

# Gan Alon Pre School

AND FOREST SCHOOL

OUR HANDBOOK



## Transitioning into Gan Alon

Once you've received your confirmation email, you will not begin to hear from us again until the month of March, prior to your child starting Gan Alon. We will then invite you to a Welcome Evening presentation in May. This is for both parents (if possible) of new children.

### *What you will receive before you start*

**Friends Request:** This is an email that we send to you in the Spring term. If you know another child or family in the preschool and you would like your child to be in the same class, you may request it.

There are two classes at Gan Alon. We try to keep classes balanced by age and gender. Therefore, there is no 'moving up'. The class that your child enters into on their first day, is where they stay until they leave Gan Alon.

At our Welcome Evening presentation in May you will be told your child's keyworker and class.

### *The Welcome Pack*

It is illegal to have your child here without contact information or an agreement to administer medication etc. Therefore, after the Welcome Evening presentation in May you will be sent electronically:

- Essential Information Form – emergency numbers/contacts
- Health Information Form – health details
- Parental Fees Contract – your choice of days and hours
- Digital Information – agreement allowing photographs/videos of your child during their Gan Alon time
- Tapestry Information – your agreement to promise not to share information online
- Family Agreement – a simple tick sheet with items that don't fit into any of the above



## Start Dates

Your child will be allocated a start date. We settle two children, one in either class, on any given day. This allows your keyworker to devote the first morning to you and your child.

Please honour the start date so that you do not compromise another family.

All September starters will have started by September 30<sup>th</sup>. All January starters will have started by the end of the second week of January.

## Term Dates

Gan Alon is the preschool of the New North London Synagogue, part of the Masorti movement.

PLEASE NOTE NNLS observes 2 days for all Chaggim. We are asked to close at 12.00 midday the day before a Festival so that there can be an Evening service.

There are two occasions in the academic calendar when time-tabling can be tricky.

1. **Chaggim** – observing the Traditional calendar, the New North London Synagogue has two days of Festival and therefore, this can mean that September/October weeks can be interrupted.
2. **Easter/Pesach** – can cause disruption if the dates of Easter and Pesach do not coincide. On this occasion we will be guided by the NNLS, Akiva (Jewish Primary School) as well as the Barnet calendar. Because we work in a communal space, we are asked to close a few days before Pesach in order to clean.



## How we settle children

We believe in being happy first, settling second.

Our aim is to create a smooth transition into preschool. We want your child's initial reactions of Gan Alon to be calm so that they can acclimatise themselves to this very new environment.

For some children settling in is instant and requires no further support from the parent. But for most children they take tentative steps.

Gan Alon does not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle. We believe that a child's distress can cause negative associations for them and can delay the settling in process.

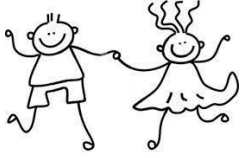
The right time for a parent to leave is decided, on a day to day basis, between the parent and staff.

Gan Alon staff believe: children are individuals and the reaction to being separated from a parent/carer will vary from child to child. This requires you to work with us. We don't want you to stay any longer than is necessary.

Gan Alon expects a parent, or significant adult, to stay for the sessions initially. We cannot guarantee it, but it is usual for it to take between 4 and 10 days. During this time staff will gradually suggest and look for opportunities when you can ease yourself away from your child.

### Tips to remember

- the settling adult does not have to be you. It could be a grandparent, nanny etc.
- try not to talk about your leaving to your child particularly if they are focused and playing happily.
- you can bring a babe-in-arms but be advised that your child may be conflicted between staying at preschool on their own whilst you leave with their sibling. Therefore, it is a good idea then to arrange alternative care for younger siblings during this initial settling in period.
- remember, please be patient with your child and the staff.



## Arriving & Collecting

### Your Child's First Day – 9:30am – 12:00pm

On your child's first day, arrive at 9.30am so that you can be greeted by your child's keyworker and collect your child at 12.00 midday on their first morning. Experience tells us that the first morning is an overwhelming experience for all children.

