



**Huntington Jewish Center
Religious School**

Family Handbook
2018-2019

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Dear Parents,

Participating in the Jewish education of our children is a great honor and privilege. Parents and teachers are involved in a sacred process. Together, we can ensure understanding of our history, customs, beliefs and language while sharing a love of Judaism with our children.

The task of Jewish education is great, but the rewards are even greater. To instruct and guide the next generation of Jews in the values and rituals of Judaism is to ensure a bright and fulfilling future for our people for many generations to come.

It is our privilege to serve as the leadership for the Huntington Jewish Center Religious School. Our hope is that together, as educators and parents, we may undertake the wonderful task of educating our children.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide an overview of our school's programs and activities. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have at (631 427-1157) or mfisher@hjcny.com.

B'Shalom,

Maxine Fisher
Religious School
Administrator

Cantor Israel Gordan
Director, Synagogue Programming &
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Religious School Family Handbook

Table of Contents

Huntington Jewish Center Vision Statement	3
Religious School Mission Statement	4
Commitment to Excellence	4
Opening Day of School	5
School Hours	5
<i>Kavod</i> (Respect)	6
Attendance, Homework and Participation	7
<i>Chuggim</i> (extra curricular programming).	7
<i>Tzedakah</i> (charity).	7
<i>Kashrut</i> (kosher guidelines on HJC grounds).	8
School Closings	8
Drop-Off and Pick-Up Safety Guidelines	9
<i>Shabbatonim</i> (student-led Shabbat services).	10
HJC Shabbat and Holiday Attendance Guidelines	
Why does HJC have a Shabbat and Holiday Attendance Component?	11
What types of Services does HJC Offer?	12-13
NEW: <u>Religious School Family Shabbat Services</u>	13
Attendance Guidelines by grade	14
Youth Group	15
Family Involvement	
Sunday Family Workshops	16
Class Parents	17
Religious School Board	17
Volunteer Opportunities	17
Parent Teacher Conferences and Progress reports	18
Student Recognition and Awards	19-21
Attachments	
School Calendar 2018-2019	
Youth Group Registration Form	

HUNTINGTON JEWISH CENTER VISION STATEMENT

Introduction

We approach, engage and nurture our members on their lifelong Jewish journeys. We offer meaningful opportunities for communal and self-expression rooted in our tradition and in connection to the Jewish people and Israel.

Our Core Values

- *Kehilla kedosha* – “a holy community” that respects each individual as infinitely valued
- Accessible and understandable Judaism – Torah and tradition that is close to human hearts and abilities
- *Tikkun Olam* – “repairing the world” by striving for social justice and caring for the environment
- Thoughtfully evolving – open and responsive to contemporary challenges and opportunities within the framework of the Conservative movement
- Egalitarian – full participation of men and women
- Acceptance of diversity – embracing all generations and Jewish family structures

We Offer our Community

- A welcoming congregation that reaches out to newcomers and members young and old alike
- Opportunities for spiritual growth
- Torah infused education for all ages and stages
- Care and support in times of need
- A warm setting for life’s celebrations
- Social activities fostering connections among members

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

“Educate every child according to their ways, so that when they are older they will not leave it behind” (Proverbs 22:6)

חֲנֹךְ לַיָּעַל-פִּי דַרְכּוֹ גַם כִּי-יִזְקִין לֹא-יִסּוֹר מִמֶּנָּה

The Huntington Jewish Center Religious School is dedicated to preparing our children to live a modern Jewish life encompassing prayer, holiday celebrations, an appreciation of the Hebrew language, history, customs and traditions, and a healthy relationship with God. As part of an egalitarian, Conservative congregation, we are committed to equal religious and educational opportunities for all. Parents and educators work together in a caring, open, and participative environment, passing on our traditions from generation to generation.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The Huntington Jewish Center offers a variety of specialized programs for your child, designed according to his or her individual learning needs. The Religious School, Youth and Family Education Directors along with the Special Education sub-committee will work closely with your family, and where necessary with public school teachers, to develop the most effective program for your child.

The Huntington Jewish Center actively welcomes interfaith families to fully participate in synagogue life.

