

# GAN SHALOM PRESCHOOL



## PARENT HANDBOOK 2018-2019

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WELCOME TO GAN SHALOM BERKELEY PRESCHOOL.

We are happy to start a brand new school year with both you and your children.

We realize that you, as parents, are a major source of responsibility for your children's development and education. Therefore, our most important role as teachers, and as a director, is to bring about communication and collaboration between your home and our program, and to help you understand and appreciate your child's development through current knowledge in the early childhood profession.

Please feel free to discuss your children's progress with our teachers. We strive to maintain regular, open, and ongoing communication between staff and parents regarding your children's lives at home and school. We also seek to create *Kehilah* (Community) and you, your children and your family are at the center of our community!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. J. Balfour", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Beatrice J. V. Balfour  
Director

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	Page 3
Philosophy .....	Page 3
Organizational Structure .....	Page 3
Admissions Policy and Procedure .....	Page 3-4
Dual Home Policy .....	Page 4-5
Tuition .....	Page 5
Family Involvement.....	Page 5
Program .....	Page 5-6
Schedule.....	Page 6-7
Arrival/Dismissal .....	Page 7
Parking Rules .....	Page 8
Lunch/Snacks .....	Page 8-9
Clothing.....	Page 9
Potty Learning.....	Page 9
Health Policy .....	Page 9-10
Sunscreen Policy .....	Page 10
Injury Policy .....	Page 11
Permission to Administer Medication.....	Page 11
Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure .....	Page 11
Field Trips .....	Page 11
Celebrations.....	Page 11
Birthdays.....	Page 11
Maintaining Peace in our Community .....	Page 12
Conflict Resolution at Gan Shalom.....	Page 12
Behavioral Guidelines.....	Page 12
Communication.....	Page 12-13
Gan Shalom App, Email and Social Media.....	Page 13
Transitions .....	Page 13-14
Parents' Rights.....	Page 14
Personal Rights.....	Page 14-15
Final Note .....	Page 15

## ☐ Introduction

Welcome to Gan Shalom! This handbook details information about the philosophy, policies and procedures of our school.

## ☐ Philosophy

Gan Shalom Preschool is dedicated to providing a warm, nurturing environment within which each child feels secure to explore and learn. Our goals are to foster each child's emotional, social and cognitive development, build positive self-esteem, prepare children for Kindergarten and promote positive Jewish identity. Our curriculum is purposely designed to offer a balanced diversity of activities in music, dramatic play, arts and crafts, movement, science, mathematics and language. We believe children learn best through concrete "hands-on" experiences, explorations, questioning, testing concepts, manipulating materials, and engaging in their curiosity and creativity to explore the world around them. Their interactions with peers provide an opportunity to learn cooperation, problem-solving skills, and appropriate ways of expressing feelings.

The Jewish calendar enriches our curriculum with the study and celebration of the Jewish holidays, Shabbat, Torah stories, daily prayers, and blessings. Hebrew is introduced through songs, stories and creative dramatics. Jewish values, such as spirituality, community, diversity, respect, aesthetics, charity, good deeds, and joy, are explored through stories, art, discussions and projects.

Gan Shalom strives to be sensitive to each child's unique self and individual learning style. Our teachers function as a team to create a supportive and engaging environment in which each child feels encouraged to explore, learn and grow. Parents are an active participant of our community, and we encourage you to bring to Gan Shalom your expertise and interests.

We look forward to working together with families to facilitate and to collaborate in the education of your child(ren)!

## ☐ Organizational Structure

Gan Shalom is operated by Congregation Beth Israel. The Rabbi advises staff in Jewish programming and often participates in our holiday celebrations. The Gan Shalom Parent Committee (PAC) comprises Gan Shalom parents and synagogue members interested in the growth and development of the school. The PAC works in liaison with the Gan Shalom Director and Beth Israel Board to engage in planning and preparing for school events and fundraising programs. Parents who wish to serve as Committee members may communicate this to the Director, Dr. Beatrice J. V. Balfour.

