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Gaon-Bet classes with Seder plates

# Our Vision

"He who cares for days- Sows wheat  
He who cares for years- plants trees  
He who cares for generations- educates people"  
(Janusz Korczak)

Wimbledon Cheder aims to provide an inclusive and positive space for children to explore their Jewish identity. Guided by our fantastic team of dedicated teachers and teaching assistants, through dynamic and creative lessons, the students explore Jewish traditions, practices, stories, beliefs, festivals and histories in a safe learning environment.

We provide the students with a safe and caring place where they can meet each week and develop sense of belonging to the local Jewish community, to the Jews in the Land of Israel as well as to the Jewish people around the world. This sense of belonging, combined with their confidence in their Jewish identity, connects the Cheder with the wider community and beyond.

Connecting our community with others, we work towards both intrafaith and interfaith relations, sharing days and activities with other Jewish communities across the region and with communities of other faiths, aiming to create a tolerant and accepting environment.

Our Cheder is a place to connect, to explore, to discover, and to get involved for both children and their parents.

Join us on this journey!



Children of the Playshul enjoying games on the  
Lag B'Omer sports day

# Timetable

Our Religion School meets on **Sundays from 10.00am to 12.30pm** at the Wimbledon Synagogue, 1 Queensmere Road, London SW19 5QD.

The Religion School year follows that of secular schools with Sukkot (Autumn), Purim (Spring) and Shavuot (Summer) terms.

Please make every effort to bring your child on time and to collect them promptly at the front door of the school. Children in the Gan, Aleph and Bet classes should be taken directly to and collected from their classroom at the end of the morning.

At 10.00am you are welcome to join us for Havdalah, the separation of Shabbat from the rest of the week which is followed by the weekly assemblies before the children head off to their classrooms.

Each week, children have a 20 minute break where they can have a snack, play or just relax. Unless it is raining, students are required to be outside. Please make sure your child dresses appropriately for the weather.

Bagels provided by the PTA can be purchased during snack time. We now have a water fountain kindly donated by the PTA, please make sure your children have a water flask to bring to Cheder.

## *A typical Sunday schedule*

- 10:00 Havdalah & Assemblies
- 10.30 Session 1
- 11:20 BREAK
- 11:40: Session 2
- 12:30 End of Cheder



## CLASS AGE RANGES 2024-2025

<b>Class</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Birth for Entry</b>
PLAYSHUL	Early Years	Before September 2019
GAN	Reception	Between Sept 2019 – Aug 2020
ALEF	Year 1	Between Sept 2018 – Aug 2019
BET	Year 2	Between Sept 2017 – Aug 2018
GIMEL	Year 3	Between Sept 2016 – Aug 2017
DALET	Year 4	Between Sept 2015 – Aug 2016
HAY	Year 5	Between Sept 2014 – Aug 2015
VAV	Year 6	etween Sept 2013 – Aug 2014
BRIYAH (Bar/Bat Mitzvah 1)	Year 7	Between Sept 2012 – Aug 2013
EMUNAH (Bar/Bat Mitzvah 2)	Year 8	Between Sept 2011 – Aug 2012
RE'UT (JET 1)	Year 9	Between Sept 2010 – Aug 2011
ATID (JET 2)	Year 10	Between Sept 2009 – Aug 2010



# Four stages in Cheder

## (1) Playshul

Playshul is a programme for children aged 0-4 and their families. Through activities including arts and crafts, construction, cookery, singing and dancing, we follow the calendar of the Jewish year. There is a soft play area where babies can safely enjoy Jewish family time and a professionally designed outdoor play area for pre-school children.

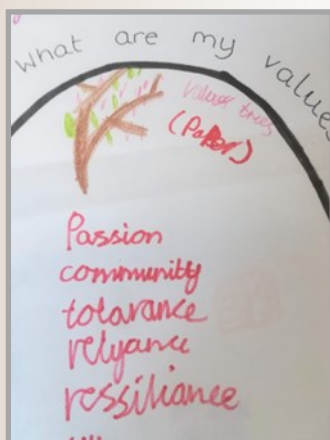
Playshul is for children and parents to enjoy interactive Jewish learning together in a stimulating, welcoming and fun educational environment. Parents are expected to remain with their children for the duration of the morning.



