, students are asked to bring their own snacks to school each day. Children in the 4th and 5th grade who will be staying until 4:30 may want to pack an additional snack for the afternoon. Children in the Gan and Kevutzot who participate in our after-school programs will receive a wholesome snack at the beginning of their activity period.

Nut-Aware Policy

Food allergies are a growing concern in schools across America. Millions of children - children must watch every single bite they eat or risk suffering a severe or even life-threatening reaction. Some of our food-allergic students have serious peanut and tree-nut allergies. Therefore, we have put the following safety guidelines into effect:

- Parents should not send any peanuts, peanut butter or foods containing peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil or any form of derivative of peanut to school.

- Parents should not send any tree-nuts (examples are almonds, walnuts, cashews, etc.) or foods containing these items to school.
- Parents should check the ingredients of all pre-packed food that is sent to school.
- Even if the ingredient label says, "may contain traces of nuts or peanuts", the label should be treated as if it says, "contains nuts or peanuts" and should not be sent to school.
- Peanut may be designated on a food label in a less easily recognized term such as "hydrolyzed vegetable protein".
- If children eat peanut butter for breakfast at home, parents should ensure that their hands and face are washed with soap and water before leaving for school.
- Beit Rabban staff and administration will follow these guidelines for all food served at school and made at school.

Peanut butter is particularly deadly to anaphylactic children because it sticks to surfaces, to cutlery and to hands and faces. The reason parents are asked to bring in "peanut-free" snacks is to reduce the very real risk of cross-contamination.

This policy is applicable on the school buses traveling to and from Beit Rabban as well. This policy is also applicable on all buses for school trips.

Supplemental materials will be circulated among Beit Rabban staff to deepen their understanding of this policy and will be made available to parents upon request.

Birthdays

Birthdays are significant milestones in the lives of young children and are wonderful community building experiences as classmates participate in celebrating the special day of their friend.

School Birthday Celebrations in the Gan

Each birthday will be celebrated together as a class with the class preparing a celebratory food and creating a birthday book or card for the birthday child. Parents will be invited to join the celebration, and we welcome parents to bring in a special book or game in honor of their child's birthday. Parents are asked not to bring cake or goodie bags as class prepares all items. The school will be happy to suggest wished-for books or games; please choose one and inscribe it with your child before presenting it to the class. Families must be in touch with teachers to make arrangements and agree on a date for the birthday celebration a few weeks in advance. Please note that summer birthdays will be celebrated in the mornings during the last two weeks of school unless parents make other arrangements with the teachers.

School Birthday Celebrations in the Kevutzot

Birthdays in the Kevutzot provide a great opportunity to celebrate together as a classroom community. In Kevutzot, birthday celebrations include an opportunity for the birthday child to share something he or she likes to do with the rest of the class. This may include a special book, game, art activity etc. for the class to engage for approximately 20 minutes. In exchange, the class will give birthday wishes to the child. In Kindergarten and first grade, parents are welcome to take part in the celebration and bring in any materials that might be needed for the activity. Families must be in touch with teachers to make arrangements and agree on a date for the birthday celebration a few weeks in advance. PLEASE NOTE THAT BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS WILL NOT INCLUDE CAKE OR ANY OTHER FOOD. In lieu of food, children will participate in a fun birthday ritual. PLEASE DO NOT BRING GOODY BAGS OR PARTY FAVORS,

BALLOONS ETC. TO GIVE OUT TO THE CHILDREN AT SCHOOL PARTIES IN EITHER THE GAN OR THE KEVUTZOT.

Birthday Parties Outside of School

When planning out-of-school birthday parties or other events that host Beit Rabban children, we ask that everyone use as much sensitivity as possible in attending to the diversity within our community and the experience of the children.

In addition to whatever foods you choose to serve, please make sure that you make available food that is kosher and that bears a *heksher* from our “communal standards” of kashrut. Please show clearly the difference between foods that are homemade and foods that purchased in accordance with the communal standard for kashrut.

Please do not schedule such events on *Shabbat* or *Yom Tov*, in order to make sure that all children will be able to attend. Also keep in mind that if your event will be on Saturday evening or after a *Yom Tov*, the program should not start until after *Shabbat* or the *Yom Tov* ends to allow all children to participate without any discomfort.

Parties and Being Part of an Intimate Community

At Beit Rabban we put tremendous effort into community building, providing students with many opportunities to think about respect, inclusion and care. Being an intimate community where everyone is known and valued is one of our greatest assets. We also understand that being a part of a small community puts additional responsibility on each member to help it work well for everyone. In many different situations, we discuss with children the role each plays and how there are times when individuals need to make sacrifices for the good of the entire community.

