



Parent Handbook

**JEWISH EDUCATIONAL CENTER
LOWER SCHOOL
2017-2018 /5778**

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JEC Lower School
Parent Handbook
2017-18/ 5777-5778

1. EARLY CHILDHOOD ORIENTATION - Tuesday, September 5, 2017

Juniors, Nursery and Kindergarten

School begins with an orientation session for parents and children. Please accompany your child to his or her assigned classroom as per the schedule below. Please make sure to bring all your child's supplies on this day.

Juniors: 8:45-9:15am

Nursery: (Last names A to K) Nursery A 9:00- 9:30 am Nursery B 9:00-9:30 am
(Last names L to Z) Nursery A 9:30-10:00 am Nursery B 9:30-10:00 am

Kindergarten: Kindergarten A 9:30-10:30am Kindergarten B 9:30-10:30 am

Primer

School begins with a half-day orientation session **for students only** from **8:30am-10:30am**. Please accompany your child to Room 106 between 8:30-8:45.

2. EARLY CHILDHOOD AND GRADES 1-6 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL - Wednesday, September 6, 2017

All students in Juniors,Nursery, Kindergarten, Primer and Grades 1-6 will meet in the main courtyard between 8:00-8:25am.

3. DAILY ARRIVAL SCHEDULE

Classes begin at 8:30a.m. daily. Supervision is available for students starting at 8:00a.m, beginning on your child's first day of school. Please note that there is no supervision in the building before 8:00a.m., except for students who are officially registered for the early-care option.

Grades

Early Arrival Location

Juniors & Nursery

Junior/Nursery classrooms

Kindergarten & Primer

Gym

Grades 1-4	Cafeteria
Grades 5-6 Girls	Cafeteria
Grade 5 Boys	8:05am Minyan

Boys in Grade 5 are required to attend Minyan which begins at 8:05 a.m. Monday through Friday. Breakfast should be eaten at home before coming to the *minyan*. Boys who are transported by bus from other communities are expected to join the *minyan* once their buses have arrived at the JEC. Should a student need to attend an alternative *minyan* elsewhere, please consult the principal for advance clearance.

5. DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

Dismissal times are:

Monday through Thursday

Early Childhood.....	3:15 p.m.
Grades 1, 2 and 3.....	3:30 p.m.
Grades 4 and 5, and Grade 6 Girls.....	4:30 p.m.

Friday schedule

Early Childhood.....	1:15 p.m.
Grades 1-6.....	1:30 p.m.

a) Please notify the office of any pickup changes by emailing transportation@thejec.org prior to 11:30am or speaking directly with the Lower School Office before 2:30pm. We cannot change dismissal arrangements without written or direct communication with the Lower School Office.

b) Please wait for your children in the carpool line (in the parking lot). This will ensure a safe, clear dismissal zone and accurate accounting of, and supervision for, all students under our care. Please note that for safety reasons, students will be dismissed **only** through the door leading from the lunchroom through the parking lot.

c) Carpool forms are sent out via email before the first day of school. To join the carpool line, turn onto Livingston Road, continue PAST the JEC driveway, and turn left onto Bellwood Place. Then, make a left turn into our driveway. Please carefully follow the directions of the JEC Lower School administrative team as they guide you through the parking lot. A staff member will bring your children to your car. Please do not exit your car while on the carpool line. Cars exit through the other end of the driveway, making a left onto Livingston Rd.

d) Please note that there is no supervision in the building after dismissal time, except for students who are officially registered for the after-school program or P.T.A. clubs. Therefore, please make sure to pick up your children on time.

6. ATTENDANCE

One of the fundamental keys to academic success is punctuality and time management. Therefore, it is essential that students start the school day on time. **Please note that the school day begins at 8:30 am SHARP.** If a student arrives after 8:30 a.m., a parent must accompany the student into the school office to sign in the student and acquire a late pass. After 8:30, for safety reasons, please do not drop a child off without escorting him or her to the Lower School office; he or she will not be admitted to class until you return to school and sign him or her in properly.

If a student is absent because of illness for more than one day, a note or email explaining the reason for the absence should be sent upon the child's return to school. This note should be given to the morning teacher. If an illness results in an absence of **more than two days**, please notify the school office as soon as possible.

A student who is under the weather and stays home from school for morning classes may be coming down with an illness and should remain home for the day. Please do not send the child to school, even at the expense of missing an exam or a project. By erring on the side of caution, you help ensure the wellbeing of both your child and all our students.

