



Gan Elohim

Early Learning Center
at Temple Beth Elohim

Parent Handbook
2024-2025

Welcome

On behalf of Temple Beth Elohim, I am privileged to welcome you to Gan Elohim as we celebrate our 53rd year. We are a community of caring and loving educators, clergy, and families all working together and sharing in your family's Jewish journey. Gan Elohim is committed to providing a developmentally appropriate learning environment for young children, integrating Jewish culture, values, and holidays into an inspiring school environment. Our program strives to achieve a balance as a community, honoring tradition and appreciating innovation. A program that welcomes all children and families while recognizing that each person is a unique and capable individual.

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center offers a highly accredited quality school program in a positive, child-centered environment. May we share many milestones together throughout the year!

I urge you to read and share the school Handbook with your caregivers. Keep this Handbook readily available, as you will want to refer to it during the year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. I am here for you!

L'Shalom,
Lisa



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HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Temple Beth Elohim Nursery School's first class of 12 students began in 1972. The school quickly grew and gained a reputation for providing a quality nursery school experience. The Nursery School was formally established as a Standing Committee of the Temple in 1983 in recognition of the program's valuable service. In 1985, the program expanded to include a second classroom, broadening its curriculum and enhancing the Nursery School's ability to meet the needs of the individual children. In 1998, the program began the first of a 2-part expansion to double the size of the school. Gan Elohim Early Learning Center now offers programming for children between 15 months old and five years of age.

There is a Midrash (story) called "**Gan Elohim**"- **God's Garden**. It is a story about a little girl who brings purple, crimson, and blue flowers each day to the site where the Israelites are building the Mishkan (tabernacle to carry the Ark) in the desert. One day, she is spotted and told she must stop bringing the flowers. She refuses and insists on speaking with the High Priest. She tells him she brings the flowers because she "wants to bring God's garden here into God's house." The High Priest is wise and understands what the little girl is saying. He tells her that she may continue bringing the flowers every day. This Midrash is based on a passage from Exodus in the Torah where it says that "everyone whose heart so moves him shall bring them-gifts for God... blue, purple, and crimson." (Exodus 35:5-6) The little girl's action reminds the High Priest about the true meaning behind this passage: that everyone, no matter how big or small, has something to offer. Each of us brings our special gifts to our community.

This story embodied the philosophy of the Temple Beth Elohim Nursery School so much that the staff and parent committee at the school recommended we change our name to Gan Elohim. Gan Elohim is Temple Beth Elohim's Garden, a loving, inclusive environment in which children and their families may learn and grow. Children learn about various topics through stories, music, hands-on projects, and play. Our professional staff provides a nurturing and enriching environment for independent inquiry and discovery. Each classroom encourages children's explorations and supports their immersion in learning. Teachers facilitate this process through the wide range of materials they provide and by listening to the children and including their ideas in the curriculum. Positive self-esteem and confidence, critical building blocks of development, are fostered as children are valued and made to feel secure as they grow emotionally and academically. Parents and families are key components of the program, and they assist in the classrooms, attend family education and school functions, serve on committees, and share their children with our staff over the years. Each of us - staff, families, and children - brings unique gifts to create our wonderful garden - Gan Elohim.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Gan Elohim Early Learning Center at Temple Beth Elohim is to provide a nurturing and supportive environment in which young children actively explore, discover, and learn the skills that foster their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. We hope children will gain positive self-esteem and the confidence to make a difference in our school, community, and world. Emphasis is placed on role modeling for children, which means sharing, caring, and encouraging them to be compassionate and kind community members.

As a Temple Early Learning Center, teaching about Judaism and fostering the development of a positive Jewish identity is the core of our program. We are committed to providing an integrated curriculum that teaches the children about Jewish traditions, including celebrating Jewish holidays and Shabbat, and develops an understanding of the importance of Jewish values such as Mitzvot and Tikkun Olam. We encourage family participation by inviting parents and families to be involved in the school experience.



GAN ELOHIM OFFICE INFORMATION

LISA SCOTT (781) 997-4231 (Direct)

Director, Gan Elohim

lscott@tbewellesley.org

WENDY WILENSKY

Assistant Director, Gan Elohim (781) 997-4279 (Direct)

wwilensky@tbewellesley.org

[Gan Elohim Website](#)

Temple Beth Elohim Main Phone (781) 235-8419

EARLY BIRDS (7:30 am and 8:30 am; separate registration required)

7:30 am – 9:00 am OR

8:30 am – 9:00 am (separate registration required; drop-in *if space allows*)

REGULAR MORNING HOURS

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

STAY DAY (separate registration required; drop-in *if space allows*)

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm (for preschool age only/3s and older)

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, OR

1:00 pm – 5:30 pm (Fridays until 4:00 pm)

Morning Drop Off

9:00 am drop-off for all classes

Pick Up

12:50-1:00, outside the classrooms. **If you have two children, one being a toddler, please pick them up first.**

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center is under the auspices of the Department of Early Education and Care, the licensing agency for the State of Massachusetts, located at 324-R Clark St, Worcester, MA 01606; phone: (508) 798-5180. For information regarding Gan Elohim's regulatory compliance history, please contact the Department of Early Education and Care.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Gan Elohim Staff and the Temple's custodial staff will work together to ensure all childcare areas, materials, furniture, and equipment are regularly, safely, and properly cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected. Cleaning items will be purchased, stored, and prepared following EEC guidelines. Children do NOT have access to any areas used to store cleaning and disinfecting supplies. All members of the Gan Elohim Community will be required to wash hands or use a hand sanitizer solution often, and the Gan Elohim staff and the custodial staff will clean and disinfect regularly.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting: To ensure effective cleaning and disinfecting, surfaces are first cleaned with soap and water, then disinfected using EPA-registered disinfectants and sanitizers. All sanitizing and disinfecting near children will be done with child-friendly, natural products. We regularly clean, sanitize, and disinfect during the school day, paying extra attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces, including doorknobs, bathrooms, and sinks. Curriculum materials will be cleaned at the end of every day. Extra care will be taken to ensure that any object a child may have put in or near their mouth is removed from circulation, cleaned, sanitized/disinfected, and allowed to air dry before another child's use.

Health and Hygiene Practices: Hand washing facilities with soap, water, and disposable paper towels will be readily accessible to all children and staff, and hand washing instructions will be posted near every sink. Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) may be used with written parental permission when hand washing is unavailable. Sanitizer is stored securely and used only under the supervision of staff. Staff will teach children the proper use of sanitizer and ensure children do not put their freshly sanitized hands in their mouths. While hand sanitizer may be used, hand washing is the preferred method. Hand sanitizer will be provided if a sink with soap and water is unavailable.

When to Wash Hands: Children and staff must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer often and whenever the following criteria are met:

- (1) Upon entry into and exit from program space
- (2) When coming into the program space from outside activities
- (3) Before and after eating
- (4) After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing
- (5) After toileting and diapering
- (6) Before and after handling food
- (7) After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
- (8) Before and after administration of medication

We are committed to our children, families, and staff's health and safety.

ADMINISTRATION

The Early Learning Center is integral to Temple Beth Elohim's commitment to lifelong learning. It is run by the Director, who works in partnership with the Assistant Director and under the guidance of the Temple's Executive Director of Jewish Living and Learning. The Director is responsible for the school's curriculum, personnel, licensing, enrollment, management of the classrooms, and overall program planning for the school year. The Assistant Director assists the Director with the school's daily operations. Gan Elohim happily supports TBE's cohort of Families with Young Children (ages 0-5). We are working hard to help emphasize connections and community within this growing demographic.

SEPARATION

Starting school is a significant occasion and can be a source of growth for everyone involved – children, parents, and teachers. Establishing trust with the teachers as a base enables children to become comfortable with the separation from their parents. We encourage parents to try to make the goodbyes a set routine, for example, three kisses, waving goodbye once, and talking on the way to school about what they will do for the first few minutes. There will be a daily whiteboard sharing what is happening at school that day, posted outside your child(ren)'s classroom.

