



**AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

# **Parent Handbook**

## **2024-2025**

**Kara Wilbourne: Club J Director**

**Angela Witherby: Club J Coordinator**

## Table of Contents

<u>A Note to Parents</u> .....	3
<u>Club J Mission</u> .....	3
<u>Judaic Programming at the MJCCA</u> .....	3-4
<u>Club J Staff</u> .....	4
<u>Times of Operation and Billing</u> .....	4
<u>Absences</u> .....	5
<u>Transportation from School</u> .....	5
<u>Bus Safety</u> .....	5-6
<u>Activity Changes</u> .....	6
<u>Homework</u> .....	6
<u>Behavior Guidelines and Discipline Policy</u> .....	6-8
<u>Inclusion Guidelines</u> .....	8-9
<u>End-of-Day Pick Up</u> .....	9
<u>Security</u> .....	9-10
<u>Snacks</u> .....	10
<u>Health, Medication &amp; COVID-19</u> .....	10-11
<u>Personal Property</u> .....	11
<u>Bathroom Policy</u> .....	11
<u>Outdoor Play</u> .....	11
<u>Concussion Awareness</u> .....	11-13
<u>Communication</u> .....	13

## A Note to Parents

Welcome to Club J! We cannot wait for your family to be part of our Club J family this year! If you have any questions or concerns, please know we are always here to talk.

Please read this handbook carefully and thoroughly. We expect parents to help establish open communication with the Club J Director. Please take the time to read all written and email communications that are sent home from our program to stay up to date on policy changes and/or special programming opportunities. Here is some important contact information for you to use during the school year to reach us at Club J:

Club J: 678.812.4058 or [clubj@atlantajcc.org](mailto:clubj@atlantajcc.org)

Kara Wilbourne: 678.812.4094 or [kara.wilbourne@atlantajcc.org](mailto:kara.wilbourne@atlantajcc.org)

Angela Witherby: 678.812.4059 or [angela.witherby@atlantajcc.org](mailto:angela.witherby@atlantajcc.org)

Front Desk of MJCCA (to be used if you are unable to contact us and it is an emergency): 678.812.4000

## Club J Mission

The mission of Club J is to serve the Jewish community and the community at large by promoting caring relationships among children and adults, enabling children to develop their interests and expand their abilities, and offering children a sense of belonging to a greater community for which we are all responsible.

### Goals

- Create a safe and fun environment where children can develop friendships and explore new ideas.
- Ensure that all children complete their homework daily.
- Help children to develop empathy for others and learn to accept people's differences.
- Build self-confidence in children by helping them to expand their abilities and discover how their actions impact their relationships with others.
- Offer a variety of social, recreational, cultural, and community service activities.
- Teach Jewish values and traditions to children for them to understand their importance in, and responsibility to, our community and the world.

## Judaic Programming at the MJCCA

Children enrolled in Club J will participate in a Shabbat celebration each Friday, in addition to numerous Jewish value and holiday activities throughout the year. These activities are a source of great joy and pride in our community, and we hope that all the people from diverse backgrounds participating in our programs will gain an appreciation for the depth and beauty of Jewish heritage. To help us achieve these goals, each month at ClubJ is dedicated to exploring and learning about one of our Youth Program Values.

Our four values are:

- **Community / Kehillah:** *Kehillah is about connecting— connecting with ourselves and with others. Kehillah is making sure that everyone has a place where they feel welcome, invited, included, and cared for.*

- **Spirit / Ruach:** *Ruach can be translated as “wind” or “breath” but is better understood as the things we can feel but not see. Ruach is the spirit and enthusiasm that enlivens everything we do and the feelings of connection we create.*
- **Character Development / Tikkun Middot:** *Tikkun translates as “repair” and middot are “character traits”. Tikkun Middot is a practice of turning challenges into learning opportunities, developing a growth mindset, and striving always to working on being the best version of ourselves.*
- **Repairing the World / Tikkun Olam:** *Tikkun Olam, translated as “repairing the world”, refers to acts of kindness performed to make the world a better place. Through social action and a commitment to social justice, Tikkun Olam empowers participants to identify and contribute to issues that are affecting the world around us.*

We welcome your questions about our Judaic programming and will make every effort to keep children and parents informed about these activities throughout the year.

