Highlights of Hannah Senesh Middle School

**High School Exmissions:** Eighth grade students and their families work closely with our Director of Outplacement to identify high schools that fit each student’s academic and social needs. Students and parents are guided through the application process including interview skills, essay writing, deadlines, and testing requirements.

**Tuition Assistance:** We encourage all applicants to apply for tuition assistance if they feel the tuition is beyond their means. Over 45% of families at Hannah Senesh receive tuition assistance.

**Academic Preparedness:** Senesh graduates students who are well prepared to succeed academically in high school. Our dual curriculum of general and Judaic studies offers students a stimulating and challenging approach to learning. Our curriculum and school experience develops lifelong, joyful learners who possess a strong sense of self and purpose.

**Overnight Trips:** Our Middle School trips offer lasting community-building and learning experiences. The 6th grade visits TEVA, a Jewish environmental retreat, the 7th grade travels to Washington, D.C., and the 8th grade takes a two-week trip to Israel where much of what the students learned in Hebrew and Judaics is experienced in a life-changing way.

**Middle School Performing Arts:** In Spring, Middle School students showcase their artistic skills in “An Evening of Art, Music, and Dance.” Our 8th grade produces an annual musical that is performed for our whole community. All 8th graders have an acting role in the musical. Other Middle School students are encouraged to participate through costume and set design, in the orchestra, or as technical staff.

**Social Action:** The social action program at Senesh fulfills our mission and values as students become an active participant in their community and take on individual and collaborative responsibilities to make a positive impact in the world.

**Big Buddy Program:** This program provides an excellent leadership opportunity for older students to guide and teach their younger buddies. They work together on math and reading activities, invite them to attend their performances, and attend events held by their Little Buddies.

**Sports Teams and Afterschool Enrichment:** Beginning in 5th grade, students may join the basketball and soccer teams or join intramural sports. Afterschool offerings include: art enrichment, dance, video game design, and musical theater.

**Electives/Chugim:** Students participate in electives once a week and rotate through different electives three times a year. Past options have included: fantasy sports, improv, STEAM Fest, and Israeli culture. Middle School students also volunteer to create the Hannah Senesh Mosaic, our school yearbook.
We understand that Middle School is a time of significant cognitive and emotional development. Students and families who join Hannah Senesh at this time will find they are well supported throughout this period of growth. Hannah Senesh welcomes students without a Jewish Day School background and eases their transition through our tailored Bridge Program.

At Senesh, families will discover a school community that fosters and promotes open-mindedness, diversity and inclusion. We impart and practice our core values of kindness, openness, responsibility, perseverance, and journey in all that we do.

How we ensure a smooth academic transition to our Middle School:

Small Group Support and Acceleration in Hebrew Language and Judaics: A dedicated Hebrew and Judaics Studies teacher works daily with each cohort of Bridge students to meet them at their individual level. Students learn to read, write, and speak Modern Hebrew while deepening their familiarity with Jewish texts, holidays, Israeli culture, and prayer/Tefila.

Advisory: Students meet in small advisory groups 2-3 times a week. Advisory groups provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their week in a safe environment with a peer group and a teacher mentor. Weekly office hours offer students time to review school work and meet with their teachers.

Parent/Teacher Communication: Teachers, advisors, and parents are in close communication throughout the school year regularly checking in on students’ emotional and academic well-being. Parents receive weekly blog posts featuring curriculum updates and class news. Parents also receive weekly school newsletters highlighting events, volunteer opportunities, and important announcements.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Class: Weekly classes prepares students for their own Bar or Bat Mitzvah which may take place at Hannah Senesh or outside of school. Students learn the prayers, study the trope for Torah and Haftorah reading, and practice writing a Bar or Bat Mitzvah speech/Dvar Torah. They learn the significance of this milestone and how it signifies a meaningful part of their own Jewish journey.

How we create a smooth social transition to our community:

Buddy Families: New families are assigned a Buddy Family who will inform them of social opportunities and will provide an orientation to the school culture.

Bridge Family Orientation: New Bridge parents meet with school administration and Middle School faculty. Families learn about the daily logistics of Middle School, the curriculum, and special events.

Visiting Day for New Bridge Students: New Bridge students are invited to spend a day at Hannah Senesh. Students are paired with a current student in their grade, visit classes, and experience the school atmosphere.

First Year Check-Ins: The Middle School Coordinator, Director of Admissions, and Middle School teachers call and email frequently to ensure new students are on track and feel well supported.

“Our daughter entered Hannah Senesh in 7th grade, transferring from a secular private school. The transition was seamless; she was enthusiastically welcomed into the Senesh community and the effect on her both academically and socially was immediate and striking. She blossomed into a scholar who engaged enthusiastically in classroom discussions and debates. We were most impressed by the dedicated and dynamic faculty who modeled intellectual engagement, the value of community, and pride in one’s abilities and accomplishments. The extent to which her teachers got to know her was reflected in the detailed narrative passages in her report cards and, later, in the school’s ability to represent our daughter’s strengths and talents to the high schools to which she applied.”

— Gillian Khatan, parent of Senesh alum and current 5th grader

Please contact Jessica Robins, Director of Admissions, at 718.858.8663 for additional information about the Bridge Program.