Please do not send your child to school with a fever of 100°F or higher, until at least 24 hours after the fever has dissipated or with written clearance from a doctor. Also, please do not send children with active stomach viruses or gastric distress until you are certain they are better.

Routine medical, dental or orthodontic visits should be scheduled during non-school hours.

7. IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO LEAVE EARLY

If it is absolutely necessary to take a child home before the end of a school day, or if the nurse calls to report that your child is ill and needs to go home, please follow the following procedure:

- a) Please go to the school office and sign the child out.
- b) We will then call your child to the office to be dismissed. Please wait for your child at the office; do not go to his or her classroom or to the nurse's office.

If you know in advance that your child will be leaving early, please notify your child's teacher so that he or she can plan accordingly.

8. VACATIONS

Vacation plans should be made in accordance with the school calendar. If special vacation conflicts arise, they should be discussed with the classroom teachers and formally communicated with administration well in advance. Please note that work should not be expected will not be assigned for your child to take on vacation.

9. SCHOOL CLOSINGS & URGENT INFORMATION

In the event that school is closed (e.g., snow days, etc.), information will be available the following ways:

- The JEC maintains an Alert-by-Text system that enables us to send out text messages to your cell phones in times of emergency, school closings, or when important information needs to get out. If you have not yet signed up for this system, please email the Lower School Office for assistance.
- The JEC emails parents in the event of a school closing

- You may visit our website, www.thejec.org. Click on the “School Closing Information” button.
- You may call our weather advisory line, 908-355-4850 ext. 6299.

10. **DRESS CODE (Grades 1-6)**

Colors-both Boys and Girls

- For both genders, students may wear navy blue, black, or khaki bottoms (navy blue or black denim skirts allowed for girls), white and any shade of pink or blue tops.
- Both tops and bottoms must be solid, with no embellishments (except for JEC-logoed clothes)
- Sweatshirts, sweaters, and layering pieces that will be worn in the school building must also adhere to the color code, with no logos except for a JEC logo.
- Please do not wear a sweatshirt in lieu of a shirt.
- White shirts and dark bottoms should be worn on Rosh Chodesh, Yom Ha'Atzma'ut, and Yom Yerushalayim. 6 th Grade girls may wear any color solid top and any color solid skirt.

Boys:

- Each boy must wear tzitzis and a kippah at all times
- No shorts, jeans or sweats
- Collared shirts with at least 2 buttons
- Closed shoes or sneakers only

Girls:

- No pants or shorts
- No sheer or low-cut blouses or t-shirts
- Sleeve lengths should be close to elbows; no sleeveless or capped sleeved shirts
- Girls grades 1-3 - skirts should be knee length
- Girls grades 4-6 - skirts should come to the bottom of the knee or below
- No skirt slits above the knee
- Jumpers and dresses should follow the guidelines for other bottoms.
- Closed shoes or sneakers only

Please note that the dress code applies to our students during all Lower School activities, whether on-site or on outings, whether during normal school hours or during extra-curricular activities.

Please help us send a consistent message to your children by modeling these standards and upholding the environment as a Makom Torah when you visit the JEC or attend school functions.

We thank you for granting us the privilege of partnering with you in providing a wonderful chinuch experience for your children.

11. TEXTBOOKS & RESPECTING SCHOOL PROPERTY

The JEC provides students with various textbooks to use during the school year to enhance student learning. At the year's end, all textbooks will be collected from students. If a textbook is damaged or lost, there will be a fee for replacing it.

In general, please help us teach and encourage respect and responsibility for personal and school property by reminding the students of appropriate care of books, supplies and all areas of the building.

12. ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

The major aim of the Lower School is to give each child the best individualized education possible. We are aware that children differ in interests, learning strengths and potential, and because of this, we utilize a variety of tests and measures to assess and pinpoint each student's particular strengths and weaknesses:

a) IN-CLASS EVALUATIONS

Each teacher utilizes a variety of educational assessments to evaluate our students' academic progress. These may include age-appropriate in-class assignments, homework, projects, presentations, tests, and quizzes. Every effort is made to ensure that a reasonable number of evaluations are administered during any given time frame.

