

# "Gan Neve Shalom" Peace Garden Preschool & Kindergarten 2016-2017

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# "Gan Neve Shalom" Peace Garden Preschool & Kindergarten 2016-2017

**Please note: You are responsible for knowing the policies of this handbook. Please keep it in a safe place and refer to it from time to time.**

**HOW TO CONTACT ME:** phone vs. email

I always prefer to speak with you in person or by phone. Please use email only to relay simple information, or to ask a question that requires a simple response. ***If you need a more in depth response, i.e. a conversation, call me.*** Leave a brief message with best call back times and I will call you back at my earliest convenience, usually within 24 hours Monday- Friday.

**Email - leahavital1318@gmail.com**

I will sometimes send you important school information via e-mail. **Please** confirm that you have received and read your email. This will help things go smoothly at school and helps me serve your child. Just hit reply and simply relay that you have received and read my mail. A simple "Got it" will suffice. I will keep email to a minimum, but please understand this is the only way to relay information to the group during vacations.

**Phone # and call times: 541-488-8887**

**No calls between 4:30 Friday and 10AM Sunday, or between 8PM – 9AM Mon - Thurs**

- ❖ If your call requires more than a brief conversation, I may set up an alternative phone time in order to do the conversation justice or arrange a meeting.
- ❖ **Please add my cell phone # 541-301-2398 to your phone contacts.**

In case of emergency I will call you from my cell, but otherwise I will call you from my home # 541-488-8887 and request that you call me on the same.

***It is your obligation to respond quickly to a text or call during school hours.***

## **WELCOME TO THE GAN!**

"Gan Neve Shalom" is the Hebrew name of the Preschool & Kindergarten, which I have translated as Peace Garden. It is my mission to relate and work with your children towards the goal of teaching through our everyday experience the path to living peacefully with one another. As the poignant song goes, "We are the ones we have been waiting for." The Gan is inspired by both the Waldorf philosophy of early childhood education, and the values, beauty, joy, and spirit of Judaism, as well as universal values. Gan means both kindergarten and garden in Hebrew.

Gan Neve Shalom Peace Garden is located at Havurah Shir Hadash on 185 N. Mountain Avenue in Ashland, operating under the directorship of Leah Avital Cohen. It is open to children ages 3-6 of any ethnicity, spiritual path, or diverse family structure. I will commonly refer to the kindergarten as Gan. I prefer to refer to the program in general as kindergarten rather than preschool, as it conjures the feeling that is most appropriate for the philosophy of early childhood education that is embraced at Peace Garden.

## **My Commitment to you**

My commitment is to provide a safe, loving, nurturing environment where your child can flourish and together we can build community. On a daily basis I strive to teach your children through action; the values of open communication, consideration, honesty, respect, giving, gratitude, and community, and to appreciate, acknowledge, and embrace the rainbow of diversity of humankind. In order to build strong community, we also need to mirror this for our children through our own behavior and, by living these values, maintain a high level of integrity in our relationships with one another.

I, Leah Avital Cohen, as teacher/director of “Gan Neve Shalom” Preschool & Kindergarten, reserve the right to adjust this program as I see fit to serve the needs of the group of children in my care. I ask that you trust me to make the appropriate choices with only the best of intentions! The adjustments I make are purely in the interest of serving your children. I consider flexibility to be an important quality in life in general, and particularly when working with children. Nothing is set in stone! The willingness to grow and change is a core quality and it is my philosophy to avoid getting stuck in dogma! I am dedicated to looking for creative solutions to all issues.

I am delighted and grateful that you have chosen Peace Garden. I know how precious your child is to you, and feel blessed to have the profound responsibility of caring for her. I appreciate being entrusted with your child’s education.

## **Handbook**

This handbook has been written with the intention of providing the clearest communication possible between parents and teacher. It is my job and my most sincere intention as your child’s teacher, to partner with you in creating a supportive home away from home for your child. In order for me to do my job to the best of my ability, I need your willingness to make every effort to communicate with me regarding anything that is affecting you as a family so that I can be aware of your child’s changing needs. I also need you to be open and direct with me in your communication if you have any questions or concerns. Call me if you have anything you would like to address. I will decide when we talk if I feel we should schedule a meeting time.

## **Teacher / Director**

Leah Avital Cohen, as teacher and director of Gan Neve Shalom, is responsible for managing the administrative and the educational needs of the school. Leah Avital is a credentialed early childhood educator with twenty-three years experience teaching, nine of which were in diverse classroom settings in the San Francisco Bay Area before opening Gan Neve Shalom. She comes to her work with children from a deep passion for the sacredness of childhood. Leah Avital is dedicated to creating a classroom environment of love and respect.

## **GETTING READY FOR YOUR CHILD’S DAY AT KINDERGARTEN**

Following a few simple guidelines will help your morning go more smoothly and pleasantly. I recommend the following:

- ❖ Lay out your child’s clothes the day before. You decide what is appropriate. If you want to provide your child with a choice...it should be one of two choices only.
- ❖ A peaceful, simple bedtime ritual and **early** bedtime.
- ❖ A hearty breakfast eaten in a relaxed way. I recommend that your child has a protein, with healthy fats every morning. Only carb breakfasts should be avoided.
- ❖ Find a sweet ritual to share some time with your child each morning so that he has some one on one attention.

- ❖ A healthy and wonderful addition to your morning would be to walk to Gan together. If you are not in walking distance, park the car a few blocks away and walk the rest of the way to Gan or park here and take a walk. You will be developing a strong and healthy child. Do not give in to complaints about walking if you receive them; just listen and acknowledge.

### **Starting you child's day off on a positive and joyful note**

The beginning and end of your child's day is as important as all that flows between. His day will flow most smoothly if he arrives on time. Often children have difficulty transitioning into the kindergarten when other children are already happily engaged with one another. It is very important that your child does not miss participating in the start of our morning together! To that end, do your very best to leave enough time in the morning to avoid rushing and the stress it creates for your family. To encourage harmonious transitions into the kindergarten I respectfully request that you follow these guidelines when dropping off your child.

