



2023-2024 Parent Handbook



Harold & Elaine
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Jewish
Community
Center**
on the Hudson

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PHILOSOPHY

Children in kindergarten through sixth grade benefit from an after school setting that fosters self-esteem and reinforces social and academic skills. Almost Home is a warm, safe, stimulating, professionally supervised environment dedicated to providing age appropriate activities in an enriched educational, recreational and social setting.

Indeed, the Almost Home staff has a strong track record of working with parents and teachers to identify the needs of children to maximize their experiences in Almost Home. In the event of family difficulties, illness or unusual circumstances, please advise the Directors. This information will only be shared with staff as-needed to help meet your child's changing needs.

Almost Home staff may contact you to discuss observations or changes in a child's behavior or difficulties during the course of the day. Your input is very important to us. Please feel free to call to discuss your child's needs at any time.

STAFF

Our outstanding staff includes teachers from the JCC summer camps as well as students training for positions in education, community service, and other related fields. All child care staff and volunteers undergo an interview, reference check and screening through the Office of Child and Family Services. Staff members participate in ongoing supervision and training.

ALMOST HOME ACTIVITIES

Children participate in a variety of activities which vary from day to day, including homework assistance, arts and crafts, board games, playground time, sports, and other outdoor activities. Please dress children appropriately, from snow boots to sun hats. Almost Home will include special enrichment activities throughout the year. Examples may include yoga, youth fitness classes, holiday celebrations, theatre and more!

In addition, families may enroll their children in extracurricular classes at the JCC (e.g., gymnastics, dance, painting, STEAM, etc.) and AH staff will escort children between AH and their classes. For additional information and to enroll in extracurricular classes, please click [here](#). Almost Home families receive a discount of 10 or 15% depending on the individual class and which is applied with a promo code that we provide each session.

The JCC is not responsible for misplaced belongings. **Please label all jackets, hats, scarves, water bottles, etc.**

Please do not send toys or electronics (i.e. dolls, action figures, gun-type toys, computer programs, cell phones, PSPs or other expensive items). Any and all weapon-type toys are expressly prohibited.

HOMEWORK

Students will begin homework shortly after they arrive at program. Our staff will provide a quiet work-space for the students during this time. Students will have ample time to complete as much homework as they can before we begin our outdoor and/or other planned activities. If students have not finished their homework by that time, they will have additional time to resume their work later in the afternoon.

SNACK

Daily snack is included in your Almost Home tuition. Snacks will include items such as pretzels and crackers, etc. Snacks will be nut-free and kosher-style. **If your child has food allergies, you must note this on their registration forms.**

HOURS OF OPERATION

AH provides childcare Mondays through Fridays, from school dismissal until 6:00 p.m.

Almost Home will accommodate all half days and scheduled early dismissals for both districts.

AH follows the Tarrytown and Irvington school calendars. The following calendar lists currently known school and JCC closings that affect Almost Home; as schools sometimes adjust their schedules for conference days, etc., we will update this calendar accordingly. Reminders will be posted and e-mailed.

ALMOST HOME 2023-2024 CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
9/5	Tuesday		First Day	First Day	OPEN
9/15	Friday	Erev Rosh Hashanah (JCC closes at 3)	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED
9/25	Monday	Yom Kippur	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
OCTOBER					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
10/9	Monday	Columbus/Indigenous People's Day	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
NOVEMBER					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
11/7	Tuesday	Election Day and Supt's Conf Day	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
11/10	Friday	Veteran's Day	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
11/22	Wed	Half-Day	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
11/23-24	Thurs-Fri	Thanksgiving Recess	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
DECEMBER					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
12/22	Friday	Irvington Half Day	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
12/25 – 1/2	Mon – Jan. 2	Winter Break	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED

JANUARY					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
1/3	Wed	Return from Winter Break	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
1/15	Monday	MLK Day	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
FEBRUARY					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
2/19 - 2/23	Mon - Fri	February Recess	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
MARCH					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
3/15	Monday	Supt's Conf Day TT and IRV	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
3/25-4/1	Mon- 4/1	Spring Recess	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
APRIL					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
4/19	Friday	Supt's Conf Day TT	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN
4/22-4/23	Mon-Tues	Passover	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
MAY					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
5/24-5/27	Fri-Mon	Memorial Day Recess	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
JUNE					
Date	Day	Holiday	TT Schools	IRV Schools	AH
6/19	Wed	Juneteenth	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
6/21	Fri	Half-Day IRV	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
6/24-6/25	Mon-Tues	Half-Day TT and IRV	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
6/26	Wed	Half-Day TT, IRV CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN

When one school is closed but the other school is open, Almost Home is OPEN. You can bring your child here at 11:00 am.

SNOW DAYS

When the Irvington and Tarrytown schools dismiss early or are closed, there will be no Almost Home. If either district remains open until normal dismissal time, Almost Home will run as usual. However, if driving conditions become difficult as the day progresses, we will communicate to parents to pick their children up as early as possible. Almost Home is unaffected by delayed openings of the public schools. Almost Home and JCC closings will be posted on our website, shamesjcc.org.

EARLY DISMISSAL/HALF DAYS

Early Dismissal:

As noted on the calendar, when the Irvington and/or Tarrytown schools schedule early dismissals, the JCC will operate Almost Home to accommodate them. AH will welcome students from their early or half-day school dismissal time through 6:00 pm. This coverage is included in each student's AH fee.

Students must bring their own kosher-style, dairy/ pareve, and nut-free bag lunch on these days. As previously stated, Almost Home does not run on days when schools close early due to inclement weather.

HEALTH REGULATIONS

A medical form, signed by a physician, with a record of immunizations and current physical examination, must be returned ASAP. No child will be accepted without a current physical and complete medical form on file. If your child's medical expires during the school year, we will need a new one as soon as possible. If you do not have a current medical form, you must provide a doctor's note confirming that a physical exam is scheduled in the near term and that you will promptly provide the completed form following the visit.

If your child requires medication during Almost Home hours, the medication must be in its original container. Cold or other temporary medications are subject to the same regulations and forms as medications prescribed for ongoing treatments. All medications stored at the JCC are kept in a lock box. **A completed medication form including parent and physician signatures is required to administer medication. Please consult your child's physician and/or AlmostHome@shamesjcc.org for the required medication consent form.**

As a general rule, children too sick to attend school are too sick to attend Almost Home. Please notify us if your child has been diagnosed with a highly contagious condition (For example: flu, Covid-19, head lice, chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye) so that we may alert other parents to look out for symptoms. If a student in AH is diagnosed with a contagious condition, families will be notified by email. Names will not be mentioned in our communication.

Staff members must follow the same sick policies.

Subject to and consistent with applicable law, The AH Leadership Team reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to at any time exclude children and/or staff from the program based on legitimate concern about risk to communal health and welfare.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES

If your child will not be attending Almost Home on a regularly scheduled day or will be taking a later bus, you must notify the Almost Home leadership team by email to almosthome@shamesjcc.org or phone call to 914-366-7898 ext. 1168. Notification to the JCC's Welcome Desk staff or others is insufficient for this purpose.

If after school activities will delay your child's arrival on a recurring basis (sports, band, orchestra, etc), one notice of the new arrival time, with starting and ending dates, is sufficient.

Attendance is taken each day when school buses arrive. If an expected child is not on the bus, the Almost Home staff will attempt to call parents at home, at work, and on cell phones. The schools will not call us when your child is absent or dismissed early. Failure to inform us of absences may result in additional fees and/or suspension from our program.

There is no discount or refund for missed AH days. AH offers childcare according to school schedules and as noted in the calendar above.

TRANSPORTATION

Tarrytown and Irvington schools provide free bus transportation to the JCC. While we are in constant contact with the schools and transportation offices, parents are responsible for confirming their child's bus space and notifying the school that their child will be attending the JCC after school program.

