



Columbia Jewish Community School Parent/Student/Teacher Handbook 2011-2012

Parents, students and teachers are encouraged to read through this information to familiarize themselves with our practices and procedures and ensure a successful year at CJCS!

Dear Parents,

Shalom and welcome to a new year at the Columbia Jewish Community School! It is our fervent hope that, by working together we will be able to provide you and your child(ren) with a quality Jewish experience. We hope to see you at school programs and encourage you to be involved by communicating with your child(ren)'s teacher(s), attending CJC/S activities, volunteering in the classroom, and discussing your child(ren)'s experiences at CJC/S.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or additional suggestions to make, please don't hesitate to be in touch!

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About the Columbia Jewish Community School

The Columbia Jewish Community School (CJCS), founded in 1971, is the first Jewish religious school established in Howard County, Maryland. The mission of CJCS is to provide Jewish education to children ages 4 – 18 and their families that leads to a lifelong love of Judaism. We teach Jewish beliefs and practices in an accepting and positive manner, emphasizing community, culture and spirituality in a Reconstructionist context.

CJCS is formally affiliated with the Columbia Jewish Congregation and with the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF). Reconstructionist Judaism is a contemporary, progressive approach to Jewish life that emphasizes community, culture and spirituality. It is respectful of Jewish text and tradition, but is also open to modern interpretations and embraces new and innovative religious practices.

CJCS welcomes students from unaffiliated families and strives to be sensitive to and accommodating of, interfaith families, non-traditional family structures, students with special needs and other challenges that may be presented to us.

Our Approach:

- We strive, at all times, to maintain a positive and safe environment for our students, parents and staff.
- We believe that the educational process is a partnership between teachers and students; towards that end, we emphasize mutual respect, open-mindedness, and tolerance of other people and ideas.
- We strive to expose our students – through our curriculum, faculty and activities - to diverse perspectives on Jewish history, religion and culture - and to do so in a positive manner. We believe that this approach enables our students to develop awareness and appreciation for the full scope of Jewish values, beliefs and practices and best equips make informed decisions of their own when faced with the many monumental choices of life in general and of Jewish life in particular.
- We strive to give our students an understanding of Jewish history and the ways in which it has shaped Jewish life and thought, while reaffirming a contemporary, progressive approach to modern life.
- We affirm that Hebrew is an essential element of Jewish education.
- We believe it is important to motivate students to make Judaism a way of life and to maintain membership in the Jewish community.
- We believe Jews should be encouraged to continue their Jewish learning throughout their life.

The CJCS office is located at:

The Oakland Mills Interfaith Center, a.k.a., The Meeting House
5885 Robert Oliver Place, Columbia, MD 21045
410-730-9355 Fax: 410-740-9323

Web site: http://www.columbiajewish.org/religious_ed.shtml

- **CJCS conducts classes and activities for Pre-Kindergarten thru 12th grades on Sunday mornings at the Oakland Mills High School** (9410 Kilimanjaro Road in Columbia; see directions inside)
- **CJCS conducts classes and activities for 8th thru 12th grade students on Thursday evenings at The Meeting House.** For additional information, contact Jerry Kiewe.

Information for Opening Sunday – Sunday, September 11:

(Note: All Sunday activities take place at the Oakland Mills High School - 9410 Kilimanjaro Road in Columbia.)

- 9:00 AM Arrival and **Opening Day Assembly** in the Auditorium – for all students AND parents
 Introduction of CJC/S staff
- 9:30 AM Students depart for AM classes – escorted by teachers and student aides
- 9:35 AM **Parent Brunch** in the Cafeteria; opportunity to hear from CJC/S Board and staff

Where Do I Go to on the First Day?

Don't worry, you won't get lost! Upon arrival at the Oakland Mills High School, go in the front entrance doors on the left.