Please be extremely sensitive when making plans for parties. If you cannot invite the whole class, a logical subset (all the boys or girls or the entire age cohort) should be invited. If inviting everyone or a specific subset does not work for your family’s plans, we ask that no one from school be invited, with the school friends having the opportunity to celebrate your child’s birthday as part of the party at school.

We also ask that when children are involved in any activities that do not involve everyone in the class, discussions about these events should not take place in front of children who were not there.

Thank you for helping attend to this sensitive matter in a thoughtful and caring partnership that takes into account these social dynamics and the fragility of each one of our children.

Dressing for School

Children are encouraged to come to school dressed in a manner consistent with a respectful attitude toward school and learning. Clothes should be neat and comfortable. We want children to be able to engage freely in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities without hindrance. Throughout the day, children work with a variety of materials which can cause them to stain their clothing. Although smocks are available in the Gan and are offered to the children, we do not require students to wear them so that they have the freedom to follow their creative impulses and to make spontaneous choices.

Footwear

We recommend that children wear sneakers to school every day. Shoes that fall off easily such as flip flops, Crocs, and slip-on shoes should not be worn to school. Children in the Kevutzot are required to wear sneakers for physical education classes. It is also recommended that when children wear boots in the winter they bring a change of shoes with them to school.

Dressing for the Outdoors

The children will go to the park every day unless it is raining or exceptionally cold. It is therefore important that children come with appropriate clothing for outdoor play in all kinds of weather. In the winter this means very warm clothing, hats, scarves and gloves. In very warm weather children may need hats and sunscreen. In the fall and spring, when temperatures can vary day to day or within a single day, we recommend layers that also include a long sleeve shirt. Teachers working together with the administration will determine whether the weather is appropriate for outside activity or whether or not students will need to keep a jacket or long sleeve shirt on while playing in the park. We will always ensure that the children are safe and well-cared for in this respect.

Going Out in Colder Weather

The general policy related to cold weather is that children go out in the cold weather when it is 20 degrees Fahrenheit or higher after taking wind chill into account. When the playground is closed due to ice or snow, with proper supervision, children will play in the fields near the playgrounds if they are deemed safe and not too icy. Children will not go out when it is raining but may go out when it is lightly snowing.

Kippot

Boys in the Kevutzot are required to wear a *kippah* throughout the day. The school supports any family who would like their daughter to wear a *kippah*. We understand that children in the Gan may not be ready to wear a *kippah* all day. If you would like your Gan child to wear a *kippah* the whole day please let the classroom teachers know. Children who wear kippot should keep a few extra kippot in their school bags for days their *kippah* is lost or forgotten. Beit Rabban Kippot can be purchased for \$10 at the main office.

Parent Participation Events and Parents' Association

Over the course of the year there will be a series of events at which you will be able to learn more about your child's school experience and our approach to educating your children. There will also be opportunity for you to ask questions and raise issues for discussion and clarification. These events make it possible for parents and teachers to work in mutually supportive and respectful partnerships for the benefit of each student. Please see the 2018-2019 Annual Calendar on the website for details of dates and times.

Orientation and Curriculum Night

At the start of the year, you are invited to an orientation and curriculum meeting for parents. At this meeting you will meet your child's teachers in their classroom environment. This meeting is an opportunity to deepen your relationships with the school and classroom community. It provides an excellent opportunity to learn about and re-connect with the school's core values and vision for education. The teachers will also provide you with important and useful information about the school year and everyday life in the classroom. At this meeting you will have an opportunity to learn about the planned program and curriculum from your child's teachers. Given the amount of material to be

covered, there will not be time for questions about individual children; parents are invited to set up a time with the teachers for a follow-up conversation about their children or to wait for the first Parent-Teacher Conference.

This allows parents with children in both divisions to go to multiple classes.

Parent Breakfasts

In the fall you will be invited by the administration and the Board to a parent breakfast by class. At this time, you will be able to meet with other parents and discuss your experiences and your child's experiences at Beit Rabban. The conversation will be structured and facilitated by the administration, and you will have an opportunity to share questions, thoughts and ideas.

