



# Gan Alon Pre-school

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## Aims of the Group

**“Self confidence and high self-esteem for the children in our care is our ultimate goal.”**

We aim to:

- Provide a seamless transition from home to pre-school.
- Build positive relationships by operating a key person system, the aim is to ensure families feel welcome, reassured and informed whilst they attend the pre-school.
- Provide a pre-school education, using observation, assessment and planning which caters to the individual needs, interests and skills of each and every child in our care.
- Provide a differentiated individualised plan to accommodate every child’s interests and needs, irrespective of special needs, to encourage all children to participate in all areas of preschool life.
- Allow children to extend their own learning at their own pace, by providing continuous provision designed and resourced to encourage children to develop their skills free from the pressure of adult intervention.
- Allow freedom of verbal expression by providing social times that encourage children to talk to the whole group, in small groups and converse with each other and significant adults.
- Promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference, through planning and resources within the pre-school and by challenging any expression of gender stereo-typing, prejudice and discrimination.
- Create a happy environment.
- Support children with English as their second language.
- Encourage independence by allowing freedom of movement within the classroom and trusting them to manage their own needs.
- Send them to primary school happy, confident and with a range of developed skills.

**Gan Alon is a Jewish pre-school with a fully integrated Jewish curriculum.**

We aim to:

- Provide a Jewish atmosphere in which children and families are involved and accepted into the community life of the synagogue.
- Ensure our Masorti pre-school is traditional, but free from religious dogma.
- Deliver the stories and teachings of the Torah by finding the educational value to pre-school children.
- Use Ivrit in the classroom.
- Support children with English as their second language.
- Establish the link between Israel and ourselves by integrating modern life in Israel into our secular routines whenever possible.

## The Gan Alon Day

### Times of the Nursery

09.15 - 12.15	Monday to Friday
12.15 - 13.15	Lunch Hour: Monday –Thursday (optional*)
13.15 - 14:30	Afternoon Session (optional*)

### A Typical Day – Monday to Thursday

09.15	Registration	
09.30	Group time and morning prayers	
09.45	Free play	
10.30	Sit and Snack begins	
11.45	Tidy up time	
12.00	Story/Music Time	
12.15	End of the morning session	
12.15	Lunch Hour *	
12.45	Lunch time games	
13.15	End of Lunch Hour	
13.15	“Active Afternoon” *	
14.30	End of “Active Afternoon”	* These sessions are additional and incur an extra charge.

### A Typical Friday

09.15	Registration
09.30	Group time and morning prayers
09.45	Free play
10.30	Sit and Snack begins
11.55	Kabbalat Shabbat
12.15	Gan Alon closes

## Settling in at Gan Alon

### Introduction

At Gan Alon, the aim is to settle your child as quickly as possible and we insist that children are happy to be left. Gan Alon staff believes that children must be treated as individuals, as the reaction to being separated from a parent/carer varies from child to child. The settling in period is finite but can range from one day to a week and occasionally longer. The time for a parent to leave is decided verbally between the parent and Headteacher.

### Staggered Entry System

Each family will be notified of their child's particular start date. In order to give families individual attention to ensure children settle happily at pre-school we operate a staggered entry system for the first two or three weeks of the Autumn Term. As stipulated in the 'Settling In Policy Statement' parents are to stay in the pre-school until their child is ready to be separated.

### Pre-nursery sessions

If your child starts in the Spring Term you and your child will be invited to attend pre-nursery sessions during the second half of the term prior to starting Gan Alon. These sessions allow children to familiarise themselves with Gan Alon by joining 3 Gan Alon sessions because parents/carers are expected to remain with their children at all times during these sessions, they are offered to you free of charge.

### The Key Person System

At Gan Alon we operate a Key Person System. A Key Person is a member of staff who is assigned five or six children. A Key Person is responsible for working with a small number of children and their families helping them to feel safe and cared for during their time at Gan Alon. Each child is issued with a folder known as The Learning Journal. The key Person is responsible for entering observations, taking photographic observations and keeping artwork for the Learning Journal. The folders are left in an accessible place at all times for your inspection.

## The Timetable Explained.

### Sit and Snack

At Gan Alon we believe that focussed play should not be interrupted therefore we provide a “rolling snack”. This allows the children to continue playing until they are ready to “sit and snack”. On advice from Rabbi Wittenberg we say the Brachot (blessing for food) together at Group time and Morning prayers. Children are required to “sign in” by taking their name from a name board and placing it on a tray. This allows staff to monitor and ensure all children during the morning take a snack.