- 1st Stop:** **Check for your name and class assignment(s) on the lists posted on the wall**
When you arrive there is likely to be a large crowd of CJCS students and parents. On the wall will be a list of all the students and their classroom/teacher assignments. You can find your name on an alphabetical list and list by class assignment. If you need help looking for your name or finding your classroom, student aides and staff will be on hand to help.
But WAIT! Don't go to your classroom yet! Next...
- 2nd Stop:** **Proceed to the Auditorium for our Opening Day Assembly (9:00 – 9:30 AM). (Student aides will point out the way.)** Look for your teacher who will be holding up a sign with her/his name and grade/class. We ask that you sit with your teacher and fellow students from your *morning* class.
- 3rd Stop:** **Your morning class. (Parents are invited to a bagel breakfast in the main cafeteria.)** Teachers and students will be dismissed as a class and walk to their rooms together.

4th thru 7th Grades: How Will I Know Which Hebrew Class I Belong In?

All 4th thru 7th grade students will be grouped by Judaica grade level for the first several weeks of school. We will then review Hebrew skills from last year and make a more comprehensive assessment of which skills each of our students have learned; ability to recognize Hebrew letters and vowels, combine syllables, and read fluently.

Once that process is completed has been completed, we will make more definitive class assignments to designated Hebrew classes, which are named after Israeli cities and typically follow the progression below

- 4th grade = Beersheva, Dimona & Eilat
- 5th grade = Tel Aviv & Tiberias
- 6th grade = Haifa & Sefat
- 7th grade = Jerusalem-Old City (OC), Jerusalem-New City (NC)
- Resource Room = Netanya (Individual tutoring, provided to students on a short or long-term basis as deemed appropriate.

There are, of course, individual exceptions. If the class we have assigned a student to does not seem to be the best "fit" (either too difficult or not advanced enough) we will be happy to reassess skills and help determine how to put him/her in a class – or arrange other assistance – that will prove more effective. We want to make sure that all of our students succeed! If you or your parents are concerned about your learning pace, you should bring it to our attention quickly.

Standard schedule of Sunday class times at CJCS:

- 9:00 AM – 10:50 AM
 - Hebrew & Judaics for Pre-K through 3rd Grade students
 - Hebrew Classes for 4th – 7th grade students
 - Student Aide Training/Jewish Service Learning for 8th grade students
 - Student Aide Service for 9th thru 12 grade students
- 10:50 AM – 11:10 AM Break Time
 - Pizza and bagels available from CJCS "Snack Shack"
 - Redemption of homework and service attendance stickers at CJCS "*Shuk of Tchochkes & Treasures*"
 - CJCS library books available
 - Various enrichment activities may be available; e.g. – CJC Choir, tennis lessons (seasonal) etc.
 - "Fun Club" for Pre-K through 3rd grade students begins
- 11:10 AM – 1:00 PM
 - "Fun Club" for Pre-K through 3rd grade students continues
 - Judaics classes for 4th – 7th Grade
 - Jewish Service Learning for class for 8th thru 12th grade students

Columbia Jewish Community School

SUNDAY SCHEDULE for 2011-2012

SUNDAY

(Pre-Kindergarten --> 7th grades)

Aug./Sept. (TBD) **CJCS Staff Orientation** [Note: HCPS begin on Mon., Aug. 29]