In-School Events

Torah Reading Ceremony

A peak moment in the life of a Beit Rabban student and a focal point for the entire school community, the Torah Reading Ceremony celebrates the launch of a lifetime of serious Jewish text study. Held in December, this ceremony involves all of the students of the school. At the center are our Shtillim (second grade) students who demonstrate the new skills they are acquiring in their Chumash studies by chanting from the Torah in front of the entire school, the parent body and community leaders. Students from other classes present music, drashot, and art, all contributing to this moment of Torah and learning. Scheduled first thing in the morning to allow working parents to attend, it is followed by a lovely reception.

Select Beit Rabban b'Yachad Assemblies

Our monthly Beit Rabban b'Yachad assemblies are a highlight of our calendar and a vehicle for building community in our class. These get-togethers provide a sense of cohesion and school spirit, allow for the exploration of big ideas or holidays, and help us celebrate the life cycle of our children and the Jewish calendar. Often, we use these as a platform for creativity, involving plays, music, and dance.

Celebration of Learning

Interdisciplinary studies are a hallmark of a Beit Rabban education, with students spending up to a semester learning about a big idea through various disciplinary lenses. Although the big ideas are a part of our scope and sequence through the various grades, the individual studies are shaped by the passions and interests of the students and their teachers. Each class invites parents to one celebration of learning to be held either mid-year or at the end of the year.

Out-of-School Events

Family Picnics

Twice a year – at the beginning and the end of school – we gather as a community in Central Park to enjoy one another's company, meet new families who have joined the school or will be joining the school, and to provide a relaxed environment for children, parents and staff to celebrate our community.

Beit Rabban Parents' Association (BRPA)

The mission of the Beit Rabban Parents' Association is to promote and foster a sense of community among Beit Rabban parents, children and staff through special events, field trips and other celebrations.

In addition, the Parents' Association is devoted to supporting the life of the school and the classroom teachers whenever necessary.

The BRPA is led by a coordinating committee and class parents assigned to coordinate the efforts and the volunteers for any given event. To get involved please email BRPA@beitrabban.org

Health and Safety

Health Policy and Procedures

With the help of our medical committee, Beit Rabban has updated our policies, procedures and routines to ensure that we meet the needs of each student. The school will always have a Health Clerk. The designated Health Clerk this year will be our Administrative Assistant. The Health Clerk is responsible for keeping accurate health records, completing reports and logs, responding to ill students, and communicating relevant student health information to teachers and parents.

Parents must ensure that we have received their child's up-to-date medical records and emergency contact information form. Students will not be able to start school without them. This should include any information about allergies, illness and dietary needs. Each fall, the New York City Department of Health reviews and monitors all students' immunization records.

Daily Log

The Health Clerk records all medical complaints raised by students in school such as stomach aches, nausea, aches and pains and generally not feeling well. Whenever a student comes to the health clerk with a medical complaint, the date and time, the student's name, class, nature of the complaint, and steps taken are recorded in the daily log. If a student is frequently coming with complaints, the Health Clerk will contact a student's parent.

Medication

When a student is ill, the Health Clerk dispenses all medications only with the written permission of the child's parents. A completed and signed Medication Permission Form is needed to provide all medications to your student. Please note the completed and signed Medication Permission Form is for both prescription and non-prescription medications. If a student needs to take prescription medicine on a regular basis, the student's parents must visit the Health Clerk's office to provide the necessary medication directly. Any medicine that is dispensed is recorded in the medication disbursement log.

Injuries

Whenever a child is seriously injured, whether it is at the park or in school, the supervising teacher is required to report the accident by notifying the Health Clerk and by completing an online incident report. In addition, the Health Clerk is required to call the child's parents to inform them of what transpired. In the case of a head injury, an email will also be sent to parents of involved children.

Communicable Diseases and General Health

If a child is ill during the school day and unable to participate in school activities, or has a fever of 100.4 or more, the Health Clerk or teachers will call parents to take the child home. We also ask that parent carefully screen children at home. If you suspect your child may be sick, please keep him or her at home to ensure that illness is not spread throughout the class.

Parents are asked to keep their child at home if they have:

- A fever or has had a fever during the previous twenty-four-hour period. Please note that a child with a temperature of 100.4 or above may not return to school for a period of 24 hours after the fever has abated. If a child is sent home because of an illness they must remain at home for 24 hours (the next full school day).
- A heavy and/or discolored nasal discharge or sore throat
- Fussy or cranky behavior or is generally not behaving like his/her normal self.
- Had multiple episodes of diarrhea or vomiting, the child should remain at home for at least 24 hours and seek medical advice.
- A rash of unexplained origin, the child must remain home and should seek medical advice.
- Fifth Disease
- Strep and it has not yet been 24 hours since both the end of fever and start of antibiotics
- Lice
- Conjunctivitis (aka pink eye)

Parents should inform the school if their child has a communicable disease. When deemed appropriate by the Administrative Director and the Health Clerk, emails will be sent home to the appropriate parents about the illness with a description of the illness and some treatment information.

