

# Parent Handbook 2024-25



**Brookline  
Afterschool  
Enrichment**  
at Temple Ohabei Shalom

## Parent Handbook • HomeBASE: Brookline Afterschool Enrichment

*Welcome to HomeBASE: Brookline Afterschool Enrichment at Temple Ohabei Shalom!*

Temple Ohabei Shalom is thrilled to be the home of HomeBASE, an innovative out-of-school program. HomeBASE offers integrated programming based on modern values, teaching children to care for themselves, each other, and the world around them. Our staff provides a safe and fun-filled atmosphere where children can always feel at home. Please read this handbook carefully so that you will become more familiar with our program's policies and procedures. We are committed to providing a warm, caring environment. Most importantly, the health and safety of every family and staff member is and always will be our top priority.

Our curriculum is based on a program model that focuses on learning enhancement, creativity, health, and recreation while also building competence and confidence in children. HomeBASE gives all children the opportunity to form long-lasting friendships that enhance their development, growth, and self-confidence.

A note on gender: At Temple Ohabei Shalom, we strive to embrace each human for the fullness of their individuality. We believe that knowing someone's name and their correct pronouns honors them as a person and shows them the respect that they deserve. Pronouns are not just words; they are a reflection of how people see themselves and how they want to be seen. We honor our students, staff, and community members by using their correct pronouns. We welcome our students and staff to use their pronouns when introducing themselves.

This handbook was created to help answer some of the commonly asked questions about our program. We have included information about everyday logistics and our policies and procedures. You may have additional questions after reading this handbook and we would love to hear them! Each staff member at HomeBASE is available to help and to guide you through the year. Please be sure to ask a lot of questions; we are always here to help.

We look forward to getting to know you and your families in the upcoming months!

Alex Brodsky,  
HomeBASE Program Director

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### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

HomeBASE is committed to providing enriching, educational, and recreational activities, guiding children toward positive interactions while respecting the rights and needs of each child. Operated by an exceptionally well-trained staff, HomeBASE provides high quality care featuring flexibility for families and abundant choice. HomeBASE supports Temple Ohabei Shalom's philosophy of promoting lifelong learning while building and enhancing the Brookline community.

### **PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

HomeBASE currently serves children in kindergarten through fifth (5) grade. Research shows that the time between the end of the school day and the time a child goes to sleep has a significant impact on a child's cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development. At HomeBASE, we aim to:

- Take a holistic approach to out-of-school care
- Provide guidance and support for each child's individual needs
- Support each child as they explore interests in a relaxed social setting
- Encourage children to develop their sense of independence
- Guide children so that they maintain a healthy self-esteem

HomeBASE: Brookline Afterschool Enrichment at Temple Ohabei Shalom is an integral part of Temple Ohabei Shalom, a nonprofit organization, and does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families or teaching staff on the basis of race, gender, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation or political beliefs.

HomeBASE operates under the licensing authority of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Early Education and Care ([D]EEC). As an equal opportunity employer, we work toward creating an environment that is cooperative and constructive for staff, children, and families. Respect is a cornerstone of our program; there is no tolerance of harassment or discrimination of any kind.

For information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history, please contact:  
Department of Early Education and Care  
1250 Hancock Street, Suite 120-S  
Quincy, MA 02169  
617-472-2881

### **LOCATION**

HomeBASE is located inside Temple Ohabei Shalom at 1187 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA 02446.

### **HOMEBASE ADMINISTRATION**

The HomeBASE Program Director of Temple Ohabei Shalom is responsible for the day-to-day management of HomeBASE under the supervision of the Temple Ohabei Shalom Executive Director of Education and Administration. These responsibilities include developing a cohesive integrated curriculum, implementing center policies and procedures, building relationships with the families, creating opportunities for family engagement, and assembling and supporting a team of dedicated professional educators for HomeBASE.

## ***Contact Information***

### **Executive Director of Education and Administration:**

Shari Churwin - [schurwin@ohabei.org](mailto:schurwin@ohabei.org)

### **HomeBASE Program Director**

Alex Brodsky [abrodsky@ohabei.org](mailto:abrodsky@ohabei.org)

### **Afterschool Coordinator**

Cary Webb – [cwebb@ohabei.org](mailto:cwebb@ohabei.org)

### **HomeBASE Office**

617.264.2801 x158

[HomeBASE@ohabei.org](mailto:HomeBASE@ohabei.org)

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Our daily schedule includes a variety of activities for each age group. Homework support is a priority for children in the upper grades. Each day also includes snack time and free play, both indoors and out. Children may choose from a variety of activity areas in the spaces for child initiated activities, art, movement, and organized games.

### **Hours of Operation**

**Monday-Thursday**                      **2:30 pm – 5:30 pm**

**Friday**                                      **1:40 pm – 5:30 pm**

HomeBASE follows the calendar of the Public Schools of Brookline in terms of school holidays, vacations, and early release days. HomeBASE does not add on for snow days at the end of the school year. The final day for HomeBASE in 2025 is Friday, June 20, 2025. Our program specific calendar can be found online at [www.ohabei.org/homebase](http://www.ohabei.org/homebase).

