

# YEDIDYA ACADEMY AT ICCJ POLICY HANDBOOK



**2024-25 Edition**  
**5784-5785**

**Yedidya Academy**  
Israel Center of Conservative Judaism  
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September 2024

Letter from the Education Director

Dear Parents,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Yedidya Academy's inaugural year—an innovative and exciting educational experience which sees children's Jewish relationships as the key to Jewish continuity. My team and I are honored to be taking this learning adventure with your child and look forward to your collaboration and participation throughout the journey (to the degree you feel applicable).

Yedidya Academy was founded to inspire a strong Jewish identity in our children, the next link in the chain of Jewish tradition. Each year, Yedidya will educate and empower our children in the Jewish values, knowledge, and skills to function as proud Jews in our local communities and the wider world. Yedidya Academy will provide an engaging, uplifting, and grounding experience for our students each Sunday.

Mishlei (Proverbs) 22:6 says "Educate a youth according to THEIR OWN path," articulating an educational philosophy with which we strongly identify. No two children think the same, learn in the same way, or ought to be taught using the same method. Yedidya honors each child's individuality, providing guidance, encouragement and a comfortable collaborative atmosphere, allowing each student to develop and thrive in his or her own way. We feel pride when we see them shine!

At Yedidya Academy, we understand that a Jewish identity permeates all aspects of life, and we invite parents to join us in fostering each child's love of Jewish values. Throughout the year, there will be many opportunities for parental engagement and involvement, and we look forward to partnering with you and building a seamless, dynamic, intergenerational Jewish community.

This handbook is designed to both inform you of Yedidya Academy's policies and encourage your input and participation in our program. We look forward to sharing in an enriching year with your children - and with each of you!

Sincerely,

Rabbi Hillel Lavery-Yisraeli  
Education Director  
Yedidya Academy

## About us

Yedidya Academy, located in the Israel Center of Conservative Judaism building, provides an experiential and friendly learning environment where children are educated and empowered to embrace their Jewish values and proudly connect with their Jewish community. The name, Yedidya, acknowledges that each Jewish child is a friend of God, and that a Sunday Hebrew School experience is meant to deepen and foster the terms of that friendship. Yedidya Academy operates as a Conservative egalitarian religious school, under the auspices of the Israel Center of Conservative Judaism, and is open to all Jewish children.

Each Sunday, Yedidya students will explore Jewish ritual and prayer, develop Hebrew reading and writing skills, and celebrate Jewish holidays, history, culture, and their connection to Israel. Intimate, mixed-age class structuring will support children in learning at their own pace, with each child receiving dedicated attention and customized learning modules.

**Yedidya's goal** is to provide students with improved ritual, cultural, and Hebrew literacy by the end of each year, with deepened love of heritage and community connection.

Our students will:

- Feel a sense of belonging in the local and larger Jewish community, finding their place in history and sharing in a bright Jewish future
- Discover and explore the Torah, unpacking its stories and values and identifying its relevance to the modern era
- Develop an understanding of Jewish rituals and traditions and develop related skills, including mastery of basic prayers and active ritual
- Acquire Hebrew reading and writing skills
- Enjoy experiential holiday celebration and develop an appreciation for Jewish festivals and Jewish music
- Develop a connection to the State of Israel, understanding the history of its creation and its importance for worldwide Jewry
- Develop their own direct, lasting relationships and friendships with God

**Yedidya's approach** to Sunday school curriculum incorporates “school-to-shul” integration, with students developing love and enjoyment of all aspects of Jewish life, including weekly intergenerational prayer services in the ICCJ main sanctuary, small-group Torah study, self-paced Hebrew literacy, and experiential exploration of Jewish culture and history through music, art, and celebration. Yedidya Academy students additionally enjoy access to ICCJ special events, and a weekly swim benefit as part of the ICCJ swim program.

**Yedidya's community** welcomes all Jewish children, regardless of their style of observance and synagogue affiliation. Yedidya Academy operates under the auspices of ICCJ, a Conservative egalitarian synagogue. Members of ICCJ shall be eligible to enroll their children in Yedidya Academy at a discounted rate, as may be determined by the

Yedidya Academy School Board on an annual basis.

