

PROJECT OF KINGS BAY Y



PARENT HANDBOOK



## Welcome to JCC Brooklyn a Project of Kings Bay Y

We are very pleased that you have chosen our program for your child!

Drawing inspiration from Jewish values and culture, we aim to nurture the growth of the whole child in a caring, loving environment. We are looking forward to a rewarding journey together as your child grows as a unique person and a cherished member of our school community.

In order for us to ensure a smooth and effective program the JCC Brooklyn Early Childhood Program has compiled the following policies and procedures for parents. We ask for your full cooperation and support by reading and complying with these policies.

### Required Paperwork

The following forms and conditions must be met before beginning the school year:

- Financial obligations as agreed to in the JCC Brooklyn Contract must be met in full.
- An up-to-date medical form with a full immunization record must be on file. JCC Brooklyn cannot accept students that are not fully vaccinated.
- Pick up authorization
- Sunscreen form
- Autopay Form with a voided check

### Financial obligations

Should families wish to withdraw from the program at any time during the year, our usual 30-day notice provision will apply. Please note that the first and last month of the school year program [ex. September and June, if starting on the first month of the school year, are not refundable under any circumstance]. Should we be ordered to close by city, county, state, or federal officials at any time, families will be required to meet their financial commitment for the duration of that calendar month so that we can continue to compensate teachers through the end of the month. After that time, no further charges will be made until we're-open. (For example, suppose we were ordered to close from December 12 through February 10. Families would be required to pay their tuition through December 31, and teachers would be compensated through December 31. There would be no charges for the month of January and charges for February would be prorated.) If we are required to close for a short period of time in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 in our community, there will be no refunds granted.

## Educational Philosophy

JCC Brooklyn is a loving and caring community that embraces all families. We are dedicated to providing our students with a learning environment that nurtures their growth, curiosity, and self-esteem. Our aim is to provide opportunities for children to develop a lifelong passion for learning, and to get to know and love themselves as individuals and as members of a caring, cooperative learning community.

We are a progressive school grounded in the philosophy that children learn best through play. Our lively, hands-on curriculum is developed through direct observation of students' interests and individual needs. Through explorations both indoors and outside of our classrooms we engage children's curiosity, imagination, and their five senses. In partnership with families, we strive to provide opportunities for each child to develop cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally at a rate that is most appropriate for them.

## Jewish Life

JCC Brooklyn is a pluralistic Jewish Community Center located in three physical sites (Windsor Terrace, North Williamsburg, and Clinton Hill) as well as in pop-up spaces. We are inspired by Jewish values and ideas and we welcome all families regardless of background.

A joyful introduction to Jewish life, culture, and holidays is part of each child's experience at JCC Brooklyn. Children become familiar with songs, customs, and stories to expand their knowledge of holidays and Jewish values. The joy of Shabbat is shared by our classrooms together each Friday and we learn about and celebrate Jewish holidays and customs throughout the school year.

The curriculum at JCC Brooklyn uses a framework of Jewish lenses through which day-to-day experiences become meaningful building blocks for identity formation and growing kind and caring members of society:



- Masa- Journey (Reflection, Return and Renewal)
- T'zelem Elohim- Divine Image (Dignity and Potential)
- B'rit- Covenant (Belonging and Commitment)
- K'dushash- Holiness (Intentionality and Presence)
- Hit'orerut- Awakening (Amazement and Gratitude)
- D'rash- Interpretation (Inquiry, Dialogue and Transmission)
- Tikkum Olam- Repair of the World (Responsibility)

We warmly welcome children of all ethnic and religious backgrounds to enroll in our school. We embrace and respect the diversity that each child brings to our community. While we do not observe specific holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Halloween, Valentine's Day, and other non-Jewish holidays, we ensure that every child's background is recognized and respected.

In our classrooms, we encourage open dialogue and understanding among students. A child's mention of any home celebration or cultural tradition is always welcome and will be treated with the utmost respect and genuine interest. It provides a valuable opportunity for us to learn from one another, promoting a sense of inclusion and unity within our diverse student body.

Our commitment is to create an environment where every child feels valued and celebrated for their unique heritage and cultural experiences. By fostering a culture of respect and appreciation for differences, we aim to cultivate a positive and inclusive learning community for all our students.