## **What does a typical day look like?**

When the weather is nice, we enjoy and encourage outside play. We've identified multiple outdoor spaces for our use in the neighborhood and enjoy daily trips to these playgrounds. Each day will consist of opportunities for small group interaction, large group time, and individual play. Class meetings, story time, art, cooking, literacy, math and science activities, and gross and fine motor opportunities will take place both indoors and outdoors. We will offer the chance to go outside daily unless the temperature is dangerously low ("feels like" is below 20 degrees) or extremely high ("feels like" is above 92 degrees) or if there is a threat of a thunder/lightning storm, high winds, or heavy rain. Children should dress appropriately.

## **HOMEBASE STAFF**

Our staff understands that your child's experience at HomeBASE is directly tied to the relationships they develop both with their peers and adult mentors. HomeBASE employs and supports a staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests. To ensure that every child receives the attention they deserve, we employ a 1:8 ratio of staff to children. Our staff is First Aid and CPR certified and is trained in medication administration according to DEEC regulations.

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All our staff adheres to a strict code of professional conduct. To maintain the integrity of the program and the professional status of the teachers and support staff, we request that parents not seek to employ HomeBASE staff for childcare outside of the school day. Thank you for your understanding.

### **PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION**

We recognize that to provide the very best educational experience for your child, the partnership between parents and teachers must be a strong one. As partners, it is vitally important to learn all we can from one another. HomeBASE has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to arrive unannounced while your child is present, however it is always best to send an email or call to make sure HomeBASE is in the building and not at the park. For some children, unannounced visits can be upsetting. **Parents may not join the HomeBASE staff and children on the walk to HomeBASE due to EEC and Liability regulations.**

Communication is the most important factor in providing a positive experience for our children and families. Parents' questions and concerns are taken seriously and should be addressed with the HomeBASE Director. If a parent is not satisfied with the answer, the parent should address their concern with the Education Director. If concerns are not sufficiently addressed at the school level, we recommend that parents bring their concerns to the TOS Vice President of Education.

The HomeBASE staff believes that communication between families and staff is the key to the well-being of all children and we urge you to share information regarding your child and/or any concerns you may have. Both the Education Director and the HomeBASE Director are readily available for phone calls and private meetings. The teachers are not available for meetings while supervising dismissal.

In some cases, it may be beneficial to have a conversation with your child's school teacher or another service provider. If you would like us to speak with your child's teacher/provider, or if we request permission from you, no communication can occur until we have a signed release from you. In this case, you will be supplied with a release form to sign. At this point, we ask that you help to introduce us to your child's teacher/provider by connecting us with an e-mail or by another method of your preference.

On an ongoing basis, there are a variety of ways in which we communicate with parents:

#### ***Written communication***

- Regular Schoolwide Newsletters: These newsletters, typically sent out at the start of the month, include important information for HomeBASE families and photos of the previous month's activities.
- Activity Calendar is shared with families regularly, typically at the beginning of each month. Because some activities are subject to change due to staffing or weather conditions, weekly and daily updates are emailed. Announcements, schedule changes, enrichment activity sign ups, vacation week program and other pertinent information can be found in these emails.

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- Accident & Incident Reports: These forms are completed as necessary to make sure parents are informed with a written report, verbally at pickup and sometimes with a follow up email from the director.

### ***Other Communication***

- Check-In Call/Email: The HomeBASE Team will call or email each family twice a year to check in.
- Progress Reports: HomeBASE staff will provide a progress report for each child. These progress reports address how each child is interacting with others, skills they are working on, and how they typically spend their time at HomeBASE.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICIES**

For everyone's safety, we continue to use our monitored security system. Arrival is managed for all children at the Marshal Street door near Beacon Street. Alternatively, arrivals are also facilitated at the Trust Center entrance at the rear of the building by the parking lot.

### ***Walk to HomeBASE***

We will provide a teacher supervised **walk from Lawrence and FRR Schools** where our staff will pick up children from school and walk them to our building in our "Walking Bus". For safety reasons, children may not ride scooters, bikes, or other such equipment on supervised HomeBASE walks.

Children in the METCO program who will be coming from other schools will come to HomeBASE via bus/van. There will be staff at HomeBASE who make sure they arrive safely. The METCO program is responsible for the planning and execution of this travel.

For families coming from other schools, please be sure to indicate what your family's plan is using the transportation form.

**If your child(ren) will be absent or arriving late, we require that you notify the HomeBASE office via phone at 617.264.2801 or email [cwebb@ohabei.org](mailto:cwebb@ohabei.org), [homebase@ohabei.org](mailto:homebase@ohabei.org) and [educationoffice@ohabei.org](mailto:educationoffice@ohabei.org)**

### ***Departure***

Departure will only take place at the HomeBASE entrance on Marshal Street near Beacon Street for grades K-5

### ***Late Pickup***

HomeBASE has set a firm policy regarding late pick up. If a parent is late by five or more minutes, parents will receive a written notice. The next time the parent is late picking up his or her child for any duration of time, a late charge will be imposed of \$1.00 per minute payable upon arrival and paid directly to the teacher(s). The HomeBASE office phone will determine the time a parent arrives. It is our goal to make the transition from HomeBASE to home a smooth and pleasant experience. As such, we ask that you please call us or the Education office at 617.264.2801 with any expected delays so that we can help prepare your child.