Please ask your child to show you the work or exams they bring home, review them with your child, sign work when appropriate, and send the papers back to your child's teacher, when requested.

b) TERRA NOVA TESTING

The Terra Nova test is a standardized exam administered to students in Grades 2-6. The results serve as one measure of our students' abilities and achievements, and as a method of evaluating our current teaching practices. The Terra Nova Test will be given during the spring.

14. HOMEWORK

Homework serves a variety of purposes: it reinforces skills and content taught in class, affords the student the opportunity to develop responsibility and independence, and reinforces good study habits.

Relevant homework may be given nightly in both Limudei Kodesh and General Studies. On most evenings, daily homework should not exceed **30 minutes** in Grades 1-3, or **45 minutes** in Grades 4-6. This total does not include time for independent reading for grades 1-6. Primer homework should be no longer than 10 minutes combined.

Please take a sincere interest in your child's homework. All students in Grades 3-6 receive a daily planner where all their homework assignments should be recorded. This is an excellent vehicle for parents to monitor their children's responsibilities. You may also use the planner as a secondary avenue for communication with your child's teacher.

15. GOOGLE CLASSROOM

Google Classroom is an easy way for parents to access clear and accurate information pertaining to their children's assignments (e.g. homework, quizzes, tests, and projects). You can access Google Classroom from a web browser, at classroom.google.com, or through the mobile app (search for Google Classroom in the App Store or Google Play). Parents will receive their children's login information within the first week of school. If you have any questions about Google Classroom, please contact Mrs. Shaindy Pinsker at spinsker@thejec.org.

Please remember that it is not YOUR responsibility to do your child's homework. When possible, please help ensure a healthy environment for your child to be able to focus and concentrate on their assignments. Additionally, if needed, please help reinforce the importance of students completing their homework or at the least trying with showing work of their efforts. Parents should NOT be completing their children's work but rather observing that homework is being completed. In the event that the task is too challenging or is unclear, please encourage your child to try again and then if still unsuccessful, please write the teacher a note explaining the difficulties and noting the amount of time spent on the assignment. Only by independently completing assignments can a child reinforce his or her skills and feel the pride of "ownership" over the work product.

16. LUNCH

- a. A hot lunch program is available through the school. If lunch is brought from home, please note that dairy or pareve lunches can be sent in any day of the week; meat lunches may be sent in on Mondays or Wednesdays only. For safety's sake, please refrain from sending any glass bottles or containers. Also, please send in lunch that is 'ready-to-eat,' as students do not have access to microwaves or hot water.
- b. Please be sure that any food sent with your child has proper Rabbinical supervision; if you are in doubt as to the validity of a certification, please feel free to contact the dean or the principal for clarification. Among the most common acceptable symbols are: OU, OK, Star-K, Kof K.
- c. All students in Early Childhood through second grade (and at times third grade) are required to wash, say Hamotzi and "bentsch" at lunch.
- d. Students are not permitted to share food.

Please note that vending machines in the Middle School and High School are off limits for all Lower School students during school hours. We appreciate your help in reinforcing this policy with your children.

17. NUT-FREE POLICY

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MAY NOT SEND ANY PRODUCTS THAT INCLUDE PEANUTS OR TREE NUTS TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD. WE HAVE STUDENTS WHO HAVE SEVERE NUT ALLERGIES, AND WHOSE HEALTH CAN BE SERIOUSLY ENDANGERED BY THE PRESENCE OF EVEN AIRBORNE NUT PARTICLES.

- a. Products labeled "produced on **machinery** that may process nuts" are also prohibited.
- b. products labeled "produced in a **facility**" that also handles nut products are permitted.

18. PARTIES

- a. Any class party must be coordinated in advance with the homeroom teacher. **When bringing in food for a class party, parents should only bring in food with acceptable Kashrus certification and that are in strict adherence to the school's nut-free policy.** In case of uncertainty, please speak with an administrator. **Home-prepared or home-baked goods are not allowed for distribution to a class.**

- b. When a party is planned for your child outside of school, please send out all invitations through the mail; do not distribute them to children in school. In an effort to continue to foster a safe and inclusive environment at school please make sure to include either the entire class, only one gender, or less than 50% of the class when creating a guest list for your party.
- c. When choosing entertainment for a birthday party, please make sure to be consistent with the JEC standards.
- d. In order to minimize disruption of learning, we do not permit siblings from Elementary School to leave class to attend birthday parties.
- e. Please no candy or soda

19. ASSEMBLIES

- a. During the school year, many of our classes perform in assemblies. In order to minimize disruption of learning, we do not permit siblings to leave class to attend these programs, with the exception of Early Childhood graduations.
- b. Please note that there is no advanced reserve seating for assemblies. If you wish to sit in a specific location, please arrive early in person to occupy your preferred seats.

