

Welcome to the Lese Center for Living Judaism, Central Synagogue's religious school.

We are thankful that you have entrusted us with your children's Jewish education, and we commit to providing a supportive, innovative, and exciting curriculum to create true mensches.

This partnership between your family and our Synagogue leadership, Clergy, and staff is a lifelong connection to Judaism and the world at large. Through our new and cutting-edge curriculum taught through the Project Based Learning education model, Central fosters a Jewish communal experience that is enriched by deep learning of Jewish values that will extend to your homes.

To ensure that we create a safe, warm and welcoming environment for all, we have established the following guidelines and policies. We encourage you to review them and when appropriate to share them with your children.

Wishing you and your children a year of intense learning, Jewish experience, and growth!

Rabbi Rebecca Rosenthal
Director of Youth and Family Education

Mikah Atkind
Director of the Lese Center for Living Judaism

Rena Allen
Director of Developmental Learning and Special Education

Rina Bergman
Assistant Director of the Lese Center for Living Judaism

Eve Morin
Assistant Director of the Lese Center for Living Judaism

Mandatory Enrollment

LCLJ is a comprehensive program that begins in pre-kindergarten and ends in 12th grade. While students must be enrolled by third grade to receive a b'nei mitzvah date in 4th grade, we strongly encourage parents to register their children sooner. Students who do not attend LCLJ before 3rd grade will miss out on vital learning and community-building opportunities that provide the foundation of Jewish education in the upper grades.

In order to receive a b'nei mitzvah date at Central Synagogue, it is required that your child be enrolled in the LCLJ in 3rd grade. Those who wish to join after 3rd grade must speak to the Director of the LCLJ to discuss any previous Jewish education that the child might have. Entry in the LCLJ after 3rd grade does not guarantee a b'nei mitzvah date.

Allergy & Food Policies

Students may not bring their own food to LCLJ except for in the case of medical need – please contact Mikah if that is applicable to your child. Upon arrival in the LCLJ, all students in grades Pre-K–6 Uptown will be given an allergy-friendly snack. Please note that food is not currently allowed Downtown per Hebrew Union College policy, and we will update you if and when that changes. Students will only be allowed to eat during early drop off and at the very beginning of their class session. Please send your child with a reusable water bottle to reduce waste of plastic cups.

If your child needs an EpiPen or other allergy related medication, we need you to:

- Make sure your child brings their EpiPen or medication to religious school.
- Supply us with instructions for using the EpiPen or other allergy related medication.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The LCLJ is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it in any form. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the LCLJ community have the right to learn in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. Bullying means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by putting the student (or students) in reasonable fear or physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other distinguishing characteristic.

We are continuously committed to ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for all our students and their families.

Arrival, Dismissal, and Safety Policies

The security and safety of everyone is our primary concern. The entrance to the Community House has been designed to improve security for our children and ease congestion during arrival and dismissal. During religious school hours, three guards are on duty. The guards and LCLJ staff are there to monitor the people entering and exiting the building.

Arrival: When students arrive for religious school, they are greeted by members of the security team and faculty. Once students enter the building they may not leave until the end of the school day or until they are picked up by a parent or guardian.

Dismissal: Parents and caregivers must come into the lobby to meet their children, and all students are dismissed from there. Students must be signed out by their teachers before they may leave the building. All teachers and members of the security team will be available to help facilitate dismissal and escort children to their appropriate buses or cars.

The dismissal section of the registration form lists the names and phone numbers of those permitted to pick up a child. No child will be dismissed to an adult who is not listed on their dismissal form. If there is an emergency or a change that needs to be made for a child's dismissal, the office must receive that change in writing. Children being picked up early will not be dismissed from their classroom until security notifies the teacher that their parent or authorized caregiver is in the lobby.

For early dismissals: please either contact your teacher before 3 pm or contact the Youth and Family Engagement (YFE) Administrator, Laura Baron, so that she can notify your teacher. If your child needs to be picked up early, you must come into the building and notify security, who will communicate with the LCLJ staff to bring your child down to the lobby. No child will be dismissed without an authorized adult there to pick them up.

Assessment

At the Lese Center for Living Judaism, we pride ourselves in knowing and tracking the progress of our students. We use informal assessment strategies in the classroom throughout the year to gauge what our children are learning and where we need to further focus our instruction in the classroom. More formal assessment is done during 3rd-6th grade to identify your child's progress with Hebrew reading acquisition. In January and June you can expect to receive progress notes from your child's educator outlining your child's progress. At any time please feel free to contact your child's educator to discuss assessment and progress.

Attendance and Commitment

Your child's attendance will directly correlate to the amount that they learn. Each project depends on student participation and when kids are not in class, they are missed. We know every family is busy. Please help make this a positive learning environment for all by bringing your children to LCLJ each week.