### **Separation Anxiety**

Some children have difficulty transitioning in the morning, especially at the beginning of the school year. If you expect that your child may experience separation anxiety, please discuss this with me before our school year begins. Separation can come up for a child for a variety of reasons and any time as they go through developmental changes. It is not a sign for worry but is something that we should discuss. Our clarity about dealing with this issue will support you and your child.

### **Relaying information at drop off time**

It is important that my focus be on the children when they arrive. Therefore, only communicate those things that are important for me to know for your child's well being on that particular day. Please be brief and to the point. If I am busy with another child or parent, and you need to relay important information that may affect your child's morning at school, please write me a note. I will attend to it at my first opportunity. However, that being said, there are days with slow arrivals and if the children are playing happily and not requiring attention, it is fine to chat a bit. I will let you know if I need to attend to the children.

### **WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS FOR KINDERGARTEN**

Our purpose in the kindergarten is to create an environment that encourages creativity and nourishes the imagination. Years of working in early childhood education are strong confirmation that children are affected by the clothes they wear. To that end, clothing and footwear should be free of media images and commercial logos that serve to distract. Please refrain from sending your child to school with cowboy boots or shoes that flash.

In order to support your child best at school, it is imperative that she be dressed appropriately for a carefree day of active work and play. It is very important that your child wears shoes that support and protect the feet, fit securely, and have good traction. Clothing must be comfortable and easily taken on and off, especially if she has been recently potty trained. Expect clothing worn to school to get dirty and stained. Therefore, have your child wear only those clothes that you don't mind being soiled. Children should not be concerned about dirtying their clothing since this can obstruct free play.

We will be spending much time outside every day. *\*Your child must have all the clothes listed below.* Your child will fully experience the elements of Mother Earth! Stomping in the mud and the puddles are some of the joys of childhood not to be missed. Be sure that your child comes prepared for all weather conditions, as being outside is not fun for the child who is too cold or wet. Layered clothing is a necessity in our climate.

### **Clothing and other necessities that remain at school**

*Remember that Ashland has many microclimates and within the 4 hours that the children are at Gan, the weather can change many times! Your child must be prepared for all possible weather. Do not judge what clothing your child will need by how the weather is where you live.*

**\*The following items must stay at school: *all clothing must be clearly labeled in an obvious place. Please check each day to see if your child's clothing has been used and needs replacing.***

### **Autumn, Winter, & Spring Clothing that stay at school so that your child is always prepared!**

- ❖ Waterproof gloves **or** mittens, and a warm hat that stays on your child's head
- ❖ Warm rain/snow boots \* see recommendation below
- ❖ Raincoat with a hood that stays on, or a rain hat with a brim to protect the face from pouring rain, rain pant. Raincoat and pants are best if lined and should be large enough to fit over clothing. \* Please see the recommendations for rain clothes.
- ❖ All children must have a second layer of warm pants for cold days. Girls should have pants to wear under skirts for cold days.
- ❖ Two changes of clothing, including 2 pairs of underwear, 2 pairs of socks, sweater or sweatshirt.

### **Boot recommendation**

Bogs are insulated, high, and great! They are available online and at the Grange.

### **\* Rain clothes recommendation**

I strongly recommend the following: "Playshoes" rain clothes. Overalls are best for comfort and protection. They will also grow with your child as they have adjustable suspenders making the expense well worth it! You will still need a roomy rain jacket and a rain hat with a brim that is not easy to find for children but Playshoes makes this as well. If your child is well protected otherwise but rain is dripping down his face, he won't be happy playing in the rain. No, I don't get a kickback! They are simply the best, most durable, and comfortable for your child that I have seen to date!

### **Clothing that comes and goes...**

- ❖ Warm winter jacket that will accommodate an extra layer underneath when needed - daily during winter months. Your child should always have layered clothing.
- ❖ Shoes must be safe for play with good traction on the soles. No flip flops, cowboy boots or flashing shoes please. When possible shoes should be able to be managed by your child. If they don't have any that they have learned to put on themselves, of course they will be helped.

### **May & June : Please add the following items for warm weather play**

In warm weather, provide a bathing suit and a towel for water play. It is also acceptable to have children play in underwear. Please put sun block on your child before coming to school, and keep an extra bottle at school that you can use if you have forgotten to do so one morning. If it is your conscious choice not to use sun block; I respect that, and of course cannot be responsible for your child becoming sunburned. There will be a sheet where you can indicate your choice and sign off in regards to responsibility. The following should stay at school beginning in May.

- ❖ A bathing suit, sunhat that will stay on your child's head, and towel (keep at school during warm weather) I strongly recommend a "Sunday afternoon" sun hat. It is the only hat I have seen that does the job. It is well worth the investment.
- ❖ An unbreakable drinking water bottle to be used outside during hot weather. A large selection of stainless steel bottles are now available that do not leach.

### **Other things your child needs at kindergarten - all through the year**

- ❖ Indoor shoes or slippers: these must not be slippery, waterproof soles are best
- ❖ Coins and one or more non -perishable food items for our *Shabbat* Circle on Thursdays
- ❖ I recommend keeping a stash in your car so that your child is always prepared!
- ❖ Lunch basket, two small wash cloth sized napkins, eating utensils (children bring lunch on Thursday only) I recommend getting a basket larger than the smallest woven baskets at Coop and Shop N' Kart. They often have nice baskets at Goodwill. It must fit into our cubbies. I will let you know that measurement.