Each child is required to contribute a piece of fruit each day for the group's snack. The fruit is cut and shared among all the children at snack time. Remember, if you cannot find a piece of fruit, vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers are welcome. We provide milk and water to drink plus a breadstick. Please note nuts are not allowed.

**Breadsticks:** At the beginning of each term families will receive a Breadstick Rota, highlighting when they are scheduled to provide breadsticks for the pre-school. Each family will be asked to contribute breadsticks approximately twice yearly. In advance of your scheduled week please purchase five packets of breadsticks.

### Lunch Hour

Children bring a dairy packed lunch. At lunch time all the children and staff sit together and enjoy their lunch. After eating the children then enjoy activities that are designed to build on skills such as number recognition, increasing vocabulary and turn-taking games.

### Hot Lunch

Every Thursday, children can enjoy a hot lunch made by the Strudel Café on the grounds of The Sternberg Centre. Gan Alon provides all cutlery and crockery and we eat in a family style with children and staff sitting together. There will be an additional charge each term for this provision.

### “Active Afternoon”

These run from 1.15pm to 2.30pm Monday – Thursday. The activities we have planned are as follows (on no specific day);

- An outside professional group eg. a drama group, a music group etc.:
- **Forest School/Art Club:** We take one class to Forest School on the grounds of the Sternberg Centre (see Procedures for details) whilst the other class enjoy a supervised art or cooking activity. The following day, we reverse the classes.
- **Picture Gallery:** This programme, run by the staff of Gan Alon, takes a well known painting each week and we read stories and do activities that refer to the chosen picture.

## Useful Information at Gan Alon

### Going Home Board

Outside each group room there is a noticeboard called the "Going Home Board". The purpose of this board is to enable parents/carers to inform staff when their children are going home with another Gan Alon family. If your child is being collected by another person the staff have not yet been introduced to a visiting grandparent, aunt, uncle and the person, please inform us personally.

### Clothing

On a daily basis Gan Alon asks you to please dress your child sensibly for active play.

### Spare Clothing

Please provide one complete set of clothing for your child in case of any accidents. They should be in a clearly marked bag on your child's peg. It is advisable to also clearly name all items of clothing.

### Gan Alon T-shirts and Sweatshirts

Gan Alon requires each child to own at least one sweatshirt and one T-shirt, specifically to wear on outings and for the class photograph. You can purchase these items from the Gan Alon Office.

### Kippot

All boys are required to bring their own Kippa that is **clearly named**. They will be kept at Gan Alon and handed out at the appropriate times. If girls would like to have a Kippa kept at Gan Alon this is acceptable.

### Birthdays

Each child's birthday is important and we help you celebrate a birthday in the following way:

**Cakes:** It is customary to provide a cake at snack time. We can only accept shop-bought cakes from a kosher bakery. Birthdays are celebrated as a whole group activity, known as "special snack". Please ensure the cake provided can be shared amongst 32 children. Please remember **no nuts**.

**Candles:** Gan Alon keeps a stock of birthday candles but you may wish to provide your own.

**Invitations:** Gan Alon staff will distribute party invitations as long as the whole class is invited and the party is not held on a Shabbat.



**Book Donations:** Families may choose to donate a book on a special occasion such as when a child has a birthday or when a family celebrates the birth of a baby. Gan Alon has a bookplate label that reads: "This book was donated by ... On the occasion of ..."

For your convenience, new books can always be purchased from the Head Teacher.

### **Kabbalat Shabbat**

Every Friday Gan Alon ends the week with a Kabbalat Shabbat service. Each week on rotation three children from each class are chosen to say the Brachot (blessings) over the candles, wine and challah. When it is your child's turn your family are invited to attend the service. The rota is sent out at the start of each term. The last Kabbalat Shabbat of the academic year is an All Family Kabbalat Shabbat held in the synagogue.

### **Book Lending Library**

Every Thursday children are asked to choose one story book and one non-fiction book from the Gan Alon library, to be read at home. Books are returned the following Monday. Staff guide children to their next choice based on parents' comments. In addition to the two books your children take home, you can opt to take a third book written in Ivrit.

### **Photographs**

Throughout a child's time at Gan Alon many photographs of your child and their friends will be taken. These photographs are displayed on our photo board outside Gan Alon, they are used as evidence for your child's transition record and lastly compiled into a special memory album that is given to parents when a child leaves Gan Alon.

