Appendix H – Jewish Life

Jewish Life: Frequently Asked Questions
For more information about these, or any other questions you might have about Jewish Life at The King David School, please don’t hesitate to contact the School Rabbi, Gersh Lazarow, on 9527 0018 or email rabbi@kds.vic.edu.au.

How is Judaism taught in the Pre-School?
In the Pre-School and kindergartens Judaism and Hebrew are integrated into the program through music, stories, art, prayers and preparing for Shabbat and festivals. The students enjoy Kabbalat Shabbat every Friday. The festivals are celebrated and shared with parents, grandparents and special friends.

How is Judaism taught in the primary years?
In primary classes students learn Tefillah (basic prayers), Torah (Bible stories and their ethical lessons), Parshat Hashavuah (the weekly portion), Israeli geography and personalities, festival customs and Kabbalat Shabbat, all with an experiential and participatory emphasis. Often Jewish Studies is integrated with other areas of the curriculum such as English writing activities, Art and Music. Students are also encouraged to participate actively in the Jewish co-curricular life of the School.

How is Judaism taught in the secondary years?
We believe that familiarity and facility with the Hebrew language is a key component of a strong Jewish identity. As such Hebrew is a compulsory in all years up to and including Year 8. In Years 9 and 10, Hebrew, like Jewish studies becomes an elective and students are required to complete a minimum of 4 units of Hebrew or Jewish Studies each year. VCE and Enhancement Hebrew are offered to students who wish to continue their Hebrew language studies throughout and beyond Year 12.

Is Hebrew separate from Jewish Studies?
Hebrew is taught as a spoken language. The selected vocabulary and stories reinforce and enhance knowledge of Shabbat, festivals, Torah and ethical values taught in Jewish Studies lessons.

How much time is devoted to Hebrew language studies per week?
There are four to five lessons per week devoted to Hebrew language study at most levels of the School.

Is Hebrew compulsory?
We believe that familiarity and facility with the Hebrew language is a key component of strong Jewish identity. As such Hebrew is a compulsory subject up to and including Year 8. In Years 9 and 10, Hebrew like Jewish studies becomes an elective and students are required to complete a minimum of 4 units of Hebrew and Jewish Studies each year. VCE and Enhancement Hebrew are offered to students who wish to continue their Hebrew language studies throughout and beyond Year 12.
What is the PACE Program?
Appreciating that our education is most effective when it is reinforced at home and at synagogue we have reviewed and expanded our parent and child education (PACE) programs as follows:

Prep: Chanukah Celebration
Year 1: Harvest Dinner
Year 2: Shabbat B’yachad
Year 3: Shabbat Workshop
Year 4: Passover Olympics
Year 5: Kabbalat Shabbat
Year 6: Morning Minyan
Year 7: Kabbalat Torah
Year 8: Tikkun Leil Shavuot

What is our commitment to Israel and Zionism?
We foster an appreciation for, knowledge of and care and concern for the State of Israel, her land and her people. We do this both through curricular learning and by encouraging involvement in communal activities, organisations and youth groups associated with the Australian Zionist movement. Year 10 students participate in a Zionist Seminar led by Israeli and local madrichim to enhance their knowledge and involvement in their Jewish identity and links to Israel. The School also hold an annual trip to Israel for senior secondary students ensuring that they have the opportunity to experience all that they have learnt.

What is the School’s attitude to Kashrut?
The King David School has developed a comprehensive Food and Kashrut Policy (Appendix J) to guide our observance.

The main principles that shape this policy are:

- The separation of meat and milk products.
- The separation of chalavi and basari utensils during the preparation and serving of food.
- All meat served by the School is obtained from a recognised kosher butcher.
- The non serving or eating of treif foods. This includes foods containing gelatine, suet, rennet, whey and certain ‘E-numbers’ that are derived from animal products.
- The furtherance of Tikkun Olam through the observance of eco-kashrut, restricting our purchase and consumption of foods to those that are produced in an ethical manner.
- The importance of teaching students about kashrut.
- A vegetarian option should be available at all school functions, including camps.

We ask that families respect this policy in the planning of parties and events outside school hours.

What if my family is not affiliated with Progressive Judaism?
We are a Progressive Jewish School and observe Progressive Jewish practice. Recognising this, we also
appreciate that we are blessed to welcome a diverse range of students and families into our school community and pride ourselves on our ability to treat all modes of observance with equal respect. As a pluralist school we encourage our students and their families to observe their Judaism in ways most meaningful to them.

Is it compulsory to attend events at a Progressive Synagogue?
The School expects full student participation in all aspects of its religious life. On occasion this includes services and events that are held are Progressive Synagogues.

What happens when my son/daughter is to become B’nei Mitzvah?
The School is happy to give assistance with your child’s B’nei Mitzvah studies in consultation with your synagogue. Individual and small group B’nei Mitzvah lessons are provided during school hours. Preparation for B’nei Mitzvah begins at least one year in advance. In Years 6 and 7, Jewish Studies classes concentrate on Jewish Lifecycle Events, Jewish Festivals, Ethics and Traditions, and Jewish History. The educational experience culminates with the Year 7 Kabbalat Torah celebration.

The School also has tutors who assist students in conjunction with your synagogue to prepare their Parshah through private tuition in Torah layning and reading of the Haftorah. If you have a child who is approaching B’nei Mitzvah in the next few years please contact the School Rabbi, Gersh Lazarow, on 9527 0018 or email rabbi@kds.vic.edu.au. It is expected that students do not miss school for more than one day prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students are discouraged from missing school after their own Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Are there expectations regarding student behaviour when attending B’nei Mitzvah ceremonies?
All King David students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately when attending synagogue or receptions for B’nei Mitzvah ceremonies of classmates. They should pick up a Siddur and Chumash when entering the synagogue so they may follow the service and join in responses. It is preferable that parents attend with their children and students sit with their families in synagogue. If sitting with fellow classmate, students must ensure they remain in their seat for the entire service and that their conduct does not distract others or detract from the occasion in any way. They should behave in such a way as to reflect positively on themselves and our School.