

GAN SHALOM  
גן שלום COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

A REGGIO-INSPIRED PRESCHOOL IN THE HEART OF CAPITOL HILL



## Parent Handbook

212 East Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC 20003

[Tina Brimo](#), Director

# WELCOME TO GAN SHALOM!

Gan Shalom was founded in 2010 under the auspices of the [Hill Havurah](#) (HH), and remains closely affiliated with the HH community. Our program welcomes all children ages 24 months to 5 years old and is housed at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, at 212 East Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC 20003.

At Gan Shalom, our mission is to create a warm, loving, Jewish community in which children learn through play, exploration, and a hands-on approach. Our shared routines and nurturing atmosphere are designed to meet individual needs, interests, and developmental stages of each child. Gan Shalom believes that children's first teachers are their families. Parents and caregivers continue to play an active role in their child's learning by acting as a support role in the classroom throughout the year and participating in the school community. As a part of our philosophy, staff provide intentionally planned environments and experiences to enhance cognitive development, encourage problem solving, strengthen motor skills, and embrace their role within our community and Jewish identity.

Our philosophy for our day-to-day learning is inspired by the [Reggio Emilia](#) pedagogy of having a child-led curriculum. Our goal is for children to spend their time at school building relationships, problem solving, exploring, creating, wondering, constructing, discovering, sharing, and finding joy in their learning alongside their peers and teachers. In our community, we strive to foster values that support a love of learning and responsible citizenship.

At Gan Shalom, we value and honor all, using compassion, empathy, and respect. Some of the core values of Jewish early childhood education is evident in our learning through stories, documentation, daily practice, and children's behaviors. These include *Yedidut* (friendship), *Tikkun Olam* (repair the world), *Ometz Lev* (courage), *Rachamim* (compassion), and *Gemilut Hasadim* (acts of loving kindness).

# CURRICULUM

## Goals

The goals of the curriculum are to help facilitate children's learning through play, and guide children's age-appropriate development and growth.

At Gan Shalom, children will build social-emotional and critical thinking skills through areas of play, including dramatic play, construction, and art. Each day children will have opportunities to expand their cognitive learning with a variety of hands-on explorations.

To prepare students to be active participants in their communities, teachers will support the children in building relationships, establishing self worth, and gaining a sense of empathy and awareness of their role as a citizen in the community at large. As a Jewish early learning center, Jewish culture and values are woven into our routine to build a foundation for Jewish identity and global citizenship.

## Assessments

- Individualized Observations and Planning: Gan Shalom teachers routinely observe each child's development, including but not limited to speech, articulation, social-emotional, behavioral, and physical development. The development of classroom management strategies and strategies for individual children occurs on a regular basis and is communicated to parents as needed.
- Support Services: On occasion the teacher's observations indicate potential benefit from intervention such as the implementation of new classroom strategies and/or referral for professional developmental screening. Gan Shalom will work with the family to determine how best to address the individual needs of the child. Gan Shalom partners with DC's Early Intervention Program, [Strong Start](#), to support any necessary observations, evaluations, and professional guidance to provide all recommended support.

## Class Names, Sizes, and Ratios

	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b># of Days/Wk</b>	<b>Teacher/Student Ratio</b>	<b>Class Size</b>
<b>Rimonim (Pomegranates)</b>	2.5-5	8:30am (staggered)	1pm	5	1:6	12
<b>Anavim (Grapes)</b>	2-3	8:30am (staggered)	12pm	3	1:4	8
<b>Tufim (Strawberries)</b>	2-3	8:30am (staggered)	12pm	2	1:4	8
<b>Afternoon</b>	Mixed (2-5)	End of morning program	6pm	5	1:4	8

# POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

## Staff

Teachers are hired based on their credentials and qualifications for safely caring for your children and encouraging their learning. The school will have regular opportunities for professional development. On Professional Development Days, school is closed to provide teachers' the time and space to take full advantage of these opportunities. Staff may not provide outside employment or other services to families (such as babysitting) without prior approval from the Director.

## Tuition Dates and Fees

A **nonrefundable deposit is required to hold your child's spot at Gan Shalom** (\$500 for the morning program, \$1,000 for the full day program). Remaining tuition payments are to be made in monthly installments through Brightwheel or, if needed, by check payable to Hill Havurah on or by the 23th of each month. Monthly tuition payments are required beginning June 2022 and continue through March 2023, or until full tuition has been paid.

Tuition Schedule				
Morning Class Options		Full Day Class Options		
Tutim Tu/Th	(8:30am - 12:00pm)	\$5,700	Tutim Tu/Th (8:30am - 6:00pm)	\$13,300
Anavim M/W/F	(8:30am - 12:00pm)	\$7,000	Anavim M/W/F (8:30am - 6:00pm)	\$16,800
Rimonim 2	(8:30am - 1:00pm)	\$6,000	Rimonim 2 (8:30am - 6:00pm)	\$12,300
Rimonim 3	(8:30am - 1:00pm)	\$7,700	Rimonim 3 (8:30am - 6:00pm)	\$16,000
Rimonim 5	(8:30am - 1:00pm)	\$11,500	Rimonim 5 (8:30am - 6:00pm)	\$24,000

## Late Payments

Payments that are received more than five days late are subject to a five percent (5%) late fee. Families more than five school (5) days delinquent in payments will no longer be permitted to attend Gan Shalom, upon the determination of the Director and Parent

President.

