



**CONGREGATION BETH YESHURUN
WILLIAM S. MALEV SCHOOLS
OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**HILLEL HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK
2011-2012
5772**

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Dear Hillel High School Students and Parents,

Welcome to Hillel High School! I hope that your families have had a great summer and that you are looking forward to the upcoming year as much as I am.

This manual has been prepared to provide you with the most pertinent information our students and their parents need to know about our school and its policies. At Hillel High School we take our responsibility to provide meaningful Jewish learning to our teens very seriously. This responsibility requires the cooperation of all our stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, administration). Please read through it, so that you will have important information that you will need. We hope that this handbook will help you understand our program and our expectations, and we suggest that you keep it to refer to as needed throughout the year.

It's been a busy summer moving back into the school and preparing for the year, and I am looking forward to getting the year started! We are so fortunate to be in an amazing new facility! Our first evening of Hillel High School is Wednesday, August 24.

All parents are invited to join us at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, August 24, the first night of Hillel High School as we get the year started. **Our 10th Grade Parents are asked to make plans to stay throughout the evening for the first mandatory session with Rabbi Rosen related to Confirmation.** I hope to see all of you then to share more with you about the upcoming year.

If you have questions at any time, please contact me at seskowitz@bethyeshurun.org or 713-666-1884, ext. 340.

B'Shalom,

Sheryl Eskowitz
Education Director

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Policies and Procedures

HILLEL HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Hillel High School strives to meet the needs of Congregation Beth Yeshurun teenagers by providing a relevant and increasingly sophisticated continuation of their Jewish education post *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Through educational, spiritual and community programs, Hillel High School helps students increase their Judaic knowledge and strengthen their connection both to Beth Yeshurun and *Am Yisrael*. Our school is a place in which teens can continue to foster a positive Jewish identity, and develop a personal relationship with God and a lifelong commitment to Jewish learning, Israel and the Jewish people.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Parents must be synagogue members in good standing in order for teens to attend Hillel High School. Students must be registered in Hillel High School and meet all requirements explained in this handbook to participate in Confirmation and/or Graduation.

PHILOSOPHY

Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam - the study of Torah is the greatest (of all of the *mitzvot*) because it leads to the rest.

We believe that Jewish education for teens is very important to keep them connected to the synagogue and to their Judaism. Therefore, the classes and curriculum must be presented in an age-appropriate and relevant forum. By combining Hillel High School with *tzedakah/tikkun olam* opportunities we hope to reach out to our students in a variety of ways: through classroom learning, special programs and social action projects, as well as informal learning opportunities. Our goal is to integrate structured learning, as well as social learning time into our program. In our program we enjoy strong rabbinic presence and expect strong family support.

The following beliefs inform our curriculum and our programming:

- ❖ The *middot* (ethical values of Judaism) are valuable decision making tools for teens.
- ❖ Teenage students have something important to say and their input is valued.
- ❖ Our school must provide a safe and respectful place for the exchange of ideas.
- ❖ Our course content must reinforce the practices and beliefs of Conservative Judaism.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Our school is a Jewish school which upholds Jewish values. The behavior policy is based on Jewish tenets. Hillel High School must be a place where students, teachers and families feel safe, respected and supported. We expect that students, teachers and families will honor each other and act with dignity and *kavod* (respect) at all times.

The following behavior is expected of all students:

- ❖ Be polite, respectful and considerate towards their teachers, fellow students and principal.
- ❖ Make an effort to actively participate in their classes.
- ❖ *Kippot* must be worn by male students and faculty at all times in the building; *kippot* are optional for female students and faculty. Baseball caps may not be worn as a substitute.
- ❖ **Cell phones, pagers, CD players, iPods, laptop computers and other electronics have no place at Hillel High School. They must be turned off (not silenced) and put away during class. If a phone is in view, goes off during class, or is being used, the phone must be given to the teacher, to be returned at the end of class. If this is a repeated issue, teachers will collect any cell phones found in use during a Hillel High School session (phone call, texting or paging) and will keep it until the time a parent comes to pick it up.**
- ❖ Parking is prohibited in reserved or handicapped parking spots. The officer on duty will issue appropriate notifications of violations.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our goal is to work together to create a respectful, nurturing learning community. We expect all members of the Hillel High School community, both adults and students, to abide by this principle.