There are two reasons for collecting at 12.00:

- mornings are physically and emotionally overwhelming
- it confirms to a young child that children are collected and leave Gan Alon to go home.

### Your Child's Second Day and going forward

You should arrive with all the other children and bring a piece of fruit/vegetable:

- 8.00-8.55am Breakfast Club, adults bring children to Gan Alon doors.
- 9.00-9.10am, children are collected by staff at the metal gate.
- After 9.10am, adults bring children to Gan Alon doors.
- 12.00 (Monday-Thursday), adults come to into building foyer to collect.
- 1.15pm or 3.00pm Monday-Thursday (and 12.00 Friday for all children), adults come into the building foyer to collect.

PLEASE NOTE: If your child has an early afternoon appointment (doctor etc.,) collect at 1.15pm. After 1.15pm we have activities or Forest School and it will not be possible to collect your child until 3.00pm.



## Kit Bags & Toileting

All children require a kit bag, of spare clothes these are not just for if they soil themselves, but also for when they play with water, mud, paint etc.

Please dress your child in easy-to-wash play clothes.

Early Years educators no longer insist that children wear aprons when they paint or draw. The reason for this is, that if a child refuses an apron, they can be put off from acquiring the vital skills of creativity and ultimately learning how to control a pen or pencil correctly.

### Kit Bags

- Throughout their time here, children need a clothes bag left at Gan Alon with sets of spare clothes to change into. A list will be made available to you.
- It is vital that clothes are replaced over-night when soiled and that the bag is kept full.
- There is no school uniform.
- PLEASE NOTE that crocs and flip-flops are not allowed as they are dangerous on large play equipment. Closed shoes or open-toed sandals are acceptable.

### Toileting

Do not worry about the stage your child is at when it comes to toileting. Our very experienced staff will work with you to help train your child.



## Snack, lunch and all things food

Gan Alon food is kosher, dairy and vegetarian, fish is acceptable if kashrut compliant.

Gan Alon is also nut-free and grapes and blueberries are not allowed as they are a choking hazard.

### Food Allergies

We take food allergies seriously, once a family has highlighted an allergy we make sure that all staff and other families know which foods to avoid for that child.

### Snack

Children are offered bread sticks, milk or water on a daily basis. All families are asked to please bring one piece of fresh fruit/ vegetable to Gan Alon everyday to be cut up and shared at snack time.

Occasionally children will be offered different foods as a result of a festival or cooking activity.

### Lunch

Hot lunch is served every day. Please take a look at our chosen provider Georgia's Deli by visiting their website <https://georgiasdeli.com/>

Lunch is at noon every day and all children eat lunch together.

### Challah and Birthday Cakes

At Gan Alon, we honour every child's birthday. The birthday child will bake and decorate a cake with a member of staff before their special day and then share it with all the children at snack time.

Each week we take two children from the rota to make challah for our Kabbalat Shabbat.



## How do we communicate with you?

**Tapestry Online Journals** – once every half term, you will receive videos and photographs of your child as they play and learn at Gan Alon.

At Gan Alon we prefer to send several videos and a arrange of photographs, giving you a clear idea of where your child goes and what they do while they are at preschool.

If your child's birthday occurs after your Tapestry Observation has been sent, you may receive another email.

**Mailchimp Newsletter** – each month we will send you a Mailchimp newsletter information via email to keep you informed of events, activities and share fun photographs of the children.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences** – held annually in the summer term.

**Library** – every week the children are asked to choose two books from our book library, one fiction and one non fiction. A comment sheet is enclosed with books, you are required to comment and the Manager will reply on a weekly basis.

**Parent Reps** – 2 parents per class volunteer their time to act as a bridge between the preschool and the parent group.

**Parents WhatsApp Group** – this is administered by the Parent Reps and is a communal space for Gan Alon parents only.





## Accidents & Incidents

Your child spends the largest part of their waking day at our preschool.