### JCC Brooklyn's *B'rit Kehillah* - Commitment to Respectful Communal Behavior

JCC Brooklyn is a pluralistic Jewish Community Center inspired by Jewish values and ideas that welcomes all families regardless of background. This *b'rit* (Hebrew for sacred agreement) establishes each individual's commitment to maintaining a school and a community environment grounded in mutual respect and a sense of personal responsibility. As a member of the JCC Brooklyn community, I affirm that I will:

- Treat all others with *kavod* (honor and respect) in recognition of each individual's dignity and potential;
- Communicate my thoughts in a courteous, timely, and considerate manner and respond similarly to others' communications;
- Refrain from any behavior that could be construed as sexually harassing, demeaning, hurtful, bullying, or inappropriate.

I understand that JCC Brooklyn reserves the right to exclude any individual who fails to adhere to these standards of behavior in any interaction with staff, parents, or other members of the community.

### Your Child's First Days at School

Starting the school year is a big step for a child. Adjusting to new places, people and routines is a process of developing trust in their teachers and the school environment. Each year support from parents and caregivers is an integral part of the process.

Our policy for all students is that the adjustment period (or "Phase In" period) each year is a gradual one. We ask that a parent or caregiver plan to stay close to the school for as long as the teachers and director, along with the parent, determine it is necessary. We have found through experience that a slow, gradual separation sets up parents, teachers, and (most importantly) children for a successful school year.

Please see below for a sample of the daily schedule for our youngest students.

### A Typical Day

8:30-9:00 - Free Play

9:00-9:20 - Circle Time

(Class discussion of plans for the day, read a story, sing-a-long, share about experience at home or in school)

9:20-9:40 - Morning Snack

9:40-10:15 - Classroom Projects

(Material play, special projects, cooking, art, etc.)

10:15-10:45 - Outside Play

10:45- 11:15 Indoor Activities

(Rotation of activities, music, cultural projects)

11:15-12:00 - Lunch

12:00 - Dismissal For Half Day Friends

12:00-2:30 - Nap time

2:30-3:00 - Afternoon Snack

3:00- Dismissal for Full Day Friends

3:00-4:15 - Outside Play

4:15-4:45 - Evening Snack

4:45-6:00 - Indoor play

\*\* Teachers will have your child's daily and weekly schedule posted in their classroom for your reference. \*\*

### Phase In

Your child's first days at school are the Phase In period. The length of acclimating to school depends on your child's age group, class schedule, and individual needs. This gradual beginning gives each child a chance to get to know his or her teachers, the classroom, and its routines and to feel comfortable in their new group setting in an atmosphere of trust. We understand that Phase-In can be inconvenient for families and we appreciate your cooperation during this period.

Please note that Phase-In begins BEFORE the beginning of the school year, during a special classroom visit that will be scheduled by your child's teachers. During this classroom visit, your child will be the focus, and you should save any questions you have for our Parent Night, which will also take place during this week via Zoom.

### Arrival and Departure Procedures:

#### Arrival:

- Please ensure timely arrival, as it is vital for your child's routine.
- Remember to sign your child in upon arrival.
- While dropping off, kindly limit conversations with teachers to essential updates regarding your child's needs.
- Our teachers prioritize warmly welcoming the children and commencing their day together.

#### Dismissal:

- For dismissal, please sign your child out.
- If someone new will be picking up your child, provide written consent in advance.
- A 5-minute grace period is allowed before additional fees apply.
- Only folding, collapsing, or umbrella strollers may be left in school.
- JCC Brooklyn cannot be held responsible for any items left in the pick-up/drop-off area.

#### COVID-19 Measures:

- Due to COVID-19, drop-off will occur in front of the school.
- We encourage leaving strollers in the shed before walking to the entrance.

#### Special Circumstances:

- Notify our staff in advance if someone other than a usual caregiver will pick up your child. Written consent is required.
- In case of changes to your plans, please call or email the school to make arrangements.
- Inform your child's teacher at drop-off of any unusual aspects related to their routine, mood, or physical well-being.

#### Running Late:

- If you are running late, please inform the office so we can notify teachers.

### Visitors and Special Guests

Due to Covid-19, we will not be able to accommodate any visitors or special guests in your child's class. We appreciate your understanding.

## Parents and Our Community

At our school, we highly value parent presence and involvement as integral parts of our vibrant school community. Throughout the school year, there will be numerous opportunities for parents to contribute in various capacities to school and community events, including holiday celebrations. If you or a family member would like to volunteer time, activity space, or resources, we encourage you to speak with your child's teacher.

### Class Parents

To enhance communication and support within our school community, we kindly request that one or more parents in each class take on the role of Class Parents. These dedicated individuals play a valuable role in assisting our teachers with disseminating important information to other parents regarding upcoming events, classroom needs, and opportunities for volunteering.