20. HEALTH REGULATIONS

- a. Each student must have a yearly physical examination on file in the nurse's office, as mandated by the state. State law mandates that the school have complete immunization records for each student. Legally, the school has no choice but to deny attendance to students whose records are incomplete. In addition to having a complete immunization record on file, students aged 4-6 must have a current Mantoux (tuberculosis) test on file in the nurse's office.
- b. Please note that state law mandates that no medication may be dispensed from the school office at any time, even with parental consent. If a child needs medication, please contact the school nurse for guidelines.
- c. It is imperative that you submit one emergency home contact card per family to the Lower School Office, and that they be updated regularly as changes in personal information occur.

21. Mandatory Lice Check Prior to School Opening

Mrs. Rachael Katz will be checking all students prior to the first day of school, on Wednesday August 30, 2017 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm, and Tuesday, September 5, 2017 from 8:30am-11:00am. There is a \$10 charge to cover this check and two other lice checks that will be done during the course of the year. Any students who have lice or nits at this time or during the school year, will be sent home to be treated, and will be readmitted **once they are certified lice-free by a professional provider.**

For your reference, we rely on the following providers to certify that our children are indeed lice-free:

- 1) Mrs. Ruth Kolb- Nits Not - Elizabeth 908-418-3306
- 2) Mrs. Randi Hershkowitz – West Orange 973-234-9093
(after 5:00pm – checking only)
- 3) Lice Busters NYC- 877-613-1143
www.licebustersnyc.com

Should you wish to use another provider, please call our school nurse, Mrs. Rachael Katz, at (908) 355-4850 ext. 150, or email her after hours at rkatz@thejec.org, to ensure that the provider meets school standards.

If your child has or has had lice, please make sure to report this to the administration or school nurse.

Mrs. Katz passes along the following pointers that are useful for us all when it comes to preventing the spread of lice:

- a) Long hair should be worn in braids.
- b) Please remind your children not to share brushes or headgear with their friends.

22. PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

If you have any questions or concerns please reach out directly to the classroom teachers first. Each teacher has an e-mail address that will be provided to you on Meet Your Teacher Night: Tuesday, September 12, 2017.

If your question or concern persists please reach out to an administrator.

Please note the dates of this year's Parent-Teacher Conferences: Sunday, November 19, 2017, and Sunday, March 11, 2018.

23. VISITING SCHOOL

- a. Parents should come directly to the Lower School Office if they need to communicate with their child during the day.
- b. Parents are requested to dress respectfully, abiding by the standards befitting our Yeshiva.
- c. All visitors entering the building will be given an ID tag that they are required to wear throughout their stay in the building.

24. BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATIONS

Although the manner of celebrating a Bat Mitzvah is a personal family matter, we respectfully request that all celebrations be conducted in accordance with the halachic standards established by the JEC, including not only the religious component of the event, but the entertainment and festive aspects as well. By establishing a level of consistency between home and school, you afford the opportunity for all of your child's friends to comfortably attend and enjoy the simcha. If you need any specific guidance in planning your event, please do not hesitate to contact the principal or the dean of the JEC, who will be happy to assist you.

25. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. Children may not use **cell phones, iPods or other electronic devices** during school hours. If a student has a phone or electronic device out, it will be confiscated and given to the office, to be retrieved at the **end of the day**. If there is a second violation, it will be returned only to a parent.
- b. **Cameras** can only be used by students under the authorization and supervision of faculty.
- c. Hand-held games are not permitted to be used at school.

26. PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Our incredible PTA has done a tremendous amount to enhance the educational environment of the school and foster school spirit: arranging and sponsoring after-school clubs and special assemblies, providing early childhood equipment and audio-visual materials, and spearheading other projects and initiatives. If you have any ideas or programs that you think can benefit our children, please feel free to contact the PTA at Yeshivapta@thejec.org.