Be aware of the delayed reaction. Any time between six weeks and three months, a child **may** suddenly realize their grown-up is not here. This is developmentally appropriate and common. Rest assured that we will support you and your child(ren) through this time.

YOU MAY FIND THIS ARTICLE BY [ELANA HELFGOTT](#) informative. **EASING PRESCHOOL SEPARATION ANXIETY - *Helpful hints for parents of preschoolers.***

Parents and children experience many emotions when it comes to separating at the beginning of the school year. Children are generally both reluctant to leave their parents' sides and excited to explore and learn in their new environment. Happy to reach these monumental milestones with their children, parents typically feel proud of their children as kids adjust to school. However, parents also often feel a mix of bittersweet emotions as their "babies" are growing up and becoming somewhat independent from them. Each child and parent react differently to the transition to starting preschool. While different reactions are normal and healthy, here are tips for parents to facilitate the transition at the beginning of the preschool year.

- 1. Talk to your child before the first day of school. Use simple sentences to describe what he or she can expect to be doing in the classroom.*
- 2. Reassure your child that you will always return to school at the end of the school day. If someone else is responsible for taking your child home, explain that person will be there daily. This reassurance builds trust and confidence in your children.*
- 3. Tuck a family picture into your child's lunchbox or encourage them to put a favorite photograph in his cubby for easy viewing. Other reminders of home, like love notes placed in a child's school bag, can be hand-drawn or written in simple language. The important thing is that your child recognizes your "presence" even when you're minutes or miles from school. Some teachers may even read such notes to children during lunchtime.*
- 4. Arrive at school a few minutes before dismissal to ensure you are waiting for your child. If your child needs to wait for you, they may experience distress, especially at the beginning of the year.*
- 5. Greet your child with a big kiss and hug. Acknowledge something positive about your child finishing the school day.*
- 6. Remember, transitions are usually more challenging for parents than for children. Even if you have to leave your crying child after your school's transitional separation period, which varies from school to school, your child will probably stop crying before you leave the building. The school director should call you if you are needed.*
- 7. Never sneak out on your child. Always say a brief goodbye, even if your child might cry for a while. This reassures your child to trust your actions.*
- 8. At times, children have a delayed reaction to separation. At first, they seem unaffected by the separation. Then, after some time at school, they might begin to cry. This is normal behavior and can be dealt with in the same manner as your initial separation.*

The benefits to you and your child for a successful transition from home to school outweigh the initial discomfort of separating. Confidence in your child's independence lays the foundation for their future self-esteem.

When you give your child the experience of flying independently, you grant a priceless gift as a parent. This support and confidence, coupled with early positive feelings toward school, encourages the success of a lifelong learner. Here is a prosperous transition for the upcoming preschool year.

HOME VISITS

At Gan Elohim Early Learning Center, the home-school connection is vital. We are continuing a home visit initiative to strengthen our valuable community.

How will it work?

- In August, you will receive an email from the Director that will contain Class Lists and links to sign up for the Home Visits.
- After seeing which class your child is in, please click on their classroom link (found in the same email) to sign up for a Home Visit. Please choose a time for the teachers to visit you and your child at home.
- This visit will last for 15 minutes. It is a chance for you and your child to meet their teachers.
- You and your child can ask questions when the teachers visit.
- The teachers and students may want to color, play a game, talk, or read a book together.

Why are we making home visits?

- Home visits help children prepare for school by meeting their teachers in the comfort of their home.
- Teachers can see their students in their home environment; this allows for a special connection before school even begins beyond the classroom walls.
- Home visits can give teachers the insight they need to help all students succeed.
- Studies have shown the great benefits of home visits during the early years in a child's later development.
- Home visits may help alleviate children's anxieties before a new school year begins.

These visits will help open the lines of communication between our families and school.

TEACHERS

Gan Elohim offers a loving, nurturing, and supportive environment where young children use play as their medium for inquiry, exploration, discovery, and learning. We aim to encourage each child's natural curiosity and interest in learning. To develop independence, self-esteem, and social competence, children are encouraged to take initiative, help each other, and become increasingly independent. We encourage our children to be compassionate members of our school, community, and the world.

Our teachers are certified as early childhood teachers by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care or continue to work toward their certification. Our educators participate in ongoing professional development. By doing so, our educators are presented with various resources that support staff with curriculum development, developmental practice, and special needs training.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment at Gan Elohim is open to children from 15 months (they must be 15 months by September 1) to 5 years old. We admit children of all faiths and ethnic groups and do not discriminate based on race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, or national origin.

Our application process will begin in the Fall for entrance into the 2025-2026 School Year. **Currently Enrolled Gan Elohim Families and Temple Beth Elohim Members, as of July 1, 2024, have a two-week priority registration period that begins on October 14.** Temple Beth Elohim membership must be in good standing for application priority.

Parents can apply for their child's enrollment to Gan Elohim by completing the Enrollment Application and submitting a **non-refundable** \$500 deposit, which will be applied to their tuition. **If space is unavailable, Enrollment Applications that are received will be added to the waitlist by the date received rather than by priority status.** If we do not offer a space to your child, the \$500 deposit will be returned.

DAILY SCHEDULE

EARLY BIRDS is offered from 7:30 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday. Early Birds will be held in toddler and preschool classrooms. At this time, pre-registration is required.

During the morning, we offer opportunities for children to have an appropriate balance between quiet and active activities. Our curriculum is carefully planned to meet the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of each child. Children learn from concrete experience and learn best when the subject is relevant. Therefore, we structure the environment so children may make independent but suitable choices from various activities. While emergent curriculum materials and activities are regularly introduced based on children's interests, developmental needs, and seasonal themes, classroom materials considered essential for all young children's development are always available daily. These materials include art, blocks, books, dramatic play, easel paints, manipulative toys, puzzles, sensory play, and science.

The morning is generally structured to include:

Free Play: Children start their day with a variety of activities, which may include sign-in, painting at the easel, building blocks, using manipulatives, sensory play, and exploring the classroom.

Morning Meeting: The class assembles to welcome each other. During this time, the teacher introduces special activities for the day, such as art or science. There are often group discussions around the theme being explored.

Choice Time: Children choose special activities and free play such as block corner, dramatic play, water and sand tables, painting at easels, and small motor activities such as Legos and puzzles.

Snack: A healthy snack of fruit, vegetables, crackers, pretzels, or something else of your choice should be provided each day for your child(ren). The children expend a lot of energy while at school, so we recommend sending two items for snack time(s). **An extra snack should be provided if your child stays for Stay Day.** Each Friday, the school provides challah in celebration of Shabbat. Please also send additional snack items for your child to enjoy on Shabbat along with their challah.

Circle Time: As a class, children participate in discussions, music, drama, movement, and story time.

Outdoor Play: Children will play on the playground, except in extreme weather, when they have gross motor activities set up in one of the Community Rooms.

Lunch and Dismissal

Lunch: Please pack a healthy lunch for your child(ren) to eat at school. Lunches and snacks should be packed in **separate containers** and labeled with your child(ren)'s name(s).

STAY DAY 1:00—2:30 pm (preschool/3s and older only), 4:00 PM, or 5:30 PM.

WEATHER

It is our policy that children go outside daily. We check the weather every morning to ensure that it is safe. On average, classes spend at least 30 minutes outside each morning. We go outdoors to play if the temperature is 20 degrees or above, and we take the wind chill into consideration. **Reminder:** during cold weather, please ensure your child has a warm winter coat, snow pants, a pair of waterproof mittens (**no gloves, please**), and a hat. Some families have found it easier to keep an extra set of snow pants, hats, and mittens at school during the winter.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Our program is carefully staffed according to student enrollment. Children must be picked up on time as determined by their arranged schedule. **If you are late, a charge will be issued according to the policy outlined below.** We apply this policy to everyone consistently. It would be greatly appreciated if **parents could call to notify us if they will be late and give an approximate arrival time** so that we can better prepare and comfort your child.