OPENING DAY OF SCHOOL

The first day of Religious School will take place on

Sunday, September 16th, 2018

On Sunday, September 16th, 2018

**At 9:00 AM we will be holding a parent orientation breakfast
for all Religious School parents**

SCHOOL HOURS

Gan (Kindergarten), Alef (1 st Grade)	Sundays	9:00am to 11:00am*
Bet (2 nd Grade)	Sundays	9:00am to 11:00am*
	Tuesdays	4:15pm to 6:15pm
Gimel (3 rd), Daled (4 th), Hey (5 th), Vav (6 th)	Sundays	9:00am to 12:00pm
	Tuesdays	4:15pm to 6:15pm
Mitzvah Team (7 th)	Sundays	9:00am to 12:00pm
	Sundays	5:30 to 7:00pm **
	Tuesdays	5:30pm to 7:30pm **

* Note: Childcare is offered on Sundays from 11:00am to 12:00pm for students in Gan, Alef and Bet. Childcare is offered as a convenience for families with older children who are in class until noon, though it is open to all of our younger students who enjoy playing with their classmates. New for 2018-19, there is a fee for childcare and the student must be signed up to participate.

** Mitzvah Team students will meet approximately twice a month on Tuesdays, and twice a month on Sundays with Kadima. View separate calendar of activities. Students are welcome to earn community service hours when not scheduled for class on Tuesdays or Sundays. Opportunities include helping in the office and classrooms. Contact Blair for more information and availability.

KAVOD (Respect)

Every member of our community, student, teacher, parent and faculty member, has the right to expect to be treated with *kavod*/respect, and the responsibility to treat others with respect. These rights and responsibilities include how each individual conducts him or herself in and out of the classroom. Please review this with your children.

1. General kavod for people – Respecting fellow students’ and teachers’ space. Listening and responding to people when they speak to you.
2. Speaking with kavod - fellow students and educators to speak without interruption. When sharing thoughts or disagreeing with others, individuals should do so without belittling the subject or the speaker.
3. Dressing with Kavod – wearing appropriate clothing while in synagogue services and class. Boys should wear a kippah at all times in the building.
4. Ensuring that ANY food brought into HJC follows kosher guidelines, as well as follows the school’s nut-free policy and is sensitive to fellow students’ allergies. For more information about food guidelines, please contact the office.
5. General kavod for the premises – cleaning up after snacks and refraining from touching or writing inappropriately on bulletin boards.
6. Kavod for learning – attending class regularly and contacting the teacher whenever an absence takes place. Bringing required books, homework and supplies, as well as aiming to come on time as best as possible, conducting yourself with maximum effort while in class is also integral to showing kavod for learning.

ATTENDANCE, HOMEWORK AND PARTICIPATION

In order for students to be successful, it is important that they attend class regularly, arrive prepared for class (including a *kipah* for boys), complete any homework on time and participate in classroom discussions and activities. If your child will be absent, please notify the office. While students will likely miss class from time to time due to illness or unforeseeable conflict, we are committed to providing every child with an excellent Jewish education and appreciate your support in making sure your children understand the importance of their role.

TZEDAKAH (Charity)

The mitzvah of *Tzedakah*, the responsibility of giving to those in need, is a basic value of Judaism. We want to instill in our students a sensitivity to the needs of others and a willingness to be generous in offering assistance. Children are encouraged to contribute money to the class *Tzedakah* box each week. At the end of the school year, the class chooses where to donate the money they have collected.

KASHRUT (Kosher guidelines on HJC grounds)

HJC is a kosher facility. Students are permitted to bring a small snack to class and we request that all snacks follow the rules of *kashrut*. If you would like to send in a snack to share with the class, there are several kosher bakeries including Hummel and Hummel, Zuckerbakers, Buttercooky Bakery and Park Bakery. Please note that Dunkin' Donuts are *not* kosher but Entenmann's is. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

We are happy to offer snacks and drinks for purchase on the days of Religious School. Snacks and drinks are sold for \$0.75 each during the 15-20 minutes prior to the start of class on Sundays and Tuesdays. In addition, bagels are available on Sunday mornings for \$1.50 for regular size and \$0.75 for a mini bagel. Funds raised during snack sales help to subsidize the cost of field trips, workshops, classroom furniture and equipment and many other expenses.