27. EARLY CHILDHOOD BATHROOM POLICY

Children will be taken to go to the bathroom, as a class, twice daily. If a child needs to use the bathroom at an inbetween time, a teacher or assistant will escort them to the bathroom unless there is a bathroom in their classroom. **At no point may the door of the bathroom be shut; it must remain open at all times. Parents will provide necessary supplies:ie change of clothes, diapers/ pull ups, and wipes.**

Nursery–Kindergarten:

A children entering these these classes must be potty trained. Being trained means that they are **independent** in their use of the bathroom. Independence means a child is able to dress and undress in order to use the bathroom. They should also be able to wipe . If a child asks for help, the teacher must have a second adult present. A teachers must use gloves when assisting a child in cleaning/wiping.

Bathroom Accidents :

A teacher will call the parent to let them know their child has had a bathroom incident. If the child requires excess help, for example a messy accident, the parents/or other predetermined adult will be called to come and take the child home to be cleaned and changed. Child may than return to school. If multiple accidents occur, the parents and teachers will meet to discuss finding solutions or determining if the child may not ready for the program.

Juniors: While in the Juniors program all children will have their pull-up or diaper checked once per hour and as needed based on teacher observation. Juniors will be changed as necessary with supplies that the parents have provided. **Gloves must be worn at all times.** Any soiled clothes or **dirty diapers** must be placed in a sealed bag. Sealed diapers will be placed in designated receptacles. Soiled clothes will be sent home unless the parent specifically asks that they not be sent home.

For those in our Juniors programs that are in the midst of potty training the teacher is responsible to maintain *at least daily* communication with the parent to assess progress and ensure cooperation between the parents and school.

These policies are for the health and safety of the child, as well as to protect the reputation of our staff and school.

28. EARLY CHILDHOOD BITING POLICY

Young children need lots of practice when learning the fine art of interacting with their peers in a positive way. They need guidance and understanding from parents and teachers. The JEC strives to give this positive guidance to all of its students, and expects parents to provide such positive guidance to all prospective and current JEC students. As children grow and mature and reach preschool ages (3+ years old 36+ months), they are expected to have the tools necessary to express themselves verbally, without resorting to physical behavior, especially biting. While biting is a natural developmental stage for some children, it is, however, generally a temporary condition that is most common between 13 and 36 months of age.

Young children who are of preschool age may at times bite others for many different reasons. For example, a child might be teething, overly tired and/or frustrated. He/she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of his/her teacher or his/her peers. In such instances, these young children present with weaker verbal skills and are often naturally impulsive. That being said, sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs in the JEC lower school:

- Teachers will monitor biter's behavior very closely to proactively deter and/or prevent biting and try to understand the child's triggers.
- The biting will be interrupted with a firm "NO, we don't bite people!".
- Teachers will stay calm and will not overreact.
- Teachers will remove the biter from the situation in order to redirect the biter's attention.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- The wound of the bitten child will be assessed by the school nurse and cleansed with soap and water.
- The parents of any child(ren) involved in the biting incident will be notified.
- Confidentiality of any child involved will be maintained.
- Parents and teachers will be advised to monitor the bitten area for signs of infection.

If the same child continues to exhibit biting behavior, the actions will be taken:

Parents will be called and the child will be sent home if, on that day, the child instigates a biting incident that leaves broken skin **or** two biting incidents, even if the biting victim's skin was not broken. In order for the child to return to school, Parents will be required to meet with the administration. After suspension, if biting continues, the administration may take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including the un-enrollment of the child.

29. BULLYING POLICY

Value Statement

The Jewish Educational Center recognizes the Torah's view of the inestimable value of each individual. As such, it is a bully free zone which has a no-tolerance policy for bullying, including harassment or intimidating behaviors. Most common negative behaviors occurring between students present themselves as conflict, and less commonly as bullying. While any and all instances of bullying will not be tolerated, and will be responded to accordingly, conflict between students is expected and will be used as a learning opportunity for growth and development of conflict resolution skills.

Bullying Defined

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means: any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is:

- Reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Put more simply:

Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behavior that often involves an imbalance of power, and/or the intention to harm or humiliate someone.

Conflict is a disagreement, argument or difference in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationships, and is an inevitable part of a group dynamic.