Behavior and Discipline Policy

Our school is one in which all individuals, whether students or staff, can expect to be treated fairly and with respect. All of our students are full participants in the creation of a positive learning environment. We consider parents to be valuable partners in our communication with the children that the LCLJ is a place where decorum is required. Your child's teacher will be in touch in the event that there are behavioral issues that we need to work on together. So too, please feel free to call us if your child has any feedback about school that you would like to share.

A sense of security at all times is a prerequisite for education; therefore, physical violence, verbal abuse or emotional abuse is not tolerated under any circumstances. We are committed to providing staff supervision and guidance that supports our students in resolving conflicts. Our education staff is trained in ethical discipline and work hard to help all children feel that the LCLJ is a safe and happy place.

For more information about our behavior and discipline policy, please see our LCLJ Community Contract. This will be reviewed with your child on their first day of class.

B'nei Mitzvah

All B'nei Mitzvah related scheduling, including tutoring, is organized through the Clergy study. Event space can be reserved within one year of your b'nei mitzvah. All questions related to your child's b'nei mitzvah preparation should be directed to the [Clergy Study](#).

All b'nei mitzvah students must be registered and have their tuition paid to the LCLJ for their 7th grade year—regardless of what time during the year they become b'nei mitzvah.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones are NOT permitted to be used by students during LCLJ hours, unless authorized for a specific lesson/program by your child's teacher. All phones will be collected in plastic bins upon entering the classroom and will be returned at the end of the day. Should you need to reach your child during school hours, please contact the YFE Administrator, Laura Baron

Communication

It is critical to the success of our work that we have excellent communication with all of our families. You are strongly encouraged to join our [LCLJ K-6 Parents Facebook group](#) and follow our [Instagram @LCLJatcentral](#), where you will get real time updates on what is happening during LCLJ hours. Project Based Learning will be best documented in this way. For grades 7-12, you can follow our [Instagram @censynteens](#) and friend our [CenSyn Teens](#) page on Facebook.

Additionally, you will receive LCLJ emails weekly, which includes information on upcoming events and general information for the month in the LCLJ, as well as a weekly email from your child's educator about what we are accomplishing during class time. Please make sure that we have your proper email on file to ensure that you receive our blasts and can follow along at home with what is happening at the LCLJ. If at any time you need to update your email address, please contact the YFE Administrator, Laura Baron.

Students may wish to communicate with their educators outside of the classroom. They should feel free to contact the educators via their Central Synagogue e-mail addresses and phone numbers. We also welcome parents to meet face to face with educators. Please be in touch with your child's educator to schedule such a meeting.

Confirmation Class Attendance (10th Grade)

Students will miss no more than five classes annually, unless a conversation is had with a Central educator or clergy member. Participation on the Confirmation Study Trip is contingent upon a student having attended at least 75% of classes AND the Confirmation Retreat. Students must attend at least 75% of classes in order to be confirmed.*

**In all cases, we expect open communication regarding attendance challenges.*

Contact Your Teachers

If you have a question about your child's class, you may contact their teacher.

- To see our current full-time educators, please [click here](#).
- If you have any questions about the LCLJ, please contact Mikah Atkind
- If you have any questions about grades Pre-K—6, please contact Rina Bergman.
- If you have any questions about grades 7-12, please contact Eve Morin.

- If you have a question about your child's learning needs or experience, please contact [Rena Allen](#).
- Any questions about curriculum or larger LCLJ questions please contact [Rabbi Rebecca Rosenthal](#).

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

When teachers must leave the classroom with the children in their class, they must take the daily attendance record with them. Teachers should always take their walkie-talkies with them. When the children line up at the classroom door or any other location in the building, using the count from the daily attendance record, the teachers must count the children, matching name to face, to ensure that all children are present and accounted for. Only then do they proceed out of the building. If there is a child missing, the teacher must notify the Directors and Security immediately, and then proceed with evacuating the rest of their class. Once the class has arrived at the designated safe area, the teachers must count the children again, using the count from the daily attendance record and matching name to face to ensure that all children are present and accounted for and the number of children counted prior to exiting the building matches the number of children counted upon arrival at the safe location.

Below are the degrees of evacuation and the final relocation site:

- For emergencies that require us to evacuate the Community House building only, we will relocate to the Pavilion located on the bottom level in the Sanctuary building on the southwest corner of 55th Street.
- For emergencies that require evacuation of the immediate 55th Street area, we will relocate to the Sony Plaza located at 550 Madison Avenue (Between 55th and 56th Streets).
- For emergencies that require evacuation of Midtown, we will relocate to Temple Shaaray Tefila at 250 East 79th Street at Second Avenue.
- In the event of an emergency evacuation, an emergency message will be left on the main synagogue phone only after we have safely evacuated the building (and if phone lines are up and running). Our priority is to make sure that everyone is out of the building and relocated to a safe location.