## **Adding Days for Rimonim Class**

There may be instances in which a day may become available for a current student to add to their attendance schedule. In these instances, Gan Shalom will notify current families that may be eligible to add that day. Available openings will only be offered to students who are in that class already.

## **Substitute Policy**

It is the goal at Gan Shalom to have at least two faculty members in each classroom at all times – whether this be the lead teacher, the assistant teacher, or a paid substitute. However, in circumstances where a faculty member is out unexpectedly and a paid substitute cannot be found, it is the responsibility of the Duty Parents (or the Parent Substitute) to serve as substitute teachers in the classroom. In such circumstances, a detailed lesson plan will be provided by the teacher or the Director, and all families in the class will be notified of the situation. On rare occasions, when no substitute faculty member or Duty Parent can be found, the Director will fill in if s/he is available.

## **Absence Policy**

In the event that your child will not be attending school, please inform the Director as soon as possible. This ensures that students are accounted for and safe. If you do not inform the Director, you will receive a phone call or email to confirm that your child will be absent from school that day.

## **Withdrawal of Students**

In the event that a family chooses to withdraw their child from the program prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>, prior to the start of the school year, the preschool will retain only the application fee and initial deposit.

In the event that a family chooses to withdraw their child from the program after June 30<sup>th</sup>, but before the start of the school year, **the family is required to pay for the first two months of**

**school.** Tuition for this period will only be prorated and returned to the family if the preschool has been able to fill the vacancy **and** if the child's class is fully enrolled. Deposit and application fees are non-refundable and will be kept by the school.

In the event that a family chooses to withdraw their child once the school year has commenced, **the family is required to pay tuition for 60 days after the child's last day of school.** Tuition for this period will only be prorated and returned to the family if the preschool has been able to fill the vacancy **and** if the child's class is fully enrolled. The family is asked to provide as much notice as possible before withdrawing, with 60 days being the preferred minimum. The more notice the family provides, the more opportunity the school will have to fill the slot, which will benefit both Gan Shalom and the withdrawing family. Deposit and application fees will be kept by the school.

In general, due to classroom dynamics, Gan Shalom will not attempt to fill a slot vacated after January 15th, and therefore, if a family chooses to withdraw their child after January 15th, all remaining tuition through March 15th must be paid, and no tuition for this period will be prorated or returned to the family. However, in the event that the decision is made to fill the slot, the tuition will be prorated and returned to the family once the slot has been filled **and** if the child's class is fully enrolled.

## **Termination of Families from The School**

While we do not anticipate that any student will be terminated from the program during the calendar year, there are certain expectations that every family must meet. In the event a family consistently refuses to meet the responsibilities required of them by Gan Shalom, the President and Director will meet with the non-participating family to discuss the situation. In the event the family continues not to fulfill their responsibilities, the President and the Director together can decide to terminate a family from the school. Tuition will be prorated and returned to the family as of the child's final day of school. Deposit money and the additional administrative fees will be kept by the school. All contact with the family must be documented, with a copy retained in the child's file.

## **Grievance Procedures**

Families are encouraged to discuss any concerns relating to their child's care and/or the classroom with their child's teacher whenever possible. Families are also welcome to address

concerns with the Director and/or the GPAC President, with the understanding that the President and the Director have the right to freely share with each other all information related to the school. In the event that the family continues to have concerns after speaking with the Director and the GPAC President, a final written appeal can be made to the entire GPAC.

## **Late Policy**

Please be respectful of teachers' and Duty Parents' time and notify the Director if you anticipate a late arrival. If late pick up (i.e. after 12:10/1:10/6:05pm depending on your child's pick up time) becomes a habit, late fees may be incurred. For example, after 12:10pm, your child will join Lunch Bunch for that day and will incur a \$25 late fee. If you would like to proactively sign up for Lunch Bunch for the year, it is \$15/day regularly, or \$20/day for drop in.

## **Confidentiality & Disclosure**

Gan Shalom Preschool is committed to student/family confidentiality, except in such cases as required by law. In such instances, relevant information about a child will only be shared with the Director, Gan Shalom faculty members, and the Parent President. **Information will only be released to other authorized persons upon written request of the family.**

## **Photo Policy**

Gan Shalom staff and parent volunteers may take photographs of students with devices provided by the school, or their personal devices, for purposes of communicating with parents and posting to a digital photo album or similar website available only to current Gan Shalom families. Any parent that does not wish to have his/her child's photograph shared with other Gan Shalom families in these daily/weekly class updates must indicate preferences via written note to the Director. Gan Shalom staff shall assume that, in absence of such a note, parents give permission for their child's photograph to be shared in the aforementioned manner. If your child's image is selected to be used for additional marketing purposes, we will request approval as necessary.

