

Kesher FAQs 2021-2022

What will Kesher (formerly Religious School) look like for the 2021-2022 year?

All students will have a two hour in person class that includes Jewish Life education, tefillah (prayer experience) and chug (a fun choice activity). These classes will remain small so that the students have even more opportunities to connect with each other and their teacher. Both the Jewish Life and Hebrew components are mandatory parts of participation in Kesher.

For any family who feels that it is easier to participate online, or has different needs, there will be opportunities to connect to class via zoom. The logistics need to be worked out ahead of class for a given week so we can help accommodate whatever needs are there.

If students need a shorter class time, please be in touch with me.

Students in grades 3-7 will also have Hebrew learning for one half-hour during the week, occurring over zoom.

How will Hebrew learning take place?

Will there be opportunity for 'extra help' /tutoring?

Hebrew learning will take place over zoom, in small groups of fewer than 4 students. Students will meet with their teacher at the same time every week. Parents may write in time and class requests in the sign up form (link above). Any students who feel they need extra help or tutoring should be in touch with Rabbi NB. Families may elect to pay for extra tutoring/Hebrew opportunities.

Will my child fall behind with Hebrew instruction?

In short, we don't think so. We found that having Hebrew classes online in the spring, with students in small groups, meant our students excelled in Hebrew and made great strides. Families and students alike really enjoyed this new way of learning and were excited to show up to learn each week. More than anything, our students got to know their teachers on a more individualized level.

What if my child has special learning needs?

Please contact Rabbi NB to discuss any special learning needs or concerns you may have and she will assist you in meeting your student's needs.

What role will Keshet serve for my child(ren) as they near their B'nei Mitzvah dates?

We expect all 7th grade students to participate in our Keshet program, as part of the B'nei Mitzvah process. This entails both our Tuesday night program as well as the Hebrew classes, in addition to their tutoring and work with the clergy. This will allow students to get the support they need to continue working on the prayers they will help lead for the service (in small group Hebrew classes) as well as feel connected to their grade-level cohort.

What's the plan for teachers?

A silver lining of the decision to bring the Hebrew component of Keshet online allows us the opportunity to hire exceptional educators from around the country. Most of our educators from last year are returning, and we are excited to welcome a number of new faculty. Each educator will receive specific training on using online resources so that they can provide the best learning for the students.

Will there be a change in the cost/tuition this year ?

Tuition is increasing this year to better correspond to what we offer each grade. Tuition helps defray the cost of training and supporting our faculty, as well as providing other wonderful opportunities to connect. In addition, we will provide other opportunities for our students to connect through "electives" we will offer each week. If you have other questions about tuition, please contact lgoldberg@tiwestport.org.

Will we have choices for days to sign up? How soon do we have to decide?

Yes, you do have choices for student scheduling. Traditionally Keshet classes are offered on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays and we will continue to offer classes on these days. This means all students can sign up for a Sunday option. Students in grades K-3 can choose Sunday or Monday options, while students in grades 4-6 can choose options on Sundays and Tuesdays. On the enrollment form which we will send out in August 2021, we will ask you to select days and times. We ask that families sign up for what works for them and then let Rabbi NB know should your circumstances change.

Can I pick my child's group for Hebrew or Judaica?

Yes! You can request one or two friends whom your child wants to learn with this year (on our form).

What about the communal and social aspect of Keshet?

We plan to offer small group programs for our students to enjoy the social and communal aspects of Keshet. This might entail a trip to the apple orchard for our Grade 3 and 4 students or a Havdalah s'mores night for our Grade 5 students. One group may come to do tie dye while another participates in cupcake wars. We look forward to seeing what crazy and fun programming we can provide.