Parents or guardians arriving after the child's scheduled pick-up time will be subject to a late fee, as follows after the second late arrival.

- **5 - 10 minutes late:** Parents will be charged a \$10 late fee per child.
- **11 or more minutes:** Parents will be charged a per-child late fee of \$10 plus \$2 per minute past 10 minutes late.
- **After 5:30 pm:** Parents will be charged a per-child late fee of \$10 per 5-minute increment.

All late fees will be added to your school billing statement.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are essential to the school's team effort in educating and caring for their child(ren). We hope that all parents will take the opportunity to get involved in the school! Some opportunities include being a parent volunteer, coming in for your child(ren)'s birthday celebration(s), joining your child(ren)'s class for a special activity, and participating in holiday celebrations.

GAN ELOHIM PARENT COMMITTEE 2024/2025

The co-chairs of our 2024-2025 Gan Elohim Parent Committee are:

Abby Chud, abbysilv@gmail.com

Jill Merewitz, jill.bloom.merewitz@gmail.com

Paige Feuerman, Paige.feuerman@gmail.com

The Committee Co-chairs work closely with Lisa Scott, Director of Gan Elohim, to oversee all aspects of the Gan Elohim Parents' Committee. They also serve as liaisons between Gan Elohim and the broader TBE community while helping to develop the long—and short-term goals of Temple Beth Elohim's Families with Young Children. The co-chairs manage and oversee the Gan Elohim Parents' Committee and all subcommittees and help facilitate communication between these committees, families, and the Director.

Room Parents:

Room Parents are at the core of the new Gan Elohim Parents' Committee. As representatives of their child(ren)'s classroom(s) and age groups, they are instrumental in shaping the activities and programs of the Gan Elohim Parents' Committee. For example, Room Parents organize class playdates and class parent dinners. They also help relay information about ongoing events to the Gan Elohim community. Along with the Caring Subcommittee, they help reach out to families in need and organize meals for classmates. Room Parents will be informed in case of an emergency and will contact the other classroom parents.

PROCEDURE FOR FORMING THE COMMITTEE

The committee position descriptions will be distributed by a survey. By completing the survey, you will be able to let us know how you might be interested in getting involved.

The Director and Co-Chairs will make the final decision if multiple people are interested in the same position.

Room Parent positions will be determined in late August/early September once classes are finalized.

COMMUNICATION

We recognize that parents are their child(ren)'s most important teachers, and open communication between parents and teachers is an essential value at Gan Elohim. Therefore, teachers constantly communicate with you throughout the year through email correspondence, Kaymbu blogs, the fall check-in phone calls, and conference reports, and during your conference meetings. Of course, if something regarding your child needs to be addressed, you can email your child(ren)'s teachers and set up a time for phone call or Zoom meeting. Open communication is a key to the team approach at Gan Elohim.

GAN ELOHIM – KAYMBU FOR FAMILIES PLATFORM

We use an online platform called Kaymbu for Families to foster Gan Elohim and family communications. Kaymbu is a comprehensive way to stay updated and connected to your child(ren)'s experiences at school. Kaymbu enables teachers and Directors to document and share photos, messages, videos, storyboards, and more. We count on you to read it regularly, at least weekly. Kaymbu will give you a view into your child's classroom and will further expand on their classroom curriculum. Teachers will post on Kaymbu 2-3 times per week.

CLASSROOM DOCUMENTATION

Your child(ren)'s teachers spend time documenting the learning process in the classroom. By reading the posts from the teachers on Kaymbu, you can learn about the ongoing activities within your child's classroom. Also, viewing the blog posts alongside your child, will provide the opportunity for your child to explain the photos and artwork displayed in the Kaymbu posts in more detail. **Kaymbu also allows parents to comment on moments or reply to storyboard emails. This further strengthens the home and school connection by letting the teachers know what the children and parents enjoy about their child's classroom curriculum.**

WEEKLY UPDATE

Weekly updates are sent out from the office on Fridays, providing reminders of upcoming events and other important information. We strongly encourage that you read this each week as important upcoming information is often provided. We also highlight a specific classroom each week to provide insight into their current activities and share any special moments.

You will receive most communication by email. We encourage you to call the School Office whenever you have a question or concern and to alert the staff regarding any information that might mean your child(ren) needs an extra hug or special attention. We are committed to understanding and adjusting to meet each child's needs. **If there has been a particular circumstance (birth, death, divorce, illness, loss of a pet, extensive travel) in your family, please notify the Director and your child(ren)'s teachers so that we are aware of your child(ren)'s individual needs.** To reach Lisa or your child(ren)'s teachers, call the School Office's direct line at (781) 997-4231. Teachers focus on greeting and welcoming the children at morning drop-off times, so this is not a good time for more than a quick update or exchange of information. You will also receive your child(ren)'s teachers email addresses for communication. **Please copy the Director, Lisa Scott, lscott@tbewellesley.org, and the Assistant Director, Wendy Wilensky, wwilensky@tbewellesley.org on any important written communications.**

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

Back to School Night for Gan Elohim parents will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 5, 2024. During this time, teachers will describe information about the class, developmental information and what milestones they will be focusing according to the classroom age (toddlers, 3s, or 4s), information about themselves, and more. This will also be a great time to ask any questions you may have for them.

CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are held in the Fall and Spring each year. (More details below). You will receive a written assessment of your child(ren)'s growth and development at the Fall and Spring conferences. There are also opportunities for you to share your thoughts about your child(ren)'s development and to ask questions or discuss any concerns. **Parents may have access to their child(ren)'s records. We ask that you give us a reasonable time to fulfill this request. No one**

can receive information from your child(ren)'s folder without a signed request from the parent. Gan Elohim Early Learning Center is required by the State to keep all files for at least seven years.

Gan Elohim is an inclusive school that meets the needs of all children. Staff work with parents and will modify the environment to meet each child's needs. Teachers are trained each year in special needs and **will recommend a child be referred for services when necessary***. Every effort is made to ensure success for each child. This may include asking parents to reduce their child(ren)'s schedule to 9-1 pm (if they attend Stay Day) if the Director and teachers find this is an important key to ensuring your child(ren)'s success during the school day.

**Per Dept. of Early Education and Care: See referral policy below for more information.*

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

Teachers write a conference report for each child twice a year. Observations for each child are maintained by the classroom teachers and are used to write the conference, adding observational detail to support the teacher's assessment. The Fall report is a shorter document from the teacher. It is based on the child's beginning observations. During the fall conference, teachers outline the specific developmental paths parents set for their children. Parents are encouraged at that time to add any information, raise any questions, or express any concerns they have for their child and to be a part of developing an action plan with the teachers to further support the child's growth and development. The Spring reports benefit from time and growth and are more detailed and specific regarding the child's development.

CLASS PLACEMENT / TRANSITIONS

GAN ELOHIM DOES NOT ACCEPT SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR TEACHERS, FRIENDS, OR CLASS PLACEMENT. Gan Elohim Early Learning Center places each child in a classroom best suited for the child individually and the makeup of the entire group. They consider teacher recommendations, boy/girl ratios, ages, familiar faces from their previous classroom (unless they are a toddler as toddler classes are only made based on the children's ages), etc. We aim to make the best match between teachers and children and provide a positive learning experience for every child.

WHAT SHOULD MY CHILD BRING TO SCHOOL?