### ***Alternative Pickup Arrangements***

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**Children will only be released to their legal guardians or to the names listed on the sign-in/sign-out sheet** (which has been prepared in accordance with your "Authorization to Release Child" form). For people who are unfamiliar to us, we may ask for photo identification. You can add or remove an authorized person to your list at any time by filling out an authorization form. **You can email any changes in your child's pick-up arrangements for that day by noon to the HomeBASE Director.** Please note that we are required to receive any such requests in writing (email will suffice).

### ***Alternative Attendance Plans***

If your child was absent or sent home early from school due to illness or any other reason, they are **not** permitted to attend HomeBASE in the afternoon. Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis per the HomeBASE Director.

If your child will be absent or arriving late, we require that you notify The HomeBASE Director by noon at [homebase@ohabei.org](mailto:homebase@ohabei.org) or 617.264.2801 x158. Failure to alert HomeBASE staff to a child's absence more than twice will result in a **\$10 fee** each time a failure to alert us occurs.

Please let us know in advance if you need to pick up your child early so we may have him/her ready and waiting for you at the designated time in order to ease the transition for your child and minimize classroom disruption.

Children cannot be picked up while the group is moving or walking. HomeBASE staff will do their best to accommodate varying schedules and appreciate your understanding for the safety of all children. If you arrive during a transition (to or from HomeBASE, from school or playgrounds), please expect to wait until we have reached our destination before you can sign out your child. This is to ensure the safety of every child in our care and is required by DEEC.

To conform with DEEC policies, all children must be accounted for by 3:00 pm daily and as such we are required to contact families of children who have not arrived at HomeBASE by 3:15 pm. Except for extenuating circumstances, as determined by the HomeBASE Director, children must be signed in at the program by 3:30 pm to participate in HomeBASE that day.

### ***Parking***

You are always welcome and encouraged to park your car in one of the three (3) designated drop-off/pick-up parking spaces marked with green signs in our parking lot. There is usually ample street parking during pick-up times. DO NOT (at any time) park in the fire lane. Please plan and be patient, particularly when it is rainy or slushy. Our parking lot is very busy on Tuesday afternoons (3:00 – 3:30 pm and 5:50 pm – 6:00 pm) due to religious school drop off and pick up. Please plan accordingly and avoid using the parking lot on those busy times.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

**HOMEBASE FOLLOWS THE BROOKLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR EMERGENCY WEATHER (SNOW) CLOSINGS. BROOKLINE PUBLIC SCHOOL POSTS A SNOW DAY CLOSING ON THE FRONT PAGE OF ITS WEBSITE [HTTP://WWW.BROOKLINE.K12.MA.US/](http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/), HOMEBASE WILL SEND OUT AN EMAIL TO ALL FAMILIES ANNOUNCING A BROOKLINE PUBLIC SCHOOL CLOSING IN ADDITION TO CHANGING THE TELEPHONE ANSWERING MACHINE MESSAGE STATING HOMEBASE IS CLOSED DUE TO A SNOW DAY.**



### **On days when Brookline Public Schools CLOSE EARLY due to snow, HomeBASE will be closed as well.**

HomeBASE does **not** make-up for snow days. On days of Brookline Public School snow delays (including both one- and two-hour delays for Brookline schools), HomeBASE will remain open. If weather or road conditions worsen or become extreme during the afternoon, parent(s) may be asked to pick up their child for an early closing.

Tuition adjustments or refunds will not be made for any missed program days due to inclement weather or governmental orders relating to public safety.

### **INTEGRATION WITH ANSIN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**

For students co-enrolled in the Ansin Religious School (ARS) of Temple Ohabei Shalom, transportation from your child's school to Temple Ohabei Shalom is available to HomeBASE students at no extra charge. On these days, your student will follow their typical transportation plan before being transitioned into their ARS class

### **REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT POLICIES**

#### ***Enrollment and Registration***

Priority registration is available to members of Temple Ohabei Shalom. Registration begins on March 1 for current HomeBASE families and temple members. Applications from non-temple registrants will be accepted beginning on April 1. Applications will be accepted according to the date received following the priority period. A non-refundable application deposit of \$500 is due at the time of registration.

#### ***Special Needs***

We work to provide care for all children to the best of our abilities. When working with a child with special needs, HomeBASE utilizes our best resource – you, our parents – to help create a safe, challenging, and appropriate environment for your child. To allow your child to be successful in our program, we ask that you share with us any information that you would share with your child's classroom teacher to help us provide clear structure for your child. This includes IEPs, behavior plans, facilitating meetings with other professionals working with the child, and behavior management supports.

### **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

Extra copies of these financial policies and schedule of fees for all programs and activities are always available on the website and are included with the September invoice.

As always, if you are experiencing a financial hardship, please reach out to Shari Churwin, Executive Director of Education and Administration and we will help support you the best that we can.

#### ***Billing Information***

Invoices are mailed on the 15th of the previous month with payments due on or before the first of the month. The deposit will be applied to your last month tuition payment, with the balance of the deposit due on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Eight (8) monthly payments are due October through May. Please make tuition checks payable to: **"HomeBASE at Temple Ohabei Shalom"**. Payments received after the 10th of each month are assessed a \$25 late fee. Families are responsible for any fees associated with checks returned for insufficient funds plus a \$25 handling/processing fee.