**The Yedidya Education Director** develops and implements Yedidya's curriculum, in collaboration with the Yedidya Academy School Board and Yedidya's subject teachers. The Education Director also makes hiring and termination recommendations to the Yedidya Academy School Board. ICCJ's rabbi currently serves as the Yedidya Education Director and may continue to do so in future years, as jointly determined by the Yedidya Academy School Board, the rabbi, and the ICCJ Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

**The Yedidya Administrative Director** is responsible for creating standards for attendance and behavior, supporting the logistical needs of Yedidya Academy programming, communicating with parents, supporting and organizing special events, and ensuring the safety of each Yedidya student from the moment that each student arrives until the moment each student is picked up by the student's parent or guardian.

**Yedidya Instructors** are responsible for delivering the subject-matter curriculum developed and assigned by the Yedidya Education Director and Yedidya Academy School Board. Instructors shall meet with the Yedidya Education Director and Yedidya Administrative Director as needed but at least once monthly to ensure curriculum alignment and address any student-related matters. Yedidya instructors shall have appropriate training and experience delivering the subject matter for which they are hired, as vetted by the Yedidya Academy School Board and Yedidya Education Director.

**The Yedidya Academy School Board** oversees Yedidya's operations, curriculum development, and personnel matters, in collaboration with the ICCJ Board of Trustees and in compliance with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's standards.

Employment: The Yedidya Academy School Board, in collaboration with the rabbi, is responsible for hiring and/or termination of all Yedidya employees, the Yedidya Administrative Director, and the Yedidya Education Director, unless otherwise determined by the ICCJ Board of Trustees. If the rabbi serves as the Yedidya Education Director, the rabbi shall recuse himself from any and all discussions regarding the hiring, termination, or ongoing employment of the Yedidya Education Director. If any member of the Yedidya Academy School Board serves as a member of the Yedidya Academy staff, such member shall recuse himself or herself from any and all discussions regarding hiring, termination, or ongoing employment.

Curriculum: The Yedidya Academy School Board is responsible for curriculum development and organizing special events, as established in collaboration with the Yedidya Education Director and Yedidya Administrative Director.

Financial Oversight: The Yedidya Academy School Board is responsible for evaluating operational expenses and preparing the Yedidya Academy annual budget, which the Yedidya Academy School Board submits to the ICCJ Board of Trustees by March 31st of each year for review and approval. ICCJ is responsible for the financial administration of Yedidya Academy, including receipt of all income and payment of all expenses, including payroll, pursuant to the terms of the approved annual budget.

Governance: The Yedidya Academy School Board consists of at least five (5) voting members, with the Chairperson and two members named by the ICCJ President (or Co-Presidents) as per the ICCJ Constitution, and the remaining members selected by the parents of Yedidya Academy students. The members of the Yedidya Board shall select a Secretary and one representative to serve for one year on the ICCJ Board of Trustees. Members of the Yedidya Academy School Board may serve for a term of three (3) years, renewable three times, for a maximum cumulative tenure of nine (9) years. All matters requiring a vote by the Yedidya Academy School Board are determined by simple majority vote, with three attending members representing a quorum and all meetings governed by Robert's Rules of Order. Meetings are scheduled on a once-monthly basis. The Secretary takes minutes of all meetings and makes the monthly minutes available to the ICCJ Board of Trustees. Monthly meetings are open to ICCJ members and Yedidya parents to attend, although only Yedidya Academy Board Members may vote at the meetings. The Yedidya Academy School Board may additionally choose to establish a Parents' Association.

## Curriculum

### Structure

Each Sunday, students will participate in a morning Shacharit service with the integrated ICCJ community, with portions of the service modified for age-appropriate education and engagement. Students will then cycle through three (3) classes, including Torah Stories, Hebrew Literacy, and Jewish History/Culture. Students will also break for a short communal snack, where they will have an opportunity to engage in a shared meal and traditional brachot. A sample schedule is as follows:

	Age Group 1	Age Group 2	Age Group 3
<b>9:00am-9:30am</b>	Community Shacharit		
<b>9:30am-9:40am</b>	Morning Stretch	Morning Stretch	Morning Stretch
<b>9:45am-10:30am</b>	Torah	Hebrew	Culture
<b>10:35am-10:55am</b>	Nutritional Break	Nutritional Break	Nutritional Break
<b>10:55am-11:40am</b>	Culture	Torah	Hebrew
<b>11:45am-12:30pm</b>	Hebrew	Culture	Torah

*Rotating subject matter will include:*

#### **Torah and Jewish History**

The children are introduced to the characters and stories of the Torah. They are given an overview of Jewish history starting with the creation of the world till modern times. As students develop advanced Hebrew literacy skills, selected stories will be read and studied in their original Hebrew.