### **LUNCH**

#### **Vegetarian Lunch and Snack on Thursdays only**

Each child brings his own lunch and snack on Thursdays only. Lunch should be simple, but substantial, with few choices. It is important that food be nourishing in ample amounts so that your child is sustained. Your child's lunch basket should be lined with a cloth large enough to extend over the sides with two **washcloth sized cloth napkins** inside and eating utensils. One will be used as a napkin, the other as a placemat. Their size **is** important since this defines a child's space. The basket should fit easily into school cubbies. It is perfectly acceptable to use washcloths and much more preferable to a napkin that is too big! A container with divided sections is a great idea. Please send their food in reusable rather than disposable containers and label with your child's name. Please do not send fruit or hardboiled eggs that need peeling. Your child can help you prepare lunch by doing that at home. While I provide 30 minutes for eating which is ample, this does not allow the extra time that it takes to do this.

One of the goals of Gan Neve Shalom is to teach children to care for Mother Earth. By using sustainable rather than disposable containers for your child's lunch, you are helping to teach them a core value. *There are finally some great choices of containers with lids that children can actually manage to open! A container with divided sections is a great idea. Ask me for suggestions. The kindergarten is a place for children to acquire a new sense of independence and this is encouraged by allowing success to be within their reach!*

**Food choices must be restricted to vegetarian or fish (no shellfish) since these are the guidelines followed by the Havurah. No meat may be eaten at school.** Be sure to check labels of prepared foods. Do not include any foods containing animal fat in your child's lunch.

Do not send cookies, candy, or sweets of any kind (this includes juice) in your child's lunch. Kindergarten is an easy place to begin new habits and your child will eat a much better lunch, if she hasn't filled up on juice. Filter water is available in the classroom.

**Any food that is a potential choking hazard, such as vegetarian hot dogs or grapes, should be cut. Please do not send popcorn!** Food should be sent ready to eat. Mealtimes are also story telling and reading time. The peeling of oranges, cutting food, and peeling hard boiled eggs takes time away from this special together so please send food ready to eat. No popcorn please.

## COMPLETION OF YOUR CHILD'S DAY AT KINDERGARTEN

### **Pick up and completing our day together**

We close our day with a goodbye circle on days when we finish inside and outside in fair weather. Our goodbye circle is our closure after having spent a day together and it is important not to be disturbed at this time. If the door to the kindergarten is closed when you arrive, please wait until it is opened to greet your child. The children's focus and ability to participate is disrupted when the door is opened before we have finished. You are welcomed to socialize quietly in the hallway so the children do not hear you. Please plan to arrive a few minutes early so that you will always be waiting for your child when the door opens. Your child will expect to see your smiling face when our day is over. He is awaiting your arrival and may feel anxious if you are late. It can be both disappointing and upsetting to a child to have his parent arrive late.

Some flexibility on your part regarding the exactness of the time our door is opened will be appreciated. This may vary a few minutes from day to day. In order to be relaxed at the close of our day together, I will appreciate your understanding and flexibility. This request is for the sole purpose of providing a smooth transition for your child. If, on occasion we are delayed more than a few minutes, I will open the door to let you know or you may find a sign on the door to let you know we are delayed.

### **Importance of and teaching promptness**

It is important that you pick up your child promptly. When you arrive on time, you are showing a sign of respect to those awaiting your arrival. Your child will learn by the example that you set that that it is either okay to be late, or important to be prompt. Your promptness will smooth transitions for your child as well as the rest of the group.

***PLEASE SEE PAGE 19 FOR SCHOOL POLICY ON LATENESS.***

## KINDERGARTEN VALUES

### ***Tikkun Olam - Healing the universe***

The single, strongest focus of Gan Neve Shalom is to help children become conscious 'citizens' of Mother Earth. Torah, the story of our history, from which we derive our teachings, teaches that we learn through our experience. Every day at our kindergarten we strive to create a caring, loving community through acts of loving kindness, (*mitzvot* in Hebrew) inspired by the Jewish value of *tikkun olam*.

### ***Tzedekah***

Every Thursday the children participate in a *Shabbat* circle where we give thanks for the blessings of Mother Earth, donate coins in our *tzedakah* box and donate staple food items to the Emergency Food Bank. The Hebrew word *Tzedakah* means justice. In Judaism, giving to those in need is simply doing the just thing, and it is our obligation. The nature of *tzedakah* is very different from the idea of charity. "Charity," on the other hand, suggests benevolence and generosity, and is a choice. At the end of the year the funds collected are donated to organizations that support those in need, as well as the environment. Together we learn to be stewards of the earth by gardening, using recyclable materials, taking care of each other; and finding ways to bring joy and consideration to our friends, families, and the world.

We reinforce the values of giving, kindness, gratitude, thoughtfulness, sharing, and loving through story, song, blessing, and the way in which we relate to each other on a daily basis. Action is by far the most powerful teacher. Our words may reinforce, but without strong modeling and teaching through experience, our words will remain empty and meaningless to our children.

**Shabbat** is the Jewish day of rest, a time of reflection to focus on gratitude, blessing, joy, and light. *Shabbat* is welcomed at sundown on Friday evening and closes at sundown on Saturday. Since school does not meet on Fridays, we celebrate *Shabbat* on Thursdays instead. This is an extra celebration and the children come to understand that our celebration is an opportunity to enjoy a time together in celebration that would otherwise be missed.

Each Thursday, as part of our rhythm of giving, please send one or more nonperishable food items to school with your child as well as five coins. The child that does not have their coins and food items are disappointed at being unable to participate in this giving tradition. Some parents find it helpful to keep a supply in their trunk. Please make it a point to do whatever necessary in order to help you remember to bring donations for your child. Otherwise, your child will receive an unconscious message that this is not important. The food items are donated to the Ashland Emergency Food Bank, and the children drop their coins in our (tzedakah) basket. At the end of the year this money is contributed to organizations supporting humanitarian needs as well as environmental causes. Your child will also enjoy choosing a food item at the store for their food bank donation. Give them a choice of two things only or this will not be fun for either of you.

### **Giving is a core value in our kindergarten community.**

Parent participation directly benefits your child and the entire school community in a myriad of ways. Your child will learn firsthand the value of community, working together, giving and sharing. Through your participation you communicate to your children that you value their school and the importance of giving of one's self. The children's enthusiastic expressions of pride and ownership as a result of their parent's contributions to the school have been a joy to behold and the value of giving reverberates in the community. Sharing a soup, bringing flowers, and preparing the challah dough are weekly ways in which I hope we can all participate on a rotating basis.