Quiet time—reading a story in the Playshul

## 2) Gan through Vav

Through a range of learning methods including classroom activities, guest speakers and field trips, the children in the **Gan (Reception) - Vav (Year 6)** classes look at all aspects of Jewish life. At this stage, the children acquire the basics of Hebrew language studies.



Learning about  
Jewish Values



Visiting the Memorial Scrolls  
Trust at the Westminster  
Synagogue



### ***(3) B'Nei Mitzvah stage: Briyah and Emunah***

In the **Briyah (Year 7 - Emunah (Year 8))** classes leading up to **B'Nei Mitzvah**, the children focus on the diversity of Jewish life and what it means to be Jewish in a non-Jewish world. This course of study will ensure that every child is prepared to become a Jewish adult in the community. The curriculum is based on 6 strands:

A major part of the B'Nei Mitzvah preparation takes place at Cheder so children are expected to be regular attendees and, indeed, to continue to the end of the academic year regardless of the month in which their Bar / Bat Mitzvah ceremony takes place. They may then continue their involvement in Jewish education by taking our Post B'Nei Mitzvah course, Judaism and Ethics for Teens (JET).

During the course of the B'Nei Mitzvah year, pupils prepare for and lead a Friday night and Saturday morning service as a group. They and their families also participate in a programme of meetings and meals with the Rabbi following Shabbat services. These pupils are expected to regularly attend Shabbat services, including but not limited to their peers' B'Nei Mitzvah.

### ***(4) Post B'Nei Mitzvah stage: Re'ut and Atid***

The **Re'ut (year 9)** and **Atid (year 10)** classes are the final years of Cheder, and are our bespoke Judaism and Ethics for Teens Programme (JET), accredited by Leo Beck College.

The mission of this two-year course is to equip our teens with the Jewish knowledge and skills to:

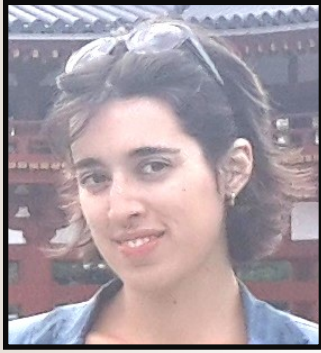
- fully participate competently in Jewish life,
- make ethical choices, and
- serve as effective assistants in the Wimbledon Synagogue Cheder.

In the first year of the programme (Re'ut class), students study Judaism and Jewish practice, expanding and deepening their knowledge of traditions and practices. Atid is the ethics class, where teens have spirited discussions grappling with Jewish perspectives on topics like body ethics, the environment, wealth, conflict, and crime and punishment. In those conversations the teens explore different ways of engaging with Judaism, including text, practice, mussar (ethics and character), spirituality and mysticism (with an introduction to Kabbalah), tikkun olam (social justice), and the creative approaches of midrash.

Students explore their own thinking, their family background, and the opinions of other Jews through individual and group projects, building leadership and communication skills along the way. They participate in the community, learning how to create social justice programmes and completing a class project in support of the Synagogue Night Shelter. Finally, teacher training will prepare students to come back as assistants if they wish in the autumn.

\* Students who complete all of the requirements of the course will be eligible to become assistants, and will also receive an official award certificate from Leo Baeck College, presented by Dr. Jo-Ann Meyers, Director of Jewish Education and our external examiner.

## Who's Who at the Cheder



Head Teacher: Julia Stolyer  
headteacher@wimshul.org



Administrator: Diane Barnett  
cheder@wimshul.org

## What we teach at the Cheder

### Our curriculum includes:

*Bible stories*

*Jewish values, mitzvot and ethics*

*Jewish calendar and Festivals*

*Jewish history and current events*

*Interfaith and tolerance*

*Faith and prayers*

*Jewish lifecycle events and traditions*

*Jewish Texts: sources and applications*

*Israel*

*Hebrew reading and writing skills*

*In general, we follow the same curriculum for all of our classes; however, when the teachers determining the learning objectives and creating a lesson plan we follow two grounded principles:*