By serving as Class Parents, these volunteers help foster a cohesive and collaborative environment, ensuring that all parents are well-informed and engaged in their child's educational journey. The efforts of our Class Parents contribute significantly to the success of our school community, and we are deeply appreciative of their involvement and commitment.

If you are interested in taking on this role or have any questions about the responsibilities of a Class Parent, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher or the school administration. Your active participation will undoubtedly enrich the educational experience of all students and strengthen the bonds within our school community.

### Parent Committee

The JCC Brooklyn Windsor Terrace Parent Committee is a dynamic team of parent volunteers and staff who share a common commitment to enhancing the quality of our Preschool Program. As an integral part of our school community, the committee actively organizes, collaborates on planning, and enthusiastically participates in a diverse range of school and community-wide events and fundraisers.

### Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. These conferences are for parents only and provide an opportunity to sit down- in person or virtually- with your child's teachers to discuss progress, interests, friendships, and goals for your child. If you wish to discuss something of immediate

importance, please be sure to email for an appointment. We are ALWAYS happy to arrange a time to discuss your child with you.

Please DO NOT engage the teachers in conversation when class is in session, especially during arrival and dismissal times. Their responsibility at this time is to the children.

### Clothing and Cubby Items

We cannot overemphasize the importance of sending your child to school in simple, washable clothing. It is inevitable that clothing gets dirty when children play. It is also extremely important that fastenings be simple enough to encourage your child's independence in toileting and dressing.

Your child's cubby should always be stocked with:

- Diapers / Pullups and wipes (if not toilet trained)
- 1 sweater / sweatshirt
- 1 change of underwear
- 1 change of pants
- 1 shirt
- 1 pair of socks
- 1 pair of extra sneakers
- 1 sheet & blanket for full time children (crib size sheets fit our rest mats very well)

ALL ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY LABELED so they may be easily identified.

When soiled clothing or sheets and blankets are sent home, please launder and send back replacements on the next school day. Full day students' sheets and blankets will be sent home periodically.

### Bringing Toys to School

If your child needs to bring her/his favorite toy to school, we do not object. Some children need the comfort of a special toy from home to help them make a comfortable adjustment to school or to help them nap comfortably.

If your child asks to bring toys to school which are not essential to his/her adjustment, we ask you to dissuade him/her since problems sometimes occur: other children may want to play with the toy, and toys can get lost, misplaced, or broken at school.



To ensure a safe and harmonious learning environment, we kindly request that costumes, as well as guns and war toys, are not brought to school. For our very young children, the distinction between reality and pretend can sometimes be unclear, and these toys may inadvertently encourage the reenactment of 'action' media, which can lead to overly rough play.

Moreover, dressing in costumes can sometimes disrupt a young child's ability to follow daily routines effectively. Our focus is to provide a conducive and structured atmosphere for all our students, promoting positive social interactions and enriching learning experiences.

### **Birthday Celebrations at School**

A birthday party at school holds significant importance in your child's life, eagerly anticipated by all. It is a special occasion where the spotlight is on them, creating cherished memories. To ensure a delightful and inclusive celebration for every child, we kindly request your cooperation with the following guidelines:

**Treats:** Please bring in a cupcake or another small treat for each child, along with a candle for the birthday child. To promote fairness, we ask that all treats are identical, avoiding multiple colors or variations.

**Inclusivity:** Every child will have the opportunity to celebrate their birthday at school. For children with summer birthdays, our teachers will gladly arrange a "special Day" celebration. Please coordinate these arrangements with the teachers in advance, taking note of specific food allergies.

### **Snacks, Lunch, and Food Allergies**

We offer the convenience of storing lunch in our class refrigerator. If your child's food needs to remain hot, please pack it in a thermos or an appropriate container. We encourage parents to pack foods that are easy for children to eat independently. To ensure a safe environment for all, our school is nut-free. Kindly substitute all nut butters with sun butter. If your child has any allergies, please notify the school so we can take the necessary precautions.

During the school day and aftercare, we provide healthy self-stacked snacks like animal crackers, veggie straws, and fresh fruit. You are welcome to bring fresh fruit for your child's class. The refrigerator in your child's class is designated for storing their school snack and milk bottles. All bottles must be labeled with your child's name and rinsed at the end of each school day.