## Club J Staff

All the Club J counselors participate regularly in school-aged trainings and workshops which are overseen by Bright from the Start, our licensing agency. Club J staff members are also certified in CPR, First Aid, and AED use. Counselors strive to be trusted guides, while also ensuring that the children are actively and safely engaged in a range of engaging and fun experiences.

## Times of Operation and Billing

Club J is housed on the MJCCA’s 52-acre Zaban Park Campus. We enroll children from Pre-K through 5th grade. Please note that our program closes for several religious and secular holidays throughout the year. Please refer to our calendar for specific dates of operation and closings. Club J hours are from 2:00pm through 6:00pm, Monday through Friday.

All Club J participants must be current members of the MJCCA (part of a Family or Single Parent membership in good standing). Club J is a 10-month program (August-May). Fees are determined according to your child’s scheduled attendance and are divided into 10 equal payments, billed monthly from August 2024 to May 2025, regardless of the number of days Club J is operating each month. Charges for Club J are debited from your credit card or checking account on the 3rd of every month. Any changes in your child’s enrollment schedule must be approved in advance and are subject to a \$25 change fee per change. Please provide written notification two weeks prior to the date the change will go into effect. **Refunds for absences or missed days are not issued.**

A \$50 non-refundable registration fee and \$100 deposit per child is due at time of registration. The \$100 deposit will be applied to the final Club J payment. Registration fees and deposits are non-refundable and nontransferable after June 30, 2024. Tuition rates do not include membership to the MJCCA nor costs associated with School’s Out Camps.

## Absences

Please submit a [Club J Mail Form](#) or email [clubj@atlantajcc.org](mailto:clubj@atlantajcc.org) to notify Club J if your child will not be attending our program on a regularly scheduled day. Please be sure to include the name of your child's school.

Club J must be notified no later than **11:00 am** that day if your child will not attend, as this helps to avoid enacting our missing child procedures.

## Transportation from School

Transportation is available from the following schools: Austin Elementary, Chesnut Elementary, The Davis Academy (both campuses), Dunwoody Elementary, Kingsley Elementary, Montgomery Elementary, and Vanderlyn Elementary. Bus spaces will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. If your child is getting dropped off at Club J by car or a bus not on our list, a parent must arrange for their child to be brought to the Club J desk for check in.

Counselors will accompany the children on a Club J bus. Counselors will check the students onto the bus and ensure that everyone exits the bus upon arrival at the MJCCA. They will also maintain a safe and secure bus ride. The bus counselors will be in constant communication with a Club J Director via cell phone.

**Below are the steps taken when we have not received notification of an absence.**

- The Club J bus will not leave the school until it is confirmed whether the child is riding or not riding (which can delay pickup from additional schools).
- Counselors call the main office of the school to find out if the child is absent or went home early.
  - If school confirms absence, the bus leaves
- If school cannot confirm absence, counselors will call the parent(s) to confirm the child's location status.
  - If the counselors cannot reach the parent(s), they will call a Club J Director to get confirmation on the child's location status.
- A Club J Director will contact parents to confirm location.
- If no contact is reached, the bus will wait 10 additional minutes before returning to the MJCCA.

## Bus Safety

Club J strives to provide a safe, well-supervised, and fun experience to all its participants, including while riding the bus. Children will be counted and marked on the roster as they leave the bus. Bus seats will be checked to ensure that no one is left behind. At no time will behaviors be permitted that endanger the safety of children or staff. Disrupting the driver, standing up or changing seats while the vehicle is moving; throwing things; putting hands or heads out the window; fighting; yelling; not listening to the bus counselor, driver, or other staff members on the bus; removing clothing; or using foul or adult language, gestures, or actions; are all considered to be inappropriate behaviors and will not be tolerated. **Please assist us with explaining to your child what behaviors are and are not appropriate on the bus and what the consequences are of inappropriate behavior.**

Should these rules and regulations not be adhered to, the following consequences will be instituted:

**First Occurrence:** The first time an incident happens, there will be a verbal warning from staff to the child. If the behavior does not stop immediately, the child will be reported to a Club J Director, at which time a parent may be called or advised of the situation.