- Sept. 11 CJCS in Session - **Opening Sunday-Classes + School-wide Parent Brunch**
 18 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 25 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Rosh HaShannah** - begins Wed. PM, Sept. 28 thru Fri., Sept. 30)
 (HCPSS closed on Th., Sept. 29)
- Oct. 2 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Yom Kippur** - begins evening of Fri., Oct. 7 + Sat., Oct. 8)
 9 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Sukkot** begins evening of Wed., Oct. 12)
 (HCPS closed on Fri., 10/14 - Prof. Study Day)
 16 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Simchat Torah** on evening of Thursday, Oct. 20)
 23 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes (HCPSS closed on Friday, 10/21-Prof. Study Day)
 30 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
- Nov. 6 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes (End Daylight Savings Time - set clocks back 1 hour on Sat. 11/5)
 (HCPS closed on Fri., 11/4 - Prof. Study Day)
 13 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes Note – Student Council Elections
 20 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 27 **NO CLASSES - (Thanksgiving Weekend)**
- Dec. 4 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 11 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 18 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **Special school-wide Chanukah Program**
 (1st night of **Chanukah** is Tues., Dec. 20; ends Th., Dec. 28)
 (HCPS closed Mon. 12/26 – Fri., Dec. 30; reopen Mon., 1/2)
- 25 **NO CLASSES - (Winter Break)**
- Jan. 1 **NO CLASSES - (Winter Break)** (Public schools reopen on Mon., 1/2)
 8 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 15 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes (HCPS closed on Mon. 1/16 for MLK Day)
 22 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes (HCPS close early on Fri., 1/20, closed Mon.1/23 for Prof. Study Day)
 29 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
- Feb. 5 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **Tu B'Shevat Programs** (*Tu B'Shevat* is Wed., Feb. 8)
 12 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 19 **NO CLASSES - (Presidents Day Weekend)** (HCPS close early Th., 2/16; closed Fri., 2/17 - Prof. Study)
 (HCPS Closed Mon., 2/20 – Pres. Day)
 26 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
- Mar. 4 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **Purim** (Note: **Purim Megillah Reading** is Wed., March 7)
 11 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 18 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes
 25 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **School-Wide Pre-Passover Program**
- Apr. 1 **NO CLASSES - (Passover + Spring Break):** Public schools close from 4/2 – 4/9; reopen on Tues., Apr. 10)
 (1st Seder in PM on Fri., Apr. 6; *Passover* ends Sat., Apr. 14)
 8 **NO CLASSES - (Passover + Spring Break):** Public schools close from 4/2 – 4/9; reopen on Tues., Apr. 10)
 15 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Yom HaShoah** – Holocaust Remembrance Day, is Th., Apr. 19)
 22 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Yom HaZikaron** – Israel Memorial Day, is Wed., Apr. 25)
 29 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Yom Ha'atzmaut** – Israel Independence Day, is Th., Apr. 26)
- May 6 CJCS in Session - Regular Classes **(Lag B'Omer** is Thursday, May 10)
 13 CJCS in Session - **Final Sunday for CJCS** (Mother's Day) (HCPS Closed Fri, 5/18)
 20 **Contingency Sunday – used in the event of weather cancelations** **(Yom Yerushalayim** – Sun., 5/20)
(Shavuot begins Sat. PM, May 25)

Sunday Emergency Contact Phone: 410-370-2520 (Sunday AM only!)
Sunday Inclement Weather Hotline: 410-313-6827

Inclement Weather Procedures - Sundays

The Howard County Public School system maintains an "inclement weather phone line" which provides information about the decision of the County to open/close its facilities. **That number is 410-313-6827.** This is the best way for you to find out about school closings.

Generally speaking, if a Snow Emergency Plan is in effect **for Howard County** as of **7:00 AM** on Sunday morning, Howard County will NOT open any school facilities and CJCS classes will be automatically canceled. **Please wait until after 7:15 AM to call this number;** decisions to lift the Snow Emergency Plan are often made early in the morning.

If there is any question, call the CJCS office **after 7:15 AM** at: 410-730-9355

If you need further clarification, you may call Jerry Kiewe directly via cell: 410-294-3205.

Inclement Weather Procedures - Thursdays

If the Howard County Public School system closes for the day or closes early, CJCS Thursday night classes will automatically be canceled. For all weather-related matters that occur or may occur after regular public school hours, teachers will make a decision by at least 6:00 PM and will send out an email notification.

Directions to: OAKLAND MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

9410 Kilimanjaro Road in Columbia, MD

FROM BALTIMORE

Via Route 29 South

1. Take Route 29 South; just **after** the exit for the Town Center, take the exit for Route 175 **East towards Jessup**
2. Take 175 East to the first traffic light; bear right onto Thunder Hill Road
3. At the third Stop sign the road will dead end; turn left here onto Santiago Road
4. Follow the road around to the right. Go **past** the entrance to the Meeting House/Inter-Faith Center and the stop sign turn left onto Stevens Forest Road
5. Go a **very** short distance, then turn left at the first traffic light onto Kilimanjaro Road
6. The first school on your left is the Oakland Mills **Middle** School; go about 1/2 mile **past** this - the Oakland Mills **High** School will also be on your left

Via Route 95 South

1. Take Route 95 South to Route 175 **West**, towards Columbia
2. Go about 2-3 miles and turn left onto Thunder Hill Road
3. Follow directions above (FROM Baltimore, via Rte. 29) from #3

