

Rosie Uran Jewish Education Center
at Congregation Sha'are Shalom

Parent Handbook

~Proudly teaching children from generation to generation~

Welcome to the Rosie Uran Jewish Education Center!

In choosing the Rosie Uran Jewish Education Center you have ensured that your child will acquire a strong Jewish identity that is relevant to his/her daily life. Jewish values are meant to guide each of us within the Jewish community. Our classrooms are small "communities," designed to enhance the development of those values. It will be a rewarding experience for both you and your child.

We want you to know and understand our goals. We invite you to look into our happy, noisy, creative classrooms and see your child at play. We want you to understand the validity of play and its importance in learning. Parents and teachers together can help your child reach his/her full human potential.

This handbook contains the policies and procedures of our program. Please read it thoroughly. If you have any questions, please call us at 703.737.0686.

Thank you.

Philosophy

To best develop a meaningful Jewish identity, Judaism must be a part of every day. We integrate Jewish values and a Jewish way of looking at the world into every component of our day.

It is our belief that education is the foundation of a child's life and that Jewish education should be the cornerstone for Jewish children. Children need a happy, relaxed and supportive environment that contributes to the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of each child. The early years are a crucial time for learning. Believing that learning takes place through active, hands-on experiences, we create opportunities for the children to explore new materials, ask questions and solve problems on their own. The classrooms are equipped with a variety of interest areas to stimulate self-initiated learning. Children also have the opportunity to work together in small groups. The teachers are facilitators who enhance the learning by the questions they ask, the information they provide and the behavior they model. There is always a positive atmosphere of encouragement, cooperation, guidance and respect.

Program Goals

RUJEC is committed to providing creative experiences that help children develop a positive feeling about being Jewish. We will celebrate Shabbat each week. We will explore the historical events, symbols and customs connected to the Jewish holidays. We will expose the children to the Hebrew language.

RUJEC's programs are a result of careful and detailed planning in accordance with the best available knowledge of early childhood growth and development. The programs are designed to meet the individual child's needs and to promote continuous growth in all areas of development.

Play is the major activity of all young children and the basic ingredient of their learning. It is the medium for self-expression, the way each child organizes and makes sense of the world. To play is to investigate, hypothesize, test and discover. It provides the most permanent and meaningful learning of cognitive concepts. Play promotes social values. Social sensitivity is not something that is suddenly achieved. It is a slow process that involves learning how to share, cooperate and empathize with others. Through play experiences, the child learns to initiate and sustain relationships with others, building interpersonal trust and emotional maturity. We provide a large variety of constructive, dramatic, and creative materials and experiences all in the context of a Jewish setting.

Licensure and Accreditation

As a synagogue preschool, RUJEC is currently licensed in Virginia as a religiously-exempt school. Since we are a religiously-exempt school, we are not bound by many of the Virginia Department of Social Services regulations governing other preschools, but we voluntarily operate as if we were bound by these regulations. Even though the Virginia Department of Social Services does not check our compliance, we meet the most rigorous standards that Virginia has developed for preschools. We intend to pursue licensure as a non-exempt school which will enable us to pursue accreditation by the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning (the greater DC "Board of Jewish Education") and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). In the meantime, we are operating as if we are already held to the standards of these two institutions.

Facility

RUJEC is housed in Congregation Sha'are Shalom, located at 19357 Evergreen Mill Road in Leesburg. The facility's classroom sizes exceed that required by both Virginia licensing and NAEYC standards. RUJEC also has a state-of-the-art, age-appropriate playground. The school has its own small kitchen which is used to assemble snack each day. The building has two additional kitchens which also follow laws of *kashrut** as defined by the United Synagogue of America and interpreted by the synagogue ritual committee appointee designated for that purpose. Parents may use synagogue kitchens by reserving them through the building administrator and securing the services of a *mashgiach** to ensure compliance with synagogue *kashrut* policy.

Staff Qualifications

All staff members exceed minimum qualifications required by both the Commonwealth of Virginia and NAEYC.

Teachers have a minimum of a four year degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Our teaching assistants, while required to have only a high school diploma, all have college level training in education. Other qualifications include, but are not limited to:

- Compliance with background check requirements
- Being of good character and reputation
- Being able to carry out assigned tasks
- Being willing and able to accept training and supervision
- Being able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
- Being able to communicate with emergency personnel and understand instructions on emergency procedures

Additionally, all staff is annually certified by a physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children.

Ratios

The Virginia requirement for teacher:student ratios by Virginia for religiously exempt schools is one staff member for every ten children. NAEYC prefers between 1:6 to 1:9 depending on the size of the group. Our school maintains a maximum 1:5 ratio for twos, 1:6 for threes, and 1:7 for fours.