The following are school and transportation office contact numbers:

Tarrytown Schools	
Tarrytown Transportation	914.631.3663
John Paulding (Grade K)	914.631.5526
Morse (Grades 1-2)	914.631.4144
Washington Irving (Grades 3-5)	914.631.4442
Sleepy Hollow Middle School (6-8)	914.332.6275
Irvington Schools	
Irvington Transportation	914.295-5544
Dows Lane (Grades K-3)	914.591.6012
Main Street School (Grades 4-5)	914.591.1961
Irvington Middle School (6-8)	914.269-5312

PICK UP

Location

All students enrolled in AH will be picked up at the JCC's Legacy Building (with the blue awning) OR **starting week 2, there will be two alternative pickup locations. (See details below).**

Authorization

Your online registration included options for identification of any/all adults who are authorized to pick-up your child. If you must adjust such "authorized pick-ups" please communicate revisions in writing by email to the Almost Home leadership team almosthome@shamesjcc.org.

- If someone is picking up who does not usually pick up, but they are on your form, please notify us so that we know to look for them.
- If someone is picking up who was not identified during registration, we will need a permission note from the child's parents or guardian (handwritten note with signature or email almosthome@shamesjcc.org).

We will not release your child to anyone who is not listed on the registration without verifying that there is a note from a parent/guardian. Do not rely on the school to pass notes on to us. Every child must be signed out by a designated caregiver.

Pick-up Process

Upon arrival at the JCC, parents and caregivers must park their vehicles in a proper parking spot and enter the Legacy Building. Upon arrival, parents and caregivers will buzz in and approach the front desk staff to share their name and the name(s) of the child(ren) they are picking up.

Then, Welcome Desk staff will radio to Almost Home staff who will escort your child to the lobby.

Beginning week 2, parents will have the option of picking up their child from two alternate locations: the field and the gymnasium in the main building. An adult will have a tablet to sign out your child. You MUST park in one of the lots to pick your child up from the field or the main building. PARKING ALONG ANY CURB IS PROHIBITED.

Pick-up Timing

If you or an alternate, authorized person will not be able to pick up by 6:00 pm, the JCC should be notified. The JCC will try to accommodate unexpected delays, but we appreciate your efforts to be on time or send word.

If we have not heard from the regular pick-up person by 6:15 p.m., the Almost Home staff will attempt to reach the relevant parents and then, someone on the child's emergency contact list. Once a listed adult arrives for the child, we will leave a message on the parent's "Best Phone Number to Call" voice-mail identifying who we released the child to.

In the event repeated late pick-ups, the JCC will charge additional fees and/or suspend program participation.

REGISTRATION FEES

ALL PAYMENTS WILL BE DRAFTED IN OUR ONLINE SYSTEM.

The JCC keeps your credit/debit card or bank draft information in our billing system. The JCC's billing program will automatically deduct the charges you owe for Almost Home on the first of each month.

Annual fees for Almost Home are based on a school year, beginning the first day of school and accounting for holidays and other school closings.

Annual fees for Almost Home will be divided into 10 equal installments. The first instalment was due upon registration and the remaining 9 installments will be processed to the credit/debit card, or bank account, on file on the first of each month beginning September 1, 2023 and through May 1, 2024. A \$25 processing fee may be assessed in all instances of declined payments.

FINANCIAL AID

The Shames JCC on the Hudson is deeply committed to enabling access to its child-care programs to families in many different financial circumstances. Need-based scholarship assistance is available for qualifying families. For more information about the Shames JCC scholarships, please contact our Chief Financial Officer, Wendy Antini wantini@shamesjcc.org or 914.366.7898 x1119. All financial aid information will be kept confidential.

REFUND POLICIES

After August 1, 2023 through conclusion of the program, fees paid are non-refundable.

Families may withdraw enrollment by written communication to the JCC (email to almosthome@shamesjcc.org); such communication should be made at least 10 days in advance of the child's anticipated last day.

No reduction in fees will be given for absences.

If a child is asked to leave the program for any reason, a pro-rated refund will be issued.

THANK YOU!
WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOUR CHILDREN
TO ALMOST HOME.