1. When a disciplinary incident first occurs, the teacher will counsel the student in the classroom in a professional manner.
2. At the time of the second incident (or if the first incident is extremely serious in nature), the student will be sent to the Education Director to be dealt with at her discretion. A discipline report will be filed and placed in the student's file. The Education Director will contact the parents and explain the discipline report.

3. The third time a student causes a significant class disturbance, the student will again be sent to the Education Director who will have the student call his/her parents. The student will be suspended until such time as the parents meet with the Education Director, teacher and the student. No student will be readmitted to class prior to this meeting.
4. If a second parent meeting is necessary, the student will be subject to suspension for the remainder of the semester. In order to return to Hillel, the student must complete the required class assignments and sign a statement of understanding.

Incidents of misbehavior may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ❖ Disrespect to faculty and/or peers
- ❖ Persistent refusal to comply with the school rules resulting in major classroom or school disruption
- ❖ Defacing school or synagogue property
- ❖ Possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol
- ❖ Theft of property
- ❖ Insubordinate behavior despite teacher direction
- ❖ Crude or abusive language or action (including physical violence)
- ❖ Leaving the building without written permission

ATTENDANCE POLICY/SCHEDULING

Our 8th - 11th grades meet on Wednesdays, 7:30-9:00 pm., and classes begin PROMPTLY at 7:30.

The only way to achieve the goals of Hillel High School is through regular attendance. Absence from school prevents the attainment of high academic standards, hinders growth and understanding, and interferes with classroom dynamics and pacing. It is essential that students have regular and punctual attendance at Hillel.

We ask your assistance in making every moment of our time together count and for eliminating disruptions during class. Out of respect for their teachers and other students, we expect all students to be on time to class, **as well as to be present for the entire time.**

Tardy/Early Dismissal Policy:

ALL students are expected to be on time and to attend all class sessions. Students who are absent are expected to keep current with their studies. We also understand that a student may be late to class very occasionally. However, teachers are required

to note tardies, and three (3) tardies will count as one (1) absence. We know that Houston traffic and weather make for variable driving conditions, so please plan accordingly.

Early dismissal will also require communication (an email or a written note to Sheryl Eskowitz or Karen Daniel) from the parent. Three (3) early dismissals will also count as one (1) absence. Specific written permission will be required each time a student needs to leave early. This policy has been adopted to support learning and to keep our students safe.

All tardies and early dismissals will be recorded on the attendance sheet. Arriving late to and/or leaving early from class **3** times will equal **1** absence.

TEXT MESSAGES OR PHONE CALLS ON A STUDENT'S CELL PHONE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AS WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (especially since all cell phones are to be turned off while at Hillel High School).

ANY STUDENT LEAVING THE BUILDING WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE OFFICE WILL BE SUSPENDED.

The following policy was adopted by the Education Committee, July, 2009.

We recognize that enrollment in Hillel High School is a commitment and a conscious choice. We hope that our teens will honor that commitment by being on time and at school. Your teen's success depends on this, as does his/her eligibility for Confirmation, Graduation and prizes/awards.

We also understand that conflicts may arise. With this in mind, students may miss a maximum of **3** classes per semester. Students are permitted up to 3 absences per semester without a note (6 per year for all grades).

We know that most students will miss school occasionally due to illness, family events, school activities, etc. Beyond these 3 absences/semester, make up work is **REQUIRED**.

Make up work will be emailed to the students and parents after a student has missed 3 classes in one semester.

If they are needed, two make up classes will be offered for students in grades 8-11 throughout the year. Each make up class can count toward 2 missed classes.

Any student who misses more than 30% of classes in any given year is ineligible to participate in any upcoming Confirmation and/or Graduation ceremony. This year, we have 27 Wednesday night sessions. **Therefore, any student who misses more than 8 sessions forfeits his/her eligibility for Confirmation and/or Graduation.**

Students may attend 1 Akiba class (Sunday morning Adult Education at Congregation Beth Yeshurun) per semester as a make up. Each Akiba class will count as 2 missed classes. The rabbis will let us know which of their classes are available for HHS students to attend.

STUDENTS MAY NOT JUST DROP INTO ANY AKIBA CLASS ANY WEEK.