**Second Occurrence:** The second time an incident happens, the bus counselor or driver will report the issue to a Club J Director and there will be a phone call home. **In the case where severe behavior occurs on the bus, the child may be given a one- to three-day suspension from the Club J bus. (No refund)**

**Third Occurrence:** The third time an incident occurs, there will be a second phone call home from a Club J Director. A three-day suspension from the Club J bus will be given. **(No refund)**

**Fourth Occurrence:** The fourth incident will result in a one-month suspension of child's transportation privileges. **(No refund)**

Once a fourth incident has taken place, any child returning after a one-month suspension will be on probation with the Club J transportation and will be subject to immediate dismissal from Club J transportation without a refund, should any further problems occur.

## Activity Changes

Any additions or changes to your child's activity schedule must be done **24 hours in advance** and communicated to a Club J Director by phone or email, as well as the director of that specific program. Otherwise, we cannot guarantee the change.

## Homework

Our counselors help children with their homework during homework time. Staff are instructed to help children stay focused and assist in the completion of assigned homework; not to correct the assigned homework. They are not responsible for re-teaching material learned in class.

## Behavior Guidelines and Discipline Policy During Club J

The MJCCA wants all our children to have a great time when they participate in Club J. We feel it is our responsibility to engage children in fun and meaningful group activities that give them a sense of belonging and freedom to express themselves. We understand that praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management. We also understand that we must act as role models for children by paying attention to their interests and treating them with respect and kindness. We will set clear guidelines for them and will be consistent in our interactions with them.

We will make every effort to help children understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviors; however, it is important that children enrolled in our program are able to follow behavior expectations and to fully participate in program activities.

Parents/Guardians are required to inform the MJCCA in writing of any special circumstances that may affect the child's ability to participate fully and to stay within the guidelines of acceptable behavior– including behavioral problems, psychological, medical, or physical conditions. In these circumstances, one-on-one counselors (facilitators), provided by and paid for by parents/guardians, are welcome in our program to help assist the child to participate and follow our behavior expectations. The MJCCA is not responsible for providing one-on-one care. **Children enrolled in our programs must have the ability to participate in a group care environment with a ratio of 2 or 3 staff to 20 children.**

### **Behavior Expectations**

- Children must cooperate with staff and follow directions.
- Children must respect other children, staff, MJCCA equipment, and facilities.
- Children must stay with their designated group, adhering to our supervision requirements.
- Children must refrain from any behavior that threatens the safety or wellbeing of any staff person or child in our program, including themselves.
- Threatening behaviors that are unacceptable include, but are not limited to:
  - making fun of or insulting someone
  - bullying
  - making obscene gestures or comments or using foul language
  - touching self or others inappropriately
  - revealing private parts of the body
  - punching, kicking, slapping, biting, or inappropriate physical contact of any kind
  - taking someone's things or stealing
  - writing nasty things about someone
  - shouting at someone
  - gossiping about someone
  - threatening someone with physical violence

## **Discipline Policy During Club J**

### **Step One:**

Children who fail to meet the stated behavior expectations, or who participate in unacceptable behaviors as described above, will be given a verbal warning by their counselor. At that time, staff will point out the unacceptable behavior, discuss how this behavior affects others, and offer suggestions for the child to use an alternative, positive behavior. Children will be guided in an age-appropriate manner. Younger children may require more coaching than older children, who may only receive one verbal warning. **If the incident warrants, the child may receive an immediate one- to three-day suspension from Club J.**

### **Step Two:**

If a child continues to have difficulty with his or her behavior, the child's parent/guardian will be notified with an incident report and/or a phone call during program hours. The child will be asked to take responsibility for the behavior by describing the behavior to his or her parents/guardians. We ask that parents assist us in helping children to be accountable for their own behaviors. A child that admits to and takes responsibility for his or her

mistakes is taking a step toward changing the behavior. At this point, the child will help to decide on a consequence for the behavior that will be designed to help change the behavior while in our program. (For example, a child that throws a ball at someone's head may become a referee for that game in the future, making sure nobody breaks the rules; or the child may be asked not to participate in a favorite activity for a time.)