**Age appropriate teaching:** *In every age group the teacher will aim for a different level of understanding, implementation and integration with existing old knowledge suitable for the class. As educators we consider the mental, emotional and social maturity of a child, rather than choosing an educational path linked only to numerical age.*

**Active learning:** *which is an approach based on activities that encourage students to take an active, engaged part in the learning process. By becoming active participants in the classroom, students build knowledge through their own experiences. For teachers, active learning provides more opportunities to interact with students, and for the students with each other. Active learning includes: group discussions, student presentations, experiments, quizzes, problem-solving, roleplay etc.*

*Creating learning experiences that fit within the developmental parameters of the children's age ensures that they enjoy learning*

## Message from the Head Teacher,

*“Much have I learned from my rabbis, even more have I learned from my colleagues, but from my students I have learned more than from anyone else.” (Rabbi Chanina)*

Any time I think about learning and development, I think about this quote. I have learned from the rabbi, I have learned from my colleagues, and I have learned from my students what it means for them to be Jewish in the UK.

But this quote applies to the children at the Cheder as well. Learning is a process, and they learn in more ways than one. They learn in class when the teacher explains new topics. They learn through doing and through games and activities. They learn through sharing and debating with our peers. And they learn when they explain things to others.

Cheder for us all is a place of learning Hebrew and Jewish tradition, but it is also a place of discovery and wonder. A place for asking questions and pondering on answers together. A place of play, of developing a community, of belonging. Of discovering the personal and communal connection to the long-standing Jewish tradition.

We are all constantly learning. Come and learn with us.

## Learning Hebrew at the Cheder

Combining original Hebrew teaching materials with existing ones, we have developed our Hebrew programme to fit the unique needs of our Cheder and community. We are happy to continue working with it and continue developing it to support and deepen the children's knowledge and understanding of the language.





## Also for parents during Cheder

### *Friends of the Cheder (formerly the PTA)*

There is a thriving Friends of the Cheder group at the Synagogue Religion School made up of a parent representative from each class and community members. The Committee meets on a regular basis during term time.

One of the most popular events is organising the bagels and coffee during Cheder. Every week fresh bagels direct from London's East End are prepared by members of the PTA, and they are a delicious addition to the Cheder morning! Parents enjoy sitting in the hall chatting together over a cup of fresh coffee.

The annual Chanukah Fair is a huge fundraiser and enjoyed by the entire community. Parents, children, Cheder staff and community members work together to create a fun morning with opportunities to purchase Judaica for Chanukah (including wrapping paper, cards, table decorations) as well as gifts for all members of your family at varied prices.

The parent representatives work together to support the Religion School, the Education Committee and the teachers, both in terms of providing extra resources through their fundraising activities, and by organising numerous

## Families Services and Youth Club

Family Services Services do not come in a one size fits all and every couple of months there is also a shorter family friendly Shabbat morning service for all ages from 0 - 120.

Friday Night Family Services Young Family Fridays - informal Friday evening services are held quarterly especially for young families followed by a chavurah (shared vegetarian meal) supper. The services are relaxed with prayers, songs and stories. Services start at 6pm and all are welcome.

### Sunday Tween and Teen Club (11+)

The Sunday Club runs once a month and is a perfect opportunity for children from the community to meet in an informal setting, get to know other Jewish people their age and really feel like the synagogue is their space.

The activities during the club are not structured and children can choose from a wide range of games such as: table tennis, Dungeons and Dragons, hide and seek etc. We provide snacks, vegetarian pizza and adult supervision on site.



Wimbledon Synagogue's own youth leaders of Reform Synagogue Youth 2024-2025 Summer camp

# General Information for the parents

## Security

We take security very seriously, particularly in these testing times. We have a security officer, a well-equipped and fully trained security team, and we work closely with the Community Security Trust (CST) and the local Police to ensure our children are safe when attending classes (and at all other times when our Synagogue building is in use).

We expect all parents of children attending Religion School classes to know how our security policies operate in this respect and receive and the relevant information

## Parking

There is no parking on the Synagogue premises as the area in front of the Synagogue is used by the children during playtime. Parking outside the Synagogue must be on the Synagogue side of the road, even if only dropping off children, to avoid causing problems with the Synagogue's neighbours.