Please note that HJC Religious School and Early Childhood Center are nut-free facilities.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In case of inclement weather go to:

[www.News 12 Long Island](http://www.News12LongIsland.com)

- HJC Religious School closes in case of bad weather and whenever school District #3 Huntington is closed.
- Sunday morning closings will always be posted on www.News12.com
- PLEASE do not drop off your child on an inclement day. Please be certain there are other people on the premises.
- If we make a last minute decision to close a Remindme text will be sent and/or the class parents will notify each family by phone. Please ensure that your cell phone info is current.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP SAFETY GUIDELINES

In order to ensure the safety of all of our children, please help us by following these rules:

Gan and Alef students must be escorted to and from their classrooms (or gym if staying for childcare).

Drop off: a key fob is required for entry into the building or the student needs to be “buzzed” in.

Pick-Up Lane

- All pick-ups are from the rear of the building. If you do not wish to wait in the pick-up line, please park your car and come into the building to escort your child to your car.
- **Please do not ask your child to run across the parking lot to your car. You must come to the curb and walk your child to your car!**
- For safety purposes, we discourage drivers from leaving the pick-up line until they reach the front. The parking lot is a busy and dangerous place. If you must pull out of the pick-up line, please do so cautiously. Sometimes children, and even parents, become distracted and walk through the parking lot without looking.
- When lining up from Leslie Lane, please pull as far to the left as possible in order to leave a free lane for those wishing to park.

Early Pick Up Procedure

- For the sake of our children’s safety, if you need to pick your child up before dismissal, please send in a note to the teacher and come to the Religious School Office . We will bring your child to the office. **Please do not take your child from the classroom by yourself.**
- School Safety Policy: No child may leave school without a parent.

SHABBATONIM (Student-led Shabbat Services)

At the Huntington Jewish Center, beginning in Gimel (3rd grade), each class spends part of the year learning about a specific service (Kabbalat Shabbat, Musaf, Havdalah, etc.). Students learn about the meaning behind many of the rituals, share their thoughts about specific aspects of their own personal Jewish identity and volunteer to be part of a group to lead individual prayers. The class' studies culminate at the *Shabbaton* when the students lead the congregation during the service.

Shabbatonim mark an important milestone in each child's growth and knowledge of prayer and worship. It is an opportunity for children to show their parents, families, and the congregation, that they are evolving as young participants as they prepare to become the future leaders of the Jewish people.

The *Shabbatonim* are very moving, particularly when the children share their personal insights into our faith. Seeing how proud they are as they lead members of our congregation in prayer is truly special, and a simcha to share with family and friends.

A special meal is part of the celebration, either dinner before a Friday night service, or luncheon following Shabbat morning. We encourage you to share this time with your children, catch up with old friends as well as make new friends with the families of your children's classmates. It is a wonderful way to strengthen connections within our community. Students' participation in the *Shabbaton* and *Oneg Shabbat* is covered by the school registration fee. The fee for parents and other guests will be determined by the catering cost

***Shabbaton* Dates for the 2018-2019 School Year**

(Date subject to change)

Gimel and Daled *Shabbaton*

Friday, May 10, 2019

Hey and Vav *Shabbaton*

Saturday, May 11, 2019

HJC SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Why does HJC have a Shabbat and Holiday Attendance component as part of the Religious School Curriculum?

1. **LEARN THE SERVICE:** One of the goals of a Jewish education is to teach the foundation of the Sabbath service including the history, connection to Israel, Hebrew language and, of course, the prayers. When we went from a 3-days-a-week-school to 2, a decision was made to emphasize teaching the Saturday morning service **on Saturday morning**, rather than during class time. By attending about once a month (10 times per school year), the students become familiar with the prayers, the flow and the rituals. This is the primary opportunity they have to learn this service. The same service they will be part of during their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **Students who attend Shabbat services regularly are very well prepared for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah training process** and are able to participate in services for the rest of their lives.
2. **FEEL COMFORTABLE:** We want the students to feel comfortable in services – since participating in the various services is part of being a Jew. We don't want services to feel foreign and scary to them. By asking them to come regularly on Saturday, the Sanctuary and Lief Chapel feel more familiar and less intimidating. It becomes a place where they “know what to do” and gives them a sense of accomplishment when they know what is happening. They learn without really trying. Parents are always welcome to worship with their children in Junior Congregation.
3. **BECOME PART OF THE COMMUNITY:** We want families to become part of the community. Services are the primary way we celebrate our Judaism in the community. By coming to services, and perhaps staying for the Kiddush, there is an opportunity to socialize and get to know other members of the community. You start to recognize faces, and often see them outside of HJC, leading to more of a sense of belonging.