### **Step Three:**

If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive or threatening, the child will be subject to suspension or dismissal, at which time **refunds will not be given**. Parents/guardians will be called immediately and asked to pick up the child right away. Depending upon the nature of the event, the child may be dismissed for the remainder of the day or suspended for more than one day. Our staff will work closely with parents to help a child succeed in a group setting. However, it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to deal with any major difficulties that a child is having. If, after repeated interventions and attempts to help a child learn positive behaviors, the child continues to be unable to function in a group care environment, that child may be asked to leave our program permanently.

### **Behaviors that may lead to immediate dismissal, suspension, or expulsion from our program without any prior incident, include but are not limited to:**

- Fighting or other violent or dangerous behavior
- Inappropriate actions, including, but not limited to, cursing, bullying, conversations of an adult nature, exposing inappropriate body parts, inappropriately touching self or another individual
- Running away from their designated group area
- Possession of a weapon of any kind
- Vandalism or destruction of property
- Theft

## **Inclusion Guidelines**

**The MJCCA's Inclusion Program strives to provide the support and flexibility necessary to enable youth with disabilities to participate in our innovative programs alongside their typically developing peers.** Youth with special needs are supported by our Inclusion Team through program accommodations and may also receive individualized support. Our Inclusion Team collaborates with parents, educators, and staff to ensure the best possible program placement for youth of all abilities. The goal of our Inclusion Program is to provide the support necessary so all youth may access the transformative opportunities available at the MJCCA. **For new participants seeking inclusion support, an intake process must be completed prior to confirmed enrollment. This will ensure that your child's experience is as successful as possible.**

**Please complete the intake process on the application which includes the questions below.**

1. What type of support, if any, does your child receive at school?
2. Does your child have a specific diagnosis?
3. What are your child's strengths and weaknesses?
4. What are your child's current areas of need or challenges?
5. Will your child be taking medication during the program?
6. Does your child have a physical condition that would impact their participation?



**Due to the fast-paced environment of Club J (including many transitional periods), we want all parents to acknowledge that it may not be the best fit for every child.**

Participants who are the most successful include:

- Children who participate safely and willingly with a group of peers in a variety of settings and activities
- Children who display non-aggressive behaviors
- Children who can keep their hands to themselves
- Children who are not a threat to themselves or others
- Children who remain with the group and follow directions provided by staff
- Children who understand the difference between right and wrong decisions

Should behavior incidents occur, each participant and incident are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

- What was happening before the incident?
- What are the known challenges for this participant?
- What are the participant's goals (i.e. social skills, self-regulation, etc.)
- What supports are in place? (i.e. facilitator, communication device, etc.)

**Should there be issues that consistently arise, it will be up to the staff discretion whether to put one-to-one facilitation in place or if dismissal is necessary.**

Should facilitation be required, we encourage all families to provide their own support staff. If you need assistance in this process, please contact the Blonder Director, Sarah Koenig, at 678-812-3886. This would be an additional out-of-pocket expense to be covered by the family. **Your child will not be allowed to return to the program until this process is completed.**

## End-of-Day Pick Up

Parents/Guardians may pick up their child from the program at any time; however, they **must be officially checked out from the Club J Checkout table**. A staff member will be seated near the front desk at the entrance to the MJCCA from 2:45 pm - 6:00 pm to allow for an easier pickup. **Dismissal numbers are assigned per child. You must know your child's individual dismissal number, and anyone else picking up your child must know this number, with an ID, otherwise, your child will not be released into their care.** All children must be picked up by 6:00 pm. In the event you will be late, please call or email Club J in advance to let them know. A late fee of \$5.00 per minute per child will be charged to your JCC account when pick up occurs after 6:00 pm.

## Security

Children must be signed out at pickup from Club J each day. **You may designate other individuals to pick up your child in the Club J Forms however, they MUST know your child's assigned dismissal number that has been given to you. If a person arrives to pick up your child that does not know your child's dismissal number, regardless of being on your designated pickup list, your child will not be released into their care until a parent is reached via phone.** In that event, they must have picture identification with them to prove their identity. Please be sure to tell your child's dismissal number to all potential individuals who might pick up your child during the year. In this case, please email [clubj@atlantajcc.org](mailto:clubj@atlantajcc.org) to let us know that a

specific individual is picking up and we will check their identification instead of requiring the dismissal number. Prior notification must be made.