## Absence

If your child is unwell, he/she should not attend the Cheder until completely better. If he/she has had a temperature, this should be normal for 24 hours before attending Cheder. Please do not let your child attend if he/she has a cold or diarrhoea. Please let your child's class teacher or the Cheder Administrator [cheder@wimshul.org](mailto:cheder@wimshul.org) know of any absence in case of illness or of any absence of more than one week.

## Mobile Phones

Please ensure your child is aware that use of mobile phones is not allowed in class. If brought to Cheder, phones should remain in school bags and used only in emergencies or if instructed by the class teacher for use with school work, eg. research for a project.

## Snacks

Your child will need a snack for break time. Please note that no meat products, meat or tref-flavoured products such as prawn flavoured crisps or sweets containing gelatine (eg. Haribo) should be brought in for reasons of kashrut. All store-bought snacks should be clearly labelled as 'suitable for vegetarians.' Because of the risk posed to children by nut allergy, all products containing nuts are also banned from the Cheder.

### *Break time*

Please be aware that all pupils must go out of the building for the main break time unless it is raining, in which case a space inside will be designated for them to play. As the weather gets colder, it is vital that they come in with a coat.

### *Tzedakah*

Every class collects tzedakah money each week for donation to a charity or charities that is/are chosen by the children. We would be grateful if you could send your child with a small coin or coins to put in the class Tzedakah box in order to teach the importance of charitable giving. We also have a large box in the lobby for dry foods for Merton homeless organisations.

### *Books*

The cost of textbooks is included in the fees but a charge will be made for lost Hebrew books.

### *Homework*

Whilst homework is not usually set until the Emunah (year 8) class, it is difficult for the children to retain and build on what they have learnt without some reinforcement between weekly lessons. Some class teachers will email home worksheets for the children to look at during the week, preferably together with their parents.

### *Departure/ Pick Up*

All children must be collected from inside the Synagogue gates for safety reasons. Gan, Aleph and Bet children should be collected from outside their classrooms.

### *Lost Property and Equipment*

We do not ask children to bring in writing / colouring equipment as so much gets left behind. Boys are asked to bring a kippah if they have one and girls may also wear a kippah if they wish. All property should be clearly labeled. Lost property can be recovered from the lost property box in the downstairs cloakroom.

\* Please note that the Wimbledon Synagogue Religion School cannot be responsible for the loss of any valuable item brought to the Religion School by children.

## *Communication with parents*

Every week parents will receive a 'News from the Cheder' email with news and important notices. There is also an all-Cheder WhatsApp group, used only for communication from Cheder (so no need to worry about constant pinging of the phone). Each class also has a class-WhatsApp group with the teacher, where teachers communicate class-specific information and parents can communicate with each other.

Nitzanim, the Cheder Newsletter, is produced monthly other than in July and August. It is sent with Kehillah, the Synagogue magazine. We welcome contributions from parents and children, and we hope that you will find the information and photos contained in this newsletter interesting and relevant.

\* Please note that from time to time the teachers will send other information that requires your response.

Urgent communications and reminders takes place by email so it is important that you inform Diane Barnett of any changes to your email address immediately.

## *Further information*

Please feel free to contact Diane Barnett, the Cheder Administrator, with any queries or concerns on 07817 053607 (Monday - Thursday 7.00am - 9.00pm) or email [cheder@wimshul.org](mailto:cheder@wimshul.org)

## *Wimbledon School Policies*

Full Cheder policies covering Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Child Safeguarding, as well



Morning Havdalah assembly for the Gan—Hay classes



*Wimbledon Synagogue*

*(a constituent of the Movement for Reform Judaism)*

*1, Queensmere Road, Off Parkside,*

*London SW19 5QD*

*Telephone: 020 8946 4836*

*email: [office@wimshul.org.uk](mailto:office@wimshul.org.uk)*

*Cheder email: [cheder@wimshul.org](mailto:cheder@wimshul.org)*

*Registered charity: 1150678*