Therefore, it is inevitable that at some point every family will receive an Accident/Incident Form describing either an Accident or an Incident incurred during their time at Gan Alon Preschool.

### *What is an accident?*

Accidents are incurred as a child plays and injures themselves.

### *What is an incident?*

Incidents are usually an altercation between children.

Occasionally, it is our experience that children will incur a scratch or bruise that they are not aware of, and nor are the staff. Therefore, you may not have received an Accident Form.



# Behaviour

Gan Alon aims to create a happy environment where the expectation is that children behave appropriately at all times.

## Child behaviour

However, every child, including yours, is capable of negative behaviour in their early years. The vast majority of negative reactions can be dealt with an explanation or a short, sharp command.

## Parental behaviour

It is unacceptable to use aggressive language or shout at staff, and never to raise your voice around the children. If you have a grievance, please ensure that you have calmed, and then make an arrangement to speak to us.



## Special Educational Needs

### *What every parent needs to know*

There are times when we have a child who, through no fault of their own, will display challenging behaviour. We deal with that behaviour with the family in a controlled and systematic way as outlined by Barnet.

Gan Alon expects positive attitudes from all parents. On occasion, a child with a greater difficulty in learning or those with a disability, may upset or unintentionally hurt your child. We will deal with the situation immediately and inform both families of any occurrence. Please be aware that parents with stereotypical views of children with special educational needs are unhelpful and will be challenged.

### *If you have a child with a special need*

At Gan Alon we are inclusive and take a holistic approach to learning and development. We liaise with families of identified children to ensure planning is put in place with assistance from outside agencies, as required. Any plan will be made known to all staff and reviewed regularly.



## Our Amazing Forest School

Gan Alon is an accredited Forest School and staff are trained in forest school practice. Our forest classroom is private, on-site and a short walk from Gan Alon.

Forest School is held during the week Monday-Thursday. We go all year round and in all conditions. It is easier to visit after 1.15pm but in good weather we will go in the morning and afternoons.

Gan Alon provides:

- fleece
- waterproof jacket and trousers

You provide:

- named wellington boots (to be kept here for the duration of your child's time with us)

As we could go to the forest at any time, we request that girls always wear (or keep) leggings in Gan Alon, instead of tights, where possible.

Children use the toilet before we leave and we also have a portable toilet in the forest.

PLEASE NOTE: We don't go in high wind or driving rain.



## Being Jewish at Gan Alon

We aim to teach our children about the Jewish religion by providing an inclusive and caring Jewish atmosphere in which all children and their families are involved.

- We establish the link between Israel and ourselves by integrating modern life in Israel into our secular routines.
- We use Ivrit in our classroom by always ensuring that one member of staff is fluent and can support children with English as a second language.
- We always try to find the educational value when we deliver the Jewish year – integrating festivals and celebrations into daily activities.

*"We want the children to absorb the rhythms of the Jewish week and year as part of their happy early memories. We want the tastes, sights, sounds and songs of Judaism to be an integrated, natural part of their experience of life. Gan Alon achieves this beautifully."*

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg

NNLS



## 10 Commandments for Gan Alon Parents

1. Read our correspondence EVERY time you receive it.
2. Every day, bring one piece of fruit/vegetable to share (no dried fruits, grapes or blueberries).
3. If your child is absent, please email and let us know.
4. Write your child's name on all their personal belongings, or we will.
5. Make sure your child has a pair of named wellington boots to be kept here all year for when we go to Forest School.
6. Keep your phone on at all times while your child is at Gan Alon. In the event you are not available, please notify the people on your essential contact list.
7. Make sure your child has enough spare clothing at Gan Alon in their kit bag at all times. When soiled or wet clothing is sent home please launder immediately and replenish.
8. Comment and involve yourself in our Book Library and ALWAYS return the books on time.
9. Settle your fees promptly.
10. Respect our staff. We will not tolerate aggressive, unkind behaviour.