## Behavior Management Policy

We understand that young children are in the process of learning effective communication and expressing their feelings. Sometimes, what may appear as undesirable behavior is their way of communicating their needs and desires. In managing behavior, our primary goal is to help children develop self-control, self-confidence, and positive relationships with their peers and community members. To achieve this, our teachers will focus on reinforcing positive behaviors as much as possible. Each classroom environment and routine will be age-appropriate, fostering a joyful and nurturing experience for each child, conducive to positive behaviors. Teachers will provide positive reinforcement and redirection when needed, guiding children to make good choices.

In collaboration with parents, we strive to understand each child's experience in school and modify the classroom environment to accommodate their needs as much as possible. Inappropriate behaviors will be addressed firmly and consistently, aiming to help the child develop increasing self-control. Throughout the process, children will be treated with love, care, and respect at all times.

To facilitate a moment of calming and resetting, a child may be directed to a "rest spot" when necessary. This rest spot is not punitive but rather a cozy and quiet space that allows the child to take a breath and gather themselves. The duration in the rest spot will be limited to one minute per year of the child's age. Before rejoining the group, the teacher will communicate with the child to ensure they understand the expected behavior.

In the event of more serious behaviors, such as hitting and biting, parents will be promptly informed, and confidentiality will be respected. If disruptive or harmful behaviors persist, teachers will work with parents to develop a personalized strategy to address and manage these behaviors effectively. In some cases, it may be beneficial to seek additional support services, and parents may receive guidance on this matter.

Our commitment is to accommodate and support every child's needs. However, in rare cases where a child's behavior consistently disrupts the class or poses harm to others, we may discuss alternative options with parents, which could include exploring the possibility of transitioning the child to another learning environment.

Rest assured that children will always be treated with respect at our school. We strictly prohibit any form of corporal punishment, abusive language, withholding or threatening to withhold food or bathroom access, shaming of a child, isolation, or other punitive actions. Our approach focuses on fostering a positive and nurturing environment that promotes the growth and well-being of every child in our care.

## Support for Students with Special Needs

Children learn and grow in their own individual ways. We strive to make the classroom a place of exploration, challenge, and success for all of our students. In some cases, Special Education evaluations and/or services are recommended. Services may include, but are not limited to Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, or the assistance of a SEIT (Special Education Itinerant Teacher).

If a child in our school receives special education services, an educator from the team is selected to be the "team leader". In this role, they will schedule meetings for all parents and pertinent educators, ensure that communication is maintained, and monitor progress toward educational goals. Please provide your child's teachers and the school director with any documentation you have (IEP, etc) to support us in specifically tailoring the classroom activities to your child's individual needs and strengths.

## Health and Illness

Every child is required to have a physical examination by their own physician within one calendar year of the start of school each year.

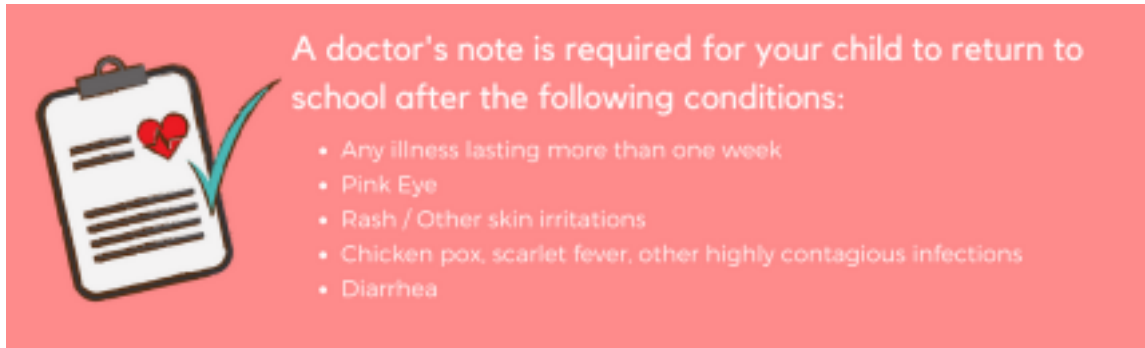
If your child's temperature reads 100.4 or over, they will be sent home and we urge that you have them seen by their pediatrician and tested for COVID-19. They will be allowed back when they are fever free for 24 hours without meds or with a doctor's note. Current COVID-19 quarantine regulations will be observed.