FROM WASHINGTON

Via Route 29 North

1. Take Route 29 North; just **after** the exit for Route 32, take the exit for Broken Lands Parkway; once on the exit ramp, bear right, headed **East**, towards Oakland Mills
2. Once on Broken Lands Parkway, get over to the left; at the first traffic light turn left onto Stevens Forest Road
3. At the first traffic light turn right onto Kilimanjaro Road
4. The first school on your left is the Oakland Mills **Middle** School; go about 1/2 mile **past** this and the Oakland Mills **High** School will also be on your left

Via Route 95 North

1. Take Route 95 North; take the exit for Route 32 **West**
2. Take Route 32 West to Broken Lands Parkway (this is a major intersection); turn right
3. Take Broken Lands Parkway to the traffic light for Stevens Forest Road; turn right
4. Follow the directions above (FROM WASH., via Rte. 29) from #3

FROM ANNAPOLIS

1. Take Route 32 West; go **past** Route 95 to Broken Lands Parkway (this is a major intersection); turn right
2. Take Broken Lands Parkway to the traffic light for Stevens Forest Road; turn right
3. At the first traffic light turn right onto Kilimanjaro Road
4. The first school on your left is the Oakland Mills **Middle** School; go about 1/2 mile **past** this and the Oakland Mills **High** School will also be on your left

CJCS Teachers for 2011-12

9:00 AM – 10:50 AM Kindergarten thru 3rd grades

- Pre-K + Kindergarten: Martha Boxman
- 1st Grade: Leonie Kahn
- 2nd Grade – Hebrew: Lori Schapiro
- 2nd Grade – Judaics: Dassi Cohen
- 3rd Grade - Hebrew: Allison Sokoll + Steve Kittner
- 3rd Grade - Judaics: Leslie Wasserman

9:00 AM – 10:50 AM Hebrew Class Designations for 4th thru 7th graders

- Beersheva (4th) Stephanie Gurwitz
- Dimona (4th) Ayala Chapman
- Eilat (4th) Mark Shimshak
- Tel Aviv (5th) Fern Cohen
- Tiberias (5th) Lori Schapiro
- Haifa (6th) Batsheva Broder
- Sefat (6th) Yael Sloviter
- Jerusalem-Old City (7th) Jon Blankman
- Jerusalem-New City (7th) Estelle Powers
- Netanya (Resource Room) Gabriella King
- Library Robyn Brilliant, Laura Knox
- Music: Cantor Jan Morrison
- Storytelling: Marc Young
- 8th Grade Student Aide Training/ Jewish Service Learning: Bracha Poliakoff

11:10 AM – 1:00 PM Afternoon Judaics Classes

- 4th Grade Judaics Dassi Cohen & Lori Schapiro
- 5th Grade Judaics Jon Blankman & Estelle Powers
- 6th Grade Judaics Ayala Chapman & Yael Sloviter
- 7th Grade Judaics - Batsheva Broder & Stephanie Gurwitz
- 8th – 12th grades – Jewish Service Learning – Bracha Poliakoff

Thursday Night Teen Classes: 8th Grade: Stephanie Gurwitz; 9th -12th Grades: Bracha Poliakoff

Teachers will be sending letters via email within the first weeks of school to tell about themselves, their expectations of students and curriculum plans.

Student Aides

CJCS employs a corps of exceptionally motivated and talented teens who assist our teachers and students in many ways. Our Student Aides help with various activities in the classrooms, help to run our "Snack Shack" and "Shuk", help facilitate our Student Council, operate the "Fun Club" program, etc. Their efforts are of immense benefit to CJCS!

What Should I Bring to School?

Each student is expected to come to school each week with the following:

1. **3-Ring Binder with paper and a side pocket for homework assignment forms** and school notices that are distributed in class
2. **Gluestick, Pencils and/or pens**
3. **Tzedaka money:** It is customary that students bring a small amount of *tzedakah* money to class each week. (Periodically students decide as a group which worthy organization will receive the class' contribution.)
4. **Lunch or snack money**
5. **Book bag with name:** We strongly suggest that each student have a special **book bag** designated for Hebrew School only. That way text books, notebooks, assignments, etc. have less of a chance of becoming scattered and disappearing. Please write the student's name somewhere on the bag in case the student and bag become separated!

