

## Frequently Asked Questions about Gan Shalom

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### **Basics**

- What are the ages of children in Gan Shalom?

*Gan Shalom is licensed to care for children who are 2-5 years olds. Age is calculated as 24 months, as of August 30. Classes are organized based on age and a family's preference for how many days per week they want their child at school.*

- How many children are in each class?

*Class sizes are generally between 8 to 12 children. Anavim and Tutim have 8 children in each class and Rimonim has 10-12 children. Class sizes depend on the age of the youngest child in the class and any additional restrictions due to COVID-19 or another public health emergency.*

- Do children have to be potty trained?

*Children are not required to be potty trained, and teachers will work with each family to find a potty and diapering schedule that works for their child. The school has two restrooms with toddler sized potties. Parents are asked to provide two (2) changes of clothes, including one set of shoes to leave at school.*

- Do children eat meals or nap at school?

*Children eat a snack (provided by families) mid-morning. Rimonim students eat lunch together, these children eat a lunch brought from home. Lunches from home must be vegetarian and nut-free. Only children in the afternoon program nap at school.*

- Is there an afternoon program?

*For school year 2022-2023, we're excited to announce that in addition to our half-day morning program, we're now offering an optional afternoon program for those families who are seeking a full-day preschool option.*

➤ What does a typical day at Gan Shalom look like?

**Anavim/Tutim**

**8:30** Free Play while friends arrive  
**9:00** Circle Time  
**9:20** Exploratory Learning Activity  
**10:15** Potty/Handwashing  
**10:30** Snack (outside whenever possible)  
**10:45** Walk/Exploration/Freeplay  
**11:50** Closing Circle/Song/Story  
**12:00** Pick-up

**Rimonim**

**8:30** Free Play while friends arrive  
**9:00** Circle time  
**9:20** Exploratory Learning Activity  
**10:15** Potty/Handwashing  
**10:30** Snack (outside whenever possible)  
**10:45** Walk/Exploration/Freeplay  
**12:00** Potty/Handwashing  
**12:15** Lunch  
**12:45** Closing Circle/Song/Story  
**1:00** Pick-up

➤ What are the class options and hours?

**Tutim (Strawberries)**

8:30am - 12:00pm  
Tuesday & Thursday  
This class meets twice per week it is available for all children ages **2\*-3 yrs.**  
*\*Must be 24 months to begin attending*

**Anavim (Grapes)**

8:30am - 12:00pm  
Monday, Wednesday & Friday  
This class meets three times per week, it is available for all children ages **2\*-3 yrs.**  
*\*Must be 24 months to begin attending*

**Rimonim (Pomegranates)**

8:30am - 1:00pm  
Rimonim 2: 2 days per week - Tu/Th  
Rimonim 3: 3 days per week - M/W/F  
Rimonim 5: 5 days per week - Monday-Friday  
This class has the option of meeting two, three, or five days per week. This class is available for all children ages **2.5\*-5 yrs.**  
*\*Must be 30 months to begin attending*

**Afternoon Program**

Monday - Friday, until 6 pm  
Tutim/Anavim: 12:00pm - 6:00pm  
Rimonim: 1:00pm - 6:00pm

*This year we're excited to offer a Gan Shalom afternoon program! The extended day will include rest/nap time and an afternoon of more exploration in the same warm loving environment as our morning program. The afternoon class will run until 6:00pm everyday. The child must be enrolled in the same day's morning class in order to join the afternoon class (for example, Tutim students will be eligible for Tues/Thurs afternoons only).*

## Cooperative Model

### ➤ How are parents involved?

*Gan Shalom is a family-focused and parent-run organization. We all work together as a community to provide this experience for our children. Parent involvement occurs in numerous ways.*

- 1. School Management Duties: Parents serve on the Parent Advisory Committee or commit to helping the school in various other roles (facilities person, substitute teacher, supplies coordinator, class coordinator, health and safety, membership and fundraising assistants). Alternatively, families can choose to pay an administrative fee (\$1500) in lieu of committing to a "role."*
- 2. Parent Classroom Volunteer Days: Parents or a caregiver serve as an extra teacher/adult in their child's classroom.*
- 3. Classroom Snack Duty: Families provide snacks for their child's class on a rotating basis.*
- 4. Other involvement: Families are also expected to participate in fundraising and membership/admissions events.*

### ➤ Tell me more about "Parent Classroom Volunteer Days"

*Classroom Volunteer Days are a time for you to participate alongside your child in their early learning with their classmates. You are a Classroom Parent about once every 2 months, depending on how often your child attends Gan Shalom. You should expect to arrive early and stay a bit later on those days. The administrative fee does not exclude you from classroom volunteer days.*

## Educational Philosophy

### ➤ What is the Educational Philosophy of Gan Shalom?

*Gan Shalom is play-based and is inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Teachers help facilitate meaningful play opportunities guided by the children's interests. Children will share in dialogue and exploration as they navigate their role in the community and learn about their surrounding environments.*

### ➤ What is the Jewish component to Gan Shalom?

*Every week children enjoy the Jewish ritual of celebrating Shabbat on their last school day of the week (Thursday or Friday). This begins with collecting tzedakah, a simple mitzvah to begin teaching in early childhood, and continues with blessings over the candles, juice, and challah. We also learn about other Jewish holidays and values throughout the year with art projects and story-telling. Rabbi Hannah often visits with her guitar to add to the Jewish learning through song.*

## Application

- What are the application fees and deposits?

*The application fee is a non-refundable \$50. The application fee is waived for Members of Hill Havurah. Accepted students must pay a \$500 deposit within two weeks after being admitted in order to claim their spot. Deposits not submitted at that time will forfeit their spot and an acceptance will be offered to the next family on the waitlist. The deposit is required of all students and is non-refundable. The deposit is included in the tuition rate.*

- Do I need to commit now to the days of the week that my child will attend class?

*If your needs change once you receive a spot, you can work with our Membership Chair at that time to see if there are additional spots available in another class.*

- How do you determine admission?

*Gan Shalom typically receives more applications than there are spots available. Preference goes to current students, Hill Havurah members, families with returning students or siblings, families willing to serve on the Parent Advisory Committee, families who are Jewish, and the order in which applications were received.*

## COVID Precautions & Protocols

- Are children expected to wear masks?

*Yes. Children 2 and older are required to wear masks per DC OSSE (DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education) recommendations. We encourage families to practice putting on and removing masks at home, so children are comfortable to do so independently during school hours. If a child is having trouble wearing a mask, they will not be excluded from care. If a child is spending more time fussing with their mask, it is no longer effective at keeping germs away from their mouths. We ask that families keep extra masks with their change of clothes, but we also keep kid-size disposable masks on-site for when a child needs a replacement. We encourage kids to wear toddler sized KF-94, KN-95 masks, or alternatively, try various fabrics of masks to find the one most suitable for your child.*

- How often will the kids play outside?

*Due to the COVID-19 restrictions and precautions, this year children spend the majority of their day outside. The teachers have created an outdoor classroom in front of the schoolroom building.*

**Outdoor Play** *is an important part of educational exploration. Classes will have scheduled time outdoors each day, rain or shine. Safety will always be our top concern, so as long as weather conditions and neighborhood environment is conducive for outdoor play, the children will have the opportunity to be on playground equipment or take neighborhood walks.*

- What are the sick day procedures for children and staff?

*Gan Shalom strictly follows OSSE and CDC guidance on sick procedures. If a child has COVID-19 symptoms they are required to get tested before returning to school.*