### ***Family Information Changes***

If at any time the information you have given to HomeBASE changes, please speak with the HomeBASE Director so that we can update your child's file appropriately. This information includes, but is not limited to, allergies, change of address, phone numbers, anyone who is authorized or no longer authorized to pick up your child, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and custody agreements.

### ***Schedule Changes***

**Individual** schedules can be changed with thirty (30) days advance notice. All requested changes must be made in writing/email. Invoices will be adjusted to reflect the schedule change on the following billing cycle. Those who choose to withdraw after the start of the school year and before March 1, 2025, must give thirty (30) days written notice to the HomeBASE Director and their tuition deposit payment will be applied to the child's final month of attendance. Families who choose to withdraw after March 1, 2025, are required to pay for the school year in full. Tuition adjustments or refunds will not be made for absences if a child out of school because of illness, vacation, weather, governmental orders relating to public safety or other circumstances.

### **PRIVACY POLICY**

HomeBASE will permit no research, promotions, or experimentation using children without first obtaining written permission from parents. This includes vision and hearing screening, fundraising, publicity, academic research, or any other activities that are not directly related to the care of children. The children's files are kept in a locked filing cabinet. These files are strictly confidential and are always kept in the cabinet per DEEC regulations.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Please label all personal belongings such as clothing, jackets, backpacks, and lunchboxes with your child's first and last name. HomeBASE has a fundraising account for washable labels through [Mabel's Labels](#). Select Diane K. Trust Center for Early Education from the dropdown menu, and we receive a donation from every purchase! Please feel free to forward along to everyone who may be interested, as every purchase helps to support education at Temple Ohabei Shalom.

HomeBASE asked that children not bringing toys from home. Parents are urged to use both moderation and selectivity concerning items the child may want to bring from home, and the HomeBASE Director can help you determine acceptable items for the classroom. **Guns and weapon type toys are not to be brought to school at any time.** Please keep in mind that HomeBASE cannot be responsible for lost or broken items brought to school from home.

Cell phones, iPods, tablets, and other electronics must stay in your child's backpack during HomeBASE hours. We encourage the children to interact with each other during our time together. If you need to get a hold of your child, you may call us at 617.264.2801

### **CHANGE OF CLOTHES**

Parents of all students are required to keep a complete change of clothes at HomeBASE, including pants, shirt, socks, and underwear. Extra pairs of socks and pants are recommended during the winter and spring. Your family may choose to leave a pair of shoes at HomeBASE. Providing seasonal changes of stored clothing is helpful.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

When your child has a birthday, we want to help celebrate. We set aside one day each month to bake a special snack to celebrate all the children's birthdays during that month. Celebrations can

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include a special project or parents may honor their child's birthday by donating a book to the program. These books will become part of the program's collection and are shared with children year after year. A donation to HomeBASE in honor of your child's special day is always welcome and appreciated. Please check the HomeBASE Amazon.com wish list for suggestions.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor activity will be provided daily, for at least 30 minutes, when weather, air quality, or environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk. During the winter months, outdoor play occurs daily (as long as it is above 20 degrees). Children should be well equipped for outdoor play with boots, a hat, mittens and snow pants on a daily basis. Please feel free to leave a pair of boots and snow pants in your child's cubby. When outdoor opportunities for large-motor activities are not possible because of weather conditions, the program provides similar inside activities. Indoor equipment for large-motor activities meets national safety standards and is supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

### **OFF SITE PROGRAMMING**

Although we do have a playground on site, it is our intention to utilize nearby playgrounds on a regular basis. HomeBASE staff will be in touch via email on a daily/ weekly basis to let you know which playground we will be at and when we will be back. HomeBASE utilizes Lawrence playground, Amory Park, Longwood Mall and The Rose Garden.

Whenever the children are taken outside of the building, a backpack containing emergency cards, emergency medications, and a first aid kit is taken along. Teachers always carry a cell phone and/or walkie-talkie when outside of the school building.

### **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

In harmony with the Brookline Public Schools, we have adopted the Responsive Classroom approach to classroom management. Responsive Classroom is an approach to teaching and learning that fosters safe, challenging, and joyful classrooms and schools. The Responsive Classroom approach incorporates the students' social and emotional growth into their academic learning, stemming from the notion that children learn best through social interaction and when they are explicitly taught social and emotional skills along with their academic lessons. The Responsive Classroom approach has been shown to improve social skills of elementary school students, decrease problem behaviors, and raise the quality of instruction in our classrooms. Simply put, we expect our students follow these 3 guiding principles:

***Take care of yourself.***  
***Take care of each other.***  
***Take care of our home/space.***

At HomeBASE, all staff members have a passion for understanding child development, allowing them to approach discipline/guidance with a positive management style to help children develop positive self-worth and self-discipline. We seek to anticipate problems and redirect inappropriate behavior. We nurture an environment in which a child can direct his/her own behavior realistically and with integrity. We value behavior guidance that emphasizes care, consistency, and trust to teach children

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strategies for coping with the ups and downs of life rather than coercing children into obedience. This constitutes some of the most important work we do with children daily.

### **POSITIVE CHILD GUIDANCE**

Department of Early Education and Care licensed programs may not use child guidance techniques that use any form of punitive punishment or corporal punishment or physical restraint. The use of punitive punishment or other physical forms of abuse; subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal abuse, neglect; depriving children of meals or snacks or access to the bathroom are not used. No form of physical restraint may be used on a child for discipline.