## Discipline & Behavior

At Gan Shalom we utilize a positive discipline approach. Teachers carefully design the classroom to help optimally engage children in their play and to minimize opportunity for running and other unsafe behaviors. It is our belief and priority to keep a safe environment for all children. If a child is behaving in such a way that creates an unsafe environment for themselves or their peers, children will be reminded how to properly keep their body and/or friends' bodies safe. If repeated mediation is required, a child may be asked to temporarily remove themselves from the space until they feel better prepared to return to the area in a safe manner. Occasionally, this may involve leaving the classroom *with an adult* to regroup in a different space. In the event that a child exhibits challenging behaviors repeatedly (biting, physical aggression) the teachers will share the relevant information with the Director and with parents. In the event that internal strategies agreed upon by parents, teachers, and the Director, are not sufficient to allow a child to be successful, Gan Shalom may recommend bringing in outside specialists to offer additional strategies. If progress is not evident with proposed suggestions, the family may be asked to seek out an alternative care plan for their child.

## Clothing & Toileting

We recommend that all children wear comfortable clothes which allow freedom of movement, and safety when running and climbing. Children should wear shoes or have a change of shoes available which will be comfortable during the walk to and from the playground and will not fall off while running/climbing. Children should wear closed-toe shoes and have rain/snow boots as the weather requires. Drawstrings should be removed from all clothing to allow for children to more easily use the bathroom and dress independently and to **prevent safety hazards**.

For children who are toilet trained or working on training, we recommend clothes that are easy to pull up and down to facilitate the toileting process and enable as much independence as possible. For children still in diapers, parents must maintain a couple day supply of diapers and wipes in the child's cubby at all times.

Art is an important means for teaching children the many skills they need to know and we do our best to put smocks on the children when they are engaging in particularly messy projects. However, despite our best efforts, it is not always possible to keep the children clean as they play and explore, so please do not send children in special clothes or clothes

that you prefer not getting dirty.

## **Diapering**

All children who are in diapers will be changed at least once, around the middle of the school day. Children will also be changed as needed when wet or soiled. We only use commercially available disposable diapers or pull ups unless a child has a medical need, documented by a physician, for other diapers to be used. In such cases, the cloth diaper must have an absorbent inner lining that is completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering will be changed as a unit.

## **Potty Training**

Children do not have to be toilet trained to attend Gan Shalom Preschool. We believe in celebrating successes in every aspect of our day including potty training, even when accidents happen!

During potty training, it is especially important to keep an ample supply of clean clothing available at school. Often, pull-ups are necessary at school during the middle stages between diapers and underwear. We find that velcro seam pull-ups are easiest in a school environment. However, each child may have different needs, so please communicate with your child's teacher.

When a family decides it's time to start toilet training, or toilet training spontaneously happens in the home, they should inform the Director/teachers so they can be prepared. Signs of readiness may include curiosity, prolonged dryness, requesting a clean diaper after wetting/soiling the current diaper, and awareness of needing to use the toilet. We aim to be as supportive as possible of all potty endeavors, and we encourage communication between parents and teachers to ensure your child's success.

To be considered fully trained, a child must be self-sufficient wiping, flushing, undoing/redoing their underwear and pants, and washing their hands thoroughly.

## **Outdoor Play**

According to OSSE, children are required to have at least 45 minutes of outdoor play daily.

Children will have the opportunity to play outdoors rain or shine, at the teachers discretion, keeping everyone's health, wellbeing, and comfort in consideration. We recommend sending your child to school in layers and ensuring they have weather appropriate clothing on a daily basis (rain boots, sunscreen, hats, etc). Teachers are responsible for the group and may not be able to attend to individual comforts as easily and we recommend your child as additional layers to add/remove as needed to stay comfortable. As children do occasionally get wet and/or uncomfortably dirty, all families must provide 2 complete weather-appropriate changes of clothing to be stored in the children's cubbies. Please be sure all children are dressed in weather appropriate clothes and have necessary outerwear available on a daily basis (rain boots for jumping in puddles, hats, mittens, snow pants, as needed).

# PROCEDURES

## Flow of the Day

Each morning, children will be greeted with a variety of open-ended invitations, either related to ongoing work or exploring open-ended materials. Invitations will often present children the opportunity to engage or re-engage in projects from previous gatherings or connected to ongoing studies or investigations. Classes will create a consistent routine for their day that includes a welcome ritual, morning meeting with meaningful dialogue, free-play, snack, and time outdoors. Outdoor activities will often include neighborhood walks as part of the local community, and may involve venturing to nearby parks. The distance of any walks will be determined by the children's stamina. Below is a sample schedule for each class.