PLEASE LABEL ALL YOUR CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS

- Daily snacks and lunches are packed in separate containers (labeled as such and include your child's name).
- If your child(ren) stays for an extended day, please send an additional "afternoon snack."
- A labeled water bottle.
- A shoebox-sized container to fit in the bottom of their cubby with **two** extra sets of weather-appropriate clothing (shirt, pants/shorts, socks, underwear, sweatshirt, extra shoes). This stays in their cubby.
- Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes for running and climbing on the playground (sandals and Crocs are **not** recommended).
- A backpack or bag *with a closure* (zipper, Velcro, or drawstring) large enough to hold art projects and snow pants.
- If your child uses diapers, please bring diapers and wipes to keep in the classroom. If your child stays for Extended Day programming it is beneficial to send a larger to supply of diapers and wipes. When these items are running low, a classroom or Stay Day teacher will let you know.

- During cold weather, please send snow pants, a pair of waterproof mittens, and a hat.
- If your child stays at school for Stay Day, they will need a small blanket and crib sheet to put on their rest mat for Rest Time. They may also bring a lovely to help them rest/sleep.

CELL PHONES

Please refrain from using your cell phone when dropping off and picking up your child from school. Please share this with anyone dropping off or picking up your child(ren). **Cell phones are not allowed while driving in the parking lot.**

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The **speed limit** on Bethel Road and in the parking lot is 5 **MPH**. You must go slow and drive with extreme caution in the parking lot. At dismissal time, children will be dismissed from their classroom by a parent or caregiver. **If a parent or caregiver is late for pick up and their teacher(s) need to work a Stay Day or need to close down their classroom, the Director or another teacher will wait with your child outside of their classroom until they are picked up.**

The following rules are enforced for the safety and well-being of your child:

1. Each school day, your child's teachers take attendance when they arrive.
2. Your child will not be released to anyone without **written** authorization from a parent or guardian.
3. We must have a list of carpools, including the names of all drivers.
4. All children must be buckled into an appropriate child's car seat/booster seat by their parent/caregiver. *
5. **If your child is going home with someone other than the usual driver (i.e., nanny, grandparent, friend, or someone NOT already on their authorized pick-up list) you must send an email giving the name of the person picking them up and the relationship to the child. Please copy the Director, Assistant Director, and classroom teachers on the email.** If you do verbally tell your child(ren)'s teachers or the Director about a change in the person picking up, please also follow up on the verbal communication with an email as we need written authorization.
6. If your child has an appointment and cannot make it to school by 10:30 AM, they must stay home for the rest of the day. This is to minimize disruptions to your child(ren)'s day and the entire classroom. If your child stays for an Extended Day until 4 PM or 5:30 PM, they must arrive at school no later than 11 AM in order to attend school that day. Thank you for your cooperation.

Gan Elohim does not transport children to or from school, and we do not take them out of the building for field trips. Instead, we bring enrichment programs into our school.

***Motor Vehicles: Chapter 90: Section 7AA.**

Child passenger restraints; fine; violation as evidence in civil action.

Section 7AA. A passenger in a motor vehicle in any way under the age of 8 shall be fastened and

secured by a child passenger restraint unless such passenger measures more than 57 inches in height. The child passenger restraint shall be properly fastened and secured according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Unless required to be properly fastened and secured by a child passenger restraint under the preceding paragraph, a passenger in a motor vehicle in any way under the age of 13 shall wear a safety belt that is properly adjusted and fastened according to the manufacturer's instructions.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to any such child who is: (1) riding as a passenger in a school bus; (2) riding as a passenger in a motor vehicle made before July 1, nineteen hundred sixty-six, that is not equipped with safety belts; (3) physically unable to use either a conventional child passenger restraint or a child restraint specifically designed for children with special needs; provided, however, that such condition is duly certified in writing by a physician who shall state the nature of the disability as well as the reasons such restraints are inappropriate; provided, further, that no such certifying physician shall be subject to liability in a civil action for the issuance of or for the failure to issue such a certificate. An operator of a motor vehicle who violates the provisions of this section shall be subject to a fine of not more than twenty-five dollars; provided, however, that said twenty-five dollars OK shall not apply to an operator of a motor vehicle licensed as a taxi cab not equipped with a child passenger restraint device. A violation of this section shall not be used as evidence of contributory negligence in any civil action.

A person who receives a citation for a violation of any of the provisions of this section may contest such citation according to section three of chapter ninety C. A violation of this section shall not be deemed a conviction of a moving violation of the motor vehicle laws to determine surcharges on motor vehicle premiums according to section one hundred and thirteen B of chapter one hundred and seventy-five.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum in each classroom is created using developmentally appropriate practice as a guideline. The children's daily schedule provides for a balance of activities with respect to the child's total daily experience, *always focusing on the child's social and emotional growth.*

Children are competent learners and learn best through active play and exploration. We strive to meet the individual child's needs through developmentally appropriate practices. Our curriculum incorporates components from various early childhood approaches, including emergent curriculum and principles of the Reggio Emilia (play-based) philosophy.

Children have a strong disposition to explore and discover. Our curriculum builds on this natural curiosity, enabling children to interact, question, connect, problem-solve, communicate, and reflect. The ideas for our thematic classroom units emerge from the children's play and through their interests. Pre-literacy concepts are embedded within the classroom environment, including conversations about words, sounds, storylines, storytelling, prediction of events, and early concepts about print and its purposes. Themes are the tools that help children access the materials and challenge their thinking.

Every day, regardless of the theme, various activities promote social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. There may be theme-oriented additions to the materials provided, but each day, the activities continue to promote children's inquiry and discovery in an active, safe, and fun way.

JEWISH CURRICULUM

As a Jewish school, we frame our work through Jewish lenses, values, and culture. We emphasize the development of a positive Jewish identity through experiences involving Shabbat, Jewish holidays, blessings, culture, and values. The love, joy, excitement, and significance of living Jewishly are essential to Gan Elohim's philosophy. The core values system of the Jewish tradition *K'lal Yisrael Aravim Ze B'zeh* (all Israel is responsible for one another) and *Derek Eretz* (respect and good manners) are values we practice regularly. Taking care of our environment by recycling and collecting litter are examples of the *Mitzvot* (good deeds) and values that the children learn by actively doing.

Shabbat is a special time. Every Friday, the classes set apart the activities they were engaged in during the week to focus on activities, stories, and songs specifically for Shabbat. Each Friday, all classes welcome in Shabbat with their class. In each classroom, the children say the blessings over the candles, "wine," and challah. After Friday lunch, we meet in the sanctuary at 12:25 to welcome Shabbat as a community and invite families to join us. (The Puppy and Tadpole classes will not join us in the beginning of the year in order to give them a longer time to adjust to being in school. We will let you know when they are ready to attend so that you may join us.) We will begin our Shabbat Child program for our preschool classes after winter vacation. One child, a week in each preschool class will have the opportunity to sign up and be the Shabbat Child. The Shabbat Child and their family assist their class in leading the blessings and celebrating Shabbat.

All families are welcome at Temple events. The Temple invites families to celebrate the holidays as a community throughout the year. Our Director of Youth and Family Learning, Josh Rosenberg, has also planned many wonderful programs for Families with Young Children. Please get involved!

ENRICHMENT

To enrich our curriculum, special visitors often join us to teach the children about a particular topic or skill. Previous enrichment activities include Barn Babies, New England Aquarium, and Pumpernickel Puppets. Each class will enjoy Yoga and Movement enrichment weekly, with Sara from Little Beats on Tuesday mornings. We will also have special visits from the clergy. The clergy will welcome Shabbat with songs and stories and share information about the holiday.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

Gan Elohim offers two Extended Day programs Monday through Friday: EARLY BIRDS and STAY DAY. For all children, pre-registration for the entire year is required for all Extended Day programs, one to five days per week.

EARLY BIRDS

7:30 am – 9:00 am OR 8:30 am – 9:00 am. Registration is required for 7:30

Early Birds.

What happens at Early Birds? Children engage with each other and educators in open-ended play.

STAY DAY

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm (preschool/ 3s or older only), 4:00 pm, or 5:30 pm.