DRESS CODE

We abide by HISD dress code. We wish to maintain a respectful, yet comfortable environment. Therefore, we expect all students to be dressed respectfully when attending Hillel High School classes and activities. The type of clothing one wears influences behavior. When students come to the synagogue for class dressed inappropriately, their behavior reflects that informality and their ability to study about Judaism and delve into deeper issues is compromised. We ask that every student come dressed in a manner that will facilitate their learning in a positive way. In particular, girls should not wear halter tops, nor have bare midriffs. Boys should not wear sleeveless shirts. Neither boys nor girls should wear very short shorts or skirts or t-shirts with offensive wording.

SECURITY

Security is of utmost concern. Strong measures are in place, and a police officer is on duty during all sessions.

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

Books are the property of Beth Yeshurun Schools. Unless there is a special project or make up assignment, the texts will remain at school. There will be a charge for lost and damaged books.

CORRESPONDENCE

E-mail is typically our most effective way of communicating with both parents and students, so it is important that **you check it regularly**. Please be sure we have your correct e-mail to ensure you are kept up to date with information. The school calendar of events is listed in the directory and more information about Hillel High School can be found on the Beth Yeshurun website at

http://www.bethyeshurun.org/Religious_School_and_Hillel_High_School.php.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Many programs, jobs and scholarships require letters of recommendation from professionals. Students are asked to request these letters from either the Education Director or the faculty member who is best able to assess the student's skills.

EMERGENCY OR INCLEMENT WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSING

Please listen to KTRH radio (740 AM) to find out about school closings. If possible, we will send an email and try to reach you by phone. Generally, if the public schools are closed, so are we. If Hillel High School has not been cancelled, yet the weather in your area is a cause for concern, please use your best judgment in attempting to make it to Hillel High School. A phone call or email explaining the situation would be appreciated.

KASHRUT

In accordance with synagogue policy, all food served in our building must be kosher. Snacks that students bring in for their own consumption must be either dairy or *pareve*. French fries or any other items from fast food establishments are **not** permitted. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

ALLERGY POLICY

The safety and well-being of each of our students is our primary concern. The Beth Yeshurun Day School has instituted a policy regarding peanuts and nuts in the school. Because we share classroom space with the Beth Yeshurun Day School, **students may not bring in foods that contain peanuts, nuts or nut-based products**. Items that have been manufactured on the same equipment as peanuts or nuts are okay.

TZEDAKAH

During the school year, each class will pick a charitable organization in need of support and fulfill the mitzvah of *tzedakah* by giving to these organizations. Money will be collected on Wednesday nights and all collected funds will be given to the assigned organization at the end of the school year. Please be sure that teens bring a small sum of money so they may participate in the fulfillment of this *mitzvah*.

GUESTS

Parents and grandparents demonstrate the value that they place in their teen's religious education by showing an interest in what s/he is doing in school. They are welcome to visit. Friends may visit as well. However, friends who disrupt learning will be asked to leave and not return. A call **beforehand** is required for friends and would be appreciated for parents, but is not required. All visitors must register in the office.

Curriculum

Hillel High School offers teens the opportunity to learn in an increasingly sophisticated and critical manner and to experience the joy and beauty of Judaism. Each year is designed to offer our students distinct and personally relevant insights into their heritage and responsibilities as Jews. This year our curriculum includes:

8th Grade: a tour of **What's in the Bible/How to find things in the Bible** (an overview and timeline of the Bible, Psalms, Ruth, King David), **Jewish Lifecycle** (including Conservative Judaism's views on *kashrut*, marriage (and divorce), *mikvah* and dating etiquette), and **Crossing the Line Online** (a unit designed to address the ever growing problem of cyberbullying and online harassment).

9th Grade: **Jewish Medical Ethics** (including Conservative Judaism's views on cloning, birth control, organ donation, visiting the sick, end of life issues) and **Jewish Values and Virtues** (including humility, justice and mercy, not embarrassing others and generosity)

10th Grade: **What the Rabbis Taught** (an introduction to Midrashic, Mishnaic and Talmudic literature), **Prayer** (what's the point, praying in Hebrew versus English, formulated prayer versus our own words) and **Theology** (the nature of God, heaven, hell and the afterlife, the Messiah/Messianic era)

Other Requirements for Confirmation:

1. Students must attend the Confirmation Retreat, Friday and Saturday, January 6-7, 2012 and fulfill the other requirements as stated in the Confirmation Contract if they are to be Confirmed.
2. Students & Parents also have 2 sessions with Rabbi Rosen: Wednesdays, August 24, 2011 & February 8, 2012.
3. Students have 1 session alone with Rabbi Rosen: Wednesday, November 16, 2011.