#### **Shabbat and Chagim (Holidays)**

Through hands-on lessons and activities, students will gain a deeper understanding of Shabbat and each holiday, their traditions, customs and celebration, as we go through the year. We will also host holiday celebrations for our students and their families, both at Yedidya Academy and together with the integrated intergenerational ICCJ community.

#### **Jewish Values and Ethics**

Our students will explore and gain an understanding of the values and Mitzvot integrated into Jewish culture, including respect, gratitude and Tzedakah.

#### **Israel**

Our students will explore the significance and beauty of Israel - past, present and future. In story and in song, we emphasize the inherent connection of every Jew to our homeland, Israel.

#### **Hebrew**

Our students begin a journey of reading Hebrew letters, transferring their reading skills to familiarity with the Siddur, and developing general Hebrew literacy in preparation for reading from the Torah.

## **CHILD SAFETY AND BEHAVIOR**

All staff at Yedidya Academy have made a commitment to safeguard children and young people by:

- Adopting appropriate behavioral practices; and
- Reporting any abuse by staff or volunteers within our organization or by others.

### **We believe all children should:**

- feel comfortable;
- be cared for; and
- feel safe and be safe.

### **Yedidya students are taught that:**

- Their feelings and body are sacred.
- It is okay to say NO to an adult if they ask you to do something unsafe or uncomfortable.
- It is always okay to tell someone if you are not feeling comfortable.

Members of Yedidya Academy faculty and administration are committed to reviewing our policy and good practices annually.

## **GENDER IDENTITY AFFIRMATION**

As a modern, inclusive, egalitarian community, Yedidya is committed to making each and every student comfortable. We recognize, affirm and celebrate each individual's right to determine their own gender identity, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be referred to using the pronouns they are most comfortable with. If you have specific needs or concerns in this regard, speak with Rabbi Hillel.

## **General Information**

Yedidya Academy is designed for children from the age of four (4) through B'nei Mitzvah age (12/13, or as otherwise deemed appropriate). Every Jewish child, regardless of style of observance, is welcome. Yedidya Academy does not require any synagogue affiliation or membership to be part of the Sunday program. For information about B'nei Mitzvah eligibility at ICCJ, please refer to the following link ICCJ Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide:

<https://www.iccj2004.org/about-us/bar-bat-mitzvah-guide/>

## **Times and dates**

Classes are held on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at the Israel Center of Conservative Judaism. The Sunday program is structured to include time for prayer, time for Torah, time for Hebrew, time for nourishment and calm, and time for cultural engagement.

Starting in September and ending in June, the Yedidya Academy calendar follows the NYC Department of Education public school term dates, with the exception of Jewish festivals. Upon registration, you will receive a yearly calendar with all the exact dates. Please be sure to use this calendar as your reference guide throughout the year.

## **Parent/School Communication**

Communication between parents and school is very important to ensure that Yedidya Academy can be an enjoyable and productive experience for every child. You are encouraged to get involved, ask questions and keep in touch with us. Feel free to contact us at any time at [yedidya@iccj2004.org](mailto:yedidya@iccj2004.org). The Administrative Director will also have a cell phone number that will be given to parents for use in emergencies and other timely notifications.

## **Confidential Information**

Please provide information about any conditions that may affect your child's ability to learn in a classroom setting. Prior knowledge of any physical, social or psychological challenges can aid a teacher in planning instruction for each child. Such information, or any other confidential information, should be discussed in private with Rabbi Hillel, [r.hillel@iccj2004.org](mailto:r.hillel@iccj2004.org).