What Happens at Stay Day? After lunch, Stay Day begins. If stay-day is not in your child's class, they will be brought by a teacher to their stay-day class for that day. At rest time, as mandated by the

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, all children rest, look at books, or play quietly on a mat for up to 45 minutes. The rest of the time, Stay Day may include enrichment options, open play, special projects, and outdoor play, weather permitting.

FOOD POLICY

For all children, lunch should be sent to school with your child in a labeled lunch box. We appreciate you sending a well-balanced nutritious lunch. While we are not a kosher program, shellfish and pork products are prohibited at Temple Beth Elohim. Please ensure that lunches are nutritious and that children are given several choices of foods. **We request that NO peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, or products containing any of those ingredients be sent to school as we have several children and staff each year with severe allergies** (please see “Allergies and School Peanut Policy” below).

Good lunch ideas are:

Cut up fruit,
Crackers and cream cheese,
Cut up vegetables and dips,
String cheese,
Sandwich with sliced luncheon meat (no pork),
Tuna,
Sliced sushi (no shellfish),
Pita pocket sandwich,
Tortilla wrap,
Soup in a thermos,
Yogurt,
Eggs,
Quesadillas,
English Muffin Pizza,
Pasta

We cannot refrigerate lunches; please use an ice pack or thermos container.

If your child has any food allergies, please let us know. One of our primary goals is to ensure **the safety of all** children at school. **We ask that parents DO NOT SEND peanut, nut, shellfish, pepperoni, or pork products in lunches (see Nut/Food Allergy Policy below).** **For safety reasons, please DO NOT INCLUDE POPCORN in your child’s lunch. Hot dogs must be sliced lengthwise, and all grapes and small tomatoes must be halved.**

Our philosophy is to allow children to eat as much of each item as they want in any order. Due to the possibility of a food allergy, we do not allow the children to share their lunch with other children.

NUT / FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

In response to the significant number of children with severe food allergies, Gan Elohim has developed a **“Policy On Life-Threatening Foods and Allergies,”** which all parents will receive and be asked to sign before their child comes to school. As part of that policy, the school administration requires that **NO NUTS OR PEANUTS be brought into our school.**

We read all the ingredient labels and ask you to do the same. We do **NOT** permit labels that read:

- **“May contain traces of peanuts” (or nuts).**
- **“Made on shared equipment that also processes peanuts or tree nuts.”**

We **DO** permit labels that read:

- **“This product may have been produced/processed in a facility that handles peanuts or peanut butter.”**

Soy/sunflower seed butter is fine, but please **label** the sandwich or container with this information to eliminate confusion and worry.

While teachers monitor the children’s lunches every day and read all labels, it is not always possible for a teacher to know if something in a child’s lunch contains peanut or nut products. The school has implemented this policy to create the safest environment possible; however, we cannot guarantee that the lunch area will be peanut and nut-free.

Reminders:

- **Label your child’s lunchbox.**
- Label all Soy/Sunflower butter or other peanut butter alternatives.
- Include an ice pack or thermos container; we cannot refrigerate lunches.
- Do not send yogurts that come with granola/nut mix-ins (unless clearly labeled NUT FREE).
- **NO** nuts, shellfish, pepperoni, or pork products.
- **NO** popcorn.
- Grapes and small tomatoes must be halved; hot dogs must be sliced lengthwise.
- Children are not permitted to share their lunches due to food allergies.

Thank you for following our School’s Food Policy.

SNACKS

All families are asked to send in snacks and lunch for their child(ren). Gan Elohim Early Learning Center asks that you provide your child with a healthy snack consisting of fresh fruit, cheese, yogurt, vegetables, crackers, rice cakes, cereal, and a water bottle each day. If your child attends our Stay Day program, we will need an additional snack for the late afternoon. On Fridays, children will enjoy challah (in addition to their home snack) provided by the school to welcome Shabbat. We are always aware of food allergies and only provide safe food for the entire class.

TOILETING

It is a joint responsibility to teach the children how to use the toilet and sink properly. Young children will have accidents. The teachers will help the children learn how to change their soiled clothing, and we encourage parents to do the same at home. When a child has an accident, teachers put on gloves to assist the child in changing their clothes. The soiled clothing will be put into a plastic bag and sent home. A reminder note will go home in your child's backpack asking for additional clothing. Please ensure your child always has two complete clothing changes in a clearly labeled box at school.

Children do not need to be toilet trained to attend Gan Elohim. Toilet training is a partnership process, and we support the children and their families in this process. A key factor is what is **developmentally best** for the child.

For children in diapers, parents shall provide diapers and wipes. The changing procedure is to put on disposable gloves and prepare the changing table with changing table paper for each child. Some children may prefer to be changed standing up. If used, all soiled diapers and wipes are to be bagged and put into a covered trash can with paper. Children wash their hands with soap and water. The changing surface will be cleaned with either disinfectant wipes or a prepared bleach and water solution after each child. The teacher must wash hands with soap and water.

All children **must** wash their hands after using the toilet. They are also encouraged to use the toilet daily (if potty-trained), usually before playground time.

BIRTHDAYS

Your child's birthday is special. Children love celebrating birthdays with their friends and teachers at school, and we love the chance to help make it a meaningful and memorable day. While we do not allow food to be brought for birthday celebrations, parents may consult with their child's teacher(s) to make arrangements for their child's birthday. For example, some families donate a book, game, or toy to the classroom in honor of their child's birthday. Donated books will have a bookplate/label that recognizes your child's name and birthday.

To be considerate of all children's feelings, we ask that NO invitations, presents, party favors, or thank you notes be distributed at school.

BABYSITTING

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center does not allow staff members to babysit current Gan Elohim families outside school hours.

TOYS FROM HOME

We realize that children like to bring things to school from home. We encourage that no toys from home are brought to school except for "rest toys" or "loveys" that your child needs to help them through their day.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

The following information outlines our school cancellation policy:

Gan Elohim follows the Wellesley Public School Calendar **ONLY** for inclement weather. As an independent school, we operate on our own school calendar.

- During the week (Monday – Friday), if the Wellesley schools are closed (due to inclement weather), Gan Elohim will be closed.
- If Wellesley Public Schools post a one-hour or two-hour delay, we will open at 10:00 am. Early Birds will not meet when the opening is delayed.
- Gan Elohim does not make up snow days.
- Wellesley School cancellation announcements will be made on WBZ TV, WCVB TV channel 5, and WHDH TV channel 7.
- If we need to be closed but the town of Wellesley is not, an email or Kayambu message will be sent to ALL families.
- Cancellation information can be found on the Temple Beth Elohim website, tbewellesley.org. Please check the website frequently for the most recent updates.

- If we do not cancel school, please use your judgment to determine whether driving is safe.
- If we must cancel school due to unsafe conditions, we will send a message via Kaymbu and begin an emergency phone chain. Every effort is made to contact all parents.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All children attending Gan Elohim Early Learning Center need an updated health form. There are certain mandatory immunizations and a Lead Screening test. The State requires the following immunizations for your child(ren) to attend school:

- Lead Screening – documentation of 3 screenings before age four
- four doses DTap
- three or more doses of Polio
- three doses of Hepatitis B
- 1-4 doses of Hib
- one dose MMR
- one dose of Varicella or proof of chicken pox

(Quantity determined as necessary by your child's age.)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Any child with a fresh cold, diarrhea, vomiting related to an illness, undiagnosed rash, eye infection, or fever cannot attend school. Children who are mildly ill, under the weather, or not participating in all school activities should remain home. Children who are not well belong at home. Attending school when ill is difficult for the child and puts classmates and teachers at risk.

While physicians may differ in their return to school policy, Gan Elohim's policies for illness are as follows:

COVID-19: In the event of a positive Covid case in your household, notify us immediately.