**Serious behavior problems:** In cases where the Administrator considers the behavior problem to be serious or persistent, a meeting will be arranged with the parents, administrator, and appropriate teaching staff to discuss it and work on a plan to resolve it. At the discretion of the Administrator, a member of the Board of Officers or the Executive Director of TOS may be invited to attend the meeting.

At the meeting with the parents, the Administrator will take notes specifying the targeted behavior, steps needed to change the behavior issue(s) and who will be involved with the process. The Administrator may refer the family to an outside agency for additional professional help (see referrals on the last page of the handbook). The Administrator will determine a trial period in which the steps will be implemented, and the child's behavior monitored and will schedule a follow up meeting with the parents and teacher(s) to take place at the end of that period. The Administrator will write a summary of the meeting and all participants will be asked to sign the summary, with additional comments if desired. The Administrator and parents will inform the child, if deemed helpful and done appropriately, about the decision of the meeting and may have the child participate in the meeting.

### **Some Examples of serious behavior problems are:**

1. Not listening to and/or following teacher directions and instructions
2. Behavior that interferes with the daily routine of the program
3. Behavior that requires constant adult supervision
4. Behavior that inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, staff, or self
5. Stealing
6. Deliberate destruction of property belonging to the program, Temple Ohabei Shalom, or another individual.

### **Suspension**

A child may be suspended from HomeBASE for the following reasons:

- If all documentation required by DEEC is not provided and/or up to date, a child may be suspended until such materials are provided.
- If tuition invoices are unpaid for 60 days or more.
- If a child needs medication or specific medical supplies which the parent has not supplied in a timely manner, the child may be suspended from the program until such supplies are provided.
- If a situation arises in which the health and safety of the child and/or the safety and well-being of other children and/or staff cannot be assured because of a child's behavior, a child may

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be suspended until appropriate referrals can be made. The child may return to the program when there is a statement from a professional regarding a referral plan and treatment, when safety issues are addressed, and when there is agreement between the Education Director, HomeBASE Director, and the referring agency stating that it is safe and appropriate for the child to do so.

### **Termination**

If at any time HomeBASE can no longer provide services to a child, the following steps will be taken to help prepare the child and his/her family for the transition:

- A log documenting the circumstances for considering termination will be kept by the HomeBASE Director
- Parents/Guardians will receive written communication clearly stating the reasons for termination. Termination may happen when a child's behavior interferes with the well-being of other children and staff, or when parents become overly demanding and unable to reach compromises within the framework of the HomeBASE policies. Parents will receive as much notice as is possible and be provided with a list of alternative programs and services that might help meet the needs of the child.
- Every effort will be made to help prepare the child and his/her classmates for the termination in a manner that is consistent with the child's developmental level of understanding. This may include "good-bye" messages from other children, a special celebration, and/or pictures to take along to a new program. Any termination will be made in such a way as to meet the unique individual needs of each student and family. The goal is to work with each child and family to determine what is safe and in the best interest of the child.

### **Referrals**

HomeBASE will provide referral support for families to local and state agency. Referrals are available on request. If a child is suspended or terminated from the program, the program administrator will work with the parents to help identify support for the child and family in the community and with written parental permission, refer the family for mental health counseling or other specialized services that can help address the child's behavior problems and attempt to assist the program in keeping the child enrolled and safe. If able to, this should occur prior to child being terminated to see if child can stay at the program without causing undue burden to the program.

It is the goal of HomeBASE to meet the needs of all children in our care. To that end, developmental concerns are brought to the attention of the HomeBASE Director and the Education Director, who will facilitate any outside referrals only after sharing concerns directly with parents. The HomeBASE staff will observe the behavior and activity of all children. It may sometimes be necessary to refer a child to appropriate off-site service organizations including, but not limited to social, mental, health, medical and educational services. A referral form will be completed if it is determined that additional support services are necessary for a child to reach his/her potential.

Parents will be provided with a written statement including the reason for making a referral for services. There will be a summary of the observations and any efforts that have been made to accommodate the child's needs. A current list of referral services in the community will also be provided to the parents. Before making a referral, parents will be required to give written consent.

In cases where a child's special needs show that their child would be better served in another out-of-school-time program as deemed necessary by their education plan, we will coordinate with the

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specialists involved to provide a smooth transition. This will include a developmentally appropriate closure for the child, classmates, and family.

Special problems and significant developments will be documented and brought to the parent's attention as soon as they arise.

(a) In these cases, HomeBASE will offer information to parents regarding health and educational resources for the child and family.

(b) HomeBASE will obtain parental consent prior to contacting any outside social, educational or health care resource or service provider on behalf of an individual child. If such direct contacts are made by the program, the licensee must maintain a written record of such contacts and the results of such contacts. Occasionally families need additional services of various types.

HomeBASE can provide parents with a list of resources for mental health, social services, educational, medical, and dental and vision services. Our referral plan is available upon request.

### PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports will be completed in January for children attending the program. Reports will be shared with parents in February along with an opportunity to meet and discuss the report. Parents are welcome to schedule meetings throughout the year.