## ☐ Admissions Policy and Procedures

Prospective parents are invited to observe our program for one hour in the morning, when they can witness a variety of our routines. If parents believe that our program is a good fit for their child they can submit an online enrollment application to be returned by the specified due date with a non-refundable \$110 application fee. For the 2-year-old program, children must be 2 by the beginning of the school year. Children who turn 2 throughout the year can be admitted to the program on a space-available basis. For the downstairs program, children must be 3 years of age by the first day of school of the admission year in order to be considered. Enrollment decisions are made and parents are informed of enrollment decisions immediately thereafter by phone or e-mail. Families who are not immediately accepted are put on a waiting list. Our admission policy preferences are as follows:

- Children of Congregation Beth Israel members who have been members in good standing from March prior to the beginning of school;
- Siblings of previously enrolled Gan Shalom children;
- Residents of the immediate neighborhood;

- All other applicants.

Enrollment decisions are based upon both the readiness of the child and on the need to balance age, gender and other diversity factors in the class.

**Final acceptance to our program, per our contract, will be based on a home visit conducted by the Director and the Head Teacher during the summer preceding each student's admission.** The visit lasts approximately 1 hour, during which the Director interacts directly with the child and observes their behavior.

The reason for the visit is:

1. To ensure that our program is right for the child;
2. To begin a relationship between child and staff to ease the child's transition into a new school;
3. For the families, to get to know the Gan Shalom staff better.

Once a spot is offered and accepted, the contract is sent out. Parents have one week to sign and return the contract with an accompanying deposit to ensure a spot for their child in our program. If parents change their mind about sending their child(ren) to Gan Shalom, we will immediately contact candidates on our waiting list. Refunds will be granted once the child's spot is filled.

Before the start of the school year, another home visit will be conducted by a Head Teacher. Also, parents will need to submit to the Director a set of forms. per California State Licensing, as follows:

1. Parents' Rights (LIC 995)
2. Identification & Emergency Information (LIC 700)
3. Consent for Medical Treatment (LIC 627)
4. Personal Rights (LIC 613A)
5. Child's health history (LIC 702)
6. Physical exam and TB risk screening – Physician Report (LIC 701)
7. Immunization records

These forms will be e-mailed to each family. They must be returned by the date given in the cover letter and prior to the child's first day of school.

All parents are required to attend our annual parent orientation the Thursday evening prior to the beginning of school.

## ▣ Dual Home Policy

Consistent with the mission of Gan Shalom to promote the best interest of each student enrolled in our school in partnership with both parents, it shall be the policy of Gan Shalom to maintain strict neutrality between parents who are involved in an action affecting the family, unless otherwise directed by court order. As such, our ultimate focus remains on the student at all times, and it is our hope that both parents work with the school to ensure that positive relationship and interactions are maintained.

### 1. Contracting with Gan Shalom

Enrollment contracts are the joint obligation of both parents/guardians to the extent that two exist. In the presence of any written court order guidelines restricting parental access or the legal decision-making rights of a parent or guardian, Gan Shalom will require a copy of these written orders on file in order to comply with them. The school will require this to be provided at least annually with any updated orders provided on a timely basis.

### 2. Parent-Signed Authorization Forms

Gan Shalom requires parents to provide unambiguous direction with regard to the safety and security of their children. As such, we ask that only one dismissal authorization form be submitted to

the school per child, with a mutually agreed-upon list of individuals who have permission to pick up the student from school (on a typical school day and/or in case of an emergency.) The school cannot accept separate or conflicting dismissal authorization forms. In the absence of one mutually agreed upon document, the child will only be released to a parent or legal guardian. In the event that parents share custody, one parent signature is adequate to grant student permission to participate in school-sponsored activities. In the case where parents do not share custody of the child, a copy of all relevant and legal court orders with regards to child custody must be filed with Gan Shalom in order for the school to assume responsibility of matters of parent guardianship.

### 3. Parent/Teacher Communications and Conferences

Unless otherwise dictated by court order (in which case the enrolling parent shall be requested to provide to the school a certified copy of the most recent court order reciting such curtailment or restriction), both parents have the right to be kept informed of the child's school progress and activities, or participate therein.

#### ☐ Tuition

Tuition is due and payable by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month from September to June. Please check your emails for your billing statement on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. A \$25 late charge will be added to your account if payment is received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month unless prior arrangement has been made with the Director or Administrator. Late payments incur an added expense to the school for additional bookkeeping fees. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Your child is welcome to stay for our afternoon drop-in program if there is space available, but please make prior arrangements with the Director and the Afternoon Head Teacher.