Your child will still be able to attend school, unless they test positive, if you test them daily for five days and they are negative. We require you to send a picture of the negative test to us; we will no longer provide tests. Like with any illness, children must stay home if, in the past 72 hours, they have/had a fever (temperature of 100.0°F or above), felt feverish, had chills, a cough, a sore throat, difficulty breathing, gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting), fatigue (fatigue alone will not exclude a child from participation), headache, new loss of smell/taste, new muscle aches. To return, children must be 72 hours symptom-free with no medications. After the 3 days with no symptoms, they can return with a mask, unless they test negative, for the next 2 days.

Chickenpox: Children must remain out of school for at least seven (7) days from the onset of Chickenpox. All blisters must be scabbed over before your child re-enters the school program. Parents should call the school immediately once Chickenpox is confirmed so that we can let other parents know. The Director or teacher must check your child before being readmitted to school.

Diarrhea: Children will be sent home if they have **two** episodes of diarrhea. Before returning to school, they must be free of diarrhea for at least 24 hours (without symptom-reducing medication).

Ear Infection: Children must be on antibiotics for **at least** 24 hours.

Fever: Children with a fever of 100 or higher will be sent home and **cannot** return the next day. They must be fever-free **without using fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours before returning to school.** Do not administer Tylenol and send your child to school, as this can mask important symptoms.

Fifth Disease: Also known as human parvovirus B19, Fifth Disease is a mild illness and not serious in healthy children. However, it can cause serious complications during pregnancy. Because there could be pregnant employees and parents at our school, we ask that your child stay home if you notice any symptoms, such as low-grade fever, tiredness, or cold-like symptoms. Once your child breaks out in the rash (which looks like slapped cheeks and/or a lacy, itchy rash on the trunk of the body), they are no longer contagious and may return to school.

Flu: The CDC recommends, and we require, that children remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever **without using fever-reducing medications.** During a pandemic, it may be recommended to extend the “remain at home” time.

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease: Also known as the coxsackie virus, a child may return when they have no lesions, are free of fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, and can fully participate in all school activities.

Head Lice: Gan Elohim honors a no-nit policy. Children may return to school after the removal of **all** lice and nits. Staff will conduct lice checks on an as-needed basis.

Rash: A child may not be at school with an undiagnosed rash.

Runny Noses and Colds: Should your child have a runny nose, ensure that their temperature is normal and that there is no evidence of green or yellow mucus; even white mucus is suspect. The mucus should be clear before the child returns. If a child has a bad “croupy” cough, they should stay home. In general, your child should have **their full energy level.** If they are not themselves, please **do not** send them to school.

RSV: Symptoms of this could include a fever and a cough, but they are not limited to these. If your child has any of these symptoms, they should be seen by their pediatrician. If your child has RSV, they cannot return to school until they are fever-free and symptom-free without any fever-reducing medication for 24 hours and can fully participate in the school day.

Strep Throat: Children must be on antibiotics and free of fever without using fever-reducing medication for **at least 24 hours** before returning to school. They must have had two doses of the medication before they can return.

Vomiting: Children will be sent home if they have **one episode** of vomiting. They must have been free of vomiting for at least 24 hours and able to keep down solid food. They should also have regained normal energy levels.

When a child is absent, parents are asked to telephone the school at **781-997-4231 (Direct line)** or email the Director, Lisa Scott, at lscott@tbewellesley.org and the Assistant Director, Wendy Wilensky, wwilensky@tbewellesley.org to let us know.

Whenever a child at the school contracts a communicable disease, including but not limited to strep throat, chicken pox, measles, or head lice, we will inform all parents of the illness at school.

If a child becomes ill at school, we will call the parent to come and pick up their child. A child will be sent home if they have a fever of 100 degrees or higher, are experiencing vomiting or diarrhea, or are suspected of having a contagious illness. The Director or Assistant Director will call the parents to come and pick up their child. If parents are unreachable, we will use the emergency phone numbers provided.

All Teachers are trained in CPR and basic First Aid. In the event of a medical emergency, we will call both you and 911. In the case of a situation requiring immediate care, an ambulance will be called to take your child and a staff member or the Director to meet you at the nearest hospital. If you have any questions, please contact the Director.

MEDICATION TRAINING AND ADMINISTRATION

Medications may be administered to a child only with parental authorization and a written order from a physician. Parents should discuss their child's needs with the teachers, director, and Assistant Director and complete the authorization form, noting any allergies or special health needs of their child. With the parent's permission, we post allergy action plans in the classroom so that all adults who work with children with allergies are aware.

If a child is taking any prescription or over-the-counter medication, ointment, or drops that require administration during school hours, please fill out a **Medication Consent Form** and present the medication in the original bottle, including the prescription label on it if it is a prescription medication. Please give the medication directly to the Director; she will then give it to the appropriate classroom teacher. **Do not leave any medications in a child's lunchbox or backpack.**

- Educators receive appropriate training on how to handle emergency allergic reactions, including complete medication administration training, on an annual basis.
- Each time a medication is administered, the educator will document in the child's record the name, the dosage, the time, and method of administration, and who administered the medication.
- If your child is taking any prescription or over-the-counter medication, ointment, or drops that require administration during school hours, parents/guardians must fill out a medication authorization form. All prescription medications must be in the originally dispensed containers and with their original labels affixed.
- Over-the-counter medications must be in the original manufacturer's packaging. No educator shall administer the 1st dose of any medication to a child except under extraordinary circumstances and with parental consent.

- If required, routine scheduled medication or treatment will be administered to the designated child by a staff member who has been properly trained to do so, by a licensed health care practitioner, or by the child's parent or the program's health care consultant with the licensed health care practitioner's written consent. All medications must be in the originally dispensed containers and with their original labels affixed.
- All unused, discontinued, or outdated medication will be sent home, and such return will be documented in the child's record. When returning medication to the parent is not possible or practical, such medications must be destroyed, and a manager or supervisor, per the Department of Public Health Drug Control Program, must record the destruction.
- **Topical ointments and sprays**, such as diaper cream, petroleum jelly, sunscreen, bug repellent, etc., will be administered only with written parent/guardian permission. The signed statement from the parent/guardian will be valid for one year and must include a list of topical medications.

The **Medication Consent Form** is available in the Gan Elohim offices and must include the following:
The name of the child.

- The name of the medication and time(s) to be administered.
- The exact dosage and the number of days medication is to be administered.
- All Medication Consent Forms must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian and the child's physician. A prescription label will **NOT** be accepted as the written authorization of the child's physician.

EPI-PENS

If your child has food or other allergies and requires an epi-pen, you must provide an allergy action plan with guidance and instructions from your pediatrician. This form includes the doctor's signature, specific instructions, and your signed consent. Please provide **two individually labeled** epi-pens for school; both will always remain with the child. *Epi-pens must be brought with children for outdoor play or walks as required by 7.11(2)(f).* **Do NOT leave epi-pens in your child's lunch box, backpack, or cubby; all epi-pens must be given to the Director.** Epi-pens must be within the expiration date on the pen or prescription, whichever is sooner. The parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring that the school has an unexpired epi-pen for the child. If a child requires an epi-pen for allergy reasons, they may not be in our care unless we have a current epi-pen in their name.

EMERGENCIES

We will immediately inform you of any injury which requires emergency care beyond minor first aid. You will be notified in writing of any first aid administered to your child within 24 hours of the incident. Please keep your phone numbers and emergency contacts current. The Director and the staff are familiar with family stress issues and can refer parents and children to appropriate social and psychological services.

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Keeping our families, students, visitors, and employees safe is among our highest priorities. TBE has a security task force regularly conducts security evaluations with outside partners and engages with the Wellesley Police Department to train staff and conduct drills. TBE has staffing and protocol adjustments, security personnel, and continued investment in new equipment to enhance what is already in place. In addition, TBE is in regular contact with the Wellesley Police Department and many

other security networks that support Jewish organizations to receive up-to-date information and recommendations.

In the event of any occurrence stated below, parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be contacted by phone and email as soon as it is determined that the Director or her designee can safely perform the contact. Fire drills occur monthly; you will not be contacted for each occurrence of a fire drill.