If your child participates in any other MJCCA programs (i.e. dance, gymnastics, sports etc.) please let us know prior to the start of the semester if you are picking them up directly from the activity or if you need them to be brought back to Club J.

All Club J staff will be in constant contact with each other and a Club J Director via walkie-talkie. Club J Directors will also carry a walkie-talkie connected with MJCCA Security and the front desk. Therefore, should an emergency occur, there will not be a delay in alerting the necessary resources.

Fire drills will be conducted monthly. Tornado and other emergency drills will be conducted every six months. This will allow the children and staff to know what to do and where to go in the event of an actual emergency. We will be sure to do these in a way that the children are not frightened or anxious by this process.

## Snacks

In our continuous efforts to put our children's safety first, Club J is a "nut-sensitive" program. Club J provides child-friendly, kosher snacks daily that will also be nut-free. We are doing everything possible to work toward the goal of keeping our children with allergies safe. **If your child has any food restrictions or allergies, please let us know by indicating it on your child's Club J Forms along with filling out the allergy action plan.** If your child is a picky eater, please feel free to send them with their own snack, as long as it does NOT contain tree nuts, peanuts, cashews, peanut butter, almond butter, Nutella, or any other foods containing any kind of nut. If you are unsure if a food is safe to pack your children for Club J, please call or email us. **Children are not permitted to share any food brought from home. This assures children's dietary observances and the prevention of allergic reactions.**

## Health & Medication

To help us prevent the spread of illness amongst our staff and children, please help do your part by keeping your child home if they are sick. We are required to exclude sick children with the following symptoms or signs of illness for 24 hours. We will call you to pick up your child when:

1. There is a fever of 99.5 degrees or over. If your child develops a fever, he or she must be fever-free, without fever medication, for 24 hours before returning to our program.
2. There is diarrhea or vomiting.
3. Your child has a communicable disease such as strep throat, viral blisters (chicken pox), impetigo, conjunctivitis, or lice. These illnesses must be treated immediately, and the child must be symptom-free for a full 24 hours before the child may return to our care.

### Regarding medications, please be aware that we must:

1. Obtain a signed consent form to administer any over-the-counter, homeopathic, natural, or prescription medications. This form must specify dosage, times, and dates to be administered. You may find these forms on the MJCCA website under Club J.
2. Dispense only medications that are in their original, labeled containers.
3. Confiscate any over-the-counter medications from children carrying such items.

## COVID-19 Policies

Please notify a director if your child tests positive. We follow current CDC protocols.

## Personal Property

**The MJCCA is not responsible for lost or missing items.** Children MUST refrain from bringing personal electronics equipment, trading cards, jewelry, and other valuables to our program. Please make sure that jackets, sweatshirts, and water bottles are labeled with your child's first and last name, as these are the most common items to be misplaced. Any items left behind that do not have a label with a child's name will be donated or thrown away. Any items left behind that have a child's name on them will be returned to the group the following day.

## Bathroom Policy

All children enrolled in Club J are expected to be toilet trained. Toilet trained means that the child wears underwear, does not wet or soil him or herself except on rare occasions, can express to an adult when he or she must go to the bathroom and can handle himself or herself in the bathroom independently. This includes being able to manage his or her clothing, operate a toilet, and clean his or her own body.

## Outdoor Play

Outdoor activities may consist of field sports, nature walks, or other outdoor activities. Therefore, please make sure that your child has labeled sunscreen with them and a sweatshirt or jacket on days that it might get colder in the late afternoon.

## Communication

Much of our communication will be provided electronically. Families are responsible for providing us with current email addresses for getting information. Families are expected to check for information regularly. Every Friday a newsletter will be sent to all families with information pertaining to activities groups participated in, upcoming closures and events, pictures, etc. We will also post reminders and information on our [Club J Facebook page](#).

We welcome an open line of communication between families and staff. You are always welcome to speak with the Club J Director about any questions or concerns that you may have. Please feel free to call or email Kara Wilbourne at 678.812.4094 or [kara.wilbourne@atlantajcc.org](mailto:kara.wilbourne@atlantajcc.org) or [clubj@atlantajcc.org](mailto:clubj@atlantajcc.org)

**We look forward to a safe and fun year with your child as well as getting to know your entire family!**

**B'Shalom,**

**Kara and Angela**