### SNACKS

This year, HomeBASE will provide a nutritious afternoon snack and water daily. Examples include crackers, pretzels, cheese, yogurt, dried fruit, apple slices and cucumbers. You are welcome to provide your child with their own snack from home if you prefer. Cooking is also often integrated into our curriculum and on occasion, we may make our own snacks. **Please be sure to inform the HomeBASE Office if your child has any food allergies (which also need to be listed on a Food Allergy Action Plan).**

We encourage each child to bring a water bottle to use during the afternoon. Please label any items which can be mistaken for allergens (sun butter, soy nut butter, etc.). If you have any special requests or concerns, please feel free to communicate them to the HomeBASE Director.

### Sample Snack Schedule (Subject to Change)

Monday – Pretzels and apple slices  
Tuesday – SmartPop and cheese sticks  
Wednesday – Veggie Sticks and apple sauce  
Thursday – Cheese-itz and yogurt  
Friday – Pirate's Booty and celery sticks

### *Peanut/Nut Policy*

**To protect the safety of our students with severe peanut and tree nut allergies, HomeBASE does not allow peanuts or tree nuts to be sent as snacks. For certain children, the simple act of smelling nuts or being touched by someone with a trace of nuts on their skin can trigger a severe allergic reaction.** All snacks (including granola bars and cereal) should be checked to ensure that they are completely nut-free. **If a child brings peanuts or tree nuts as a snack, we will ask them to pack it away and send it home along with a note detailing why it wasn't allowed. Our staff is highly sensitive and vigilant to children's allergies and we do our best to ensure that our environment is safe for all children.**

**However, as parents are allowed to send their child with a snack, we cannot fully guarantee a nut or peanut-free environment. SNACKS**

To minimize food handling by staff, HomeBASE will not provide any food this year. **Please be sure to inform HomeBASE if your child has any food allergies (which by DEEC regulation also need to be listed on an Individual Healthcare Plan).**

Every child will need an afternoon snack and water bottle. We encourage you to send in only a few items for each snack time as children can become overwhelmed with too many choices. Please use a cold pack to keep food fresh through the day and make snacks prepared and ready to eat. If possible, please send snack in separate, labeled containers that indicate "for HomeBASE/afternoon" Teachers are always available to help open containers, but unfortunately cannot microwave snacks. Please label any items which can be mistaken for allergens (sun butter, soy butter, etc.).

If a child doesn't have a snack, HomeBASE will provide limited snacks. The program periodically offers "special snacks" that are usually homemade and respect all children's dietary restrictions. We will share information on these special snack options, as well as cooking project ingredients.

### ***Dietary Guidelines***

- In accordance with our synagogue, we have a 'kosher-style policy' of no pork or shellfish at Temple Ohabei Shalom.
- **We are a nut/peanut aware program.** Do not send peanut butter or products made with peanuts or other tree nuts (see below for additional information).
- Candy, soda, and glass items should not be included in lunches.
- In our attempt to "go green" we are keeping our use of disposables to a minimum and request that you send reusable eating utensils and bags.
- We ask that you send a labeled water bottle with your child each day. The children will have access to their water bottle throughout the afternoon.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### ***TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM COVID POLICY (2024)***

As with the previous school year, TOS continues to remain a mask-friendly environment and will continue to encourage a school culture supportive and respectful of anyone choosing to mask.

The following COVID-19 policies from the previous school year also remain unchanged and in effect:

- **Vaccination:** TOS requires all staff to receive "full COVID-19 vaccination", unless they receive a documented medical or religious exemption in accordance with relevant state and/or federal law. As per the Center of Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) definition, "full COVID-19 vaccination" status will be accorded to any person two weeks after the final dose of initial vaccination (one dose for Johnson & Johnson and two doses for Pfizer and Moderna). Additionally, TOS strongly recommends that staff with "full COVID-19 vaccination" status receive any CDC-recommended booster vaccine shot(s) for the Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, and Moderna vaccines. A COVID-19 vaccine is not required but is highly encouraged for all TOS students.

- **Testing and Reporting:** We will not be reporting positive cases and close contacts this year, nor will we provide testing at school. At-home test kits are available at local retailers and pharmacies.

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### TOS Guidelines on When to Keep Students Home

These guidelines are in line with the continued DESE, DPH and DESE guidance for respiratory viruses including COVID-19.

- Stay home and away from others, returning to normal activities only when symptoms are improving and the person has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Get tested for COVID-19 and flu. Talk to your healthcare provider about getting treatment if you test positive.
- Stay away from others in your household. Wear a mask when you have to be around them
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.
- Clean high touch surfaces (such as countertops, handrails, and doorknobs) often.

There is no requirement for a 5-day isolation if tested positive for COVID-19.

You should stay home even if you don't know what virus is making you sick.

Upon returning to normal activities, individuals are encouraged to take these additional measures for 5 days to prevent disease spread:

- enhancing hygiene practices,
- wearing a well-fitting mask,
- keeping a distance from others,
- increasing ventilation to clean air,
- utilizing indoor air filters.

### ***Medical Records***

Medical and immunization records for your child must be submitted to HomeBASE prior to the beginning of the school year. Children must meet state requirements for immunization and vaccination. Your physician or health care provider must update medical forms on a yearly basis. All information is maintained confidentially in your child's file. The content of each file is available to HomeBASE staff, administrators, parent or legal guardian and authorities from DEEC, our Massachusetts licensing authority.