Fire Drills

When the fire alarm sounds, proceed according to the following:

Rooms 114, 116/117, 118, 119

Leave the classrooms immediately, turn right, and exit via the back playground entrance. Wait in the rear courtyard until the building is declared safe for re-entry.

Rooms 120, 121/122

Leave the classroom immediately, turn left, and exit via the back playground entrance. Wait in the rear courtyard until the building is declared safe for re-entry.

Room 217/218

Leave the classroom immediately, turn right toward the rear of the building, walk down the stairs at the end of the hallway, and exit via the stairwell door. Walk past the playground to the rear courtyard. Wait in the rear courtyard until the building is declared safe for re-entry.

Room 220/221

Leave the classroom immediately, turn left toward the rear of the building, walk down the stairs at the end of the hallway, and exit via the stairwell door. Walk past the playground to the rear courtyard. Wait in the rear courtyard until the building is declared safe for re-entry.

Room 222

Leave the classroom immediately, turn right toward the rear of the building, walk down the stairs at the end of the hallway, and exit via the stairwell door. Walk past the playground to the rear courtyard. Wait in the rear courtyard until the building is declared safe for re-entry.

From the Playground:

Leave the playground immediately and walk to the rear courtyard until the building and playground are declared safe for re-entry.

From the Beit Midrash:

Leave the area immediately through the fire exit in the room. Meet in the rear of the temple parking lot by the Schofield School and wait until the building is declared safe for re-entry.

Alternative exits are:

a) The community kitchen will lead to the rear courtyard. Wait in the rear courtyard until the building is declared safe for re-entry, OR b) the main temple doors which lead to the parking lot. We will meet in the rear of the temple parking lot by the Schofield School and wait until the building is declared safe for re-entry.

BOMB THREAT

Gan Elohim staff is trained in specific protocols should a bomb threat occur. Details of this protocol are *not* publicized to maintain the utmost safety for our students and TBE staff. Our procedures and protocols are reviewed regularly and updated according to guidance from the Wellesley Police Department. Gan Elohim staff will have emergency contact information and emergency medication on hand for all students should any emergency arise during a potential bomb threat situation. Using cell phones, staff will contact all families to pick up their children if necessary. The staff will remain with the children until all the children have been picked up.

FOR ALL EVACUATIONS

The Director, designee, or person identifying the emergency must call 911. A classroom teacher must take the backpack with the attendance sheet and all emergency forms outside and take attendance, ensuring that all children and classroom staff are accounted for. The last teacher to leave the room should make a visual check of the room, make sure no children remain behind, and close the classroom door.

LOSS OF WATER

If Gan Elohim experiences a loss of drinking water, the Director or designee will purchase bottled water for drinking. If Temple Beth Elohim loses use of all its water, parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be called to pick up their children, and the center will close until the problem is rectified.

LOSS OF HEAT

If Gan Elohim and Temple Beth Elohim lose their heat, it is deemed that the heat cannot be fixed while the children are in the building. The temperature in the center cannot be adequately maintained, and parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be contacted to pick up the children. The center will close until the problem is rectified.

LOSS OF POWER

If Gan Elohim loses its power and it is deemed that the power cannot be fixed while the children are in the building, and the temperature in the school cannot be adequately maintained, parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be contacted to pick up children. The school will be closed until the problem is rectified. However, we will continue the program if the temperature exceeds 65 degrees, and the rooms are well-illuminated by natural light.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE AND LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

Gan Elohim staff is trained in specific protocols should a threat occur. Details of this protocol are *not* publicized to maintain the utmost safety for our students and TBE staff. Our procedures and protocols are reviewed regularly and updated according to guidance from the Wellesley Police Department. Gan Elohim staff will have emergency contact information and medication on hand for all students should any emergency arise during a potential threat. Using cell phones, staff will contact all families to pick up their children if necessary. The staff will remain with the children until all the children have been picked up. If you have any questions regarding security procedures, please contact Lisa Scott or Stephen Ashkinos, Executive Director, Administration & Operations, at sashkinos@tbewellesley.org

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

One role of an early childhood educator is to respond when challenging behaviors are exhibited. We develop a genuine acceptance and understanding of children and their level of development, with respect for the individual child and the group's needs. When a child is having a difficult time, we may try to divert the child's attention, spend time with the child, and whisper about appropriate rules and why they are necessary for this child and the group. Please use good judgment in your actions and words; we focus on teaching age-appropriate problem-solving skills. Teachers are trained in discipline and how to implement it in the classroom. Children are encouraged to speak to each other when there is a problem, and the teacher is a facilitator. When limits need to be set, the limits focus on the child's abilities. Initially, children are allowed to gain self-control before engaging in the problem-solving process. Children should never be embarrassed in front of their peers. Children should never be sent to an isolated area. Food is never used as a means of punishment or reward. Corporal punishment is forbidden. Children are empowered to gain control of themselves and rejoin the group when ready.

If a child is having a tough time listening to the rules in the classroom, the parents will be consulted, and the parents and teachers will devise a plan to help the child. If a child bites another child in school, the parent is notified at the end of the day. In the rare event that the same child bites again, we then call the parents and set up a team meeting to create an action plan for working through this issue.

All classroom rules need to be clear, consistent, and positive. The classrooms and outdoor play areas are set up so that all dialogue can be positive.

Per Department of Early Education and Care Regulations: (see Appendix 1, "Family Involvement Information" that details regulations on parent rights).

REFERRAL SERVICES

Gan Elohim's policy is to obtain current enrollment information for each child enrolled in the program every year. An individual file is created for each child, including documentation identifying the child's personal, health, and educational information. The files are securely and confidentially maintained in the School Office.

For social, mental health, educational, and medical services, including vision, dental, and hearing, the referral plan is as follows:

- When any staff member has concerns about a child, it is reported to the Director.
- The teacher will be asked to observe and record the child's behavior. The observation will focus on specific behaviors associated with these general areas of development: social-emotional, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, and language development.
- The concerns will be verbally shared with the parent(s) as documentation is being carried out so that the parent(s) may also observe the child's behavior in an environment other than school.
- Upon completing the observations, a meeting is scheduled with the parents to discuss the concerns/observations.
- At this meeting, the parent (s) must receive a written statement explaining the reason for recommending a referral, a summary of the staff's observations related to the behaviors, and the school's efforts to accommodate the child's needs (e.g., modification of materials, activity, grouping, timing, degree of structure/teacher direction, etc.). A copy will be placed in the child's folder.

- The staff will recommend and assist the child's parent(s) and provide referral resources.
- Records can only be transferred with the written consent of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- A list of referral resources for children in need of special services is available in the Director's office.

REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT BY PARENT/GUARDIAN:

All Gan Elohim Early Learning Center staff are mandated reporters (Massachusetts 51A Law) and are required to report suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) immediately by phone (617-748-2000). If a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, they must file a report with DCF. Educators will immediately consult with the Director upon suspicion of abuse or neglect before contacting DCF.

The following procedure will be followed:

- A staff member who suspects abuse or neglect must document their observations, including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior, and any other pertinent information.
- The staff member will discuss this information with the Director.
- The Director or the staff member, with the assistance of the Director, will make a verbal report to DCF, to be followed by a written report 51A within 48 hours.
- All concerns of suspected abuse and neglect reported to DCF will be communicated to the parents/guardians by the Director unless such a report is contra-indicated.

Department of Children and Families Child at Risk Hotline: 1-800-792-5200

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT BY TEACHER:

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center is committed to protecting all children in care from abuse and neglect. The following is the procedure for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect while in the care of the school:

- Any report of suspected neglect/abuse of a child will be immediately reported to DCF and the Department of Early Education and Care.
- A meeting will be held with the staff members to inform them of the filed report.
- The staff member will be immediately suspended from Gan Elohim Early Learning Center pending the outcome of the DCF and Department of Early Education and Care investigations.
- If DCF screens out the report, the staff member **MUST** remain on suspension until The Department of Early Education and Care has completed its investigation and The Department of Early Education and Care permits the staff member to return.

