

Park Avenue Synagogue Congregational School Parent Handbook 2022–2023/5783

Vision & Educational Philosophy

The Park Avenue Synagogue Congregational School (PASCS) is dedicated to engaging Jewish education to inspire lifelong participation in the Jewish community for all our K – 7 learners and their families. In partnership with our families and with the synagogue community, the PASCS provides meaningful learning through both formal and experiential education.

Our educational philosophy, curriculum, and programs are rooted in four strategic areas:

1. A core curriculum scope and sequence for age-appropriate Jewish learning
2. A strong Hebrew decoding program to enable learners to be active participants in prayer services
3. Teacher excellence
4. Ongoing communication and clear expectations for families

Office Hours and Contact Information

The Congregational School office is located on the sixth floor of the Eli M. Black Lifelong Learning Center, 11 E. 89th St.

Telephone: For all Congregational School staff, call 212-369-4900 and then enter the appropriate extension.

Office: x131

Office Hours, during the school year:

Monday–Thursday, 9:30 am–6:30 pm

Friday, 9:00 am–3:00 pm

PAS Congregational School Staff

Melissa Silverman Cohavi, Director, x132

MCohavi@pasyn.org

Sarah Clarkson, Assistant Director, Hebrew Education & Gr 7, x185

SClarkson@pasyn.org

Aaron Hersh, Assistant Director, Grades K-3, x184

AHersh@pasyn.org

Matt Altman, Assistant Director, Grades 4-6, x183

MAltman@pasyn.org

Leah Fleischhaker, Administrative Assistant, x139

LFleishhacker@pasyn.org

Curriculum

The curriculum for each grade has components focused on Judaics, Hebrew, and prayer (including skills & rituals). For details, please visit our website and attend our Curriculum Night in the fall.

Communications

You will receive a weekly Congregational School email newsletter about upcoming events and programs. You can also check pasyn.org/congregational-school for information.

Based on the email contact information you submitted in your registration from, we will email either one or both parents/caregivers. If you are not receiving our emails and would like to, please notify the Congregational School office.

School Closings and Emergency Procedures

The Congregational School follows the decisions of the New York City public schools for closing in inclement weather. Notification of PASCs closings will be sent by email and will also appear on the Park Avenue Synagogue website at www.pasyn.org. If possible, synagogue security staff will remain on the premises to accept any children who are not aware of the school closing.

If there is a severe weather situation on a Shabbat (Saturday), please use your best judgment about sending your child to the synagogue as updated closing information may not be available on our website or voice mail.

Arrival, Dismissal and Attendance

Arrival

The welfare and safety of each child in our program is of primary importance.

On weekdays, a member of the synagogue staff will be in front of the building to greet children as they arrive by school bus, and to escort Kindergarten and Grade 1 learners to their classrooms. Children coming by school bus must come directly into the building, even if they arrive early. (Note: Parents must arrange school bus transportation with the child's school.) If your child usually arrives by bus and will not be arriving by bus on a particular day, please call or email the Congregational School office by 3:00 pm.

If your child arrives early on a weekday, they must go to the study lounge in the lower level. The lounge is supervised from 3:00 to 4:00 pm. Classrooms are used for tutoring sessions prior to the start of class, so we ask that any children who arrive before the start of class go to the lounge.

On Shabbat mornings, please have your child check in at the Shabbat registration table in the lobby, at either PAS@87th or PAS@89th, depending on your child's grade.

Dismissal

Dismissal after class is from the 89th Street lobby. Dismissal after tutoring sessions for Grades 5 & 6 is in the lobby at 6:35 pm. Children may leave on their own *only if they have written permission to do so*. Prior to the start of the school year, parents must complete the arrival/dismissal section of the registration form indicating whether their child may go home on his/her own. It is imperative that you inform us of any changes regarding your child's arrival and dismissal information.