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, please notify the office so that the appropriate communication can be sent to the community. HomeBASE staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, as well as signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that families should implement at home. HomeBASE must notify the Health Department of the childhood contagious disease in accordance with child care licensing laws.



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### **Medication**

Whenever possible, we encourage you to schedule medication during the hours your child will not be at the program. When it is necessary for your child to have medication while at HomeBASE, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Written parental authorization and a written order from the child's health care provider via HomeBASE's Medication Consent Form must be provided to the Education Office before medication can be administered.
- Medication must be provided in the original childproof container.
- DEEC regulations require that the first dose of any medication be administered outside of school.
- Non-prescription medication (i.e. Tylenol) also requires written authorization by a parent and a health care provider.
- All medications are stored in a locked container while onsite at HomeBASE.

A log indicating the time, dosage and name of the staff person administering the medication is kept for each child. This written information will become part of the child's record when the term of the treatment has ended.

Any administrator or HomeBASE staff member who administers medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration verifying that:

- (1) The right child receives the
- (2) Right medication
- (3) In the right dose
- (4) At the right time
- (5) By the right method

With documentation of each step above each time the medication is given. The person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above.

Non-prescription topical substances such as sunscreen and insect repellent can be applied only with written authorization from a parent.

### **Allergies**

Informing us of any restrictions will help us take the right precautions to ensure the health and safety of your child. Any allergies (i.e. asthma, hay fever, food reactions), must be indicated on your child's developmental history. A Food Allergy Action Plan must also be completed. Our staff will do our best to ensure that a child is not exposed to something to which he or she is allergic. Information about allergies and restrictions will be posted in each classroom for staff reference. **HomeBASE does not allow any peanuts, tree nuts and products made with peanuts or tree nuts in the building or on the property.** Parents are required to notify the office in writing if any new allergies develop or any changes to a child's list of allergies during the school year.

### **Individual Health Plans**

In accordance with DEEC regulations, HomeBASE must maintain, as part of a child's record, an individual health care plan for each child with a chronic medical condition who has been diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner. The plan must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of

that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered. With the written permission of a child's health care practitioner, parents can contact the Education Director to arrange for a time to train staff in the implementation of their child's individual health care plan.

### ***Children with Disabilities***

Upon enrollment, parents should contact the HomeBASE Director to discuss specific strategies and measures to be taken to ensure the health requirements of children with disabilities are met. The program administrator will be the liaison to families and the Brookline Public Schools to best insure the safety and care of children with disabilities and/or behavioral issues.

### ***Illness and Medical Emergencies***

Part of childhood involves sneezes and sniffles, coughs, and fevers. Our goal, to the greatest extent possible, is to prevent the spread of infection to ensure the health of the children and staff. Therefore, children who are exhibiting the following symptoms should be kept home: Fever, vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis and other contagious diseases and infections.

When you do plan to keep your child at home, please call the Education Office at 617.264.2801 x158 to notify the staff by noon. If your child is sick and must leave school early, please call us on your way to pick them up. If we are scheduled to pick up your child from school and you did not communicate to us that your child will not be attending our program that day, **there will be a \$10 fine** payable by cash or check at pick up on the day when your child returns. Failure to alert HomeBASE staff to a child's absence more than twice will result in a **\$10 fee** each time a failure to alert us occurs.

If your child becomes ill while at HomeBASE, we will contact you and ask you to pick up your child as soon as possible. When parent(s) cannot be reached, we will call the designated emergency phone numbers in your child's file. **Children must be symptom and fever free for a full 24-hour period before returning to HomeBASE.** If a child is prescribed antibiotic medication by a physician or health care provider, they must take it for a full **24-hour period** before returning to HomeBASE.

**If your child becomes ill while at school and/or is sent home from school, they will not be permitted to attend HomeBASE that day.**

According to DEEC policy, we must notify all families if a child in the program has come down with a communicable disease/infection or condition. We will send email communication to the entire program if a child or staff member is sick with a communicable illness or contracts head lice. Your child will not be identified. Examples of communicable diseases are strep throat, conjunctivitis, and flu.

All staff members are trained in Pediatric First Aid and CPR. Any incident that requires first aid will be reported to the parents in writing as required of HomeBASE by Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (our childcare licensing body). In the rare event of a serious accident or injury, we will call an ambulance to transport your child to the nearest hospital and, at the same time, attempt to reach you, your physician or the program's health care consultant.

### ***Promoting and Protecting Children's Health***

To protect against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne disease, HomeBASE suggests that:

- Children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.

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- Children will be encouraged to play in the shade on hot days. When in the sun, they wear sun-protective clothing, applied skin protection, or both. Applied skin protection will be either sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher that is applied to exposed skin (only with written parental permission to do so and provided by the parent or guardian).
- Children use insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease when public health authorities recommend use. Staff can apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission.

### ***Head Lice***

Head lice are not a threat to our health but can be a nuisance. Control of head lice is a shared responsibility of both parents and HomeBASE. Parents can help limit the problem by checking their child's head regularly. If lice or nits are found, the school must be notified. A child who has had head lice will be permitted to return following a treatment and lice check by the Education Director or her agent.