#### ☐ Family Involvement

Gan Shalom strives to serve as a supportive community for its children and families. Parent participation is encouraged in family events, field trips, special classroom projects, and in the celebration of holidays.

Parent involvement is also vital to the running of the school, and to fostering a true community effort. Each family is required to contribute a minimum of 10 hours per family each school year.

If you have a special talent such as sewing, building, painting, etc., please let us know. We'd love for you to share your expertise and skills with Gan Shalom's children and with our community.

Work to maintain the school has been valued at \$40 per hour, **and all hours not reported by June 1 must be paid at \$40 for each hour not worked.** Please record your hours worked, fill out your family's volunteer hours page in the Family Participation binder near the parent boxes. The administrators will keep an account of work hours completed and hours still outstanding.

Please remember: it is your active participation that enables Gan Shalom to function as a community for the benefit of our children and families.

#### ☐ Program

Gan Shalom serves children between the ages of 2 years to kindergarten age. Families must enroll their children in the morning program, with an option for afternoon enrollment, or a full-day program. The 2 year old program has an option for 2, 3, or 5 mornings a week with an option for afternoon or full day program. The schedule for both programs:

- The morning program begins at 9:00 and ends at 1:00. There is an option for 7:30 or 8:00 AM early morning care.
- The afternoon program begins at 1:00 and ends at 4:00 PM.
- There is after care from 4:00 to 5:30 PM.

## ☐ Schedule

Our day is structured to offer a free choice of both indoor and outdoor activities, small group activities such as stories, music, movement, drama, and a circle time including all the children. Our basic schedule is adhered to with some flexibility to accommodate children's needs. It is as follows:

### Downstairs:

#### Morning

7:30-10:00	Activity time (free choice of activities)
10:00-10:15	Clean-up, hand washing and bathroom time
10:15-10:30	Circle time (greetings, morning prayer/tefillah/Netilat Yadayim)
10:30-11:00	Lunch
11:00-12:15	Activity time (divide into small groups for special projects) Outdoor activities (choice of fine motor and/or gross motor play activities)
12:20-12:30	Handwashing/bathroom time
12:30-12:50	Snack
12:50-1:00	Closing (songs, Birkat Hamazon)
1:00	Dismissal of morning program children

#### Afternoon

1:00-1:15	(prep for relaxation time)
1:15-2:00	Relaxation/quiet time (longer if needed for child) incl. exercises such as yoga & breathing, stories and songs
2:00-4:00	Snack, afternoon enrichment activities and free play; 4 PM dismissal
4:00-5:30	Indoor and outdoor free play and after care dismissal at 5:30

### Upstairs Toddler program (Keshet):

#### Morning

7:30-9:15	Activity time (structured and free choice)
9:15-10:00	Morning Routine (diapers/bathroom, circle, snack, tefillah)
10:00-11:00	Outdoor activity time--gross motor/fine motor activities
11:00-11:15	Bathroom/diapers; story time
11:15-11:45	Inside story time/Lunch
11:45-12:45	Outside time
12:45-1:00	Clean-up/bathroom/diapers/ 1 PM Dismissal
1:00	Rest time (according to the needs of the child)

#### Afternoon

1:00-3:00	Rest time
3:00-4:00	Snack/afternoon enrichment activities/Closing circle; 4 PM dismissal
4:00-5:30	Indoor and outdoor free play and aftercare dismissal at 5:30

**Enrichment Programs:** Gan Shalom offers a series of enrichment programs, which vary from year to year. If you are interested in what the enrichment program for this year will be, please ask the Director.

### A Word about the Afternoon Program:

**Rest Time:** All families who have a child staying regularly in the afternoons must purchase a nap mat. Specific information about what and where to purchase this will be shared at parent orientation. Nap mats will be sent home weekly for washing. Providing a space for children to rest is according to state licensing regulations. All children at Gan Shalom have time dedicate to rest, relaxation and quiet time; children who do not fall asleep get up after 20 minutes or so and play quietly in the classroom until afternoon snack. Like potty learning, rest

and sleep are individual with each child and family and we will work with you on how children transition in and out of rest time on a daily and ongoing basis. Nap schedule is posted on the Gan Shalom App each day. For Licensing Regulation, we cannot keep a child up who falls asleep during relaxation.