During the last term of the year a professional photographer comes to Gan Alon and takes individual and group photographs that you can purchase as a special memory.

### **Tzedakah**

Please note that each Friday we collect Tzedakah for our current Tzedakah project as part of our Kabbalat Shabbat.

## Days with a Difference

### Invited Entertainment to Gan Alon

We aim to invite three groups a year into Gan Alon:

- Science Company
- Animal Company
- Travelling Theatre Company

### Outings

Parents are informed of upcoming outings at least one month in advance and a Consent Form, highlighting the cost, times and dates will be sent home. When travelling by road we hire a coach with seatbelts and toilets. The ratio is always one adult to every two children.

### Festival Celebrations

**Prior to each event a list of foods is posted on the door requesting parents to contribute food items by signing a list.**

**Tu B'Shevat:** During the morning the children will be offered 15 different varieties of fruit at snack time and we will have a planting ceremony.

**Purim Party:** From 10.00-12.00. Our Purim celebrations begin with the children making Mishloach Manot baskets and filling them with 'real' gifts (e.g. fridge magnets, necklaces etc) made at an activity table. The event is facilitated by parents, A list of the activities is posted on our notice board. Gan Alon provides all the equipment and instructions for the activities.

The activity session is followed by a party, 'megillah reading' and some Purim songs. In line with Purim tradition children are invited to wear fancy dress.

**The Gan Alon Seder:** From 10.00-12.00. This communal Seder is led by Rabbi Jonathan using our very own Gan Alon Haggadah. One adult is invited to accompany each Gan Alon child.

**Yom Ha'Atzmaut:** Children are told that they are going to spend the day in Israel. We have devised a special programme that takes us through our entire three hour session. We ask that you dress your child in blue and white on this day.

**Lag B'Omer Picnic in Avenue Park:** To coincide with Lag B'Omer we walk down the road to Avenue Park for a picnic and play in the playground. Parental assistance will be requested. All children stay until 2.30pm on this day.

**Chanukah Party:**

The children are entertained by an invited Entertainer after which they enjoy a party in Gan Alon when Rabbi Jonathan comes to light the Chanukiah. Our morning ends with some festive singing. Parents are not required at this event and our morning runs as normal.

**Shavuot Leavers Kiddush:** The end of the Shavuot service in the Synagogue is dedicated to the children of Gan Alon. Rabbi Jonathan makes particular mention of those children who will be leaving Gan Alon at the end of the summer term. The service is followed by kiddush for the Congregation sponsored by the families of Gan Alon. All family members are warmly invited.

**Sports Day:** All children stay until 2.30pm on this day. After lunch the children are divided into teams and we put a series of sports activities out on the playing fields behind Gan Alon. All Gan Alon parents are invited to support their children.

**End of Year Show and Graduation:** This takes place the day after the last day of the summer term. The staff and leaving children prepare a concert to which parents and carers are invited. The show is followed by a short graduation ceremony. Children are required to wear Gan Alon t-shirts and sweatshirts.

## Admission

Children whose birthdays fall between:

**1st September and 31st December** will start in the Autumn Term which includes their third birthday.

**1st January and 31<sup>st</sup> March** will start in the Spring Term which includes their third birthday.

**1st April and 31st August** will start in the Autumn Term of the next academic year.

If there are more applicants than vacancies, places are allocated in the following order:

- 1 Returning families of NNLS/Masorti Members
- 2 NNLS members
- 3 Other Masorti synagogue members
- 4 Other children

You can apply for a place at any time from your child's birth. Places are offered from the September before the academic year in which your child is due to start. Gan Alon operates a waiting list system.

It is advisable to send in your registration form as early as possible as the receipt date is used when allocating places.

The **cut-off date** for receiving registration forms before the academic year in which your child is due to start is the **1<sup>st</sup> July**.

## Registration Form

If you would like apply for a place for your child please complete and return the attached registration form either by post or return by e-mail. It is also possible to download a registration form from the NNLS website.

## Visit

To experience Gan Alon first hand, we invite all prospective parents to view a typical morning. Contact the Head Teacher between 9am and 1pm, Monday - Friday on 020 3182 0116 or by email [gandalon@npls-masorti.org.uk](mailto:gandalon@npls-masorti.org.uk) to arrange a date and time.