Textbooks: Teachers will distribute textbooks during the first few weeks of school. Every Hebrew class and Kindergarten through 3rd grade will receive a textbook.

Homework: Homework is a vital aid to the learning process! Each teacher determines how much homework to assign, but expect some assignment in *every* Hebrew class. Typically, this will involve a modest written assignment that should require no more than 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Since the real key to learning Hebrew (and any foreign language) is practice and repetition, we highly recommend that each student try to practice reading aloud for 5 minutes each day.

Homework from afternoon Judaics classes will typically consist of a question pertaining to that week's class lesson that students should discuss with their parents.

Students will receive homework assignments in class from their teacher which each student should "glue stick" into his/her 3-ring binder from home. (See: What do I need to bring?) Teachers will also be sending a copy of the homework assignment via e-mail each week. Parents are asked to sign these forms each week indicating that the homework assignment has been completed.

****CJCS offers an additional incentive for the completion of weekly homework assignments in the form of "Shuk stickers" that can be redeemed at the CJCS Shuk (market) each Sunday for prizes!**

Help for Parents Who Can't Read Hebrew

We realize that, for various reasons, some of our parents may not be able to read Hebrew. For this reason, CJC periodically offers Beginner's Hebrew classes for parents and our staff will be happy to refer interested parents to other opportunities that may be available.

CJCS also developed its "CJCSings!" with this in mind; an updated Parent's Guide will be produced that includes English transliteration to go along with the CDs to enable anyone to read along, whether or not they know Hebrew. "CJCSings!" Parents' Guides will be distributed at the CJCS Opening Sunday Bagel Breakfast and at the subsequent Parent Brunches.

CJCSings!

"CJCSings!" is a program that was designed to help students and parents in their effort to learn Hebrew and prayers. It consists of a CD that is distributed to all of our families and an accompanying guide for each grade level. Students and parents can listen together to the reading of each prayer, first slowly and then in song. We hope that the CD, along with copies of the prayers, will make our prayer program clearer and easier for both parents and students to use.

CJCS Library Ladder

Read your way to the top! Earn gift certificates to local bookstores by reading and reviewing books borrowed from our library. Each summer we add new books to our collection over the summer, so check it out – then check one out!

If you have any books of Jewish interest that are gathering dust on your shelves, please let us find a new home for them. We can use them in the CJC/S Library!

Shabbat at Home

At CJC/S we strive to foster a strong partnership between your family, the religious school and the congregation. Our collective goal is to teach our children how to live meaningfully as Jews. We can teach children about prayer and about belonging to a community in our classrooms, but in order for these lessons to have intrinsic meaning for your child(ren), they must be reinforced by the active participation of your family.

Observance of *Shabbat* rituals at home is strongly encouraged. **If your family would like a "Shabbat Kit" that contains easy-to-follow instructions and some ritual objects, please let us know and we will make one available to you.** Use of these kits may also be incorporated into the standard curriculum of particular grades at CJCS.

Shabbat Services at CJC

It is our hope that our students will regularly attend *Shabbat* services either Friday night or Saturday morning with an adult family member. Regular attendance will reinforce the Hebrew that your child learns in class. **In order to encourage this, Shabbat Service attendance lists will be on hand at each service. They will provide students with an opportunity to self-report their attendance, earn "CJCS Shuk stickers" that are redeemable at the CJCS Shuk on Sundays for prizes, and receive recognition at the end of the year.**

We wish to especially encourage attendance at the special "L'Dor V'Dor" Shabbat Services that will take place periodically during the year ahead. Some will take place on Friday nights and others on Saturday morning. All are held at the Meeting House/Oakland Mills Interfaith Center.

- Thu., Oct 20, 2011 @ 6:30 PM
(*Simchat Torah*)
- Fri., Nov. 11, 2011 @ 7:00 PM
- Fri., Dec. 9, 2011 @ 7:00 PM
- Sat., Jan. 28, 2012 @ 10:00 AM
- Sat., Feb. 25, 2012 @ 10:00 AM
- Fri., Mar. 23, 2012 @ 7:00 PM
- Fri., Apr. 13, 2012 @ 7:00 PM
- Sat., May 26, 2012 @ 10:00 AM

Tot Shabbat Services + Birthdays & Anniversaries on Friday Nights

CJC also holds regular Tot *Shabbat* services and a monthly service to honor those celebrating special milestones. Both will take place on the dates below unless otherwise indicated. Tot Shabbat begins at 6:15 PM, Friday Night services at 8 PM.