As the need arises, we will wake up your child after an agreed-upon period of time asleep. However, if it is difficult to wake your child, it may be that they need more time to rest and refuel. When this is the case, we will need to let the child continue sleeping. For children transitioning out of daytime nap, we will work with you on how best to do that, so that your child has enough rest to participate fully in the afternoon program and at the same time not upset their nighttime schedule.

## ☐ Arrival/Dismissal

For safety and legal reasons you must sign your child in and out of school each day. SIGN YOUR FULL NAME and SIGN IT IN A WAY THAT IS LEGIBLE. A current sheet for this purpose will be posted.

If your child is going home with someone other than yourself, please indicate alternate pick-up plans on the sign-in sheet in the space provided if the person has been previously authorized OR send a note stating that we can release your child to that person.

For your child's protection, we will release your child only after we have seen proper identification from that person. If your child is going home with another child from school you may indicate this in writing on the sign-in sheet. This is done for the safety and protection of your child. **If you need to communicate with us urgently, or there is a change in pickup plans made later in the morning, please telephone or e mail the school Director, or the Gan administrator.**

Each child benefits from the full program for which they are enrolled. Arriving at school promptly allows the child to become fully integrated in the activities of the day. A child who walks into the class late may have a more difficult transition.

Children feel secure knowing they may anticipate being picked up when other parents begin to arrive. For your own child's interest, please be on time.

- Morning dismissal is at 1:00 pm
- Afternoon dismissal is at 4:00pm - 5:30pm.
- Early Shabbat Friday Dismissal at 4:30 pm lasts from November to March.

**Promptness at pick-up time is important. Please be on time. 1:00 is the pick-up time for the morning program and 4:00 or 5:30 is the pick-up time for the afternoon program.** Late fees are outlined below.

Late Pickup Fee Schedule	
1:01 PM - 1:10 PM	\$12.50
after 1:10 PM	\$40.00
4:01 PM - 4:10 PM	\$12.50
After 4:10 PM	\$18.00
After 5:30 PM, per minute:	\$4.50

## ☐ Parking Rules

Parking rules have been established for safety and as a courtesy toward the neighborhood. **They are also conditions by which our Use Permit has been approved and must be adhered to at all times. Failure to follow these rules will result in expulsion from the program:**

1. Enter Jefferson Street from Allston Way **only**, and exit via Bancroft Way **only**. Park **only** on the west side, our side of the 2200 block of Jefferson. Park **only** from in front of Gan Shalom, south to the corner of Bancroft and Jefferson, or park off the block.
2. No double-parking at any time.
3. No waiting for a space.
4. No U turns at any time.
5. No using driveways for turning around.
6. No blocking driveways.
7. No speeding.
8. Do not leave motor running in an unattended car.
9. Do not honk your horn, shout to a friend or otherwise disturb the quiet of the neighborhood.
10. Utilize walking, bikes, and car-pools.

**You are responsible to communicate these rules to others (nannies, grandparents, etc.) who might drop off or pick up your child.** Please make certain they are obeyed.

## ☐ Lunch

We request that all families send their children with lunches. The kitchen at Gan Shalom is kosher. All children are asked to bring vegetarian or dairy, *parve* lunches (fish is ok). We do not allow children to share lunches.

Send a lunch including milk/juice or water, all necessary cups, utensils and napkin in a lunch box or bag clearly labeled with your child's name. **Please label all containers.**

Make sure foods are prepared for the child to eat. Please cut fruit and/or sandwiches, as your child requires. We can heat up food in our microwave. **All food to be heated must be in a microwaveable container with a lid.**

It is important that you omit sweets from your child's lunch. This includes all kinds of candy, bars, gum, chocolate, pudding and soda.

We often find that children do not eat large lunches at school. We will send home uneaten food if it is in a re-sealable container. Please be aware of what your child is or is not eating.

## ☐ Snacks

We provide daily snacks for our children. We are committed to serving the most nutritious and balanced snacks using the highest quality foods. We serve water, not juice, and sometimes milk, with all snacks. We aspire to use as many organic products as we can, especially animal products, such as milk and eggs and produce, according to our budget. We serve a morning snack for Keshet (the upstairs class) at 9:30 a.m., and for the downstairs class at 12:30 p.m. An afternoon snack is served between 2:30 and 3:30 pm daily.