A Department of Health Form is provided to each family in their enrollment packet. This must be filled out by your child's doctor and returned prior to the beginning of school. **YOUR CHILD CANNOT BE ADMITTED ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL WITHOUT A FULLY COMPLETED HEALTH FORM.**

- Your child should be kept home if they show any sign of illness and should come back to school only when they can participate in the full program of their class, both indoors and outdoors. We have no provisions for caring for children who are sick. Please notify the school as soon as possible if your child will not be in attendance because of an illness.
- If your child has had an illness lasting more than one week, a doctor's written consent is required for your child to return to school.
- When your child has been ill with a fever, they may not return to school until they are fever-free (**without fever-reducing medicine**) for **at least 24 hours**.
- In case of contagious disease or exposure to contagion (i.e. chickenpox, pink eye, stomach virus, lice), parents are asked to notify the school immediately, even if this occurs during vacation periods within the school year.
- If your child has lice (or nits), they will not be allowed to remain in school. Teachers will do periodic head checks as prevention, but it is expected that a

close eye is kept on the situation at home.

- If your child has a rash of unknown origin, they must be seen by a physician. A doctor's note saying that the child is not contagious is required in order for the child to return to school.
- A doctor's note is required before a child who has been suffering from diarrhea returns to school.
- If your child has ANY viral infection (all viral infections are highly contagious), they will not be allowed to come to school until a doctor has cleared it safe for them to return.



The school will notify you if a teacher observes that your child has become ill during school hours and cannot fully participate in class activities. You will then be expected to arrange for your child to be picked up and promptly taken home.

Parents will be notified by the school if a child in the class has a contagious disease.

### Safety and Emergencies

We take the utmost care to prevent emergencies from occurring. However, in the rare event of an emergency, it is important that our families know what to expect.

### Emergency Contacts

In the event of any emergency or illness, you will be called. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts indicated on your application will be called and asked to come pick up your child. Bearing that in mind, be sure that your emergency contacts are close enough to respond quickly to an emergency.

### Illness or Injury to A Child

Parents will be contacted to bring a child home promptly if emergency medical care is not deemed necessary. A sick or injured child will be transported to the hospital for emergency care if required. If it is necessary to call 911 for emergency personnel, parents will be called immediately afterward once help is on the way.

## Missing Child

Our teachers take tremendous care that no child is ever left unattended. To prevent any confusion, children are not released to their caregivers or parents until they have been signed out on the class sign-out form. In the event that it is realized a child is missing in the building, we will initiate lockdown procedures until the child is located.

During class trips, teachers constantly count (and recount) the children in their groups. If it is ever discovered that a child is missing on a trip, children will be re-grouped, and the immediate area searched for no longer than 3 minutes before calling 911 and alerting appropriate site authorities. The school director and parents will be called immediately after 911. The group will remain with one teacher while chaperones and staff conduct a search until the child is found.

## Biting Policy

Biting is a common and normal stage of development, particularly among children who are on the cusp of becoming more fluent in their language skills. Although it can be alarming and frustrating when it occurs, it's essential to understand that it is a natural part of a child's development. Like other developmental stages, biting usually lessens over time.

While we acknowledge the normalcy of biting as a developmental milestone, we also take safety and health concerns seriously. When a child engages in routine biting, our staff collaborates closely with families to establish a school action plan that aims to reduce biting incidents and guide the child through this stage of development.

In response to biting incidents, our first priority is to ensure the well-being of the child who was bitten. We provide care and support to them. Subsequently, we focus on helping the child who bit to learn alternative behaviors. Our emphasis lies not in punitive measures but in employing effective techniques to address the underlying reasons for biting.

Through compassionate guidance and understanding, we aim to assist children in navigating through this stage and finding appropriate ways to express themselves and interact with others. By working together with families, we create a nurturing environment that supports the child's growth and development, fostering positive behaviors and healthy social interactions.

## Evacuation of the Building

Our school conducts fire drills during the school year in order to ensure that our staff and students know how to evacuate safely and quickly. In the event of an actual emergency, staff will evacuate children as planned moving them down the block past the school building. In cold weather, if possible children will enter the lobby of one of our neighboring buildings. In the event that it is not safe to stay in the immediate vicinity, JCC Brooklyn Windsor Terrace has an arrangement with Chai Tots (located at 1256 Prospect Avenue) to allow our students to wait there until they can be picked up by a caregiver or parent. In this event, families would be notified after an evacuation was safely completed.

## Sign and Return

Please tear off this page, then sign and return it to the administration.

I have read, understand and agree to comply with the policies and procedures laid forth in the JCC Brooklyn Windsor Terrace Parent Handbook (2023-2024).

Child(ren)'s Name(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_