



**Policy: Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School Eligibility**

**Date Approved:** July 20, 2017  
(Replaces Previous Policy Dated: November 25, 2014)

**Approved By:** Board of the Shaar Shalom Congregation

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**Policy Statement**

Children in families who are members in good standing of the Shaar Shalom are entitled to enrollment in the Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School at no additional cost beyond their family membership dues. However, the nature and composition of the Halifax Jewish community is changing and this policy has been developed to enable Jewish children of non-member(s) and non-Jewish children of a Jewish parent to access a Jewish education.

A Jewish parent actively seeking Jewish education for their non-Jewish child is likely doing so because Jewish heritage, the Jewish community, and Jewish education are of importance. The Shaar Shalom welcomes this. The Jewish tradition recognizes the desire of a Jewish parent to educate and integrate their non-Jewish child; presumably, for the purposes of eventual conversion. This non-Jewish child can, according to Jewish law, undergo formal education until the age of Jewish majority (13 years old), at which point the child either converts or ceases formal Jewish education.

However, the education of non-Jewish children must also be balanced with the importance of maintaining a cohesive structure within the Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School. If a non-Jewish child spends several years in Hebrew school, forging friendships and a Jewish identity, and then withdraw due to an unforeseen conversion issue, it would place undue emotional and psychological duress on the class and the child.

**Definitions**

**Good Standing** – In this policy, “good standing” means that membership fees (as per the Fees for Membership, Burial, Perpetual Care and High Holidays policy) are paid up-to-date.

**Jewish Child** – a child under age 13 born to a Jewish woman or who underwent full conversion (milah, mikvah/shem for males and mikvah/shem for females)

**Member** – an individual included in one of the following three classes of membership:

1. Single – a Jewish person over the age of eighteen (18) years who is not otherwise included in a Family Membership.
2. Family – includes:
  - A single Jewish adult with one or more dependent Jewish children; or
  - Cohabiting Jewish adults, with or without dependent Jewish children; or
  - Such other definition as designated by the Board.
3. Such other classes as may be designated by the Board from time to time

The synagogue office retains a list of the specific individuals covered under each class of membership

## **Policy Objectives**

The objective of this policy is to describe the Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School eligibility and enrollment criteria for Jewish children of non-member(s) or members not in good standing and for non-Jewish children of Jewish parent(s).

## **Policy Application**

### **Jewish Child of Non-Member(s) or Members Not in Good Standing:**

The Jewish parent(s) will be encouraged to join the synagogue with a family membership or to bring their membership up to good standing. If they decline, the registration form for the child of a non-member will be screened by the Shaar Shalom's spiritual leader to ensure the child is Jewish according to Halacha. If approved by the spiritual leader, the child will be enrolled in the Hebrew School provided the parents pay an amount per child that is based on the actual cost per child to operate the Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School.

Payment for a Jewish child of a non-member must be received by the synagogue before the child may attend classes. The Shaar Shalom Synagogue collects these fees and they form revenue for the Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School.

### **Non-Jewish Child of Jewish Parent:**

A non-Jewish child will be enrolled in the Hebrew School provided the following criteria are met:

- The spiritual leader secures a commitment from the child and parent(s) that the child will undergo conversion. The following will guide this process:
  - The spiritual leader assesses the child's eligibility for enrollment during the summer before the commencement of **each** Hebrew school year. Factors included

- in assisting the spiritual leader to determine a proper course of action include: current practices at home, Jewish outlook, conversion timeline, genuineness, etc.
- Assuming both parents are on-board and there is consensus in the family, the spiritual leader works with the family to ensure a timeline for conversion is determined and respected. If there is incongruity in the family and there is no timeline set for conversion by grade 3 or within two years if the child joins in grade 3 or later, the child is denied entry into the Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School. However, the family may continue to work with the spiritual leader to create an alternative course for Jewish education if it is still requested and desired.
  - The Jewish parent joins the synagogue and pays a family membership fee.

### **Policy Exceptions**

There are no exceptions to this policy. For greater clarity, the Shaar Shalom Ombudsman does not give financial consideration for the per child fee paid by parents who are not members in good standing.

### **Policy Monitoring**

Before the beginning of each Hebrew school year, the spiritual leader will provide the Board with a list of the non-Jewish children of a Jewish parent and any new Jewish children of non-member(s) who have been approved for enrollment in the Halifax Cooperative Hebrew School.

### **Forms Included with this Policy as Attachments**

None