We support and work closely with families of children who have medically documented food allergies to satisfy daily nutrition and provide taste and variety. We encourage the family to provide us with snacks similar in kind to what we serve our other children for any given snack to create an environment of inclusion for the child who

has food allergies. We encourage the family to share food allergy information with the entire community to ensure the child's safety and well-being on play dates, etc.

## ☐ Clothing

Please think of your child's comfort so that they can play and explore without unnecessary restrictions.

### General Guidelines

1. Provide simple, comfortable clothing that is free of uncomplicated fastenings. **No overalls unless child can be independent.**
2. **Please no high-top gym shoes.** As you know, they are hard to get on and off and this hinders your child's independence in self-care.
3. Berkeley's weather is variable. Layers are most practical. Jackets or sweaters are advised for the cooler parts of the day. It is easier to remove unnecessary items than to search for something warm to wear in the school clothing box.
4. Children do get dirty. **Please do not send your child to school in expensive clothes. We cannot be responsible for their clothing. Send them in clothing that can be soiled with paint, sand or mud.**
5. Please do not send clothing, back packs or lunch boxes with super heroes/heroines or aggressive imagery on them. Our dress-up corner provides clothing for imaginative play.

Each child should have at least one complete change of clothing in their cubby, including shoes. There is a labeled box in each child's cubby to hold these clothes. Please supply boots and a rain jacket for rain walks. **Please label all clothing.**

## ☐ Potty learning

At Gan Shalom, we work together with each child and their family to facilitate this important transition in your child's life. Families with a child in diapers must supply diapers, wipes, diaper cream if necessary, and lots of changes of clothes. Teachers keep a diaper changing chart so that teachers and families have this information each day. Each child is different and it is important that we stay in contact at each stage of this process. Communication between parents and teachers is vital to this process. It is best to start this communication early at the home visit, so information can be gathered and shared amongst all teachers involved.

## ☐ Health Policy

For the general health of all people at Gan Shalom, sick children cannot be accepted into the classroom. Staff is responsible for determining whether a child is sick or well enough to attend, and is charged with applying and enforcing sick policy. We ask parents' cooperation.

### General Guidelines for keeping your child home

Children must stay home:

1. If they have a fever of 100 degrees in armpit, 101 degrees by mouth, or 102 degrees by ear, or have had a fever during the previous 24-hour period without a fever reducer such as ibuprofen or Tylenol.
2. During the first 24 hours of taking an antibiotic.
3. If they have a heavy nasal discharge.
4. If they have a constant cough.
5. If they are fussy, cranky, or generally not sociable.
6. If they show symptoms of a possibly communicable disease.
7. If they are very tired. Rest at such times may prevent the development of a serious illness.

8. If they have had diarrhea two or more times in the previous 24 hours and/or uncontrolled, unformed stool.

- Children with runny noses will not necessarily be excluded from school. However, if the mucous is profuse and cannot be controlled by normal wiping, they may be excluded at staff's discretion.
- If a child has an infected throat, congestion, a persistent cough or is generally irritable, they may be excluded.
- A child with loose or watery stool will be observed. If repeated twice within two hours, the child must be excluded. Children may not return until they have had at least one normal bowel movement.
- Children with conjunctivitis (pink eye) cannot return to school until they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours and upon a doctor's note that the child is not infectious anymore.
- If a child is scratching their head abnormally, we will check their hair for lice. If lice nit is found, the child will be separated from the rest of the children. The parents will be contacted, and the child must be picked up immediately. The child's hair needs to be thoroughly shampooed. This process alone does not remove the lice. After shampooing, the child's hair needs to be combed with a special fine-tooth comb specific for the removal of lice nit. There are a variety of natural essential oils that kill and prevent the spread of lice. For example, a few drops of tea tree oil can be added to shampoo to kill lice. A few drops of rosemary and lavender oils can be put on your child's hairbrush to prevent lice from developing and spreading. A good website on the subject is [www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org). Regardless of what lice treatment product you choose to use, successful removal depends upon the process of combing and removing nits from the hair completely, which may require repetition. This process is integral to success. A child must be lice and nit free in order to return to school. We encourage parents to check their own and their other children's hair. Lice spread from person to person very easily. We also recommend that clothing, bedding and anything the child has come in contact with be washed and put in a hot dryer for 20 minutes. All clothing that children come in contact with at the school will be removed and washed. To prevent the spread of lice, Gan Shalom schedules monthly lice checks and if the lice problem persists, the frequency of lice checks will be increased.
- If your child develops any illness, please notify the school as soon as possible. A health notice will be posted to notify parents of major communicable illness at the school.

