



FRANKEL
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
WHERE JEWISH LEARNING FLOURISHES

Parent Handbook



Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative Congregation
3700 East Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040



All policies and procedures have been approved by the HNT Board of Directors on August 27, 2025. HNT reserves the right to review and update these policies at any time.



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Dear Frankel Religious School families,

“Only learning that is enjoyed will be learned well.” - Judah HaNasi

Thank you for entrusting the Frankel Religious School (FRS) at Herzl-Ner Tamid to help guide your child(ren)'s Jewish educational journey. Our dedicated teachers, staff, and *madrachim* (teen classroom assistants) work hard to ensure the best possible learning experience for all of our students. We believe that all learning should be meaningful and fun. We hope that this handbook provides concise, organized information and practical guidance about FRS values, policies and resources.

Like most things, your time at FRS will be what you make of it. We offer a wide variety of ways to get involved - Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations, a vibrant and active Parent Committee, and so much more. Each program is an opportunity to foster relationships, make new friends, and create more Jewish memories for your family.

We strongly believe that we are your partners in this journey. Religious School was always meant to be supplementary, enhancing the many ways that you celebrate Jewishly at home - lighting Shabbat candles, spinning the dreidel, hosting a seder - whatever that looks like in your life. We welcome families from across the Jewish spectrum and are here to support you in any way that we can.

The Frankel Religious School is just one piece of the broader Herzl-Ner Tamid community. We offer opportunities to worship together, learn Torah together, and engage in social action projects together. This sacred community is a special one and we are so thrilled that you have chosen to be a part of it.

As a Jewish educator, I am deeply committed to doing all I can to ensure that every student has the best possible experience in our program. I welcome feedback and promise we will always do anything possible to support your child(ren).

If you have any questions about our program, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

L'Shalom,

Irit Eliav Levin, MSW
Director of Education
Frankel Religious School, Herzl-Ner Tamid
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School Vision and Leadership

Herzl-Ner Tamid Vision Statement

Following in the example of Abraham and Sarah, Herzl-Ner Tamid (HNT) welcomes the community into its sanctuary. We are a congregation of leaders who actively practice the principle of repairing the world (tikkun olam). Our synagogue is home to Jews from every path without regard to age, gender, or family configuration. We take pride in our traditional religious services whose modern adaptations allow for a complete and inclusive experience for all who attend. In addition, our congregation's outlook on the world is nothing short of progressive, as we are firmly dedicated to the ideals of social justice, equality, and a strong support for Israel.

Our purpose is one of connection. We connect Jews to Judaism, Jews to each other, Jews to the World. Every age group is provided opportunities for these connections, from the youngest of children to the wisest of adults. Every family is granted the possibility for involvement, whether they be families with or without children, traditional or nontraditional. Our congregation is our home.

Frankel Religious School Vision Statement

The goal of the Frankel Religious School (FRS) is to build a vibrant school where students actively live Jewish lives expressed through their actions and values. The Frankel Religious School creates a foundation for fostering deeper connections to Judaism, Herzl-Ner Tamid, Israel, and the modern world. We are a school of inquiry and we promote asking good questions. We foster a welcoming and enthusiastic community where all family members can find multiple ways to connect to our congregation through social and learning events, parents' activities, volunteering, social action, and friendships. We provide our students with a solid foundation grounded in Judaics, including Torah, Hebrew, Israel, holidays, and Jewish values. We welcome families from the full spectrum of Jewish life.

Educational Goals and School Values

The Frankel Religious School offers a high quality educational program for all of our children. The FRS Parent Committee and the HNT Board of Directors, partner with the Director of Education to strive to ensure the needs of all of our students are met. Our fantastic FRS teachers, with the support of teenage madrichim (assistants) in the classroom, provide innovative and engaging lessons and experiences for our students. Our madrichim play an essential role in our educational program. They serve as guides and role models for our younger students. Madrichim may choose to be paid (ages 16+) or serve as volunteers.

Education flourishes when relationships are formed - between students and teachers, students and madrichim, and amongst the students themselves. This relationship fosters a love of and commitment to Jewish education. FRS strives to foster these relationships through school wide educational programming, community dinners and events, and participating in the rhythm of Jewish life together.