Admission Policies

The Rosie Uran Jewish Education Center admits children without regard to race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability, marital status of family, family lifestyle or national origin. Members of Congregation Sha'are Shalom and their siblings are given priority when registration begins. Currently enrolled children and their siblings have second priority. When open enrollment begins, applications are sent out to all interested parties.

RUJEC is open to children with special needs. Admission will be at the discretion of the Director

* *Kashrut* (also *kashruth* or *kashrus*, תַּשְׁרִיט) refers to [Jewish dietary laws](#). Food in accord with *halakha* (Jewish law) is termed **kosher** in [English](#), from the [Hebrew](#) term *kashér*, meaning "fit" (in this context, fit for consumption by Jews according to traditional [Jewish law](#)). -Wikipedia

* In [Judaism](#), a *Mashgiach* ([Hebrew](#): משגיח) is a person who supervises the [kashrut](#) status of a kosher establishment. -*ibid*.

after meeting with the parents and child to ascertain that the program can meet the needs of the child. Parents must make a full disclosure of the nature and degree of the child's special needs. It is understood that our staff has no specialized training. Parents are asked to consider outside support as necessary.

Enrollment Procedure:

Enrolling one's child requires a completed application form along with the registration fee payable to the Rosie Uran Jewish Education Center. Enrollments are accepted in the order in which they are received. When an application has been received, the required registration forms will be sent home. These forms must be returned prior to the opening of classes. Enrollment is confirmed upon receipt of the first month's tuition.

Children's Files

All files are kept strictly confidential and information is handled with the utmost respect for privacy and confidentiality. Each child's file must contain:

- a current registration form
- a current Commonwealth of Virginia health form signed by the child's doctor
- a signed current release form
- a developmental form

We must see each child's original Birth Certificate prior to the first class. Failure to provide the requested forms could result in our asking you to leave the program until the forms are on file.

Tuition and Fees

An annual registration fee is due with the application. Tuition rates for specific programs are quoted on the application form.

Tuition is for the entire year as stated in the Parent Contract. RUJEC will accept monthly payments, due on the first of each month. Payments are considered late on the 10th of the month and will be assessed a \$15.00 late fee.

Reasonable collection costs including legal fees shall be added to your account balance if legal action is required.

In order to make a Jewish education accessible to all children, we offer scholarships based on financial need. To apply for such financial assistance, please contact the Director.

Withdrawals

In the event it becomes necessary to withdraw a child, written notice must be given thirty (30) days in advance to give us the opportunity to fill the opening. If RUJEC can fill the opening, we will notify you in writing and release you from your remaining annual tuition obligation.

Vacation and Holiday Credits

No credit on tuition is given for regularly scheduled holidays and vacation periods. Because of vacations and holidays, some months are shorter than others. Tuition is based on a full school year

and can be divided into ten equal, monthly payments for your convenience.

Program Closings

RUJEC closes for inclement weather when Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) are closed. We do not have our own separate announcement on the radio or TV. When LCPS announces closure, we are closed. If LCPS has a one hour delay, we will open at our regular time. If LCPS has a two hour delay, we will open one hour late. Please take safety into consideration when coming to class. Just because we are open does not mean you should take unnecessary risks if your neighborhood has been particularly hard hit by weather. Emails will be sent regarding status of the school.

If a class misses the equivalent of more than a week of school (2 days for 2 day students, 3 days for 3 days students, etc.), make up classes will be scheduled. Make up totals will not exceed two weeks.

Communication

Daily communication will be through email. Teachers send daily emails outlining activities of the day. If email is a problem for your family, please contact the school. Email will be our primary information medium as we feel this is the most efficient and most environmentally-friendly way to stay in touch. Please feel free to communicate with the teacher/director throughout the year. If issues cannot be resolved with the teacher/director, the Parent Liaison to the synagogue can be contacted.

Please help us give your child the most successful experience possible by informing us of changes in your family's life such as a birth, death, relative's visit, a pet's death, a remodeling, etc. We will offer meetings with other professionals to assist parents in their parenting role and we can often offer sources of information for questions parents may have about parenting issues. When appropriate, teachers may use these events to model/teach social skills.

It is VITAL that contact information be updated throughout the year as necessary. There is little more disconcerting to a child than being sick and knowing that no one is able to reach someone to pick him/her up. If your child will be absent, we ask that parents please leave a message at the school's designated phone, 703.737.0686. We are required by regulations to note a reason for absence on attendance forms.

Health and Safety

For safety reasons, at least one staff member on the premises has a current CPR and First Aid certification. Staff members are trained to do Daily Health Screenings. These daily health observations are made as each child arrives. Any child who is noticeably ill will not be admitted. Should a child become ill, s/he will be isolated from the group. The parents will be notified and required to pick the child up as soon as possible.