HJC SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES (cont'd)

What types of services does HJC offer?

HJC offers different programs based on age. If you feel your child might enjoy a program intended for a different age group, please contact Maxine Fisher to discuss the curriculum and find the best fit.

Babysitting: Infants through age 4: Young children are encouraged to play in the gym under the supervision of an adult babysitter while older siblings and parents participate in Shabbat and holiday services. This free service is available every Saturday at 10:15am in the gym.

Nitzanim: Age 4 through 2nd Grade: Children in this age group learn about Judaism through engaging stories, games, movement and activities. The program is offered every Saturday September – June. *Nitzanim* is held in the Family Life room from 10:30 am until approximately 11:45 am when the children make their way to the *bimah* in the main sanctuary and lead the smiling congregation in singing *Ein Keloheinu*.

Junior Congregation: 3rd Grade through 6th Grade: The students are guided through their own Shabbat morning service. They have opportunities to lead prayers, open the ark and even carry the Torah. The weekly *Parshah* (Torah portion) is discussed and the children have a chance to perform in a *Sedrah Scene* which is a comical skit based on the lessons of that week's *Parshah*. Parents are always welcome to worship with their children in Junior Congregation which runs twice a month from 10:30am to 11:45am in the Lief Chapel. (see calendar for dates)

Special Family Junior Congregation. Friday Night December 14th @ 7:00 p.m.
Friday Night April 5th @ 7:00 p.m.

Main Sanctuary: 7th Grade through Adult (Open to All when there is no Junior Congregation on the calendar) Children entering their Bar/Bat Mitzvah year join the adult community in the main sanctuary starting February of their Vav year, so they may become familiar and comfortable in the service.

*** Any Shabbat when we do not have Junior Congregation, students are invited to join us for the regular service in the Main Sanctuary. ***

HJC SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES (cont'd)

Special Shabbat services and dinners for Gan, Alef and Bet

Early Childhood Center – Gan –Alef & Bet Friday, September 28th 5:00 pm service,
5:30 pm dinner

Early Childhood Center – Gan – Alef & Bet Saturday, October 20th 10:30 am

Gan and Alef – Family Shabbat Fair Friday, October 26th 5:00 pm

Early Childhood Center –Gan - Alef & Bet Saturday, December 8th TBA

Early Childhood Center – Religious School Saturday, January 26th 10:30 am

Early Childhood Center Gan-Alef & Bet Friday, February 8th 5:00 pm Services and
5:30 pm Dinner

HJC SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES (cont'd)

Guidelines for Gan, Alef and Bet

Our younger students are encouraged to participate in our *Nitzanim* and ECC Family Shabbat Services. We recommend that younger children attend 8 or more services as they become comfortable participating in age appropriate services.

Guidelines for Gimel, Dalet, Hey and Vav

Each student should attend a minimum of **10 services** for Religious Service Participation. This can be from any combination of Junior Congregation, Religious School Family Services (see above), Friday night, holiday, and daily minyan services. We strongly recommend that at least 5 attendances come from Junior Congregation, as the content of this service is designed for your children.

Note: Students who attend at least 15 services will qualify for a special Junior Congregation Award, special end of the year mystery trip on Tuesday May 28th, and *could* be considered for the Judaic Scholar award (if academic and class participation guidelines are met).

We record attendance at Junior Congregation services. If your child attends other services, it is your responsibility to report it to the Religious School office, so credit can be received. Periodically, service attendance records will be emailed home. Please take the time to double check these records for accuracy.