Head Lice

Students with head lice are to be excluded from school. When lice are identified, parents will be notified immediately and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible. If lice are identified outside of school, parents are required to notify the school by emailing the health clerk. Students will be excluded from school until they bring in a clearance note from a reputable lice treatment company (i.e. LicEnders) or medical provider indicating that the student is lice-free. The clearance note must be presented to the Health Clerk before the student returns to class.

Students with nits (lice eggs) will not be excluded from school. Nits are not equivalent to head lice, since nits cannot be transmitted from person to person, and therefore will not result in school exclusion. If nits are identified during the periodic school-wide checks or a class-wide inspection after a family has alerted the school to the presence of lice in a student in the class, a note will be sent home to the families of the children with nits with information about lice and the recommended procedures to follow. An email notification will go out to class parents informing of a case of lice or nits in the class.

The school takes steps to limit transmission of lice, including asking students to not share brushes, hair accessories, kippot, hats or other head coverings; routine treatment of classroom carpets after the identification of lice; the installation of barriers or distance between hooks used for the hanging of coats and scarves; and diligence in the implementation of this policy.

Allergy Protocol

At the start of the school year, a letter is sent to parents of all students who have allergies as listed on their health/emergency contact forms. This letter includes an Allergy Protocol to be completed and signed by the child's doctor. For students with serious and life-threatening allergies, their forms will be marked as such and printed on bright paper. The form should be returned to the Health Clerk with a **photo** of the child. These forms are kept in the Health Clerk's office in the red medical records binder.

In every classroom and the main office, there is an allergy binder that contains a list of all students who have allergies and their specific allergies. A copy of the allergy protocol for each student is also included

in the red binder. Epi-pens are kept in the Health Clerk's office and in the park bag in each classroom. The classroom's "park bag" will contain an Epi-pen, allergy list and allergy protocols for each student and will be taken daily to the park and on all school trips. Children with life-threatening allergies will be asked to bring 2 Epi-pens to school at the beginning of the school year to be stored at school in the above-mentioned places. All Beit Rabban faculty and administration will be trained on an annual basis in responding to allergic reactions and using Epi-pens.

Staff Training

Every staff member is trained in CPR and first aid and learns how to administer an Epi-pen. Additional training will be provided for teachers of students who have medical conditions.

School Hygiene

Bathrooms are cleaned twice daily. Hand sanitizer is provided in every room. There will be programs for students about hygiene and cleanliness throughout the school year, including posting signage in bathrooms outlining the appropriate steps for washing hands. Washing hands and covering coughs have been identified by the Department of Health as the key steps to fighting the spread of contagious diseases such as strep.

Crisis Preparedness Policy

In order to ensure the safety of all school occupants, Beit Rabban has developed a crisis preparedness plan. In creating the plan, Beit Rabban consulted with the U.S. Department of Education, the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and the Anti-Defamation League. We have received input on this plan from staff, parents, board members, the synagogue staff, and the NYPD. The plan covers four areas: mitigation & prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. What follows is important information for parents to know.

1. **Fire Safety:** Beit Rabban's Fire Safety Plan calls for a regular schedule of fire drills. The first fire drill of the year will be announced well in advance so that teachers and students will be prepared, and subsequent drills will not be announced in advance. The fire drill assembly location is on the corner of 86th Street and Central Park West.
2. **Attendance Tracking:** In order to account for all students each day, daily attendance will be taken. Attendance sheets will be completed and returned to the school office every day by 8:25am for Kevutzot and by 8:45am for the Gan. If children arrive at school after these times, they must stop at the office to obtain a late pass which lets us know who is here and who is not. In an emergency, it is imperative that we not spend precious time searching for students who are not at school that day.
3. **Parent Alert:** The school has in place the RenWeb Alert system to alert families of urgent issues such as an emergency or a snow day.
4. **Alternate Locations:** If evacuation is necessary, three alternate locations have been identified in addition to the fire drill assembly location. Please contact Beit Rabban as soon as possible if you need directions to or a map of the alternate locations.
 - a. Primary Location (weather permitting): Central Park – at 86th Street.
 - b. Secondary Location: The Jewish Center, 131 West 86th Street.
 - c. Tertiary Location: Rodeph Sholom School, 10 West 84th Street
5. **Emergency and Student Release Procedures:** In the event of an emergency, the COO will determine if it is necessary to release students early or directly to parents/caregivers (instead of going on the bus as usual, if relevant). If this happens, the school will contact parents directly. In addition, the school will send out an alert through Parents Alert to all parents with pertinent information. If phones are not working, parents should:

- a. Listen to local media for instructions. As many radio stations as possible will be contacted; the primary ones will be: WNYC - FM 93.9 and AM 1010 WINS. Beit Rabban will also leave information with the local police station (24th Precinct at 151 West 100th Street, New York, NY, 10025 (212) 678-1811).
- b. Report to the alternate location to retrieve children. If it is necessary to go to an alternate location, a sign will be posted on the door of the school, a message will be left on the school's answering machine, an alert will be sent to all parents, and every effort will be made to inform the local media stations cited above and the local police precinct. School officials will have the roster of children and parents/caregivers will have to check-in before leaving the alternate location with their child(ren) so that everyone is accounted for.
- c. If a parent/caregiver is unable to get to school or the alternate location within a reasonable timeframe, children will either be given shelter at the school (the school has purchased emergency provisions to be prepared for this situation), will be sent home with their "buddy" family as designated on the emergency contact forms filled out by the parents over the summer, or will accompany a teacher or staff member home. Clear instructions will be left with SAJ building staff and/or with the local police precinct if the building is closed.

Beit Rabban will do everything possible to communicate with you regularly if there is an emergency. Know that the safety of your children is of utmost concern. If you have any comments, questions or concerns about the crisis preparedness plan, please be in touch with our COO

Field Trips

Field trips are an essential part of the experiential learning program at Beit Rabban Day School. Teachers are encouraged to use New York City as a laboratory for learning, and we are fortunate to have such incredible museums and other resources so close by. In order to ensure that all students travel and return safely on field trips, we frequently invite parents to chaperone. Parents are responsible for helping ensure the safety of the children and are often asked to lead a group and facilitate learning. We ask that parent volunteers do not bring younger siblings to attend field trips.

Absences

We hope all children will be able to attend school every day. For purposes of safety and security, it is also essential that we are aware of who is and is not at school at all times. In the event that a child will be absent, please let us know why and when we can expect the child to return to school.

It is essential that you call us or leave a message before 8:15am to let us know the reason for the absence and when you anticipate your child returning to school. If your child is ill longer than expected, please continue to keep us informed.

Bikkur Cholim, the idea of caring for the sick, is an essential value at Beit Rabban. In the Gan, as part of the classroom jobs, a student is in charge of *Bikkur Cholim*. The teachers and students in your child's class will call your child to check on him or her at home during the school day. In the Kevutzot, the teachers will ask a student in the class to call your child, ask how your child is feeling, and will give an update about what happened in school that day. (When children are sick we do not expect them to do school work until they are well enough to return to school.) We appreciate your help when it is your

child's turn to call a sick classmate. Please also make certain that you are fully aware of the school's policies regarding returning to school after an illness, covered in this handbook's section on Health and Safety.

Strollers

All strollers of younger family members must be left in the lobby when you take children to their classrooms; if the younger child is sleeping, please ask another parent to watch the sleeping child or to bring the student to the classroom. Strollers are a safety hazard when taken to the hallways outside the classrooms.

Security

We take security very seriously at Beit Rabban. Personalized letters are sent out to parents and guardians regarding our security procedures. Should you have any questions regarding security, please contact our COO. Your full cooperation with our procedures is greatly appreciated.

In addition, we ask that families are careful regarding the items that children bring with them to school.

The following items are not allowed in school:

1. Any sharp objects
2. Any toy or real weapons
3. Electronic devices, except related to medical needs
4. Clothing and accessories that interfere with the health, safety and academics of our children should not be worn to school
5. Any food containing nuts

Snow Days and Emergency Closures

On snow and emergency days, Beit Rabban decides whether to call for a snow day informed by the decision of the NYC Department of Education and the safety needs of both children and staff. We also consider the decision of the NYC Department of Education as school bus service does not run on days that the public school system closes. You can hear news of public school closings on your radio station. If school closures are necessary during the school day, you or your emergency contacts will be contacted via Parent Alert to arrange for your children to be picked up as soon as possible.

***We look forward to a joy and growth-filled
2018-2019 school year!***