When a child has a temperature, is vomiting, has diarrhea, has a rash or a yellow/green nasal discharge, s/he should not be sent to school. A child may return when s/he has been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Please report any contagious disease you or a member of your family develops. As appropriate, we

will post a notice informing parents their child may have been exposed. We will make every effort to ensure the family's privacy is maintained.

As mandated by Virginia, no medications of any type (over-the-counter or prescription) will be administered to a child by the staff at the school. This includes ointments, sunscreen and insect repellent. As children are outside most days, please be sure to apply needed sunscreen or insect repellent before leaving your child at school.

A signed medical release form authorizing RUJEC to obtain any necessary medical treatment must be in each child's file in the event that parents cannot be contacted. If a child has a life-threatening health condition (needs an epipen, nebulizer, or glucagon), special forms must be filled out and the parent must meet with the teacher and director to be sure the physician-provided protocol is understood.

Accident and Injury Procedures

If a child has a minor scrape or bump, the staff will wash the injury and apply ice and/or bandages if necessary. Parents will be notified immediately if there is a more serious injury.

Arrivals and Departures

Classes begin at 9:00. It is important that you arrive on time. Our program is designed to be three hours long. We plan different experiences for different times during the morning. Children will benefit most by taking part in all of the activities. It is also much more difficult for a child to join in when the other children are already involved in play. For safety's sake, children must be brought to their classrooms and there must be a direct transfer to the teacher with a written notation made on the Attendance Form. Please be sure to note on the attendance form if someone other than a parent is picking up your child. Please do not arrive before 8:55 as the teachers are busy preparing the classrooms and may not be able to greet your child with the undivided attention s/he deserves.

Please inform the school by phone or email if you child will be absent or more than a half-hour late.

At dismissal, please wait in the entry foyer for your child to be released to you by the teachers. This is very important to insure each child is released only to the appropriate person. At pick-up, each child should be signed out on the Attendance Form.

Pick up time after class is 12:00. Lunch Bunch pick-up is at 1:00. It is important that you pick up your child on time. It is very difficult for a child to watch everyone else leave and be the only one left behind. Please know that if you have an unavoidable delay that is out of your control, we will make sure your child is reassured and made very comfortable.

Sign In and Out Procedures and Security

Each child must be signed in and out on the daily attendance sheet by the classroom door. Please remember to note the name of any person picking up your child if it is not a parent. This is required by Virginia regulations for early childhood programs.

The doors will be locked from 9:15 to 11:45 each day. Admission may be obtained by buzzing the

office. We will ask for identification from visitors.

Children will only be released to registered parents or to persons the parents have listed on the release form in the child's file. We must have written authorization for any changes. You may clip a note, signed and dated, to the sign in sheet for a one-time permission for someone who is not on your release form. If there is a last minute change in who will be picking up your child, please call the Director to authorize the change. Valid identification will be requested at time of pick up for anyone the staff does not know.

Clothing

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and closed toe shoes. Daily activities include active and messy play, and the children should be comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about getting dirty and stained. Sandals, jellies, crocs, and clogs are unsafe for outdoor play. Jewelry can present a safety hazard as it can get caught on play equipment, so it is best left at home. Please consider your child's skills at dressing and undressing for the bathroom when dressing for class. Outdoor clothing, including boots, should also be easy for children to manage. We want to encourage children to work toward becoming independent and we don't want to make it more difficult for them.

We go outside every day. Please dress your child appropriately. If your child is too sick to go outside, they are considered too sick to be in school.

Please write your child's name on all sweaters, jackets, coats, hats, scarves, caps, snow pants, boots, mittens, etc.

Each child needs to have an extra set of clothing in case it becomes necessary to change him/her. Please bring a complete change in a plastic shoebox labeled with your child's name. If your child comes home wearing these extra clothes, please send in a new set on the next class day. Please keep these clothes updated for seasonal and size appropriateness.

Items from Home

It is important for some children to bring a transitional item (toy, blanket, or favorite stuffed animal) from home. We recognize and respect that need. Other than that, we discourage bringing items from home. We will help the child transition from bringing the special item into the class to leaving it in the backpack. Sharing a personal toy is difficult for a child and we cannot be responsible for it getting lost or broken. No toy guns, swords or any other toy weapons will be allowed as they encourage aggressive play and are not appropriate.

Discipline

When adults interact with children, they play and converse with them as partners. When adults manage children, they retain the upper hand by giving instructions and letting the children know what to expect. While prevention of a problem is an efficient short-term approach to discipline, encouraging children to solve problems for themselves accomplishes more in the long run because of the opportunities it provides.

When dealing with conflict, we always try to keep the child's developmental characteristics in mind. Preschoolers are still quite self-centered. They are also struggling for independence and control. We acknowledge and talk about what each child is feeling and engage the children as active participants in the problem-solving process. The limits we set and expectations we have for our children respect the ages and abilities of the children.

