

Jewish Practices in the King David Schools

This document serves to capture the practice of Judaism within the King David Schools. The Constitution of the South African Board of Jewish Education [SABJE] deems the King David Schools to be responsible for “establishing schools which promote Jewish Education”. Jewish Education, as defined by the Constitution means “the continuation of Jewish and Zionist Education based on traditional and customary Orthodox lines and the recognition of the centrality of the State of Israel to the Jewish People”.

In translating these objectives of the South African Board of Jewish Education into practice, one must be cognisant of the dynamic nature of the schools. As the schools strive to raise the bar in education, so too, over the years, the schools have enhanced the Judaism learnt and the practice there of, while at all times striving to adhere to Orthodox Halacha and take guidance in this regard from the Beth Din. The purpose of this document is to capture the various policies that have been in place throughout the schools in the past. Many of these policies have been captured in various documents whereas this policy document serves to collect them into one succinct resource.

1. THE YEARLY CYCLE

All festivals and commemorative days form an integral part of the school ambiance. The Primary School curriculum strives to teach to this cycle and all the schools put the theory into practice in different ways in an age-appropriate manner. The following days are celebrated and commemorated. More details about each will be communicated by the school before the particular day.

1. **TuB'shvat:** is normally early in the year. This is a time when nature is celebrated with the planting of trees or other activities that connect us to nature and the land of Israel.
2. **Purim:**
 - No formal schooling takes place on this day as all celebrations and activities focus on Purim. School closes at 12:30pm.
 - Prior to Purim is the Fast of Esther, being a fast day there are no sports held on this day nor are tuckshops open.
3. **Pesach:** The schools are always closed for Pesach. This includes Chol Hamoed, the intermediate days.
 - No school activities take place on Yom Tov.



- Should any activity have to take place during Chol Hamoed, then it must be noted that no kitchens or tuckshops may be used or accessed as they are sold for the duration of Pesach due to the prohibition of possessing chametz.
 - No building alterations may take place over the entire period of Pesach.
4. **Sefirat HaOmer:** The school keeps the mourning period from Rosh Chodesh Iyar until 3 days before Shavuot as per the South African custom.
- This affects the playing of music, musicals or other events which use music, in the schools. Thus, no school plays take place during this time nor may any rehearsals take place or any events with music.
 - During this time period no haircuts or shaving are permitted other than for specific days.
 - Timetabled music lessons continue.
5. **Yom Hashoa, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim:** Ceremonies or assemblies are held for all and Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's day of Independence, is celebrated during the entire or most of a school day.
- School closes at 12:30 on Yom Ha'atzmaut.
 - Music may be played on Yom Ha'atzmaut, Yom Yerushalayim and Lag BaOmer and the sefirah restrictions do not apply on these days.
 - School functions may be held on these commemorative days but should not clash with any communal events being held and should be appropriate for the nature of the day.
 - Full Hallel with a bracha is recited on Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim.
 - Music used in assemblies for Yom Hashoa and Yom Hazikaron should be of appropriate somber nature.
6. **Shavuot:** This is a Yom Tov, no school is conducted on these two days.
7. **The 3 weeks:** This is a period of mourning during the 3rd term. It is from the fast of the 17th of Tammuz until the fast of TishaB'Av.
- There is no music, dance or plays during this time. There may be no plays, rehearsals or practicing for events with music.
 - We do not have haircuts nor shave during these 3 weeks.
 - Tuckshops do not serve meat in the 9 days before TishaB'Av until midday of the day after TishaB'Av nor should any building alterations take place during these 9 days.
 - Music lessons continue in the 3 weeks but teachers should ensure that either classical music or music of a somber nature is studied.
8. **TishaB'Av:** Tuckshops close on a fast day. No sports are held.
9. **Rosh Hashana / Yom Kippur:** School is closed. School is often in session on the day following Rosh Hashana, this is the Fast of Gedalyah and thus tuckshops are closed and sports should not take place on this day.



10. **Sukkot:** The schools do sometimes open during the Chol Hamoed (intermediate days) period.

2. SHABBAT AND YOM TOV

1. No school activities take place on Shabbat, nor do learners or members of staff represent the School on Shabbat (from Friday sundown until Saturday night, stars out). The same applies to any Yom Tov be it Pesach, Shavuot, Succot, Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur.
2. Sport and activities end early enough on a Friday for learners to get home before Shabbat. The policy is that students must be back at school no later than an hour before Shabbat. This may require students to leave school early so as to complete fixtures on time.
3. A Shabbaton is held for each Grade from Grade 6 to 11 each year. These are run by the DIJE (Department of Information Jewish Education). Encounter in Grade 11 is over an entire week.
4. Any school tour which is over a Shabbat will have Shabbat observance as part of the trip. A member of staff who can ensure the adherence to Shabbat must take part in the trip or a member of the DIJE staff should be organized to take part and assist in this regard. Note: This applies to local, national or international trips when the students are representing the school. All staff who go along on the trip should be role models in this regard.
5. Schools must encourage parents and pupils not to have any parties or other social events on Shabbat or Yom Tov.
6. It is understood that the school has no jurisdiction over weekend activities of students participating in their private capacity. When announcing the success of students in these activities at an assembly no mention should be made of the day only the achievement is mentioned.
7. If a student is required to sign up under a school name in order to participate on a Shabbat or Yom Tov, then permission may not be granted for this as they are in effect representing the school. This happens for schools golf and other events.
8. Mini City Council: The primary schools often see this position as their highest leadership position in grade 7. The concern has always been the desecration of Shabbat due to such participation. Along the previous guidelines listed above, mini councilors may not participate in nor promote any events that take place on a Shabbat or Yom Tov as they are only in that position due to their representation of the school. The same applies to the councilors in the high school.