## **Parent Participation – What You Provide**

### **Shabbat Flower Sign-up**

Families take turns throughout the year bringing flowers to beautify the *Shabbat* table. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board above the cubbies for you to sign up to bring flowers on a rotating basis throughout the year. Please sign up in a rotating order so that all children have a chance to bring flowers and do not wait to long for their turn.

### **Thursday Shabbat Circle**

Remember to send your child each Thursday with the following:

- \* Coins to donate - each child receives a pouch to use for this purpose and stays in her cubby
- \* One or more nonperishable food items for donation to the food bank

### **Share a Soup**

Sign up to bring a soup once on Mondays on a rotating basis. This is a great way to share something from home with your child's school friends. There will be a sign-up sheet at the beginning of the school year. The purpose here is to present an opportunity for your family to give and for the children to learn the value of giving. It has become a loved Gan tradition. I encourage you to have your child involved in the preparation of this soup whenever possible. It is special to prepare one of your child's favorite soups for this occasion, as long as it fits within the parameters of our wholesome and organic guidelines. When you sign up, you may check with me in regards to acceptable ingredients.

### **Preparation Of Challah Dough**

*Challah* is braided festival bread. Your child will love you to take home our recipe and ingredients and prepare our challah dough at home. Ideally you will prepare it together but if you do the preparation they will still love knowing that you have contributed your time to do



something for our kindergarten. It has become a beautiful tradition. If you have never prepared bread, this is something not to miss! We have a sign up sheet with a rotating schedule. ***If, as the date gets closer you see a conflict, just ask another parent to switch dates with you.***

### **Regarding parent participation in general**

I will be grateful for your participation in the kindergarten community through volunteer time. Volunteer time can be as little or as much as you choose. There are many ways to help outside of school, as well as selected times when I will invite parent volunteers into the classroom to help with baking or cooking projects. Many hands make little work and model strong community ethics for children. This value cannot be under estimated.

*\* Please note that some children are challenged by their parent's presence in the classroom. If your child may fall into that category, I recommend that you speak to me before choosing to spend time in the classroom. If this is the case for your child, there are many other ways to give.*

Sometimes other commitments may make volunteering impossible or very difficult. If you feel unable to volunteer in any way, please don't feel guilty. This is not about creating stress and overwhelm in your life. Any time you wish to offer will be deeply appreciated. A list of various ways in which you may contribute time will be provided throughout the year. I will provide a corresponding "sign up sheet" where you can add your name when you choose to participate.

### **Additional Ways of Participating Working in the Garden**

We absolutely need volunteers to continue to maintain a garden. Our garden depends on you and will give your child a real sense of pride and ownership when you participate.

### **Baking and Cooking Projects**

A few times a year we have large projects that require parent help. I will put sign up sheets on top of the cubbies for those who would like to participate.

### **Other opportunities to support your child's kindergarten through volunteer time include:**

- ❖ Sewing
- ❖ Carpentry
- ❖ Cleaning (can be rotated on an ongoing basis or signed up for as needed)
- ❖ Repairing broken equipment
- ❖ Cutting paper
- ❖ Classroom coordinator
- ❖ Grant writing
- ❖ Fundraising

## **KINDERGARTEN RHYTHM**

### **Daily & Weekly Rhythm**

Our daily rhythm is subject to change when needed to best serve the needs of the children. The rhythm of our day and our week provides a secure environment in which your child can rest with the knowledge of what to expect. Timing is not exactly adhered to, but provides a framework and leaves time for spontaneity. Curriculum as well a food offered is influenced by the season as well as special seasonal and festival activities.

In general we will start our day outside Sept - December and end it inside, and change our rhythm if the weather gets particularly bitter so that we begin inside and finish our day outside when it has often warmed up a bit. I will break this rhythm occasionally to allow for more outside time when we get warm sunny days in the middle of winter. Wouldn't want to miss that!

**Weekly Rhythm:** Activities sometimes vary according to the celebration of festivals and birthday celebrations, and includes the preparation of bread dough, crafts, cooking, and baking.  
\*Activity schedule is subject to change as needed

Monday: crafts will vary according to the season, cooking and baking

Tuesday: Wet-on-wet Painting day. Birthday celebrations

Wednesday: Felting and sewing with our handcraft specialist Margarete Mieger

Thursday: Braiding and baking our Challah (traditional Shabbat/Holiday bread)

**Thursdays** are “Backwards Days” at Peace Garden, a beloved tradition. Children bring lunch and snack on Thursdays only. We finish our day inside on Thursdays after our Shabbat circle. If we finish a bit early, we may go outside.

### **Rhythm of the Day**

- ❖ It is very important that your child has had a relaxed, full and nourishing breakfast each morning
- ❖ 8:45 - 9:00 AM - drop off, goodbye hugs and kisses, our kindergarten day begins
- ❖ 9:00 AM -10:00 - 10:30 ish - Our circle time begins after we transition from outside play. It is followed by hand washing, a wholesome organic meal, then creative play, crafts, painting, cooking, baking, and bread making according to our weekly rhythm. Blessings are always said before and after our meals.
- ❖ Nibbles: This may consist of veggies, fruit, crackers, nuts, or nut butter. Nibbles are not to replace a full breakfast, which is very important to your child’s well being each morning.
- ❖ Tidy up the classroom together, followed by our apple circle. The children receive a slice of apple one at a time, share their gratitude, and then we sing goodbye to one another.
- ❖ 12:55 : Pick-up time

### **FOOD AT THE GAN**

If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions, please be sure to note those on your emergency form. I do my best to accommodate special diets: however there are times when your child may need to bring something extra from home or eat something special tailored to her needs. The challah bread we prepare on Thursday does have gluten. If your child is gluten free, please include a treat in their lunch basket that they know is for Shabbat circle, so she will not feel deprived. Organic foods are offered whenever possible. In rare situations there may be an ingredient that is not available organically. This will be a very small percentage of the time.

