Job Description: Special Needs Coordinator

Purpose:
The Special Needs Coordinator will partner with the Religious School staff (and senior staff as appropriate) and school families to design supportive environments, build positive relationships, design social and emotional teaching strategies and, when necessary, develop more intensive individual instruction, so that each child, regardless of individual learning style and needs, is a welcomed participant in Ohev Shalom's educational programs. In addition, the Special Needs Coordinator should assume an Advocacy Role in the needs of all students enrolled in the Religious School.

1. The Special Needs Coordinator will review all existing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans, or Individual Health Plans, that are shared by families and collaborate with the Ed Director, teachers, individual families, and if appropriate students, to design each individual Special Needs Action Plan (SNAP). Note: This would apply to any struggles that a family shares (in written or verbal form) that are determined to reflect a special need, even if the child does not have an IEP in secular school.

   a. When possible, the Special Needs Coordinator will include individual classroom teachers in the SNAP meetings with families. When it is not possible for a classroom teacher to be present at a SNAP meeting, the Special Needs Coordinator will review the individual SNAP with the classroom teacher to ensure that the classroom teacher is familiar and comfortable with the identified needs of the student and recommended adaptations and strategies. This can be done by telephone conference if needed.

   b. Each child’s SNAP will be reviewed with the specific Resource Room staff working with that child. Training, information and support will be provided to the Resource Room director as well as the student tutors and madrichim. The Resource Room teacher will be provided with copies of the SNAPS for the children seen there.

   c. The SNAP will be reviewed a minimum of 3x over the course of the year to determine if changes are required, additional teacher training is needed, materials are needed etc. The SNAP will be developed or updated at the start of the year. The SNAP will be reviewed at the time of each report card (mid term and at the completion of the year). Additional reviews should take place on an as needed basis. The SNC will consult with the teacher and the Resource Room to provide the family with a written update on the child’s progress using a SNAP Progress Report form. Parent – Teacher Conferences should be offered to any family that has a SNAP. The SNC will attend these meetings as appropriate.
d. If the school identifies a student challenge that the family has not shared or is unaware of, the SNC will work with the Ed Director to determine whether and how an outreach might be made to the family to explore the child’s needs and experience of the school program. No diagnostic language would be used, only behavioral observations and classroom concerns.

2. The Special Needs Coordinator is responsible for collaborating with the Hebrew School classroom teachers to design appropriate accommodations for children who have been identified as having a learning difference or style that requires specially designed instruction. This might include: physical restructuring of the environment, materials, teaching strategies, and demonstration of lessons and techniques, where appropriate and necessary.

3. The Special Needs Coordinator should be familiar with the Hebrew School Curriculum, for different grades, as well as the special projects required for each grade.
   
a. The Special Needs Coordinator will collaborate with the Education Director, teaching staff and family to identify and/or assist in the creation or purchase of necessary equipment and/or materials that may be necessary to support an individual student's specific need.
   
i. The Inclusion Committee can provide support and resources as needed.

4. The Special Needs Coordinator will develop and present trainings and workshops and/or identify presenters that will enhance the understanding and professional development of the Hebrew School staff as a whole. This information can be about specific special needs, general special needs skills or information on general classroom management techniques. Readings and information will also be provided to individual teachers on an as needed basis to help them understand the specific needs of their students.

5. The Special Needs Coordinator is responsible for collaborating with the Rabbi, Cantor, Educational Director, Youth Directors and other staff and lay leaders, to ensure understanding of individual learning styles of students and ensure that accommodations are understood and included in all aspects of each student’s participation in all personal and group events and activities such as, youth group events, trips, B’nai Mitzvah preparation, etc.

6. The Special Needs Coordinator is responsible for supporting and collaborating with the Hebrew School Resource Room director and tutors
as well as with the classroom madrachim as appropriate.

7. The SNC will model and teach other staff about issues of confidentiality and the use of respectful language to understand and describe special needs.

The SNC will not:

- Provide coverage or assistance for classrooms or school events, unless assisting or training a teacher in meeting a student’s special learning needs, or observing an identified student in his/her classroom, or other environment, e.g. tefillah, or special event.
- Attend teacher trainings or school events that are unrelated to Inclusion.
- Be seen as faculty with hours matching those of the school. The SNC is a consultant and will have responsibilities that are met during and beyond school hours through meetings scheduled with staff and families, through attending trainings etc.
- Be used in a punitive manner to address negative classroom behavior, i.e. act as disciplinarian. Of course, the SNC can be used in a constructive, collaborative manner to assist with the managing of challenging behaviors that are related to special needs.
- Reach out to a family who has not self identified as having a special learning need – without prior consultation with the Ed Director.

The SNC will:

- Provide support and education to any and all members of the synagogue staff who are interacting with families who have a child with a special need.
- Respond to all family requests for special needs support in a timely manner, and will follow up to determine if the response has been sufficient and successful.
- Maintain confidential and clear records of interactions with families, IEPs, SNAPs and other materials and interactions that are relevant to that child. i.e. a running log of what interventions were provided, when and with whom.
- Hours will need to flex around teacher and parent availability for meetings. Compensation will be provided to teachers who will be expected to participate in the SNAP meetings and trainings with the SNC as necessary and appropriate during non-school hours.