<b>Anavim/Tutim</b>	<b>Rimonim</b>	<b>Afternoon Program (Open to Anavim, Tutim and Rimonim)</b>
<p><b>8:30am</b> Children Arrive  <b>9:00am</b> Circle Time  <b>9:20am</b> Explorative Learning Activities  <b>10:15am</b> Potty/Handwashing  <b>10:30am</b> Snack  <b>10:45am</b>  Walk/exploration/freeplay  <b>11:50am</b> Closing  Circle/song/story  <b>12:00pm</b> Pick-up</p>	<p><b>8:30am</b> Children Arrive  <b>9:00am</b> Circle time  <b>9:20am</b> Explorative Learning Activities  <b>10:15am</b> Potty/Handwashing  <b>10:30am</b> Snack  <b>10:45am</b>  Walk/exploration/freeplay  <b>12:00pm</b> Handwashing/potty  <b>12:15pm</b> Lunch  <b>12:45pm</b> Closing  circle/song/story  <b>1:00pm</b> Pick-up</p>	<p><b>12:00pm</b> Lunch,  <b>1:00pm</b> Nap/Quiet time  <b>3:00pm</b> Snack  <b>3:30pm</b> Afternoon Circle time  <b>4:00pm</b> Outdoor Exploration  <b>5:00pm</b> Story and Free Play  <b>6:00pm</b> Pick-up</p>

\*\*Any activities may be led outdoors at the teachers discretion, keeping everyone's health, wellbeing, and comfort in consideration.

## Daily Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures

Families are responsible for transporting their own child to and from school. At no point will a Gan Shalom employee transport a child to or from the school. At the start of each day, parents must sign their children in using Brightwheel at drop-off. Teachers will sign children out

once the child has been returned to the care of their parent or other authorized caregiver. Children will only be released to those people listed on the Gan Shalom Registration Form **designating pick-up authorizations, unless authorization is received**. In the event that your pick up plans change during the day, you must inform your child's teacher and director of any changes. Any additional caregiver not listed on previously approved forms will be required to provide proper identification at the time of pickup.

## **Communications**

Classroom learning and activities will be available through documentation, emails, or newsletters. Community events, school updates, and reminders will be shared via email from classroom parents, teachers, or the Director.

Teachers will request more diapers, clothing, or additional supplies as needed through Brightwheel or in-person when possible. Any child-specific communication, aside from supply reminders, will be shared through in-person conversation when time allows, or via scheduled meetings and parent-teacher conferences. Teachers and families should maintain ongoing communication about any observations or changes at home or at school.

Pertinent information that must be relayed more promptly, will be shared by the Director and/or classroom teachers through Brightwheel or a direct phone call.

## **Field Trips**

Families will be notified for approval of any irregular trips away from school at least one week prior. Additional parents may also be invited as chaperones for some field trips.

## **Celebrations**

Birthdays, secular holidays and Jewish holidays will be discussed and planned as a class or community, based on each class's learning, and particular interests. Any foods shared for celebrations must be vegetarian and nut free.

## **Summer Camp**

Gan Shalom will offer similar programming throughout summer months to include more water play and seasonally appropriate activities. Camp will be available for 6-8 weeks between

June and August, with sessions and dates provided in early Spring. Registration will be made available to current students first, then to incoming families, shortly after session dates have been announced.

## **Unusual Incident Reports / Mandated Reporting**

Gan Shalom Preschool is required by law to report any unusual incident that may adversely affect the health, safety or well-being of any child or children to the appropriate civil authorities. Unusual incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The presence of any individual in the school who has, or is suspected of having, a communicable disease that must be reported to the DC Department of Health
- Any circumstances under which a child is deemed missing or unaccounted for
- Injury to, or illness of, any child occurring during program hours that requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment
- Damage to the school that interferes with the capability of the school to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the children and adults in the school
- Death of a person occurring within the school
- Any other occurrence at the school that involves a response by police, fire, ambulance or any other emergency service

Any individual who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that an enrolled child is or has been in immediate danger of being abused or neglected shall make or cause to be made an immediate oral report to the Child Protective Services Division of the Child and Family Services Agency via the 24 hour hotline (202-671-SAFE) or to the Metropolitan Police Department. All staff members, parents, and teacher aides are required to cooperate with legal officials as directed.

# FOOD

## Snacks & Lunches

Snacks and lunches will be either dairy or *pareve* (i.e., containing no meat or dairy). No *hechsher* (symbol that the food meets standards of *kashrut*) is necessary. Due to allergies of children in our program and at the request of our landlords, all food brought into Gan Shalom must also be nut free and vegetarian. For Shabbat, families are asked to provide fresh Challah and juice (Thursdays/Fridays).

In accordance with the recommendations of the **American Academy of Pediatrics**, whole grapes, raw carrots, and popcorn will not be served at Gan Shalom Preschool as they are potential choking hazards.

**Gan Shalom classrooms are nut-free.** However, as a shared space, we cannot guarantee that those who have nut allergies are totally protected. The FDA considers the following to be allergy prone and can often be found in familiar ingredients and recipes. This includes pesto, baked goods using extracts or flavoring, milks, oils, nut butters, granola bars and marzipan. Please refrain from using these ingredients in snacks and lunches brought to school.