11th Grade: **Different Religions** (including a look at Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist Judaism, Christianity and Islam), **Israel Advocacy** (including Zionist thinkers' contribution to the creation and character of Israel, history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, modern attacks on Israel's right to exist) and **God on Trial** (students will have the opportunity to study and explore the Jewish views of age old questions such as Who is to blame for the evil and natural disasters that have affected humankind for centuries? Is it God? What does Judaism say?)

In addition, there are 2 awards for which every 11th grade student is eligible:

❖ **The Kevin M. Penn *Chesed* Award:**

Each student is encouraged to write or record an essay about a personal act of *chesed*. These will be considered for the Kevin Penn *Chesed* Award, which carries a \$500 cash prize.

❖ **The Mozelle Barg Award:**

The Mozelle Barg award is given to an 11th grade student who is both outstanding in his/her own right and who exemplifies Mozelle's high standards for academic excellence, high personal standards and a commitment to Judaism.

Applications are available from the Religious School Office.

12th Grade: Wednesday sessions with guest speakers at Rabbi Rosen's home and other venues tailored to teens on the brink of adulthood.

****In addition, every 12th grader has the option to write a Genealogy Essay about his/her family's roots to be considered for the **Lena Dow Caplan Award**.*

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DATES FOR ALL HHS STUDENTS:

MENSCHES IN ACTION PROJECT: Sunday, November 6, 2011

PURIM CARNIVAL: Sunday, March 4, 2012

We want our students to work together within the community on these days, so please mark these 2 Sundays on your calendar now! *Mensch*es in Action is a time for the students to volunteer their time in the greater community and the Purim Carnival is a time for them to volunteer here at Beth Yeshurun.

Pizza and *Parashah*:

Twice a semester we offer the chance for our students to have dinner with one of our Beth Yeshurun rabbis and learn a little bit of Torah. This optional program begins at 6:45 pm, and Hillel High School will pay for dinner. The dates for Pizza and *Parashah* for the 2011-2012/5772 year are:

- ❖ October 26, 2011 with Rabbi Morgen
- ❖ December 7, 2011 with Rabbi Morgen
- ❖ February 8, 2012 with Rabbi Rosen
- ❖ March 28, 2012 with Rabbi Strauss

Students must RSVP to Sheryl Eskowitz or Karen Daniel, so that we know how much food to order!

Special Programs

GEMILUT CHASADIM

It is our responsibility to repair the world—“*tikkun olam*” through deeds of loving kindness. Teens are expected and encouraged to do volunteer works of kindness in the community. Hillel High School staff stands ready to facilitate such endeavors which can also fulfill community service hour and/or Confirmation requirements. In addition, Hillel students will

- ❖ Volunteer during *Mensches* in Action Day on Sunday, November 6, 2011
- ❖ Help with Count Me In on Wednesday, November 30, 2011
- ❖ Take a shift at the Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 4, 2012

Everyone's participation at all of these events is expected.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Throughout the year, our students will have the opportunity to participate in special programs with a variety of speakers. This year, we are pleased to have:

- ❖ A fabulous Book Fair Program
- ❖ Other special programs are in the works, including a combined, interactive program in the spring with the high schools of Congregation Emanu El and Congregation Brith Shalom

SHABBAT DINNERS

There will be grade-level Shabbat dinners immediately following Shabbat services during the year, and it is our hope that everyone will make an effort to attend.

RSVP's to Sheryl Eskowitz or Karen Daniel are necessary so that arrangements can be made for all attending.