We do not have the space or facilities to keep sick children. If we call you to pick up your sick child, you or another authorized person listed on your emergency contact form must come immediately.

Gan Shalom does its part to hinder the spread of illness. We will disinfect tables, chairs and sleeping mats with a solution of vinegar and water at least once a week and every day, if necessary, during flu season.

We encourage children to use a tissue only once, throw it away, and wash their hands. This minimizes their contact with germs

### ☐ **Sunscreen Policy**

In the warmer weather months, **parents are expected to apply sunscreen to their child's entire body before coming to school.**

In addition, please bring a bottle of general sunscreen to school. If your child needs to wear a specific sunscreen, please let the Director and the Head Teacher(s) know.

Children often take off some of their clothes, or put on swimsuits during outside free playtime. Teachers will re-apply sunscreen later.

Your cooperation ensures maximum sun protection and assists teachers in being free to respond to all the children's needs.

## **☐ Injury Policy**

If your child is injured at school, you will be informed with an 'Ouchy report'. The course of action will be determined by the severity of the injury. Parents may choose to come and pick up their child after they are called.

## **☐ Permission to Administer Medication**

In the event that parents want staff to administer a medication, an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form will need to be filled out by the parent. Staff will administer prescription and non-prescription medication in its original bottle, per directions.

## **☐ Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure**

In the event of a medical or dental emergency, trained staff will provide first-aid and 911 will be called, if necessary. Parents will be contacted and informed immediately of their child's situation and a plan will be formulated. In the absence of direct contact with parents, the Director will escort the child to the emergency room or to the appropriate caregiver per the parental emergency consent information and remain with the child until parents or other designated people can be with the child.

## **☐ Field Trips**

From time to time, we take field trips to various places in the neighborhood, including the synagogue. For these walking excursions, every family is to fill out a field trip permission slip for their child. This gives Gan Shalom the right to take your child off site.

## **☐ Celebrations**

Families are an integral part of our celebrations. Starting in December, families are invited to our Shabbat and holiday celebrations that occur during the school day. Please be aware that the presence of adults at school affects not only your child but other children as well. Once all children are feeling secure and comfortable with the school routine, we are happy to have guests. We ask that parents wait until December to attend Shabbat circle. Please speak with the Director or the Head Teacher(s) to let us know that you are coming.

## **☐ Birthdays**

Birthdays are important times for children. We celebrate birthdays during our morning circle. Throughout the morning, children make a special book with wishes for the birthday child. Parents are welcome to attend the birthday celebration which starts at 10:00 am. If parents wish to send a special fruit snack, we will enjoy it at the end of birthday circle. We ask that you arrive at 9:45 am to prepare fruit if you are bringing fruit to share. Please bring a picture of your child as a baby, at 1 and 2 years old, and 3 and 4 years old if turning 4 or 5. The teacher will tell a special birthday story for the child and we will sing birthday songs. Please schedule your child's celebration with the Director.

We discourage party favors. We find it detracts from the focus upon the birthday child. As an alternative, we suggest sending a book or a puzzle as a gift to the school in honor of your child's birthday. The gift will be enjoyed time and time again. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions.

If your child is having a party outside of Gan Shalom, please do not put invitations or thank you notes in children's cubbies unless you are inviting ALL of the children. Please be aware that many of our families keep kosher and observe Shabbat. Please do not schedule birthdays on Saturday in order to include all children.

## ▣ Maintaining Peace in our Community

The culture of our school emphasizes the value of community in all respects. Our daily interactions give form to this concept in a concrete and meaningful way. Teachers act as facilitators of conflict resolution and often employ problem solving as a technique. Teachers act as guardians of physical and emotional safety. Children are encouraged and supported to solve problems on their own. There is no corporal punishment used at Gan Shalom at any time.