The food offerings are not set in stone but generally are as below. Your child will enjoy a wholesome organic\* meal each day. Each day there is a meal that the children come to associate with the day of the week. **This does NOT take the place of a healthy breakfast.** Within that rhythm there is room for surprise, food for special occasions such as birthdays, seasonal celebrations, and of course dishes prepared especially for festivals.

**Monday** - is brown rice and bean/broccoli day

**Tuesday** – Share a soup day – parent participation on a rotating basis

**Wednesday-** sweet potatoes/yams and or frittata with spinach and goat cheese, occasionally steel cut oatmeal (Bear Mush) with raisins and apples, and other seasonal or festival foods, which are prepared together with the children.

**Thursdays** we share the festive braided Challah bread that we have mixed, kneaded, braided, baked, taken to the oven, and blessed together. Your child comes with a snack in their lunch also. Gluten free children should come with a special snack to eat when we have our challah.

## **SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS & HOLIDAYS**

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Tuesday is the day designated to celebrate birthdays at Gan. The children will bake a cake together the day before the birthday celebration, your child will be crowned with a fresh flower crown, and there will be a special birthday circle. Parents of the birthday child are an integral part of this celebration. We will choose a date as close to your child's birthday as possible (but not before) for our celebration. If your child has a summer birthday it is often a nice alternative to celebrate a half birthday.

Scheduling your child's celebration date: *If you have a challenging schedule please contact me as much in advance as is necessary and I will try my best to accommodate for your needs within what is possible with our rhythm.*

You may make a donation of \$18 (which means "life" in Hebrew numerology) to our "Tree fund." This is, of course, a personal choice and a gift of any amount will be deeply appreciated!

### **Parent preparation for birthday celebrations**

Please choose one birth photo and one photo to represent each year of your child's life. Bring your child's photos to the Gan on Tuesday of the week of the celebration, so that the children may enjoy them. Please mount them on a board with a brief explanation under each photo. During our birthday circle you may share some memories about your child's birth and each year of your child's life. This should be short and sweet since some children have difficulty sitting for too long.

### **Passover and other festival celebrations**

We celebrate some of the traditional Waldorf festivals as well as Jewish festivals that are appropriate for this age group. You will receive information regarding those celebrations at our meetings or via newsletters.

During the celebration of Passover, there will be special guidelines for lunch. I hope you will consider this an opportunity to enjoy, learn, and experience newness in your lives, including foods prepared uniquely for this holiday. You will receive all the info you need well in advance as regards your child's lunch during this period, and school snacks will change on those days.

### **Home birthday parties**

If your child is 3, invite 3 children, four years old, 4 is a good number of children to invite and so on. This is a great rule of thumb to follow. Of course, you know your child best and what will work for him. Large, exciting parties are usually overwhelming for the young child and will often result in tears rather than smiles. This is one of those many instances when less is more. There is already more than enough excitement already about the birthday coming. If you decide to invite only some of the children in our group, please remember to distribute your birthday invitations away from school to avoid hurt feelings. If you have an inviting all children in our group, it is fine to distribute them at school but please wait until school is over. Feel free to ask me about any of the above.

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

### **Parent Teacher Meeting** *\*parents only*

This is a meeting time for individual families to sit down together with me to share the joys and struggles we both face with your child. It is an important time to gain more understanding and insight about your child's particular needs and how we can partner to best serve him/her. I will provide a sign-up sheet for you to reserve a time.

### **Parent Evenings** *\*Parents only*

Parent evenings serve as a bridge between home and kindergarten. They provide an important opportunity to get to know each other, share school information, learn more about your children's kindergarten experience, and create the community that is so vital to supporting your children. We will try to schedule meetings approximately every eight - twelve weeks. \* It is important that at least one parent from each family attend school meetings.

### **Recommended Reading**

If you do not want to purchase your own copy of these, I have a few to loan. I recommend that you read *Simplicity parenting* first over the summer if you have not already.

"Blessings of a Skinned Knee" by Wendy Mogel, PhD.

"Simplicity Parenting" by Kim John Payne

"The Soul of Discipline" by Kim John Payne

### **Parent-Teacher Communication**

We live in a society that often pressures us in many aspects of our lives. As parents of young children, we strive to provide our precious ones with a healthy emotional and physical foundation to support them as they grow. It can sometimes be overwhelming in a world of both excessive and controversial information, much of which is generated by commercialism, to make wise decisions regarding what is best for our young ones. I believe that listening to your intuition, and being tuned into your child's needs, can relieve much of the stress and pressure of life in the 21st century. Please feel free to speak to me if you are struggling with issues and would like guidance. It is my honor to partner with you along your journey in parenting. Healthy communication between parents and teacher is vital to meeting the needs of the whole child. As an early childhood educator, it is my goal to partner with you to support your child's healthy development. It is therefore of utmost importance that we communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully with one another. It is imperative that you bring anything that concerns you to my attention without delay. If I am unable to give the issue the attention it deserves when you call, I will schedule a time to discuss the matter at my earliest possible convenience.

I will share my observations and suggestions regarding your child with you whenever I deem necessary throughout the year, and when we have individual parent-teacher meetings. It is important for you to remember that the purpose of my input is intended solely to support your child's happy and healthy integration into our kindergarten classroom.

The connection between home and school cannot be underestimated. Your child's time at school is small relative to her life at home. My ability to serve your child best is dependent on our ongoing communication. Also, remember that whatever affects your life will also affect your child, so please do not hesitate to share with me. To that end, please keep me abreast of changes, challenges, etc. in your child's life. Any confidential information you choose to share will be held in the strictest of confidence.