TBE POLICY ON TERMINATION AND / OR SUSPENSION OF A STUDENT

It is the policy of Gan Elohim Early Learning Center to make every effort to accommodate each child's individual needs. Therefore, only under extreme circumstances would the need for termination and suspension from the school program occur. In the unlikely event that a child displays significant emotional, social, or developmental difficulties, the Gan Elohim staff will carefully document any difficulties and notify the parents. A meeting will be called between the staff and parents to devise a plan to improve the situation. If appropriate, the staff will recommend outside assistance to help support the child, parents, and staff. The staff will continue to monitor the situation and determine whether they

can meet that child's particular needs. If the difficulty still needs to be resolved, the Director of Gan Elohim Early Learning Center would notify the child's parents personally and in writing of the need to evaluate whether it is appropriate for the child to continue in the school. The parents would receive written confidential information and a parent conference detailing the reasons for initiating any termination and suspension proceedings. Information about the termination and suspension process would be presented to the parents under CMR 7.04 (17) (i).

If the Director and the staff determine it is detrimental to the child or others in the school for the child to remain at school during the evaluation period, the school will recommend the termination and suspension of the child from the program. If it is determined by the child's evaluation team that Gan Elohim cannot provide for the child's needs, the school will follow that recommendation and terminate and suspend the child from the program.

If a child were to be terminated and suspended from Gan Elohim, the staff would prepare the child for this transition in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand. If the Director believes it appropriate, the child shall be allowed to remain at school until a more suitable program is in place. The staff would also assist with the child's transition by working with the staff of that alternative program and the child and their family.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center does not discriminate in providing participation in its program to children and their families based on race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. This applies to the hiring of our staff and the application of our students. Children do not have to be toilet trained to attend Gan Elohim.

SCHOOL YEAR AND FULL YEAR OPTIONS

One of our primary values at TBE is to create an inclusive community that serves the needs of all our families. Our school is a wonderful and rich program that introduces young children to the joys of Jewish living. Gan Elohim Early Learning Center offers PART DAY/FULL DAY programming and SCHOOL YEAR/FULL YEAR options.

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center will be closed for all students on the first and second days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first day of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, the first day of Passover, the last day of Passover, Shavuot, all Federal and State Holidays, the day before and after Thanksgiving, Staff Professional Days, Winter Vacation, and for two weeks at the end of August.

School Year is considered enrollment from August 31st through June 6, 2025 (not including February and April Vacation programs). **Full Year** includes **priority** sign-up for the February and April Vacation programs and the Summer Fun Program. **If there is low enrollment for February and or April school vacation weeks, those programs will not run. You will be notified via email.**

Billing is done separately for each of those programs.

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center is a non-profit agency that relies on tuition for operating expenses.

Gan Elohim Early Learning Center Tuition rates for the 2024-2025 School Year:

5-Day Preschool Programs

\$14,930 per year

5-Day Toddler Programs

\$19,620 per year

3-Day Toddler Programs

\$13,307 per year

2-Day Toddler Programs

\$10,160 per year

Other factors relating to tuition include:

- A \$500 non-refundable deposit is required to hold a child's space. This deposit will be applied to the 2025-2026 school tuition.
- For the 2024-2025 school year, tuition is payable in ten installments, as indicated on your bill.
- If two children from the same family are enrolled during the same school year, a 5% tuition reduction will be applied to the lower two tuition amounts. The reduction applies to school-day tuition only (9:00 am—1:00 pm) and not the fees charged for Extended Day Programs, Vacation Weeks, or the Summer Fun Program.
- ***Tuition is non-refundable unless the child's space is filled***
- All tuition payments and any financial concerns should be sent to:
 - Temple Beth Elohim
 - Attn: Jeff Nielsen
 - 10 Bethel Road
 - Wellesley, MA 02481
 - Jeff can be contacted by email jnielsen@tbewellesley.org or (781) 235-8419 ext. 247.

APPENDIX 1: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Early Education and Care

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT INFORMATION

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandate that the Department of Early Education and Care be legally responsible for promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of family childcare, small group, school-age childcare, and large group and school-age childcare.

These regulations, 606 CMR 7.00, establish standards for the operation of family childcare, small group and school-age, and large group and school-age childcare programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (program owners) regarding their work with families. A summary of the information parents need and their rights and responsibilities are identified below.

Family Involvement. The following 606 CMR 7.08 requirements apply to all programs: family childcare, small group and school-age, and large group and school-age childcare. Additional requirements for family childcare are found at 606 CMR 7.08(9). Additional requirements for small group and school-age and large group and school-age childcare are found at 606 CMR 7.08(10). The licensee must support and encourage a partnership with and the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children.

Parent Communication. The licensee must develop a mechanism for and encourage ongoing communication with parents and must be able to communicate effectively with families whose primary language is not English or who require alternative communication methods.

Parent Input. The licensee must have a procedure for allowing parental input in developing program policies, which may include, but need not be limited to, a suggestion box and individual or group parent meetings.

Parent Visits. The licensee must permit and encourage unannounced visits by parents to the program and their child's room at any time while their child is present.

Enrollment Meeting. The licensee must provide an opportunity for and encourage parents to meet with the program administrator or their designee before admitting a child to the program.

- The licensee must offer children and parents an orientation to the program. The licensee must provide an opportunity for parent(s) and children to visit the program and meet educators before the child is enrolled.
- The licensee must seek information about each child's and family's interests and needs.
- To support transitions and coordinate with services offered by other providers, educators must request that parents share information about other therapeutic, educational, social, and support services the child receives. For children younger than school age, educators must discuss each child's developmental history with their parents at the time of enrollment. The developmental history must be updated annually and maintained in the child's record.

Written Information for Parents. The licensee must provide the following information to families in writing prior to enrollment of their child: notification that parents are welcome to visit the program unannounced at any time while their child is present; and that input from and communication with parents is encouraged;

- the frequency of children's progress reports; the program's policy regarding administration of medication; the procedures for meeting potential emergencies; the transportation plan; a program calendar noting closed days and hours of operation;
- the program's fee schedule, including any fees for late payment, late pickup, field trips, special materials, etc.;
- the program's plan to provide positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development;
- the program's criteria for excluding children from care due to serious illnesses, contagious diseases and reportable diseases in conformance with regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, Department of Public Health;
- information regarding SIDS risk reduction practices, including the practice of sleeping infants on their backs;
- the procedures relating to children's records;
- notice that child educators are mandated reporters, and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families;
- notice that the program is licensed by EEC, including the telephone number and address of the EEC regional office responsible for the program;
- a

statement that parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history. Parent Conferences. The licensee must make educators available for individual conferences with parents at parental request. Notifications to Parents. The licensee must inform parents immediately of any injury that requires any medical care beyond minor first aid or of any emergency administration of non-prescription medication; • immediately of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving their children while in the care and custody of the licensee; • before or as soon as possible following any change in educators; at the end of the day regarding any minor first aid administered; in writing within 48 hours of any incident; • whenever special problems and significant developments arise; • whenever a communicable disease or condition has been identified in the program; • in writing seven days before the implementation of any change in program policy or procedures; • before the introduction of any pets into the program; of the use of any herbicides or pesticides, before their use whenever possible; and • whenever the program deviates from the planned menu.

Additional Requirements for Family Child Care. The provider must notify parents • in writing of a firearm in the family childcare home. This notification must be given upon enrollment and when the firearm is brought into the family childcare home • of any changes in the regular composition of the household. The provider must notify the parents of anyone regularly on the premises. Additional Requirements for Small Group and School Age and Large Group and School Age Child Care. The licensee must provide the following information to parents in writing before enrollment: • the program's written statement of purpose including and, where applicable, information on the administrative organization of the program; • The suspension and termination policy.