## ▣ Conflict Resolution at Gan Shalom

Conflict resolution is approached as an opportunity for learning. The role of the teacher is to help children become independent problem solvers. We honor the process of empowering children to negotiate and speak out about their needs and feelings. Please speak with the Director if you have any further questions.

## ▣ Behavioral Guidelines

In order to ensure the safety of all our children, destruction of equipment and property and/or dangerous behavior by children is not allowed. Below is a general outline of our policy, however, each case is handled individually.

1. Staff Intervention: Teachers handle minor conflict by teaching Gan Shalom rules of conflict resolution. This includes modeling appropriate behavior for children by using kind words and by doing *tikkun olam* (repairing the world by fixing our mistakes and helping others who are hurt). Teachers reinforce doing *mitzvot* by going over the rules that keep us safe at Gan Shalom.
2. Parent/Staff Intervention: If there are repeated incidents involving a student's behavior, parents are contacted to have a meeting to discuss ways to address the child's behavior.

## ▣ Communication

Approximately every week you will receive an e-mailed newsletter that describes school activities, upcoming events and other relevant information. Most daily communication between the Director and families can be done through the Gan Shalom App and the Gan Shalom Google Group.

Notes about special pick-up arrangements, requests for drop-in care, etc. must be written on that day's sign in/sign out sheet as well as verbally communicated to a staff member.

If you need to reach us urgently, please call the school at (510) 848-3298 or email [director@ganshalomberkeley.org](mailto:director@ganshalomberkeley.org). You can also send a message to the Director through the private 'chat' on the Gan Shalom App. If you do not hear back from the Director within an hour, please call Joelle Yzquierdo (administrator) at Congregation Beth Israel at 510 843-5246 or email her at [office@cbiberkeley.org](mailto:office@cbiberkeley.org) between the hours of 9 am and 3 pm

**Parent-teacher conferences:** An initial conference is scheduled after the Jewish High Holidays are over. This is a 15 minute check-in conference with head teachers. It is a time for each family to ask questions about their child's experience so far at school and to share pertinent information with teachers. We will be asking about transitioning, potty learning, and any developmental or social concerns at this moment in your child's development. A longer, more in depth conference takes place in late January for you and your child's teachers to discuss your child's growth and development. Please check your school calendar for the exact date. You will have the opportunity to schedule your conference at a time most convenient for you from the available appointment times on that day. School is closed on this day. Per the school calendar, there are opportunities in December to meet with teachers to talk about Pre-K/K readiness on an as-needed basis.

We are deeply committed to your children's development and feel most effective when we can work with you to understand them and enhance their growth. Please feel free to speak with the Director or your children's teacher about your concerns. You may leave a message on the Gan Shalom voicemail and we will return your call, or send the Director a note via e-mail with a time when it is most convenient for you to talk.

## ☐ **Gan Shalom App, E-Mail and Social Media**

The Gan Shalom App is how the school communicates daily information to families such as group time activities, snack schedule, rest times and calendar. You can also request that the Director link your personal online calendar to the Gan's Google calendar. You can also use the app to communicate with the Director on the 'Chat'. It is a forum for parents to reach out to one another to organize play dates, informal group gatherings at parks and other group outings, to seek and offer help for such things as babysitting, give tips on special local events for children and families, etc.

Every parent is also subscribed to the Gan Shalom group ([ganshalom@googlegroups.com](mailto:ganshalom@googlegroups.com)) which can be used by everyone for similar purposes. To add or change an email, please let the Director know.

Both the App and the Google Group are not the venues for resolving conflicts. The first thing to do to resolve a problem is to speak with the Director. Please do not air grievances about the school or other parents on the e-mail list. Personal attacks should, of course, be avoided. Exercise good judgment before joining on a thread by asking yourself if the post is constructive and if it helps build community.

Social Media is a tool to keep informed about families and friends and a great way to build community. Here are some guidelines for using this tool safely and effectively:

- Weigh whether a particular posting puts you or any one, child or adult, at risk.
- Post only what you want the world to see. On a social networking site, basically once you post something it may be available even after it is removed from the site.
- Do not discuss other children, parents, or teachers, or publicly criticize school policies or personnel.
- A good rule of thumb: Do not post images that include students other than your own child.