***In the event that insurmountable challenges arise around Kindergarten readiness, discipline, aggressive or violent behavior, I reserve the right to dismiss the child from the program.***

I am dedicated to creating a physically and emotionally safe space for all children. I do my best during the enrollment process to determine that the Gan Neve Shalom program will be suitable for an incoming child. It is not possible, however, to predict the dynamics of a group of children or to foresee how your child will integrate. If, after, exhausting all the resources available to us as a team, I determine that a child's needs exceed my ability to provide service, or in the rare case that a child's presence is not mutually beneficial to the group, it may be necessary for me to request that a child leave the program.

I will have a minimum of one conference with the parents (with mediation if necessary) before requesting that a child not return to the program. If a fee is involved for mediation, parents will be responsible to cover fees. Parents must be willing to have a conference within seven days of my request.

### **When Challenges occur**

Most often open communication between parents and teachers will lead to a creative solution to problems that may occur. Sometimes, a parent's first instinct is to remove their child from that which may be perceived to be a negative or uncomfortable situation. I am committed to your child's success and I expect the same level of commitment from school parents. In most circumstances, it is in the child's best interest to face challenges and move through them with the support. Avoiding difficult issues actually prevents the child from valuable learning experiences that will serve them throughout their lives. Challenging experiences when supported by a loving teacher offer opportunities and possibilities of empowerment and the building of strong self-esteem.

### **Exploring Solutions and Educational support**

Occasionally I may determine that a child could benefit with the support of a specialist in the field of child development. A consultation will be requested only with the consent and participation of the parents. When such a consultation is requested, the parents will be responsible for any fees involved.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES – Classroom**

***Drop-off - Please have cell phone ringers turned off at school and please do not have phone conversations on the premises.***

**Drop-off time is 8:45AM - 9:00AM**

### **Drop off checklist:**

- ❖ Sign the Sign In and Sign out on the Sign In/Out sheet on top of cubbies
- ❖ Check for notices on the cubbies to update you on Kindergarten info before leaving
- ❖ **You must** make contact with me before leaving school premises. Be sure your child knows that you are leaving and that you have said your goodbyes. A child's entire balance can be thrown off without a proper goodbye.

### **Pick up**

Pick-up time is a good time to check in with me about your child's day, but only once all the children's parents have arrived. You are welcomed and encouraged to spend time after school socializing, but please do so outside in the playground when weather permits. It gets terribly loud and chaotic in the hallway when the children have no place to play and parents are socializing. It is prime time for children to become wild, have accidents, and have emotional

meltdowns. Do not allow your children to run up and down the hallway. This will help insure safety as well as happy goodbyes for all the children!

**Children may not re-enter the classroom to play at the end of the day unless I, or a parent that is helping to clean gives your child special permission.** We have said our goodbyes and play time in the classroom is finished. This is time for adults to clean up and be able to move on with their day. You are free to have your child play as long as you like outside, as long as you supervise your child.

### **Pick up person**

*If anyone other than those who are listed on school records is picking up your child, I need to have a written permission slip with that person's contact information. It is your responsibility to inform that person about school policy regarding pick-up. **It is crucial that your child know that you will not be picking them up. Please let him/her know in advance if you will not be picking them up and who will be.***

### **Dogs**

Dogs are generally not allowed in the Havurah garden. On days that you choose to linger in the garden, which you are most welcome to do, I will make exception to this rule. However, you must keep your dog on a leash and be attentive for all the obvious reasons. Thank you in advance for adhering to this rule.

### **Pick up Checklist:**

- ❖ Sign the Sign-out sheet as soon as you arrive
- ❖ You are responsible for the supervision of your child after 12:55
- ❖ Always let me know you are leaving with your child!
- ❖ When socializing in the hallway with other parents, please make it clear to your child that school is over and you are fully in charge. This will help insure safety as well as happy goodbyes for all the children!
- ❖ In order to facilitate the cleaning of the classroom and preparation for the next day at school, only those children whose parents are helping to clean the classroom may stay in the classroom. This is a special treat for most children! You are always welcomed to stay and play in the playground as long as you supervise your child.
- ❖ The parking lot is restricted to coming and going. Children must never be in the parking lot unsupervised. Please use only designated parking spaces and park where your car will not be visible from the patio outside the classroom, if at all possible. This insures that children will not be disrupted by seeing their parent before our day ends. Please feel free to join us at 12:55 p.m.

### **Health & Safety**

**It is your responsibility and crucial that you keep your emergency form up to date. You must pay attention and respond promptly whenever your child is at Peace Garden.**

#### **Health**

A healthy environment helps children have a positive learning experience. I am concerned about your child's physical well being, and also about the health of the other children at the school.

When children become part of a group, their exposure to others often means that they will contract minor illnesses such as colds, more frequently. This is a normal part of building a healthy immune system. As a parent, you are best able to recognize when your child is not feeling well. The kindergarten is not the place for a child who needs rest to support healing. Please keep your child at home so she can focus her energy on healing.

Your child should stay at home to be nurtured when she is sick. This is the best and quickest way to promote healing. This is the stuff that childhood memories are made of! Situations may arise when staying home with your child is not possible. Please make arrangements in advance for a back-up support system. This will greatly reduce stress for everyone. Being sure that your child is completely well before returning to school will prevent relapses for your child and prevent unnecessary contagiousness.

For the well being of the entire group, I reserve the right to send a child home before entering the classroom if I consider him not healthy enough to be at school. If during our school day I see that your child is unable to participate fully in a normal day at school due to illness, fatigue, or unusual distress, I will call and request that you take her home.

**It is important to inform me immediately if your child has a contagious illness so that I may inform other school parents.**

If I am unable to contact parents, I will refer to the emergency release form to contact friends or family you have listed in order of preference. **Please be sure to keep all emergency information current.**

### **Guidelines for keeping your child home:**

- ❖ A fever in the past 24 hours
- ❖ Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- ❖ Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- ❖ A severe rash
- ❖ Lice
- ❖ Any other condition that is contagious
- ❖ Heavy nasal discharge
- ❖ Constant cough
- ❖ Impetigo
- ❖ Pinworms
- ❖ Chicken pox

### **Head Lice**

We all dread having to deal with these pests! Though prevention may be difficult or impossible, catching the problem early is the best way to avoid infestation. It is strongly encouraged to check all members of the family for lice regularly.