- Friday, September 9, 2011
- Friday, October 14, 2011
- Friday, November 11, 2011
- Friday, December 9, 2011
- Friday, January 13, 2012
- Friday, February 10, 2012
- Friday, March 23, 2012
- Friday, April 13, 2012
- Friday, May 11, 2012
- Friday, June 8, 2012
- Friday, July 13, 2012
- Friday, August 10, 2012

Tzedakah

Tzedakah (facilitation of social justice and welfare through charitable giving) is a Jewish value that we strive to instill in our children. Each class collects *tzedakah* money each week, so you are encouraged to send your child with some extra change Sundays so he/she can participate in this *mitzvah*. Each class collectively determines the recipients of its collections, which are distributed by the school at the conclusion of the school year.

If your family would like to carry out this practice at home, CJC/S can provide you with a "Blue and White" *tzedakah* box.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Brunches

On Opening Sunday (September 11), CJCS will sponsor a "Parent Brunch" in the Main cafeteria that will begin immediately after our initial orientation (which will conclude with students being escorted to classrooms by their teachers). This will provide opportunities for both our newer and "veteran" parents to meet one and another and hear from board members and staff.

CJCS will sponsor a series of "Parent Brunches" to enable parents to meet their children's teachers, hear from CJCS board members and staff and become better informed of what to expect in the year ahead.

The Parent Brunch schedule for 2011 is as follows:

Sunday, September 25:

9:15 AM: Pre-K + Kindergarten
10:00 AM: 3rd grade
11:15 AM: 4th grade
12:00 Noon: 5th grade

Sunday, October 2:

9:15 AM: 1st grade
10:00 AM: 2nd grade
12:00 Noon: 6th and 7th grades

Parent Volunteers

CJCS has come to rely upon the talents of many parents who have made a variety of valuable contributions to our school. Helping to give individualized attention to students, teaching a particular subject in the classroom, operating our "Snack Shack", giving tennis or chess lessons during the mid-morning "break time" or facilitating Israeli dance sessions are all examples of ways that parents have helped to enhance the atmosphere at CJCS.

If you have a particular interest or skill – especially Hebrew reading ability – we would love to provide you with an opportunity to become involved. Our "volunteer corps" includes plenty of parents who are only able to volunteer for one or two specific activities each year – so you needn't feel overburdened.

If you are willing to help out, contact our CJCS Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Lehman at: FanofTerps@verizon.net.

School Board

Of course, for anyone who wishes to go the extra mile, we will welcome your interest in becoming active on our board, which oversees the operation of the entire school and coordinates a number of major holiday celebrations and other special activities that the school offers.

The 2011-12 CJCS Board:

President: Rick Feinleib
1st Vice President: Eileen Singleton
Vice President: Laura Knox
Vice President: Laura Lehman
Treasurer: Renee Brimfield
Secretary: Jamie Goldstein
Member at Large: Stuart Berlin
Member at Large: Julie Cooper
Member at Large: Laura Janis
Member at Large: Marc Norman
Member at Large: Lisa Pomerantz

Member at Large: Karen Russell
Member at Large: Stephanie Shane
Member at Large: Todd Snyder
Member at Large: Mark Steinhorn
Member at Large: Jill Witkin
Member at Large: David Zinner
CJC Representative: Stuart Berlin
CJC President: David Glaser
Educational Director: Jerry Kiewe
CJC/S Rabbi: Rabbi Sonya Starr

CJCS Board Meetings are held monthly, generally at 9:15 AM at OMHS

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|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| • Sunday, Sept. 18 | • Sunday, Dec. 11 | • Sunday, Mar. 11 |
| • Sunday, Oct. 9 | • Sunday, Jan. 8 | • Sunday, April 15 |
| • Sunday, Nov. 13 | • Sunday, Feb. 12 | • Sunday, May 6 |

Parent Communications

The CJCS staff maintains regular correspondence with parents via e-mail. Teachers send weekly reminders and the administrative staff sends periodic school-wide communications regarding upcoming programs. CJCS also maintains a web site: www.ColumbiaJewish.org/religious_ed.shtml and occasionally we even resort to old-fashioned telephone calls! Of course, any time that you are seeking additional information, please don't hesitate to contact our staff or board members.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued at mid-year and at the end of the school year. These progress reports serve as yet another means of communication between our teachers and parents. Please take time to read them and contact the teacher if you have any questions about your child's progress.