## **Personal Belongings**

We acknowledge that students may bring personal belongings and cherished treasures with them from time to time. Yedidya Academy does not assume any responsibility for these items, and encourages that they be kept safe at home.

## **Food**

Any food and drinks brought to Yedidya Academy, for snack, special occasions or otherwise, must be Kosher and approved by the rabbi. We recognize that food allergies can cause serious, life-threatening conditions for some students. Please inform the Administrative Director of any significant food allergies.



## **Yedidya Academy Responsibilities**

1. Provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment for your child.
2. Provide your child with a suitable, capable and knowledgeable teacher who is dedicated and concerned about your child's welfare and Jewish education.
3. Give your child knowledge of Hebrew, Torah, Israel, and Jewish history and culture; expose them to Jewish holidays, customs and traditions.
4. Provide any relevant printed materials.
5. Keep you informed of your child's progress and class activities.
6. Provide your family with opportunities to learn, enjoy and engage with our Jewish heritage through integrated community activities and school-to-shul experiences.

## **Parents' Responsibilities**

1. Provide, and update as needed, all required contact information.
2. Bring and pick up children on time.
3. Keep children home when ill.
4. Promptly inform the teacher and/or education administrator of any significant issues.
5. Take an active part in your child's Jewish education, to the extent possible.
6. Check children's school bags for any work or important notices and respond when appropriate.

## **Tzedakah**

Tzedakah (charity) is a concept which is basic to Judaism. We attempt to develop a commitment among students to share with those less fortunate by donating to charity. Parents are asked to provide their child with a coin for Tzedakah each week.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance supports success. There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement, interest and attitude. Parents are encouraged to support each child's regular Sunday program attendance.

## **Pick Up and Location**

Yedidya Academy does not provide transportation to and from the Sunday program. Please drop off your child by 9:00 a.m. and pick up your child by 12:30 p.m. from the security guard at the 73rd avenue entrance to ICCJ. No child will be permitted to wait outside. Please notify the Administrative Director if someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, or if the person picking up your child is running late.

Children will have access to various rooms within ICCJ, including the Main Sanctuary for integrated prayer, multi-purpose rooms for special activities, and formal classrooms on the second floor of the ICCJ building. A security guard will monitor building security throughout the duration of the Sunday program.

## **Absences and Illness**

Please notify the Administrative Director of any absences, whether related to travel, unexpected illness, or otherwise. Please also notify the Administrative Director in case of contagious sickness, so that we may notify the parents of the other children in the class to be aware of the symptoms. Please also let us know of any changes in your child's health during the year e.g. vision, hearing etc. This will help us understand and cater to the child's needs.

## **School Records**

Parents should notify the school promptly of any change in address, telephone number, e-mail address, authorized "pick-up" persons, or other pertinent emergency contact information. Promptness and accuracy are necessary to keep records up to date and to communicate with parents.

## **Visitors**

Parents wishing to visit the classrooms must make prior arrangements with the Administrative Director.

## **Tuition**

The 2024-2025 Tuition Schedule shall be as follows:

- Early Bird Special (for all students enrolled prior to April 19, 2024): \$695
- ICCJ Member Rate: \$750
- Standard Tuition Rate: \$995
- Sibling Discount: - \$25 per child

An initial, non-refundable deposit of \$200 shall be due prior to the start of each term, and the remaining balance shall be due by December 31st of each year.

Tuition rates shall be adjusted on an annual basis, as may be determined from time to time by the Yedidya Academy School Board. All such financial decisions are subject to review and approval by the ICCJ Board of Trustees.

\*Note: No child will be turned away due to lack of funds. Please contact Rabbi Hillel Lavery-Yisraëli, [r.hillel@iccj2004.org](mailto:r.hillel@iccj2004.org), to confidentially address any financial concerns.

## **Refund Policy**

Registration deposits are non-refundable. Should you decide to withdraw your child from Yedidya Academy you will receive a pro-rated refund of the remainder of tuition. There are no refunds or credits for days missed due to illness, holidays or family vacations.

*Any questions or special circumstances not addressed within the Yedidya Academy Policy Handbook shall be discussed by the Yedidya Academy School Board and resolved by majority vote.*