Almonds (Almond Milk)	Beech Nut	Brazil Nut
Butternut	Cashew	Chestnut
Chinquapin	Coconut	Filbert/Hazelnut
Ginkgo Nut	Hickory Nut	Lichee Nut
Macadamia/Bush Nut	Pecan	Pine Nut
Pistachio	Shea Nut	Walnut

**Please refer to the updated [Snack Guide](#) for more information regarding expectations for snacks. Duty parents are expected to provide enough snacks for the entire class for the whole week. Please bring fruit and vegetables whole; teachers will slice it at school.**

*If your child has an allergy or food sensitivity, the Director will discuss an alternative snack plan with you, as needed.*

# HEALTH & SAFETY

Keeping our school a healthy place for children, teachers, and families requires your cooperation, understanding, and compliance with our health standards.

## Health Forms and Immunization Records

All children must have current medical and immunization forms, completed by a licensed healthcare professional, on file at the Gan Shalom Preschool before they may attend. Gan Shalom requires that all newly enrolled children are up-to-date on all immunizations recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding immunization against childhood diseases.

Children for whom immunization is medically contraindicated may be exempt from this requirement if their medical contraindication is documented by a physician who is board certified by a certifying board which is a member of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). In the event that any *outbreaks* or *epidemics* occur (as defined by the CDC and/or the District of Columbia Department of Health (DC-DOH)) children must receive updated vaccinations prior to returning to school or until relevant government health officials have informed Gan Shalom that it is safe for the children to return school.

## General Illness Policy

Parents are required to notify the school and keep children home if s/he:

- Has had a fever during the previous 24 hours. Children must be fever free (100.3 or less *without* any fever reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school;
- Has any undiagnosed rash or unusual redness or sores;
- Has had an upset stomach including vomiting or diarrhea during the previous 24 hours;
- Has a sore throat or severe cough;
- Has a runny nose to such an extent that the child is uncomfortable or requires an inordinate amount of the teacher's attention to control;
- Requires extra care or is not able to participate in daily activities.

If a child does not appear well during drop-off, they will be sent home. Children may return to school once severe symptoms have subsided and mild symptoms become manageable. A child may return to school on antibiotics after 24 hours with significant improvement and/or

written guidance from a medical professional. Please notify your child's teacher if they are currently on any medicine that may cause side effects (e.g. fatigue, decreased appetite, or upset stomach).

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness (e.g. Pink Eye or head lice), families are asked to notify the school immediately so that the school can inform other families in the class and hopefully prevent the spread of the illness. Children can return to school only once the contagious period has ended, and they have been cleared to return by a medical professional.

## **COVID Policy**

The COVID-19 Policy for the 2022-2023 School Year is still being finalized. It will be shared with families on August 3, 2022 and will be added to the Parent Handbook at that time.

## **Allergies**

The parent/guardian must inform the Gan Shalom Preschool, **in writing**, of a child's specific allergies. Should a child's allergy situation change at any time during the year, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must inform the school immediately. The "Allergy Addendum" and (if applicable) the "Food Allergy Action Plan" must be completed and signed by a licensed physician authorizing treatment. Any necessary medication or medical equipment must be kept securely on site at all times. Medications and ointments will be safely stored for easy access for teachers and emergency medications (Benadryl/Epi-Pens) will remain with the child's classroom teacher at all times.

## **Medication Authorization**

Medication, including over-the-counter medications, may be administered to children only upon the written order of a licensed physician. The forms must be filled out correctly before any medication can be administered during school hours. The classroom teacher will provide emergency medication as per your physician's orders. Diaper cream, sunscreen, and bug spray must be listed on your child's forms for application during school hours.

## **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called and parents will be notified. If a parent cannot be reached, the alternate emergency contacts designated on your child's emergency contact list will be called in the order they are listed. If emergency personnel determine that the child cannot wait for a parent's arrival, a Gan Shalom faculty member will accompany the child in the ambulance to the hospital and remain at least until one parent arrives. Parents of other children in the class will be contacted to provide coverage for the teacher's absence or to pick up their children if coverage cannot be found in a timely fashion.

It is the family's responsibility to ensure that every emergency name and phone number for each child is on record and up to date. We will call the parent/guardian first if a child becomes ill during school. If we are unable to contact either parent/guardian, then we will call the emergency number(s) immediately.

## **Security & Emergency Preparedness**

In the event of an emergency which results in a need to vacate the premises, the Gan Shalom students and staff will be relocated to the neighboring church townhouse. If an evacuation requires an alternative location, families will be notified immediately upon reaching other emergency evacuations facilities.

In the event that shelter-in-place is required, we will swiftly engage our shelter-in-place plan and notify families.

Parent volunteers will be responsible for reading Gan Shalom's [Rapid Emergency Response Plan](#) and [Fire Evacuation Plan](#). It is their responsibility to prepare themselves for all emergency situations before their first duty day.

## **Fire Drills**

Monthly fire drills will occur without notification to properly prepare children and staff for unannounced emergencies. Students will practice leaving the school safely and gathering at a designated space outside the building. The first few months of school teachers will practice their exit route with children and inform parents of any practice occurrences to allow for continued safety dialogue and reassurance at home.

## **Inclement Weather**

In the event that DCPS is closed due to inclement weather, Gan Shalom will be closed as well. In the event that DCPS has a delayed opening, Gan Shalom will begin at 10:00am and will dismiss at the regular time.