We want our students to gain the skills needed to:

- Join and lead Shabbat and Holiday services
- Understand and study Torah
- Have a basic foundation in Hebrew
- Have knowledge about and a commitment to Israel
- Live lives grounded in Jewish values
- Know that they are a part of *K'lal Yisrael*, the Jewish people
- Have a strong connection to Conservative Judaism.

Our Sunday morning program begins each week with an all-school morning assembly. Parents are encouraged to stay with their students during this community time. For our Shabbat morning students, parents are also encouraged to join the community for Shabbat services during school time in order to best support your child's learning.

Hebrew Curriculum

Our goal is for our students to learn to read and understand the Hebrew that will allow them to participate and feel comfortable in services. An integral part of the FRS curriculum is the study of *T'fillot*, prayers. Due to the amount of time allotted for FRS participation, it is not within our capacity to teach conversational Hebrew. We encourage as much Hebrew vocabulary building as possible within our time constraints.

To review our overall FRS Curriculum, click here: <https://h-nt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FRS-Curriculum.pdf>.

Tzedakah

Tzedakah comes from the Hebrew root *zedek*, meaning righteousness, but is often used as another word for charity. Students are encouraged to bring money each week for tzedakah in any amount that is comfortable for the student and family. This gives students the opportunity to help those in need and understand the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam, Repairing the World. Additionally, throughout the year, students will have other opportunities to engage in helping those in need. Please note that tzedakah is not collected on Shabbat.

Director of Education

Irit Eliav Levin, MSW, has been the Director of Education at Herzl-Ner Tamid since 2023. Irit has extensive experience in Jewish education, including serving as a Curriculum Consultant for the Frankel Religious School, helping to create the spiral curriculum that was adopted by HNT in 2018.

Irit is the author of several Jewish education books including the Making T'fillah Meaningful Series (author), Hebrew in Harmony series (contributing writer), Israel: It's Complicated book (co-author) and Teacher's Guide (author) from Behrman House. She is also the author of Yad B'Yad: Working Hand in Hand to Create Healthy Relationships, and is co-editor of A Journey Towards Freedom: A Haggadah for Women Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence, both from the FaithTrust Institute. She has also written book club guides for the PJ Our Way program for PJ Library. She was a long-time board member of Camp Solomon Schechter, serving as chair of the Programming and Education Committee. She is a recipient of the Legacy Heritage Innovator Award.

Before entering the Jewish education world, Irit was a social worker, primarily supporting survivors of domestic violence and youth in foster care.

Irit and her husband, Dr. Joshua Levin, are also proud parents of three students in the Frankel Religious School.

FRS Parent Committee

Parent involvement is essential to the success of our program. The FRS Parent Committee meets monthly, on Sunday mornings after morning assembly. Meeting dates are listed on the FRS Calendar. The committee works to support FRS Special Events, provide support to teachers, and brainstorm innovative curriculum ideas. The FRS Parent Committee Chair also serves as a member of the HNT Board of Directors, ensuring that the needs of FRS families are included in overall synagogue decision making.

Parent volunteers are also needed to support events, help out in the FRS office, and serve as room parents. Reach out to the FRS Parent Committee Chairs to get involved.

Parent Communication

Parents should expect regular communication from the Director of Education and from their student's teachers. Weekly newsletters will update you on what is happening both in the classrooms and in the school as a whole. This newsletter will include information on upcoming FRS and HNT events, volunteer opportunities, and community programs. Parents are also encouraged to read the eKol (HNT's weekly e-newsletter) and the HaKol (HNT's monthly newsletter).

Frankel Library

HNT is lucky to have a wonderful lending library of Jewish books available. If you are interested in checking out one or more of these books, there is a sign-out sheet by the entrance of the library that you may use to do so.

FRS Policies and Procedures

Safety and Security Policy

The safety and security of our students, staff, and volunteers is our highest priority. Anytime FRS is in session, armed security guards are always onsite. HNT also has cameras in and around the building to support safety and security. The Director of Education works with our security team to ensure that all appropriate safety precautions and protocols are in place and followed.

There may be marked or unmarked hazards on the property and in the facility. For the safety of all students, students unaccompanied by staff are not allowed on the grounds or in other parts of the synagogue. No drugs, alcohol, or weapons of any kind are permitted at FRS. Students found in possession of these items will face disciplinary action, up to and including potential suspension or expulsion from the school.