CURRICULUM

The CJCS utilizes a "spiral curriculum" designed to have students revisit key subjects during the course of their education in varied, age-appropriate ways. Our various grade levels focus on specific areas of instruction, as indicated below.

Pre-Kindergarten thru 3rd Grades

Beginning Hebrew Reading and Prayers
Jewish Holidays
Jewish Folk Tales and Jewish Music
Jewish Arts & Crafts

4th thru 7th Grades

Hebrew Reading Skills and Prayers
Jewish Life Cycle Events
Bible and History
Jewish Values & *Mitzvot*

Additional details related to the curricular goals will be sent separately to parents in each grade level during the initial weeks of school.

We use the "Hineni texts" and our "CJCS Sings!" as our main sources for the Hebrew School.

CJCS Student Council

In 2010-11, CJCS reconstituted its Student Council, comprised of elected representatives from each of its 4th thru 7th grade Judaics classes. The goals of the Student Council are:

- To provide CJCS students with an opportunity to create programs and engage in activities that will be of interest to them and are in keeping with the values and purposes of CJC/S;
- To provide CJCS students with greater familiarity with, and appreciation for, the democratic process; and
- To provide CJCS students with an understanding of how Jewish values can inform and influence their decision-making and the use of their leadership skills.

For 2011-2012, voting is scheduled to take place on Sunday, November 13. The procedures by which representatives from each class are elected will be communicated to all students during the initial weeks of classes.

Guidance and direction for the Student Council in 2011-12 will be provided by **Stephanie Gurwitz**, with assistance by a designated student aide.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

CJCS is formally affiliated with the Columbia Jewish Congregation (CJC), which will determine appropriate *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* dates and facilitate the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony of its member children. **It is the policy of the congregation that families who wish their children to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah at CJC must become members and begin attending classes at CJCS by their child's 3rd grade year.**

The preparation provided at CJCS will satisfy the general Judaic educational requirements of CJC. Along with Jewish values, history and holidays, Hebrew language and prayers are progressively taught at each grade level. Our 6th and 7th graders are introduced to *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* prayers and rituals. The congregation will arrange for additional tutoring specific to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah portion.

"Fun Club": Mid-morning activities for Pre-K thru 3 students

Please be aware that CJC/S offers an OPTIONAL "Fun Club" program from 10:50 AM – 1:00 PM for Pre-K through 3rd grade students. Operated by veteran student aides, they will meet your child at the end of his/her morning class and provide snacks and activities for the remainder of our day at Oakland Mills. Cost is \$5/hour/child with advance reservation (by 7 PM Friday); \$6/child/hour at the door (sign up by 9:30 AM); there is also a sibling discount for a 2nd child. Contact: **Briane Pomerantz**: brizypop12@yahoo.com 301-474-0423

General Information and Expectations

Attendance

Regular and consistent attendance is vital to the progress of your child's progress and that of his/her class. Facilitating regular attendance at religious school makes a positive statement to your child about the importance of Jewish education. The school's expectation is that that each child will attend all sessions. If parents know that their child will be unable to meet this standard, they should contact the Principal to discuss their particular circumstances. If you need to pick your child up earlier than the scheduled ending time of class, please notify the teacher and Principal in advance.

Behavior

CJCS is a school with a well-deserved reputation for maintaining an educational environment that is positive and productive. We credit the caring attitude of our staff and the constructive enthusiasm of our students and parents.

We expect our teachers to create lessons and activities that will engage our students, our students to participate enthusiastically, and our parents to be supportive of our efforts. Teachers and parents are encouraged to contact one another directly to discuss methods and strategies that will work best for each student.