Lost and Found

If an item is found during or after class without any identifying information, it will be brought to the Security desk. If your child has lost an item, please check with the Security desk promptly, as items will only be held at the Security desk for a limited time.

Mandatory Programs

B'nei Mitzvah Family Programs: A family's attendance is required at the 4th grade Derech Mitzvah Program in the fall, and at the 5th grade B'rit Mitzvah program in the spring. Check [LCLJ calendar](#) for dates.

Retreats: Attendance is expected at the following retreats: Masa Mitzvah Family Retreat (6th grade) and the Confirmation Retreat (10th grade). Confirmation students must attend the Confirmation Retreat in order to be able to travel on the Confirmation Study Trip. Families who miss the 6th grade Masa Mitzvah Retreat must make individual appointments with a clergy member or educator to discuss the programming that they missed.

Outside Programming

Throughout the course of the year, The LCLJ offers a variety of different programs for children in grades pre-K–12. These programs are open to enrolled LCLJ families. If there is space in a given program, it may be opened to non-enrolled families. In this case a fee may be attached with participation. There will also be a number of programs that are geared towards families throughout the year that will be open to any and all who wish to participate.

RSVP/Cancellations: For many of our programs, we ask for RSVPs in advance. Those RSVPs drive our programming from transportation costs to staff to food purchased. We reserve the right to charge a \$50 cancellation fee for any cancellations that give less than one week's notice. A child may not participate in any outside programming, including Study Trips (grades 8–10), which require payment unless the payment is made BEFORE the program/trip.

Photos

We try to take many pictures of our students for use in various publications and programming. However, photos of children will not be used for any publications or websites without a signed waiver from a parent, which was included in the LCLJ registration material. In addition, we do not attach a child's name or identifying information to any photographs.

Scholarship

We believe that finances should never stand in the way of our LCLJ students participating in enriching programs—whether that be going on a study trip with Central, to a URJ sleep away camp, or a variety of other experiences throughout the school year and summer. A scholarship application must be completed for each program. Once an application has been submitted it goes to the LCLJ Scholarship Committee who will allocate the funds appropriately. Please contact Mikah Atkind for more information about applying for financial assistance.

School Closings

In the event of the possible closing of school due to weather or any other reason, a decision will be made as early as possible and will be posted on the synagogue website. Families will be alerted via email and automated voicemail when possible. In general, Central Synagogue closes the LCLJ when public schools are closed.

Service Attendance

Students in grades K–6 are encouraged to attend Shabbat services in the Main Sanctuary. Students in grades K–2 are required to attend at least three (3) Shabbat services each year and students in grades 3–6 are required to attend at least five (5) Shabbat services a year. In order to record the attendance of the students at Friday night or Saturday morning services, there will be a sign in sheet at the back of the sanctuary and students are asked to sign in with their name and grade. The sign in sheet will only be available during Shabbat services and will not be distributed at holiday services. If students are unable to sign in, an email from their parent to the YFE Administrator or Educator will work as a substitute.

For students in 7th grade: Students are expected to attend services regularly, but at least seven times during their 7th grade year. Worship is part of Jewish life and it is especially important that students and their families become accustomed to the flow of Shabbat service so that it is comfortable for them when

they help lead it. Students are also asked to sign in at the end of services each week, and if they are unable to sign in, an email from their parent to the YFE Administrator or their educator will work as a substitute.

Each student who fulfills his or her services requirement will receive public recognition and a prize during the LCLJ.

Special Education

The Lese Center for Living Judaism embraces and supports all learners and strives to include as many children as possible. If your child has specific, learning, emotional or behavioral needs, please contact [Rena Allen](#), our Director of Developmental Learning and Special Education.

Tipping & Gifts

Central Synagogue employees, including the educators, are not allowed to receive cash or cash equivalent gifts and/or excessive gifts from congregants. If you would like to express your appreciation to your child's educator, you may consider making a donation to the synagogue in their honor and/or giving them a modest, personal gift (such as a homemade gift, coffee mug, plant, \$20 gift card). Also, if you would like to recognize the work of an educator, you can send a letter to the educator's supervisor.

Tzedakah

This year we are expanding and highlighting more Tzedakah opportunities with students in all grades! Throughout the year, students will have the opportunity to fill the Community Fridge that Central Synagogue is sponsoring. Each month one week will be designated for students to bring in items for the community fridge; families and teachers will receive reminders beforehand. Students can bring fruit, vegetables, pantry items, or any other items they would like to find in a fridge themselves. Later in the year, we may encourage students to head upstairs during early arrival to pack sandwiches that will be brought to the community fridge.

We will also have school-wide service projects throughout the year. Tzedakah opportunities will likely be incorporated into programming outside of class time, such as a Challah for Hunger bake and the sixth grade day of service.