In the event of an emergency situation, FRS staff will remain with students until parents or authorized guardians are able to get to HNT for pick-up. In the event it is not safe to be at HNT, FRS students will evacuate to the Stroum Jewish Community Center across the street and staff will stay onsite until all students have been picked up.

Parents or another authorized guardian need to pick up their students from their classrooms. Students will not be released to older siblings. If someone other than a parent or legal guardian is picking up a student, please notify both the teacher and the Director of Education of the change. If for any reason, one parent is not legally authorized to pick up the student, you must notify the Director of Education in writing in advance.

Sunday mornings, FRS begins with morning assembly, which parents are encouraged to attend. Parents and teachers will then walk kids to class. On other days when FRS is in session, the Director of Education or a lead teacher or staff member will greet students.

On Shabbat, FRS is in session until 12:15. Parents or authorized guardians must pick-up their students at this time. FRS staff are responsible for students until they are released to an approved adult. Students may not go to the Kiddush luncheon without their parent or other authorized adult supervising them.

Medical Needs Policy

When filling out the FRS enrollment forms, please describe and list in detail any allergies and/or medical conditions we should know about to keep your child(ren) safe. If your child takes any prescribed medication on a regular basis, indicate the name, dosage, and frequency. Also include any instructions for administering the medication in the event of an emergency. If there is a need for us to administer the medication while your student(s) are at FRS, please let us know. FRS and HNT cannot be held responsible for conditions and/or medications that are not shared with us in writing.

In the interest of keeping everyone healthy, please plan to keep your students home if they have a fever, productive cough, or have vomited/had diarrhea within the last 24 hours. If your child has tested positive for COVID, or has been exposed to someone who has tested positive, please plan to keep your child at home.

Food Policies - Kashrut and Allergies

We follow the commandment to keep Kosher in order to elevate and sanctify life. It reminds us that we are a holy people, ethical and responsive to our fellow creatures.

Herzl-Ner Tamid requires that all food brought into the building must be kosher. All snacks and meals served as part of the FRS program maintain this high standard. Food must either be prepared in the HNT kitchen, purchased from a kosher establishment, or packaged and marked as kosher. To help us preserve our kashrut standards and keep our students safe, please refrain from bringing any food to FRS. Students who must bring their own food for medical reasons, must clear this exemption to policy with the Director of Education in advance and in writing.

Additionally, we have several students at FRS with life-threatening food allergies. To maintain their safety, we are a nut-aware facility. We do not serve any food containing peanuts to FRS students. While we have taken these measures to minimize risk, we cannot guarantee the facility is fully peanut free. Items may be served that are made in a facility that also processes peanuts. In line with current best practices, tree nuts and seed products are still permitted.

Students are served snacks every time FRS is in session. Snack usually consists of a packaged product (pretzels, snack mix, or similar) and a piece of fruit. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottle to FRS.

Attendance Policy

FRS understands that students have many demands on their time. However, students will only get as much out of the program as they put into it. We encourage you to miss

class only when absolutely necessary. Teachers will work with students to create appropriate make-up assignments if class time needs to be missed. We ask that you drop off and pick up your students at the proper time. Students arriving late or leaving early creates distractions for both teachers and other students. Please note our Sunday morning assembly is part of our instructional time and students are expected to attend and participate. Shabbat morning students will often attend services as part of their curriculum. This is part of the attendance expectation. Parents who are late to pick up more than 2 times will be charged a fee of \$1 per minute, unless extenuating circumstances have been shared with the Director of Education.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather during the week, FRS will follow the guidelines of local school districts. If either the Mercer Island or Bellevue School Districts close due to weather, we will follow their lead. Zoom sessions may continue to run, based on the discretion and availability of the teacher.

On Sunday mornings, the Director of Education will send an email by 8:00 am to determine whether school will be closed. If it is Shabbat, no emails will be sent. Please use your best judgment regarding your safety. If you choose to attend on Shabbat, please escort your child into the building to ensure their teacher was able to make it to HNT. As always, our students' safety is our primary concern. In the event school remains open, but you feel the roads in your neighborhood are impassable, we urge you to use your discretion regarding what is best for your family.