## ☐ **Transitions**

### **Initial Adjustment**

When your child, new or returning, comes to school for the first time, they will be taking the first big step toward independence and may need help in adjusting.

Bringing your child on the first day and staying with him or her for 15 minutes will help familiarize them with the new surroundings. If your child's drop-off does not go as planned, do not hesitate to ask a teacher for support or suggestions.

Your child may feel uneasy, worried or confused in reaction to the new surroundings and people. Often a young child will have a reaction that seems uncharacteristic or regressive. Examples of these symptoms of tension are shyness, clinging, aggression, crying easily and wetting. Please do not be disturbed if this occurs; this will disappear as your child grows used to the new situation. Be sympathetic, patient and understanding.

Transitions are important and significant moments for children. We have a few resources on our website that can help you and your child(ren) during the process: <https://ganshalomberkeley.org/community/resources/>

It can be helpful to have a school ritual you share with your child. For example, you could read 3 pages of a book before leaving the school, or kiss their hand and let them push you out of the school's door. You could even give your child an object to hold onto while you are away, like an 'invisible string' or a picture. A ritual can help keep the transition at school short, sweet, and simple.

Whatever ritual or strategy you decide to use, make sure to communicate it to the primary teacher(s) in the classroom.

Our staff is there to support you throughout this process!

### **Helping With Adjustment**

There are things you can do to help your child with their initial adjustment and with their ability to feel secure throughout the year.

Prior to coming to school, act out the experience of going to school with your child, and do so in detail. Remind your child that you will return for them at a specific time (e.g., “after closing circle”).

**Do not linger in the classroom or around the school doors or windows where your child can see or hear you. A crying or clinging child usually stops as soon as family members move out of sight.**

Please be sure to notify the school of any family changes, moving, illness, visitors, births, etc., in your household. This information is important because these changes will always affect your child. All such information will be kept confidential.

Every child is an individual and as such will differ in their needs. Every once in a while a child may have a hard time starting school or may suddenly develop separation anxiety in the middle of the year. Usually there is no need for concern and your child’s teachers are experienced with dealing with these behaviors and are prepared to help.

We encourage parents’ participation in the classroom. However, at drop-off and pick-up we require that the parent(s) leave after no more than 15 minutes to make transitions smooth. If you want to and can spend time in the classroom, please arrange with a Head Teacher ahead of time so that you can offer support, for example in planning or organizing an activity.

### **☐ Parents’ Rights**

As a parent/authorized representative, you have the right to:

1. Enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are in our care.
2. File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee’s public file kept by the licensing office
3. Review, at the child care center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the child care center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the child care center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.
6. Receive from the licensee the name and telephone no. of the local licensing office: Community Care Licensing, 1515 Clay St. Ste 1102, Oakland, CA 94612, Tel. 510-622-2602
7. Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to the child care center for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may also be obtained by contacting the local licensing office.
8. Receive, from the licensee, the Caregiver Background Check Process form.

### **☐ Personal Rights**

See section 101223 for waiver conditions applicable to Child Care Centers. Each child receiving services from a Child Care Center shall have rights which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.

2. To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishing and equipment to meet his/her needs.
3. To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: Interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
4. To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative, if any, informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited to, the address and telephone number of the complaint receiving unit of the licensing agency and of information regarding confidentiality.
5. To be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice and to have visits from spiritual advisor of his/her choice. Attendance at religious services, either in or outside the facility, shall be on a completely voluntary basis. In Child Care Centers, decisions concerning attendance at religious services or visits from spiritual leaders shall be made by the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child.
6. Not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises day or night.
7. Not to be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restrain approved in advance by the licensing agency.

THE REPRESENTATIVE/PARENT/GUARDIAN HAS THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE APPROPRIATE LICENSING AGENCY TO CONTACT REGARDING COMPLAINTS, WHICH IS: COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DEPT. BAY AREA OFFICE, 1515 CLAY STREET, SUITE 1102, OAKALAND, CA 94612, TELEPHONE 510-622-2602

**☐ Final Note**

The learning environment at Gan Shalom is designed to guide each child in their development of increased capabilities, understanding and self-confidence. We look forward to joining with you in the very exciting and rewarding process of your child's growth.