Gan Shalom reserves the right to deviate from this policy based on the following factors:

- Weather forecasts/Advisories
- Conditions at the entrance of the school
- All teachers' commute and the condition of the roads between their homes and Gan Shalom

A decision about closings or delays will be made by the Director and President together and parents will be notified by 7:00am. Gan Shalom makes every effort to establish a full calendar at the start of the school year and does not schedule make-up days for school days missed due to inclement weather or other emergency circumstances.

## **Pets & Animals**

The Gan Shalom Preschool does not allow pets or animals, unless they are service animals as defined by the ADA.

# FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Gan Shalom started as a parent-led co-op in 2010. Since then, we have become a OSSE licensed school with a full professional staff. One of the things that makes Gan Shalom so special is the high level of parent involvement. The school-home connection is vital to the children's education and Gan Shalom's ability to run smoothly. There are two main ways that parents are expected to participate in the school community.

## 1. Duty Parents/Caregivers

Parents/chosen family members will select duty days at the start of each school year, based on their child's class size. Days will be chosen on a first-come first-serve basis. Duty Parents should plan to arrive ten minutes prior to the start of the school day, stay until every child is picked up, and support the classroom teacher with cleanup.

### **Duty Parent Expectations**

Each child should have at least one parent or caregiver who is able to act as a certified Duty Parent (individuals who have completed and filed the OSSE required forms) and assist in the classroom. This will occur 4-6 times during the course of the school year on a sign-up basis. Only employees or certified Duty Parents can be responsible for directly providing care to, or supervision of, children. Only these adults shall be counted in the adult-to-child ratios. Volunteers (individuals who have not completed and filed the OSSE required forms) shall not be used to meet adult-to-child ratio requirements.

Children shall not be left alone in any room or outdoors, even momentarily, without staff present. Each Duty Parent or volunteer at Gan Shalom shall work under the direct supervision of a Teacher, Assistant Teacher, or Director at all times. The duties of each Duty Parent at Gan Shalom shall include (a) assisting the Teacher, Assistant Teacher, or Director as directed, and (b) providing supervision and appropriate care to the children in his or her assigned class or group, under the direct supervision of a Teacher, Assistant Teacher or Director. No Duty Parent or volunteer should have sole responsibility for a group or classroom, or for the Facility, at any time. When needed, Duty parents, volunteers, and chaperones are to seek support from the Gan staff to redirect student behavior per the [Gan Shalom Discipline and Behavior Policy](#).

When parents are volunteering in the classroom, we request that you are focused and present while assisting the students and the teachers. Please limit mobile phone use as much as possible. If you are expecting an emergency call, inform the teachers and the Director at the start of the day. Refrain from taking photos or videos unless instructed to-so by the teacher. See [Photo Policy](#) for more information.

All individuals fulfilling Duty Parent responsibilities at the school, must submit a [Child Protection Registry Check Request](#), provide a [health form](#) completed by their physician, a staff health form, and submit to an FBI background check no later than June 20, 2022. These requirements are outlined in the [Gan Shalom Registration Checklist](#) on the Gan Shalom website. In accordance with DC Licensing standards, we need to have at least 2 adults on site who are trained in First Aid and CPR. To meet this requirement, all Duty Parents must have current First Aid and CPR training and must provide us with copies of their training cards.

## **2. Out-of-School Volunteer Opportunities**

Parents can participate in the school community by participating on the Gan Parent Advisory Committee or by fulfilling a coordinator role throughout the school year.

### **Gan Parent Advisory Committee (GPAC): 6 positions**

The GPAC assists the Director in the management of the school and will serve as the "parent voice" with school-related decisions. The GPAC is made up of the following positions and parents who attend monthly meetings and support the Director in the management of Gan Shalom:

President: Carly Clark (Mom to Sophie, Anavim)

The Parent President is responsible for leading all GPAC monthly meetings; meets regularly with Director; shares input on adjustments to program policies from a parental perspective; consults with fellow parents on program feedback; acts as an extra set of eyes to financial and budgeting tracking; works closely with the Membership Chair during Admissions season. The Parent President should be available to be on call for emergencies.

Vice President: Valerie Bluestein (Mom to Brody, Rimonim)

The Vice President ensures parents are able to fulfill their roles to support the school, including ensuring parent volunteer paperwork is completed, coordinating the Room Parents, and acting as lead coordinator for a few school events.

Treasurer: Erin Goldstein (Mom to Aurelia, Tutim)

The Treasurer supports Gan Shalom Director, HH Executive Director, and HH Treasurer to create an annual budget; calculates annual tuition and monthly payments for parents; manages Bright Wheel; and assists with the financial components for fundraisers.

Membership Chair: Tara Fortier (Mom to Renee, Rimonim)

The Membership Chair manages enrollment and membership. This work includes: collaborating with the Director and GPAC President to update the application; updating Gan Shalom Director and the GPAC President about current enrollment numbers, including waitlisted students; and working with the Membership Coordinator to communicate with prospective families and organize open houses.