Tuition Policy

FRS families are expected to be members in good standing of Herzl-Ner Tamid. Pre-Gan families are invited to try out FRS for one year before becoming members.

HNT will always work with families towards a manageable overall financial package. If you decide to unenroll your child before December 5th, a prorated tuition reimbursement will be issued upon request, less the non-refundable \$200 deposit to cover administrative costs.

After December 5th, tuition payments are not eligible for reimbursement, unless extenuating circumstances are approved by the Director of Education and HNT Executive Committee. No refunds are offered for missed days, student schedules, illness, Covid, weather related closures, or to switch to online classes. This policy is subject to review and change at the discretion of HNT.

Behavior Policy: Frankel Religious School Behavior *Brit* (Covenant)

The Frankel Religious School (FRS) at Herzl-Ner Tamid is a sacred learning community, built upon the foundational principles of *Chesed* (Kindness), *Kavod* (respect

for one another) and *Derech Eretz*, (literally the way of the land - a belief that proper and kind behavior can lead to a positive and harmonious environment for our students, parents, teachers, and volunteers). By joining together in learning and t'fillah, we are entering a *brit* (a covenant) with one another, committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive educational community.

FRS will take a proactive approach to prevent bullying, harassment, and intimidation by:

1. Teaching Jewish values of kindness and respect as part of the curriculum.
2. Encouraging students to speak up when they witness inappropriate behavior.
3. Promoting community-building activities that foster inclusivity and understanding.

Any behavior that intentionally causes physical, emotional, or any other form of intentional harm to another student or staff member is not tolerated, whether verbal, physical, written, or electronic. Students and parents are encouraged to report any bullying, harassment, or intimidation to a teacher and/or the Director of Education. All reported incidents of inappropriate behavior will be investigated and responded to with prompt and appropriate action and discipline, up to and including temporary suspension or dismissal from the school. The Director of Education will work with parents to come up with an appropriate plan, ensuring the dignity and value of all students is honored. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. FRS is dedicated to upholding this policy and ensuring a learning environment where all students feel safe, respected, and valued. Parents, staff, and students share the responsibility for fostering a culture of kindness, inclusion, and respect.

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB) Definitions:

- **Harassment** is unwelcome conduct based on race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.
- **Intimidation** is any behavior that is intended to threaten, frighten, or coerce another person.
- **Bullying** is repeated and intentional aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power. It may include name-calling, exclusion, physical aggression, spreading rumors, or cyberbullying.

This policy applies to all students, parents, staff, madrichim, and volunteers at FRS, whether on synagogue premises, at off-site school events, or in digital communications related to school activities.

For questions or to report an incident, please contact the Director of Education.

Students with Disabilities or Learning Needs Policy

Herzl-Ner Tamid (HNT) is committed to meeting the needs of all our students, both within the Frankel Religious School (FRS) and as part of the B'nai Mitzvah Process. We believe strongly in partnering with families to ensure that HNT and FRS are supportive and welcoming environments for all children. We strive to do all we can so that your child's needs and wishes are fulfilled, with the highest possible *Kavod* (respect). We are able to fulfill these goals more effectively when parents communicate with us, share copies of any IEP's and/or 504 plans, and let us know tools that work for their children. The more information we have about your child(ren), the more successful we can be in their Jewish educational plan. We cannot be held accountable for needs that are not shared with us in writing.

HNT has established the Rachel Trager Fund to provide additional support for students who qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan within their secular school. Students who need additional support, but who do not have one of these plans may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Herzl-Ner Tamid includes 20 lessons as part of the B'nai Mitzvah process. Students who qualify for additional support may receive **up to** 20 additional lessons to help them have a meaningful and rewarding B'nai Mitzvah experience.

For students who need an additional *madrich(a)* (teenage assistant) to support them in their FRS classroom, the Rachel Trager Fund can also help to support that process to ensure that they are set up for success at FRS. FRS is committed to making all reasonable accommodations to help set students up for success.

If your child needs additional support, please contact the Director of Education to schedule a meeting to see how we can best support their needs.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Teachers are mandated reporters, required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). The Director of Education will always be involved in the reporting process. Parents will be notified if CPS is contacted.

For more information on any of these policies, please contact Irit Eliav Levin, Director of Education at (206) 232-8555 x 220 or Irit@h-nt.org.