In the unfortunate event that a student displays disruptive behavior, our staff will attempt to explore additional means of engaging him/her. We will also encourage him/her to regain the self-control necessary to remain a full participant in the classroom. Should in-class efforts prove unsuccessful and the misbehavior continue, the Principal will meet with the child and parents will be notified and consulted.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available from CJCS each year on the basis of demonstrated financial need. (This is separate from the financial assistance process of the Columbia Jewish Congregation.) Scholarship requests must be re-submitted each school year. Forms are available from the office and should preferably be submitted by mid-August, though they will be accepted and considered at any time. Families are encouraged to make us aware of any changes in their financial status.

All information will be kept in the strictest of confidence and applicants will be notified promptly of the scholarship committee's decision.

Maintaining Safety

In the Classroom

Children who display destructive or harmful behavior to themselves or others may be removed from class immediately. If necessary, the school may require a parent to accompany their child as a condition for his/her return.

In the Parking Lot

In order to help ensure everyone's safety, we are requesting that you help exercise caution in our parking lot. If you park in the lot for drop off in the morning, please accompany your child(ren) to the front entrance of the school. For pickup, please park your car, come inside to meet your child(ren), and walk back together to your car. Children darting in between cars that slow down for pick up is a potentially dangerous situation. Help keep all of our students safe!

Fire Drills

The CJCS staff will conduct a fire drill during the early weeks of school. All CJCS staff, students and other occupants will be asked to exit from the facility through the closest exit doors to and gather at the front of the building.

Foods and Snacks

CJCS operates a "very popular "Snack Shack" which sells pizza, drinks and other food items during our mid-morning break (10:50 – 11:10 AM). The Snack Shack is run by volunteers with assistance from student aides.

On a different note, please be aware that there are a number of students at CJCS who have serious, in some instances, life-threatening allergies most typically to peanuts and other types of nuts. Though CJCS cannot maintain a fully controlled environment at the High School and cannot guarantee that these children will not be exposed, we strive to make reasonable efforts to reduce the chances. We therefore request that our parents:

1. **Avoid sending food and snacks that contain peanut products to our school;**
2. Be aware of and respectful of tables that may, at times, be marked as "peanut-free" (as a preventative measure, parents whose children are especially sensitive may clean a particular table to remove any residual food remains);
3. Discourage your child from the practice of sharing food with other students (a wise precaution in any event);
4. Attempt to help explain and impress the need for extra sensitivity to this growing problem with your child.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation with the above and reassure you that the CJCS staff is also fully prepared to follow-up in the event that a medical emergency occurs.

Preventing the Spread of Infections:

The following are steps that CJCS will be taking – or will ask that parents take - to help prevent the spread of illnesses, and infections:

- Parents are, of course, asked to be cautious about sending students to school who show signs or symptoms of illness.
- As always, students are expected to wash their hands thoroughly when using restrooms and when handling any materials that might carry germs or viruses. This would be especially applicable for certain field trip or special programs (e.g. – “pet day”)

Preventing the Spread of Head Lice:

Some parents have periodically expressed concerns about the spread of head lice and its possible spread via use of CJCS-provided *kippot* for services. Towards that end, we would like to offer the following information and advice:

- Our own research and consultation with medical professionals indicates that no lice infestation - neither live lice nor their "nits" (eggs) - can survive for more than a day or two without a host, let alone a full week in our storage closet, where our supply of *kippot* resides in between class sessions. This ensures against transmittal of lice from one week to the next.
- It remains our responsibility to prevent sharing of *kippot* on any given Sunday. One means would be for each student to bring his/her own *kippah* each Sunday – and we encourage that. Yet we recognize that CJCS cannot rely upon this and that we will still need to have a supply on hand. We will thus create a specific supply of *kippot* for each class that will be brought out for that class' prayer service – and will be returned to the designated supply bag for that class at the conclusion of their service. This should ensure against repeat use of the same *kippot*.
- We will add one additional warning for our students and staff to use only 1 *kippah*; if it accidentally falls off of a student's head, it should return to the head of only that student. (Sharing can be a wonderful thing, but protecting one's own health and that of others is also a *mitzvah*!)