- ❖ November 11, 2011 - 8th and 9th Grades - at Beth Yeshurun with Sheryl Eskowitz and ISJL Fellow, Mark Swick
- ❖ December 2 2011 - 10th Grade at Rabbi Morgen's home
- ❖ December 2 2011 - 11th Grade at Rabbi Strauss's home

UNITED SYNAGOGUE YOUTH (USY)

The general aim of the United Synagogue Youth program is to bring about a meaningful and fully reciprocal encounter of Judaism, the Jewish people, and the Synagogue on one side, and the Jewish teenager on the other. As a result of this encounter, the Jewish teenager will, firstly, demonstrate and experience how the Jewish way of living, through study, action and fellowship, leads to personal fulfillment and growth while meeting his/her spiritual and social needs, and secondly,

make a significant contribution to his/her synagogue, community, society and the Jewish people.

The local, regional and national USY events are optional; however, we do hope that your teen will choose to participate in the variety of programming that will be offered to them on all of these levels.

In addition to local events with the city-wide Houston chapter (HouJews), the following is the list of dates for the regional/national conventions:

Fall Kallah/Camp Kadima November 18-20, 2011 - Camp Young Judaea, Wimberley, TX
International Convention, December 25-29, 2011 - Philadelphia, PA

Please email HOUJEWS@gmail.com for more information on these conventions or to be included on information about local events. You can also contact co-presidents: Amanda Actor, amactor@comcast.net or Tiana Valdespino: tiana.valdespino@gmail.com or advisor: Tobi Cooper, tobi.b.cooper@gmail.com

Scholarship money is available for USY conventions. Please talk to Sheryl Eskowitz about it.

MILESTONES

During their Hillel High School years, students will participate in two important milestones: Confirmation (after the successful completion of 10th grade) and Graduation (after the successful completion of 12th grade). In each case, there are requirements above and beyond class attendance. Students completing the requirements for these milestones will have their photographs displayed.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

1. Students are eligible for Confirmation if the following requirements are met:
 - a. Families are members of Congregation Beth Yeshurun and are in good standing at the time of Confirmation.
 - b. The student has continuously attended classes at Congregation Beth Yeshurun Hillel High School since and including 8th grade.
 - c. The student must be in good standing from previous years. All make up work must have been completed within the time frame given when the assignment was sent out.
 - d. During the 10th grade, the student must sign the Confirmation contract, (this includes a *mitzvah* project), attend the three classes with Rabbi Rosen pertaining to Confirmation, the Confirmation retreat, volunteer at *Mensches*

in Action Day, volunteer at the Purim Carnival and complete any assignment that is given to all Confirmation students.

2. Students are eligible for Hillel Graduation if the following requirements are met:
 - a. Families are members of Congregation Beth Yeshurun and are in good standing at the time of Graduation.
 - b. The student has continuously attended classes at Congregation Beth Yeshurun Hillel High since and including 8th grade and 11th grade.
 - c. The student must be in good standing from previous years. All make up work must have been completed within the time frame given when the assignment was sent out.
 - d. During the 12th grade the student must meet all Graduation and attendance requirements. **A Jewish Day School cannot be substituted for the 12th grade year.**
3. For new members of Beth Yeshurun who have children eligible for Hillel, the student must be enrolled from the date of the family's joining the congregation, with a minimum of one year's attendance.

All exceptions will be handled by the Education Director and Education Committee.

Hillel High School Staff

Hillel High benefits from substantial rabbinical involvement, which includes teaching. The faculty consists of experienced and specially trained members of the Houston Jewish community who are knowledgeable about a broad range of Jewish subjects. **Students will have all teachers listed in their grade.**

Our teachers and staff are happy to speak with you when the need arises. Please call them at the school office, email, or leave a message for them along with your contact information, and the best time to reach you. They will return your call promptly, and set up a meeting if necessary.

Religious School Office:

Sheryl Eskowitz, Education Director
seskowitz@bethyeshurun.org
713-666-1884, ext. 340

Karen Daniel, Administrative Assistant
kdaniel@bethyeshurun.org
713-666-1884, ext. 334

5772 Faculty

8th Grade

Mr. Michael Morgan
Mrs. Ariel Rozen

korus32@hotmail.com
arozen18@gmail.com

9th Grade

Mr. Michael Morgan
Mrs. Hilary Most

korus32@hotmail.com
hilarytmost@gmail.com

10th Grade

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Rabbi Brian Strauss

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11th Grade

Rabbi Brian Strauss
Mrs. Ariel Rozen

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arozen18@gmail.com

12th Grade

Rabbi David Rosen and guests

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