Should you have to pick up your child before the end of the school day, please stop at the reception desk in the lobby to sign out your child. You will receive a signed form to give to the classroom teacher. The teacher will not release your child without this signed form.

On Shabbat, dismissal is from the lobby at 12:00 pm.

Attendance

Regular attendance is the basis of successful learning and community experience. We know that the Congregational School and our families have a mutual commitment to providing the finest Jewish education possible within the framework of a supplementary school.

All learners are expected to attend scheduled classes and programs. Teachers take attendance in all grades on both weekdays and Shabbat. If a child has been absent more than 15 percent, the Congregational School team will be in touch to discuss the child's situation and how to best proceed.

Cell Phones

Learners are not permitted to use cell phones or other personal electronics during class. Phones are available Monday–Thursday in the Congregational School office for children who need to call parents. You may always contact your child by calling the school office; please do not call or text children when they are in class. **Children will be asked to leave their cell phones in a bin in the front of the room upon arriving. Cell phones will be returned at the end of class time.**

In keeping with the spirit of Shabbat, cell phones are not allowed to be used during Shabbat Experience programs.

If you need to reach your child during weekday class time, please call the synagogue and dial x131 or ask to be transferred to the Congregational School office. A member of the Congregational School administrative team will assist in connecting you with your child.

Health and Safety

Medical Issues

If your child is ill, please do not send them to the synagogue. Be aware that your child may not return to PASCs classes for 24 hours (unmedicated) after fever or other illness that would prevent attendance at school during the day.

If a child is not feeling well during class hours, the PASCs team will make every effort to contact a parent or the child's emergency contact. No faculty or staff member may dispense medication of any kind, including acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil). If your child has any special medical needs, please contact the Congregational School office.

Food Allergies

The Congregational School provides snacks on both weekdays and Shabbat mornings.

The PAS Congregational School is a nut-sensitive community. We order and serve kosher foods without nuts and order baked goods from a nut-free kosher bakery. We cannot guarantee that all machinery used to produce foods we order will be nut-free. Families that have informed us of a learner's food allergy will be informed via email prior to events when special foods will be ordered and served.

We also provide gluten-free (kosher, nut-free) snacks for children who have celiac disease or severe gluten allergies.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted periodically to ensure that everyone can leave the building safely and quickly during emergencies.

Derekh Eretz (Proper Respect) and Conduct

Respectful behavior – *derekh erez* – is expected from each learner toward his/her peers and toward the teachers, Congregational School administration, security guards, and maintenance staff. Each learner must show respectful behavior toward the people and the Congregational School spaces to align with our culture of *derekh erez*.

Kashrut

Teachers will provide learners with a choice of kosher snacks at the beginning of class. We ask that children do not bring packaged snacks up to the classrooms. Fruit and vegetables are permitted. (See also above under Food Allergies.)

The laws of *kashrut* are observed within the synagogue building. All food served is kosher. Please feel free to call the Director of the Congregational School should you have any questions about *kashrut*.

Trips

Throughout the school year, field trips may be scheduled to destinations throughout the city. Parents and learners will be notified in advance of a trip.

Parents Association

Membership in the Congregational School Parents Association is open to all parents who have children enrolled in the Congregational School. The CSPA's goal is to enrich the educational experience of our children and to promote community spirit for our families. Volunteers are needed in many areas; the CSPA would love for you to become involved!

For more information on the Parents Association, please visit [pasyn.org/congregational school](http://pasyn.org/congregational-school) or go to the pasyn.org homepage, click in the dropdown menu under Lifelong Learning, then click on Congregational School.

School Directory and Privacy Policy

Each year the Congregational School publishes grade directories. You will be emailed your child's grade directory in the fall. The directories are for the exclusive use of the Park Avenue Synagogue community. We do not distribute our learner and/or parent lists to anyone for commercial purposes, nor may this information be used by anyone for any purpose other than personal. We strongly request that you respect the privacy and safety of our PAS families by keeping the information contained in the directory strictly confidential.