However, there are occasions where our best efforts are not successful in resolving an issue. When this occurs, we will contact parents and ask for help. Usually, parents will understand a situation and offer alternatives which may help in the successful resolution of the issue. Sometimes, a formal parent-teacher conference will be necessary. Any discussions with staff will be strictly confidential. Parents and teachers are partners in a child's successful experience at school. If it is determined that our program cannot accommodate the special needs of a child, s/he will be asked to withdraw from the school.

Snacks

The goals of snack in the classroom are to:

- provide nutritious snacks for the children each day
- provide learning experiences about different foods, their tastes, and their importance to their growing bodies
- provide an opportunity for social time
- enhance our themes and Jewish holidays. The children will occasionally prepare their own snacks as a classroom activity.

If you would like to bring a special snack for your child's class, please check with your child's teacher. All snacks must be kosher and have the appropriate *hechsher**. No food made in a private kitchen may be brought in for consumption by the class. (Lunch bunch is private consumption.)

We are a nut- and peanut-free school. We do not serve these products or anything made on equipment that also produces them. Please remember this when sending food to school.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:00 to 1:00. You must purchase a Lunch Bunch punch card in advance. Each punch card costs \$50.00 and is good for 10 lunch bunches. Please provide a dairy or *parve** lunch. We ask that you not send peanut butter or peanut products or anything containing nuts because of allergies. Some suggestions might be: bagel and cream cheese, tuna salad, egg salad, jelly and cream cheese. We will not be able to heat or refrigerate anything for your child.

Parent volunteers are needed for each Lunch Bunch. Volunteers' children are not charged for staying for Lunch Bunch. Sign up sheets will be provided for volunteers.

* **parve** (also spelled parev, pareve; [Yiddish](#): פארעו *parev*), neither meat nor dairy -Wikipedia

* A **hechsher** ([Hebrew](#): הכשר *hechsher*) is the special [certification marking](#) found on the packages of products (usually foods) that have been certified as [kosher](#) (meaning "fit" for consumption). -*ibid*.

Birthdays

Children love to celebrate their birthdays. You are welcome to bring a special snack to celebrate your child's birthday. Please try to make the snack nutritious. All snacks must be kosher and have the appropriate *hechsher*. No food made in a private kitchen may be brought in. Please check with your child's teacher regarding allergies in the class.

Another meaningful way to celebrate your child's birthday is to give a gift of a book to your child's classroom. If you wrap the gift, it can be opened in class. It will be a special time for your child. Please ask your child's teacher or the Director for some suggestions of appropriate items the class would enjoy. A bookplate will be put into book donations to commemorate the occasion.

Please be sensitive when extending invitations. We request that invitations to parties be sent through the mail unless the whole class is invited. The same is true with Thank You cards. It is an appreciated courtesy and we would not want to make any child feel uncomfortable.

Donations

As a not-for-profit school, RUJEC welcomes donations. We are especially interested in toys made from natural materials that are noncommercial in nature and books. We also publish a wish list of other desired items in the monthly newsletter. These could be appropriate gifts to a classroom.

Visitations and Conferences

Parents may visit any time to observe. If the teachers are not free to talk with you, please understand that the children come first during class time; they will be happy to talk with you after class time. Confidentiality issues prohibit teachers from discussing many matters when others are present.

Due to class size and the ratio of children to adults being a large component of a quality program, it is not possible to bring friends or siblings to stay in the classroom with your child.

Two parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled during the year - one in the fall and one in the spring. A teacher or parent may set up additional conference at any time during the year as needed.

Any special needs and/or problems should be reported to the teachers before the child enters the program. If problems arise during the year, parents may feel free to call the teacher to discuss the matter or to arrange a conference.

During the year, please notify us of any special events in your child's life (e.g. birth of a new baby, a special vacation, hospital stay) so we may help him/her adjust by means of stories, discussions, etc.

Parent Participation

RUJEC has a Parent Volunteer Committee that works to plan fundraisers and special functions. The committee meets several times during the year and is chaired by our synagogue Board member.

Each class has a volunteer room parent that serves as a class representative to the committee and

also helps organize classroom events.

The school has a Parent Advisory Board. This Board works with the Director setting policies and procedures for the program. If you are interested in serving on the Board, contact the Parent Committee chair.

All parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom. Any special talents, abilities, hobbies, etc. among our parents can be a great contribution to our classroom experiences. Please let us know if you have something you would like to share.

Outside of classroom time and board positions, the school can always use parent volunteers for other help, such as administrative tasks.

Several parent/child functions are held throughout the year. We ask that you attend with your child. If you cannot attend, grandparents, aunts, uncles or a family friend are welcome to join your child. It is difficult for a child to be without her/his "own" adult.

A solid partnership between parents and school is how we plan to assure a fantastic experience for the RUJEC children.

"Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning." Fred Rogers