Types of Bullying

Physical Bullying

- Using physical actions to gain power and control over a target
- Hitting, punching, slapping, shoving
- Kicking
- Biting

Verbal Bullying

- Using words, statements, and name-calling to gain power and control over a target
- Name calling
- Insulting
- Teasing

Cyber Bullying

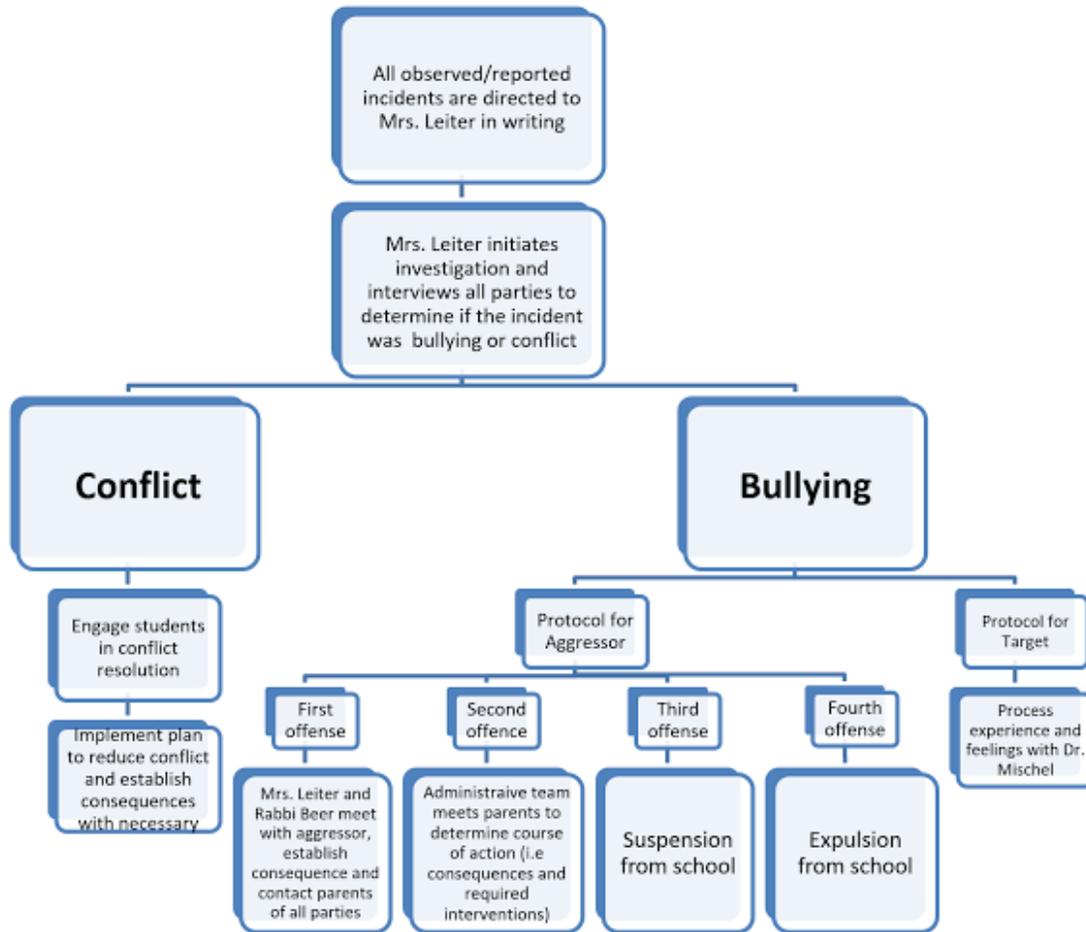
- Using the Internet, a cell phone, or other technology to harass or embarrass a target
- Posting hurtful messages
- Making online threats
- Sending hurtful emails or texts

Relational Aggression

- Hurting peers and sabotaging their social standing by manipulating relationships
- Ostracizing others from a group
- Spreading rumors
- Breaking confidences
- Manipulating situations and controlling another person to increase ones own social standing

PROTOCOLS

A student who is experiencing bullying or believes that another student is experiencing bullying, should report the situation to a school employee. A school employee who becomes aware of or suspects that a student is being bullied must notify Mrs. Faigy Leiter immediately in writing. Mrs. Leiter will document that report and activate our bullying protocol outlined below as soon as possible. All students and parents should feel safe reporting incidents of bullying: retaliation for reporting will not be tolerated by the JEC.



Note: The disciplinary actions for violations of the bullying policy will be determined by the school administration. Disciplinary actions for violations of the bullying policy will balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The severity of the disciplinary action shall be aligned to the severity of the bullying behavior as determined by the school administration.

BEST WISHES FOR A WONDERFUL YEAR OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR OUR CHILDREN!