Guidelines for Mitzvah Team

Students entering their Bar/Bat Mitzvah year transition into services in the Main Sanctuary starting the February of the Vav year. Our goal is to help them feel comfortable and confident with the services so that they may fully enjoy this special time as they prepare to become adult members of our community. To ensure that they are prepared, **all Mitzvah Team students are expected to attend at least:**

10 Shabbat morning services in the Main Sanctuary

AND

6 Friday evening services

This commitment should be completed 3 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to ensure that each student is comfortable and confident.

Note: *Mitzvah Team students are responsible for turning their own attendance cards.*

YOUTH GROUP

The friendships that form during Religious School are very special. While the students may attend different schools during the day, being part of a community with other Jewish children gives them a sense of belonging to something bigger. Youth group provides a regular opportunity to socialize with their friends in a fun environment while trying new activities, making up silly skits or songs, or working on a *tzedakah* project. We offer groups for 4th through 12th grade.

CHAVERIM: 4th – 6th grade meets twice a month (Approximately)

Tuesdays, 6:15pm to 7:30pm (dinner is included in the membership fee).

October 9 th , 16 th , 23 rd , 30 th	February 5 th , 26 th
November 13 th , 27 th	March 5 th , 19 th
December 4 th , 11 th	April 9 th , 30 th
January 8 th , 22 nd	May 7 th , 21 st

KADIMA: 7th and 8th grade meets twice a month (part of MT curriculum)

Sundays, 5:30pm to 7:00pm

October 14 th , 21 st , 28 th	January 6 th , 13 th , 27 th	April 14 th
November 4 th , 18 th	February 10 th	May 5 th , 19 th
December 2 nd , 9 th	March 10 th , 17 th , 24 th , 31 st	

USY: 9th – 12th grade meets twice a month, there are also Divisional and Regional events

Sundays, 7:30pm – 9:00pm alternating between HJC and East Northport

October 14 th , 21 st , 28 th	January 6 th , 13 th , 27 th	April 14 th
November 4 th , 18 th	February 10 th	May 5 th , 19 th
December 2 nd , 9 th	March 10 th , 17 th , 24 th , 31 st	

Registration forms are included with this packet, or contact the office for more information.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

A religious education is a joint effort between educators, the congregation and the family. Students get more out of Religious School when their families participate in the community. With all the demands on our time, we strive to provide a variety of opportunities with various levels of time and commitment needed. We are happy to discuss the various roles to help you select one or more that work with your interest and availability.

Sunday Family Workshops

Each grade has at least one Sunday Family Workshop. **It is important that at least one parent, or adult family member, attend with the child.** These workshops allow the students to explore specific aspects of Jewish life. The workshops generally begin at 9:15 am and end sometime before noon (before 11:00am for Gan, Alef or Bet classes). Dates are subject to change.

The Vav (6th grade) class has a series of 6 workshops in preparation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. Vav Workshops start at 9:00 am in the Lief Chapel, and continue at 9:45 am with the instructor. The first three Vav workshops will be lead by Rabbi Saks.

Alef	SHMA Pillow Workshop	February 3rd	
Bet	Mastering the Alef-Bet	April 7 th	
Gimel & Daled	God Workshop	December 16 th	
Hey	Hey Brachot Workshop	November 18th	
Vav	Bar/Bat Mitzvah	October 14 th November 18 th December 16 th	January 13 th February 3 rd March 31st

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT (cont'd)

Class Parents

Class Parents assist the teacher by coordinating other parents to help with events such as the *Shabbaton* and classroom celebrations. Class Parents also assist with communication to the families in case of school closings due to weather, or when there are important events or opportunities. If you are interested in becoming a Class Parent, please contact the office.

Religious School Board

The Religious School is overseen by a lay board made up of parents of children in all grades. These parents volunteer their time to develop and implement policies and programming in an effort to create a school where all children have an opportunity to succeed while strengthening their personal connection to Judaism. The board always welcomes new members. If you are interested in joining the committee, or would like more information, please contact [Felicia Messing](mailto:kmessing@optonline.net) kmessing@optonline.net or AJ Hepworth at OceanAJ4@yahoo.com

Volunteer Opportunities

The success of the school is tied to the commitment of our families. We encourage all families to find the level of involvement that works with their individual situation. There are opportunities large and small. Whether you are able to make a few phone calls, pick up some needed items at Costco, shmear bagels on a Sunday morning, set up for a function, organize an event, create a new program or anything in between – we have the perfect opportunity to fit within your schedule. Please contact Felicia Messing at kmessing@optonline.net or AJ Hepworth at OceanAJ4@Yahoo.com to discuss how you can help our school succeed.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

During the school year, you will be receiving periodic e-mails and updates from your child's teachers. We encourage parents and teachers to discuss any issues or concerns as they arise so that situations may be addressed right away.

