

Temple Beth Torah
Morris Nirenberg Religious School

MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS POLICY

Chris Brumbach, School Coordinator, Nikki Glick, Chair of Education
2162 WASHINGTON STREET, HOLLISTON, MA 01746 508-429-6268
WWW.BETHTORAH.ORG

UPDATED JULY 2020

Commitment

Temple Beth Torah's Morris Nirenberg Religious School is committed to ensuring that all of our children achieve Jewish educational success in a personal and meaningful way. This policy reflects an approach in which all students are treated with respect and acceptance regardless of their learning style or ability. Individual learning styles and personal differences are expected, accepted and valued. The end result is an enriching educational experience and a school culture that fosters mutual respect and a sense of community.

Vision

Our vision for The Religious School, is that honest, open communication between Parents/Guardians, Teachers, and the School Principal, will lead to the best program for every child. In order to provide effective accommodations for each child, we ask that parents and guardians share those strategies that have proven to be supportive of their child's learning. The Religious School is committed to supporting reasonable adjustments to the learning process in order to promote success. This vision recognizes that, for some students, additional or alternative accommodations within and/or outside the general classroom may be necessary.

The 504 Plan/Special Education Team

The primary educational team in The Religious School consists of the Parents/Guardians, the Teachers and the School Principal. Communication, cooperation and collaboration create a successful learning environment subject to reasonable and appropriate limitations.

Parents/Guardians: Parents/Guardians know their children's educational needs best. They play a pivotal role on their child's educational team. Parents/Guardians' responsibilities in the area of his/her child's specialized education include:

- Provide a copy of the child's 504 Plan or IEP Plan as a confidential document shared with the School Principal and Classroom Teacher
- Request educational adjustments and services through the School Principal and Teacher
- Provide input and materials relating to your child's learning style and needs
- Respond to concerns raised by the Teacher or Principal regarding
- Reach agreement with other team members on services and classroom accommodations, resulting in a Summary of Best Practices for the classroom

The Classroom Teacher: The Teacher is the provider of education for all students in the classroom. The Teacher's responsibilities in the area of 504 Plan/special education include:

- Meet with the School Principal to discuss the student's learning style and to plan accommodations to be made in the classroom.
- Meet with the Team regarding a specific student's needs
- Make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to classroom materials and instruction as agreed upon by the Parents/Guardians, the Principal and any other relevant professionals
- The Summary of Best Practices document drawn up by the Team will be kept by the Teacher to inform the classroom instruction.

- Bring all concerns about any struggling students to the attention of the Parents/Guardians and the Principal
- Reasonably modify class, home assignments and learning experiences to accommodate various learning styles and needs
- Attend training sessions offered to assist with classroom modification and individual accommodations

School Principal: The School Principal oversees the day to day operations of the Religious School and includes supporting children with different learning styles and needs. The School Principal oversees planning for those children currently served by a 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Program in their daily school program.

- Inform all Parents/Guardians about the opportunities for special education supports and 504 accommodations in the classroom.
- Encourage all Parents/Guardians to share information about their child's individual learning styles and needs, whether through sharing public school documents or professional evaluation materials.
- Lead the Team in discussing with Parents/Guardians how the Religious School can best meet their child's individual educational needs.
- Review shared materials and facilitate agreement among Parents/Guardians and Teachers about the adjustments to be made.
- Write a one-page Summary of Best Practices of learning style, modifications and classroom accommodations that will support the child's learning. This document will guide the Teacher's classroom teaching
- If a Student Success Plan (to manage behavioral challenges) is needed, the Team will also agree on this and the Principal will facilitate implementation of it with the Teacher
- Mobilize resources including special materials, classroom aides, volunteers and other services if needed.
- Supervise and review the implementation of all plans and services for a child, ensuring that accommodations that have been agreed upon are carried out. Follow-up on student's progress.
- Explore options for in-service Professional Development for Teachers in the area of meeting the needs of all learners

Educational Accommodations and Classroom Modifications

While we strive to accommodate many learning styles within the classroom, at times other modifications are necessary to help students. These will vary for each student. The Religious School is committed to planning and making reasonable adjustments to lesson plans, instructional materials, classroom presentations and discussions to promote success for students with different learning styles.