If one of the children in our group has lice, you will be informed by phone. If I discover that your child has lice, I will call you to take your child home. A child with lice will need to stay home until she is both nit (egg) and louse free. There will be a lice check each morning before school in order to prevent the spread from one child to another. Parents will be asked to help check children's heads in the morning before school. This is a perfect time to show community support and help one another. Lice are out there and any of us could become contaminated. It is not a reason for shame, it's just one of those mundane hassles to deal with! In the event of a lice outbreak, school may close for a day in order to prevent ample time for cleaning. Parent help will be very much appreciated in this situation.

## **Safety**

When a child's behavior presents a danger to the other children, I reserve the right to require that a child leave school and not return until the problem is resolved.

## **Accidents**

Most accidents are minor and are easily treated with loving care. I will administer a flower or homeopathic remedy as needed if you have signed a permission slip that allows me to administer such remedies on your emergency form. It is school policy that anything but the most minor of accidents will be recorded and we will ask you to read and "sign off" on an accident report. I will call you when I deem it necessary.

In the event of an emergency, immediate first aid will be given and 911 will be called. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. When parents are unavailable, I will call those listed on your registration form in order of preference.

***Parents are responsible for all expenses incurred as a result of an emergency.***

***It is crucial that you keep your emergency form up to date!***

**Toys and Jewelry** Please have anything in these categories remain at home. Though they have their rightful place at home, toys and jewelry brought from home are often a distraction and do not add to creative play at school.

**Media and Electronics** The presence and influence of media and technology in our society has a deep influence on the growing minds of children. There is a growing body of research that gives evidence to the negative effects on healthy development. I am clearly able to see these effects on the ability of children to play imaginatively and creatively in the kindergarten. Since our greatest purpose in the kindergarten is the development of a healthy imaginative life, television and the like directly opposes that very purpose.

Therefore, NO television, videos, computer, should be watched at all during our school week. I strongly support and encourage you to make your home environment free of this type of entertainment for your young child in general. I understand well that this requires discipline, but you and your child will reap a myriad of benefits.

I will be sharing my philosophy regarding early childhood education and will elaborate during our parent meetings. You may be given handouts at various times throughout the year. Remember to speak with me whenever questions come up regarding your child. This will create healthy communication and avoid unnecessary difficulties that arise when frustration or dissatisfaction is not discussed in a respectful and timely matter. I am always available to speak with you at an appropriate time. Please understand that I cannot speak with you when I am involved with the children.

**Teacher Absence** Unlike institutionalized daycare or public school, it is not an appropriate option to have someone unfamiliar to the children substitute. However, if Margarete, our crafting teacher is available to take my place this would be appropriate since the children will be familiar with her.

Leah Avital is entitled to a maximum of 8 days of absence during the school year. In the event of illness, there will be no refund of tuition. Tuition is based on required funds necessary for annual operating fees. In the unusual event of an extended absence, I will provide a refund that will be calculated as a percentage of the annual fees. I want to assure you however, that I have a great track record! There has been only one year when I needed to take off more than one or two days and most years I have not had any absences.



**Calendar** Each year in August the calendar is created for the upcoming year. It is finalized in by October. Holidays occur on different dates each year.

Jewish Holidays: The Jewish year is based on a lunar calendar, and therefore the dates on the Gregorian calendar vary greatly from year to year. There are often no closures for Jewish holidays since they often fall between Friday and Sunday, and some years when they fall on school days and school must close. The calendar always balances out so on a year when there is more closure, just know it is unlikely to occur more than once in your child's time at Peace Garden. Some years have more school days than others.

Please mark all school holidays and events in your personal calendars at the start of the year so that there will be no surprises or disappointments.

### **Snow Days**

Policy for closure, for simplicity and everyone's safety, goes according to public school closure. If Ashland schools close, we will close. Unlike the public schools that need to cover a certain amount of material, there are no make-up days. When there is snowfall, check the Ashland Public Schools website for closure info. Also, when there is a late-start, the Gan will have late-start.

I hope you enjoy a snow day with your child or call another parent who can have your child over for a play date.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES - FINANCIAL**

### **Tuition and Admission Agreement**

Annual tuition, for the 2016-2017 school year, for the 4-day program, is \$4,720. Your annual non-refundable materials fee is always due on June 1 prior to the school year. Your first tuition payment of \$472 is due on September 1. Your monthly payment always remains the same regardless of holidays or family vacations since monthly tuition payments are based on an annual tuition agreement. *Each month your payment is one tenth of the annual fee.*

**Tuition is always due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and considered late after the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month, regardless of school vacations.**

Timely tuition payments are crucial to the ongoing success of Gan Neve Shalom. It is your responsibility to pay your tuition on time. When tuition is due during a school vacation, please make your payment before school breaks or mail it before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.

*I respectfully request that you speak to me prior to the due date if there is a problem paying tuition on time. In a difficult situation, I will do my best to work with you to find a solution, but please remember that communication is vital.*

**Payments are late after the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month,** at which time a \$15 late fee will be assessed.

Please add this fee to your tuition if your check is late. If tuition has not been paid by the third of the month, the child may not attend until full payment has been made *unless other arrangements have been made with me.*

There is a \$30 service charge plus any bank fees on all returned checks.

## Payment Options

We all have busy lives. Use whatever method works best for you to get your payment in on time. Please make arrangements with me to pay your tuition on a schedule suitable for you. You may choose to pay annually, biannually, quarterly, or monthly.

### 1) "Bill Pay"

Arranging for "bill pay" will allow you to forget about getting payments in on time. Just be sure if you are arranging "Bill Pay" that checks go out in time to arrive in Ashland the first of the month.