### ***Handwashing Policy***

Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children. Staff can assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

To reduce the risk of transmission of infections to themselves and others, all children and adults should wash their hands upon arrival at HomeBASE. This may take place in the bathrooms near the classrooms.

#### *Proper Hand Washing Procedure:*

1. Use liquid soap and running water
2. Wet hands before applying soap
3. Rub hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds. Include back of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails
4. Rinse thoroughly
5. Dry hands with paper towels

#### *Occasions for Hand Washing Throughout the Day (for Adults and Children):*

- Upon arrival into the classroom
- When returning from outdoor play
- After diapering or using the toilet
- After handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood, or vomit)
- Before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or after handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry)
- After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals

### ***Child Abuse and Neglect***

According to Massachusetts law, an abused or neglected child is any child under 18 years of age whose parents or any person responsible for his or her care:

1. Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury

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2. Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care
3. Abandons the child
4. Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to the child's age and level of development
5. Commits or allows to be committed an illegal sexual act upon a child or allows the child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material

Report any suspected cases of child abuse directly to Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the Temple Ohabei Shalom Education Director. Every educator is a mandated reporter under M.G.L and must make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) whenever s/he has reasonable cause to believe a child in the program is subject to abuse or neglect.

### **FIRE DRILLS**

HomeBASE is required by DEEC to hold monthly practice fire/evacuation drills with all groups of children and all educators during different times of the program day. Fire drills are logged monthly.

### **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

Emergency procedures are posted in each room and are reviewed with staff annually and as deemed necessary by the Education Director and HomeBASE Director.

Chain of command in the Education Director's absence:

When the Education Director is present, his/her decision is final in an emergency.

When the Education Director is not present, the designated staff person will make the decision in emergency. He/she will immediately notify the Education Director and advise the building administrator of the issue at hand.

### ***Emergency Contingency/Preparedness Plans***

In the case of fire, natural disaster, or any situation necessitating the evacuation of the building, the emergency evacuation procedures as outlined in each classroom and in all handbooks will be utilized.

The telephone should be used in emergencies to obtain information from local authorities to determine to evacuate or shelter in place in the event of a natural disaster.

In the case of a power outage, HomeBASE is equipped with back-up emergency lighting that will light the classroom for a period of 1-1.5 hours. Battery operated flashlights are available in the classroom. In the case of an extended electricity outage or loss of heat, every attempt will be made to keep HomeBASE open if feasible without heat. If the room temperature drops to 65 degrees, parents will be notified that HomeBASE will be closing and asked to pick up their children.

If telephone service is not available to the center, the Education Director/HomeBASE Director will utilize a cellular phone to contact parents or necessary emergency personnel.

If an evacuation from the building is necessary, the staff and children will proceed by foot to  
Certified Property Management  
1195 Beacon St STE 1, Brookline, MA 02446

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The Brookline Police and Fire Department are equipped to help with transportation as needed. HomeBASE staff will take the emergency backpack with them which has, among other items, a complete first aid kit and emergency contact information for all children in the program.

In the event a child cannot be located; the police will be called immediately. All children will be brought to a central location while synagogue staff and any available staff in excess of child supervision ratios, search the building and surrounding areas.

In the event of a threat to HomeBASE or Temple Ohabei Shalom, a mandatory lock down will be instituted, and police will be notified. If a lock down is in place, all children and teaching staff not only remain inside of the locked building, but the doors to the classrooms will also be locked until the threat is either resolved or the police have secured the building.

### ***Environmental Health Policies***

Toxic substances (used only as directed by the manufacturer) are stored in the original labeled container, kept in a locked room or cabinet inaccessible to children, and away from medications and foods. Matches and lighters are not accessible to children, and gasoline and other flammable materials are stored (when needed) in a separate building. The program maintains facilities so that they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

Temple Ohabei Shalom, the HomeBASE facility, and outdoor play areas are a smoke free environment. No smoking is permitted. Drinking of alcoholic beverages on the premises during child care hours is prohibited.

### ***General Safety***

We encourage the children to run, jump, play, and explore during our time outside. Outside play is a great way to develop gross-motor skills. While at the park, staff will remind children to use structures and materials safely. The following is a list of expected behaviors while at the park.

- We go down the slide feet first, one at a time
- We use the swings (tire or regular) by sitting on our bottoms only.
- Jump ropes are only to be used for jumping rope
- We will leave all nature items at the park (rocks, sticks, leaves)
- Climbing is for the play structures only, we leave the trees alone

### ***Pets***

No pets are allowed to enter the building unless they are kept on leash. Service animals are permitted. The Education Director or HomeBASE Director may ask you to keep the pet outside of the program at any time.

### ***Playground Safety***

We will go to local playgrounds, as mentioned earlier in this Handbook, every day- weather permitting. Safety at local park and playgrounds is of the utmost importance.

### ***Staff***

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All staff are required to wear yellow vests when out with the children. This is to ensure safety for the group, as well as making it easy for the children to find an adult at the playground. Although staff will be spread throughout the park, it is important that every child can always quickly spot a HomeBASE staff member.

### **CLOSING WORDS**

We are so happy to have your family at HomeBASE this year. We look forward to lots of wonderful experiences. Your feedback on the handbook and through out the year is appreciated. Thank you.