Hill Havurah Liaison: Colin Chazen (Dad to Saul, Rimonim)

The Hill Havurah Liaison serves as a Board Member of the Hill Havurah Board, and they must be a member of Hill Havurah. The Hill Havurah Liaison attends both monthly GPAC meetings and Hill Havurah Board meetings. The purpose of this position is to maintain a close connection between Gan Shalom and Hill Havurah.

Communications Chair: James Baker-McKee (Dad to Leora, Anavim)

The Communications Chair is responsible for community-wide communications, maintains parent email listservs, and keeps the school website up-to-date.

## **Coordinator Positions**

Classroom Coordinator (3 positions, one per class)

The Classroom Coordinator assists with planning such things as class pictures, Meet and Greet, playdates, in-class parties, End of Year Celebration. They ensure that a Duty Parent is signed up to volunteer in the classroom each week; coordinate snacks (with Duty Parent, as needed); coordinate with teachers and parents on supplies requests; and work with families in the class to provide support during life events in the community (i.e. birth of a new baby, death in the family, etc.).

Social Event Coordinator (2 positions)

The Social Event Coordinators help plan school-wide events and organize day-of event support. Some tasks might include creating and sharing sign-up sheets for any food, organizing parents and goods for set-up and clean-up, and making sure we have adequate day-of support. Fall events might include: Back to School Night, Family Sukkot celebration, Hanukkah family fun. Spring events: TBD.

#### Fundraising Coordinator (2 positions)

The Fundraising Coordinators will create, plan, and deliver fundraising events/projects, both virtual and in-person as appropriate. They maintain a list of donations, ensuring all acknowledgement letters are sent in a timely fashion. This job allows us to provide little "extras" to our kids. In the past, we've used the funds to pay for extracurricular activities, including a few weeks of soccer coaching, Mr. Steve Music Man Sing-A-Longs, or a preschool "mad scientist". *We're also considering how fundraising might help us create an annual scholarship to partially fund a Gan Shalom student tuition.*

#### Librarian (2 Positions, one per age group)

Helps keep the Gan Shalom library organized. Using the DC Public Library, or via other means available, procures subject-relevant books for teachers to support classroom curriculum. Checks in with the Director on a monthly basis to understand if there are any literary needs.

#### COVID Consultant (1 position)

Ideally, the COVID Consultant should be a board certified doctor, nurse, or come from a public health background. The COVID Consultant will update the previous school year COVID policy to align with updated health/safety guidance, and to most effectively mitigate the risks related to COVID-19. They will remain in close contact with both the Director and the GPAC President throughout the year to address any questions or COVID-related issues as they arise.

#### Outdoor Clean Up Coordinator (2 positions)

Coordinate a date with the Director to clean outdoor play areas in preparation for the start of school (during teacher prep week). Clean outdoor play areas once a month in warmer months/every other month in colder months. Organize volunteers to assist with the cleaning. The school has a hose and water tables available to use to clean. This would ideally be done on Saturdays, when the children are not using the outdoor space, but alternate times can be coordinated with the Director.

### Organization Coordinator (2 positions)

The Organization Coordinators categorize toys and books in the Gan Shalom storage room. They will collaborate with the Director and teachers to determine a plan for organizing the space and materials for the start of the school year, and maintain organization monthly throughout the year.

### Membership Assistant (1 position)

The Membership Assistant supports the planning and day-of logistics for Gan Shalom membership events (e.g. Open Houses). They assist the Membership Chair in responding to prospective parents.

### Specials Teacher (1-3 positions)

Share a special skill such as music, cooking, yoga or gardening (or any other special skill or passion that you have) with your child's class on a monthly basis. A Specials Teacher should expect to spend an additional 30-60 minutes in the classroom per month.

### Substitute (3 positions, one per class)

When a teacher is out sick, or has a planned absence, a Substitute may be required. The Substitute would be the "first call" the Director makes in the event of needing a substitute. This position is great for parents who have flexible work schedules and love spending time in the classroom.

### **Other Roles**

If you don't see a job that fits your skills or schedule, but would still like to have a school job, reach out to the GPAC President, who can help you find a way to match the schools' needs with your skills.

### **Administrative Fee**

If a family is unable or does not want to fulfill a parent job during the year, they may opt to pay an **administrative fee of \$1500** in lieu of fulfilling a parent job. This fee is due by the first day of school, **August 31, 2022**. A receipt can be provided for tax charity deduction purposes.

# LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

## **Gan Shalom Limitation of Liability**

Gan Shalom and its employees, affiliates, officers, and volunteers' entire liability arising from any and all causes, whether based in warranty, contract, tort or otherwise, shall not exceed the aggregate fees paid by each family for child care services within three months prior to the first claim filed. This limitation is cumulative, with all payments and liabilities being aggregated to determine satisfaction of the limit. The existence of multiple claims shall not enlarge the limit. Any claims not brought against Gan Shalom, its employees, affiliates, officers, or volunteers' within one year after the occurrence of the act (or failure to act) giving rise to such claim shall be deemed waived and released. In no event shall Gan Shalom Preschool, and its employees, affiliates, officers, or volunteers be liable for special, incidental, consequential, exemplary, punitive, or indirect damages hereunder, including without limitation loss of profits or loss of use damages, even if Gan Shalom, its employees, affiliates, officers, or volunteers have been advised of the possibility of such damages or losses. Parents acknowledge that these limitations on liability are essential to this agreement and reflected in the prices /rates set forth herein, and that Gan Shalom would not enter into this agreement without such limitations on its liability.