There are times when flexible arrangements may be needed. Educational options can be initiated by Parents/Guardians, Teachers or the School Principal. These accommodations can be implemented for the short or long term at any point during the year. Modifications will be determined through collaboration among Parents/Guardians, Teacher, Student and School Principal and other participants as needed.

The Agreement Process

In order to provide the best learning environment for each child, we expect to hold a collaborative meeting with the Team within a reasonable amount of time, when the Teacher and/or School Principal initiates the meeting. The School will be as flexible as possible to accommodate the Parent/Guardian's schedule, within reason.

Confidentiality

Any conversation related to individual children and their 504 Plan or special education plan, is to be kept confidential between Parents/Guardians, the Educational Staff involved with the Student and the School Principal. All discussions should be in a private location. No child-centered discussions should be held in hallways, the lobby or in any other public area of Temple Beth Torah. All written documentation (except the Summary of Best Practices – kept in the classroom) and discussion regarding each child in the Religious School will be kept in a confidential file in the School Principal's office.

Parents/Guardians Rights

Parents/Guardians have the following rights:

- To know what modifications and accommodations the School is planning to provide to their child
- To decide whether to accept those changes to the general classroom program
- To meet with the Team to discuss their child's needs
- To provide Religious School staff public school 504 plan, Individualized Educational Program and/or evaluation materials and to know that the documents will be held in confidence in the School Office.
- To approve the Summary of Best Practices created by the Team for implementation in the Religious School

Contact with Outside Professionals

With written permission from the Parents/Guardians, members of the Religious School staff will make every effort to consult with outside professionals.

Behavior

Parents/Guardians may recommend behavior management strategies and plans and with Team input adapt those to use in the Religious School. At times, the School Principal and Teacher may consult with Parents/Guardians on behaviors that are occurring that are challenging in the classroom setting, to get Parent/Guardian input and revise any current plan or create a new plan for a student. The Education Chair may be called in to help with this process at times. At this time, a Student Success Plan will be drawn up, agreed to by the Parents/Guardians and the Teacher, and put into place at the Religious School. The School Principal will oversee the implementation and the success of the program and be in communication with Parent/Guardians about its success.

Staff Training and In-Service Programs

The School Principal will arrange for a minimum of one training on meeting the needs of diverse learners each year. Teachers are expected to participate in this training and any other pertinent training focused

on teaching a diverse classroom. In addition, Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for professional development through Jewish conferences for educators and other sources. The amount of training a teacher is expected to complete will vary based on her/his/their experience and the needs of her/his/their assigned students.

Classroom Aides

The purpose of classroom aides is to assist the teacher and students in all classroom learning experiences. Religious School cannot provide a 1:1 aide for any one child. Aides are assigned to assist the class as a whole with the possibility of particular attention provided to those students who require additional support.

Progress Reports and Feedback

The Teacher will be available for conferences with Parents/Guardians as needed. The education staff will provide feedback and other pertinent information as concerns develop or as the child's progress changes. The Teachers will provide feedback at least once per year at the regularly scheduled in-person conference mid-year. If more frequent feedback is deemed necessary a special agreement with the Parents/Guardians, Teacher and School Principal will be developed.

Limitations

There may be situations where the specific and challenging needs of a child exceed the services that can be reasonably provided in the Religious School. The School Principal should bring these concerns to the Chair of the Education Committee. Through conferencing with all relevant parties, an agreement will be made between the Teacher, School Principal, Education Chair and the child's Parent/Guardian, based on what is best for the child. If appropriate, the Education Committee will review parental requests for services.