Twice a year (January and May) you will receive a Progress Report to let you know how your child is doing academically and socially. In addition, Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in January.

Students in **Gan and Alef** will have their conferences on **Sunday, January 13th**. During this time, we have a special program to occupy the students. During this time, students will have a program, leaving the teachers free to meet with parents.

Students in **Bet through Mitzvah Team** will have their conferences on **Tuesday, January 15th**. Please note, Bet through Vav will have **EARLY DISMISSAL AT 5:45pm**.

STUDENT RECOGNITION AND ACADEMIC AWARDS

Each student connects with Judaism in a unique way. We honor every child with either a student recognition award, or an academic award. The Student Recognition and academic awards assembly takes place during school on Tuesday, May 21st. Parents with their families are invited, to attend.

These awards include:

Huntington Jewish Center Academic Awards

Progress Report grades are on a scale of 4 (Excellent), 3 (Very Good), 2 (Satisfactory) and 1 (Needs Improvement)

- **Honor Roll**

- All final scholastic achievement grades must be 3's and 4's. At least half the grades should be 4's
- No outstanding disciplinary issues
- No more than 10 absences from class during the school year (an exception for extended illness may be made)
- Must satisfy Shabbat and Holiday Attendance Guidelines (minimum of 10 attendances)
- Available to students in Bet through Mitzvah Team

- **High Honor Roll**

- All final scholastic achievement grades must be 3's and 4's. A maximum of three grades may be a 3, all other grades must be a 4
- No outstanding disciplinary issues
- No more than 10 absences from class during the school year (an exception for extended illness may be made).
- Must satisfy Shabbat and Holiday Attendance Guidelines (minimum of 10 attendances)
- Available to students in Bet through Mitzvah Team

STUDENT RECOGNITION AND ACADEMIC AWARDS (cont'd)

- **Judaic Scholar**

The Judaic Scholar Award is designed to recognize students who excel in academic performance, religious service attendance and personal behavior.

Students who receive the Judaic Scholar Award at least four times during the five years of Religious School are eligible for induction into Keter Torah, a Metropolitan New York (METNY) Honor Society of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ).

- All grades must be 3's and 4's. A maximum of three grades may be a 3, all other grades must be a 4
- All behavior grades must be 4's
- No more than 6 absences from class during the school year (an exception for extended illness may be made)
- Must earn the Junior Congregation Award for Shabbat and Holiday attendance (minimum of 15 attendances)
- Available to students in Gimel through Mitzvah Team

Excellence Awards from the METNY Region of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism (USCJ)

- **Junior Congregation Attendance**

Students are recognized for consistent participation in Junior Congregation and other religious services. In order to qualify, the student must attend a minimum of 15 religious services during the school year.

STUDENT RECOGNITION AND ACADEMIC AWARDS (cont'd)

- **Akiva Award**

The Director of each religious school in the METNY region, selects one 7th grade student to receive the Akiva Award. A student receiving this honor will be recognized as an individual working toward a “personal best” in Judaic studies, showing a commitment to community service/*tikun olam*, and serving as a synagogue student role model. This student should also qualify for Honor Roll or higher. Akiva Award winners are invited to the annual METNY Regional ceremony with families, principals and rabbis in attendance.

- **Keter Torah**

The Keter Torah Honor Society recognizes students who excel in Judaic Studies and exhibit the highest levels of personal behavior and commitment in their congregational religious schools. The special distinction is for students in the graduating class of their schools who have earned at least four Judaic Scholar Awards during five school years. Students receive a certificate and are inducted into the Keter Torah Honor Society at the annual METNY Regional ceremony with families, principals and rabbis in attendance. Induction into Keter Torah is the highest honor available to our students.