# PARENT AGREEMENT

\_\_\_ I have thoroughly read and am prepared to assist with all emergency practices.

\_\_\_ I agree to the terms of being a Mandated Reporter for any suspected abuse or neglect.

\_\_\_ I agree to follow all protocols related to the [COVID-19 Policy](#) provided.

\_\_\_ I am and will remain up-to-date on my vaccinations.

\_\_\_ I am committed to being a present and healthy classroom volunteer.

\_\_\_ I am committed to fulfilling a parent job or paying the \$1500 administrative fee.

\_\_\_ I agree to follow all protocols related to the [Photo Policy](#) provided .

\_\_\_ I understand and respect the [Confidentiality](#) needs of the Gan Shalom community.

\_\_\_ I agree to the [Gan Shalom Limitation of Liability](#).

After initialing the above statements, please sign and date:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# PARENT REFERENCES

## School Readiness Checklists

### Forms to Sign

- Registration (Care Away from Home)
- Emergency Medical Treatment
- Medical Administration
- Travel Authorization
- Liability Waiver
- Health Forms (and Oral Health Form for children 3+)
- Parent Agreement

### Packing List

*Reminder to label all clothing, shoes, hats, water bottles, etc. with your child's name to help our children and teachers!*

- Water bottle and carrier/sling for walks
- 4x6 family photo (if desired)
- Diapers/pullups/wipes (if needed)
- Two changes of clothes in labeled ziploc bags
- Tzedakah (*charitable giving*) - 15-20 quarters in a baggie
- Summer wear, e.g. sun hat, sunscreen, etc.
- Winter wear, e.g. hat, gloves, boots, etc.
- Extra pair of rain boots/sneakers at school for bathroom accidents or dry shoes after rain/snow play
- Extra face masks in a plastic bag(s) and a lanyard, if possible
- Lunch (*for Rimonim class and Lunch Bunch only*)

## 2022 - 2023 School Calendar

- August**
- 13 - Playdate at Stanton Park**
  - 21 - Playdate at Stanton Park**
  - 27 - Playdate at Gan Shalom**
  - 22-26 - Teacher Prep Classes**  
Teachers in - No Students
  - 29 - Meet the teachers family event**  
Anavim & Rimonim Friday kids and parents come to meet their teachers and see their classroom
  - 30 - Meet the teachers family event**  
Anavim & Rimonim Thursday kids and parents come to meet their teachers and see their classroom
  - 31 - First Day of School**
- September**
- 05 - Labor Day - HOLIDAY**  
No teachers - No students
  - 22 - Back to School Night**  
School in session - Evening Family Event
  - 26 - Rosh Hashanah - HOLIDAY**  
No Teachers - No Students
- October**
- 04 - Yom Kippur Eve - EVE HOLIDAY - No Afternoon Program**  
Morning Teachers in - Morning Students in  
No Afternoon Teachers - No Afternoon Students
  - 05 - Yom Kippur - HOLIDAY**  
No Teachers - No Students
  - 10 - Indigineous People Day and First Day of Sukkot – HOLIDAY**  
No Teachers - No Students
- November**
- 10 - Professional Development Day**  
Teachers in - No Students
  - 11 - Veterans Day - HOLIDAY**  
No Teachers - No Students  
*[13-17 - Optional Parent Teacher Conf. (20 mins, after morning program)]*
  - 24-25 - Thanksgiving - HOLIDAY**  
No Teachers - No Students

**December 08 - Professional Development**

Teachers in - No Students

**23-Jan 2 - Winter Break**

No Teachers - No Students

**January 02 - New Years - HOLIDAY**

No Teachers - No Students

**03 - Teacher Classroom Prep/PD (no school)**

Teachers in - No Students

*[04 - First day back for kids in school]*

**16 - MLK Day - HOLIDAY**

No Teachers - No Students

**February 20 - Presidents Day - HOLIDAY**

No Teachers - No Students

**March 10 - Teacher PD**

Teachers in - No Students

*[13-17 - Optional Parent Teacher Conf. (20 mins, after morning program)]*

**April 05 - Passover Eve - EVE HOLIDAY - No Afternoon Program**

Morning Teachers in - Morning Students in

No Afternoon Teachers - No Afternoon Students

**06 - First Day Passover - HOLIDAY**

No Teachers - No Students

**11-12 - Last two nights of Passover**

No Teachers - No Students

**17-21 - Spring Break (aligned with DCPS)**

No Teachers - No Students

**May 26 - Shavuot - HOLIDAY**

No Teachers - No Students

**29 - Memorial Day - HOLIDAY**

No Teachers - No Students

**June 16 - Last Day of School**