### 2) Mailing

You may bring or mail your tuition payment to me dated the first of the month the last week of the month and I will NOT deposit before the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

**Tuition Payments:** Checks must be written to Linda Cohen, the legal name on the school account. **Postal Address :** Linda Cohen  
700 Clay Street  
Ashland, OR. 97520

### 3) Bringing your check:

Drop your check in the tuition basket just inside the classroom door **only** during weeks that school is in session. ***When school is not in session during holidays, spring, summer, or winter break, or if tuition is due and you haven't dropped your check in the tuition basket, please mail your payments. I prefer not to accept cash payments. If it is very important that you pay in cash, call me and we can make an arrangement.***

## Withdrawal Policy

Registration at Gan Neve Shalom represents a ten-month agreement. It is crucial that you always talk to me regarding any challenges or difficulties that you or your child are experiencing which are directly or indirectly connected to school as regular protocol. If you are considering withdrawing your child from the school before the end of the school year, it is important to realize that everyone concerned is impacted; you, your child, the children, and myself as their teacher. A 45-day written notice of your intent to withdraw is required. You are financially responsible for one tuition installment in addition to your enrollment deposit (which covers June.) Please read the sections regarding parent-teacher communication. (Pages 12 & 13)

## Enrollment/Security Deposits & Other Fees

The non-refundable enrollment deposit that you paid when you registered your child is held as a security deposit and becomes the June tuition installment.

The one-time application fee of \$36, and annual materials fee due each year by June 1, are also non-refundable.

## Late Pick-Up Fees: Pick up time is 12:55 prompt!

***It is a legal requirement to pick up your child at 12:55. You are also legally required to sign you child in and out each and every day with the correct time. \****

You are expected to make every effort to arrive prior to 12:55 to pick up your child. In what should be only the very unusual delay in your arrival please text to inform me of your expected arrival time. In most cases I will only see your message at the end of the kindergarten day, as I am busy with the children.

I understand that there are sometimes unforeseen circumstances that prevent promptness. However, in most cases, we make choices regarding our commitment to promptness. If you are late and feel that there is a valid reason why a late fee should be waived, please speak to me.

**If you are late, there will be a late fee charged of \$15 for the first fifteen minutes or any part thereof. After 15 minutes there will be a charge of \$5 per five minutes or any part thereof. It is expected that you pay the week of your lateness; otherwise you will be invoiced.**

- This is based on the honor system. My first responsibility is the safety of your children. I cannot, nor would you want me to, have my eyes on the clock. I am trusting you to be honorable and pay the late fees as above when you are late to pick up your child. Thank you for adhering to this policy.

## FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

It is a popular misconception that private schools do not need to receive community funding. Without substantial subsidies it is a struggle for a school to survive. Tuition payments only cover a portion of our operating costs.

It is our goal to raise money through fundraising efforts, and to seek education grants. Our success in raising funds will enrich the school through the purchase of new equipment, and enable us to support a scholarship fund.

We will be truly grateful for the generosity of donations from parents, grandparents, and friends. A donation may come in various forms. *Remember that a donation to early childhood education is an opportunity to make an investment in our future!*

### Tax Deductible Donations\*

Gan Neve Shalom is grateful for tax-deductible donations to provide sustainability as well as opportunities to low-income families who require tuition assistance to enroll in our program.

Tax- deductible donations should be made to “Havurah Shir Hadash” with **preschool** in the memo line of your check or to pay with Pay Pal go to [www.havurahshirhadash.org](http://www.havurahshirhadash.org) , click on “donate” and make sure to put “**preschool**” in the purpose line.

**Wish List:** Please speak to me if something on this list sparks your passion. Please ask me for details.

- ✚ Playground equipment
- ✚ Classroom equipment

# Peace Garden "Gan Neve Shalom"

## Preschool & Kindergarten

### ADMISSION & TUITION AGREEMENT – SAMPLE CONTRACT

My/Our child, \_\_\_\_\_, is now formally enrolled in Gan Neve Shalom Preschool & Kindergarten program. Annual Tuition for the 2016/2017 school year is \$4,720. An application fee and non-refundable enrollment deposit of one month's tuition is due at the time of registration to secure your child's place in the program. The non-refundable annual materials fee is due June 1, and the September installment on your tuition fees are due on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Each of the ten tuition payments is due on the first of the month. Payments received after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month may incur a \$15 late fee. There is a \$30 service charge and any bank fees on all returned checks.

- 1) The enrollment fee is a security deposit. It is held until the end of the school year and becomes the June tuition payment. It is a non-refundable fee.
- 2) The annual materials fee is used for purchasing school material for the year. This is a non-refundable fee.
- 3) **You are legally required to pick up your child at 12:55**

In addition late pick up is strongly discouraged due to the impact it has on your child, the personal life of the staff, as well as cleaning needs. Late fees are \$15 for the first fifteen minutes or any part thereof and \$5 per every five minutes thereafter or any part thereof. You will be invoiced at the end of the month. By signing this contract you are making a commitment to a ten-month school year, beginning in September and finishing in June. The viability of Gan Neve Shalom is dependent on parent commitment. The school calendar will be finalized each year by the end of October.

- 4) Any reduction in contracted schedules requires your 45 day written notice. Specifics are explained on the Tuition and Admissions Agreement and Withdrawal Policy in your parent handbook. One tuition installment in addition to your enrollment/security deposit is owed in the event that this contract is broken.
- 5) If failure to adhere to all tuition responsibilities listed above results in any legal costs incurred by the school, including but not limited to lawyer fees and/or collection fees, these costs become the responsibility of the undersigned. By signing this I am agreeing to have any issue or claim arising out of this contract or out of my child's enrollment, attendance or care at Gan Neve Shalom decided by neutral arbitration.
- 6) The school reserves the right to terminate this agreement at any time. The school also reserves the right to modify any part of this contract subject to a 30-day prior written notice. Please note any specifics and related issues noted on the Parent Agreement Form.

I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this Admission Agreement.

You will be given a separate copy to sign and return to the director along with other forms.