3. KASHRUT

1. All Tuckshops are to be kept strictly kosher.
 - Tuckshops run by schools must be inspected on a regular basis by the head of Jewish Studies or a member of the Jewish studies staff. The Beth din will send an inspector from time to time.



- Outsourced tuckshops must adhere to the strictest levels of kashrut. This must be ensured by heads of Jewish studies as well as Jewish studies staff. These will be inspected by the Beth Din from time to time and if run by a non-Jew they may be required to have a full time mashgiach.
2. All school activities are required to only provide kosher food, i.e. food under the supervision of the Beth Din, or made in the school kitchens. This is also a requirement for any tours in South Africa or overseas, which are school tours.
 3. Students holding a celebration at school such as a birthday party may only bring food that is under the supervision of the Beth Din. Cakes, etc. or other products may not be brought from home (even if they say they are kosher). Thus, if any cakes, foods, sweets, etc. are sent to the school for the class that are not kosher or are not from a kosher store under the Beth Din- these may not be handed out. The same rule would apply for any food brought to a market day or for any other school requirement.
 4. Staffrooms are required to be kept kosher such that any staff member can feel confident to eat in the staffroom. This must be supervised by the head of Jewish studies or a member of the Jewish studies staff. That said, the head of school must ensure that there is someone responsible for this and that they are given full support and resources to maintain the kashrut of the staffroom.
 5. Home Economics teachers must be taught the basic of kashrut and kitchens should be inspected from time to time by heads of Jewish studies.
 6. The sports department are required to liaise with all schools with whom we play sports and explain to them the need for kosher snacks or refreshments to be served.

4. TELIFILLAH (Prayer)

1. There is Tefillah at the start of the day throughout the schools, from Grade 1 upwards. This applies to all students and thus students may not be taken out of tefillah for any other school requirements without first consulting with the General Director.
2. All Boys require Kippot for Tefillah.
4. All Boys and Girls require siddurim.
4. Boys over Barmitzvah are required to bring Tefillin to school and put them on during prayers.
5. Behaviour during prayers should be of an exemplary standard.



6. In matric there will prayers and schools can follow one of two options. There will either be prayer every Monday and Thursday throughout the year or there will be prayer every day for the first two terms of the year.

5. CURRICULUM

1. All learners are required to do both Hebrew and Jewish Studies until the end of Grade 10. The only students who will be considered for an abridged Hebrew course are those on the schools special needs programme having done a full assessment. Jewish studies lessons are 2 hours a week from grade 1-11 and Hebrew lessons are 4 hours a week from grades 1-7 and a minimum of 3hrs a week from grade 8.
2. Students may choose whether or not to offer Hebrew for matric, such choice takes place at the end of grade 10. Jewish Studies continues until the end of grade 11 for 2 hours a week and may be taught in grade 12 in order to meet some of the life orientation requirements.
3. Jews of all denominations are accepted to the school and different views are respected but all lessons follow an Orthodox understanding of Judaism.
4. Policy on teaching Jewish Studies: Jewish Studies lessons serve to make students knowledgeable and proud Jews, through the observance of our traditions. Lessons include History, text, philosophy and ritual and strive to bring the tradition alive through honest, practical and nurturing lessons. The King David Schools while embracing orthodoxy, are not affiliated to any particular stream of orthodoxy. Guidance is taken from the Johannesburg Beth Din. Teachers are expected to foster a positive appreciation for Judaism, a grasp of Jewish History and a love for the land of Israel. Children from all backgrounds, affiliations and levels of observance are accepted. Thus, the teachers must respond to these differences with tolerance and respect, never running down other worldviews while teaching Judaism.
5. Should a teacher not be sure how to deal with a particular matter, it must be referred to Heads of Department, campus Rabbis or to the General Director. It is to be stressed that teachers are not to use their local Rabbi for halachic decisions relating to school matters. Matters of doubt will be taken through due process to the General Director who, if uncertain, will refer the matter to the Johannesburg Beth Din for guidance.



General

1. All staff of the King David Schools are required to support the Jewish ethos of the schools and support the policies of the schools.

2. **Dress code:** Please see attached teacher dress code. Student dress code has an implication for Jewish ethos as well and thus uniforms should be worn correctly, and high schools should ensure that skirts are not rolled too high at the waist making them too short. Civvies days should also be monitored as student dress has an implication for prayers as well as general immodesty.

NOTE: I will be meeting Heads of Hebrew early in the term to clarify which prayers are taught by which grade and will include that in section 4.