

south hampstead
SHul

Bar & Bat Mitzvah





If you are here, you are probably starting to think about your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah!

We are thrilled to host and facilitate your special milestone and will try to support you in any way. Here is some information to get you started.

If you would like any more help, please get in touch by emailing office@southhampstead.org.

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Any links in blue are hyperlinked to a webpage or email address and can be clicked.

Bat Mitzvahs at South Hampstead

From a girl's 12th birthday according to the Jewish calendar, she is considered Bat Mitzvah, a daughter of the commandments. This means that she is considered like an adult in Jewish law and takes her place in the community.

To find out when your daughter's 12th birthday is [click here](#).

Below you will find a description of how Bat Mitzvahs are celebrated at South Hampstead. If you have a different idea of how to celebrate this special milestone, we are happy to discuss and explore possibilities together. Our vision is that our young people should have every opportunity to nurture their Jewish journey as thinking and connected individuals.

We believe that the best way to celebrate this journey is for our young women to spend considerable time pouring over ancient wisdom and thinking about how it bridges into contemporary Jewish life today. This dynamic process generally leads to them finding their own unique voice, which enables them to share with the community novel and deep thoughts about their heritage.

It can be done in any/all of the following ways (some of which work better at certain times of year):

1 Friday night

Just before Shabbat comes in, family and friends gather together for a special candle lighting ceremony. This is followed by a musical Friday night service, words of wisdom from the Bat Mitzvah girl and the recitation of the Bat Mitzvah prayer.

Sharing blessings, wishes, music and light for the Bat Mitzvah girl make for a really meaningful beginning to the weekend.

2 Shabbat morning

After the Torah is returned to the Ark, the Bat Mitzvah girl addresses the entire congregation with a Dvar Torah of approx. ten minutes.

3 Havdalah ceremony

Replete with candle, spices and wine, this special musical ceremony creates a wonderful atmosphere. It includes a Dvar Torah for all family and friends in attendance. You can book a Havdalah ceremony to take place at the shul a minimum one hour after the end of Shabbat.

4 Musical Hallel

If your daughter loves singing and there is Rosh Chodesh (a new month) or a festival around the time of the Bat Mitzvah, she may like to lead a women's musical Hallel on that day.



Bar Mitzvahs at South Hampstead

From a boy's 13th birthday according to the Jewish calendar, he is considered a Bar Mitzvah, a son of the commandments. This means he participates in services like adult men, and is ready to take his place in the community.

To find out when your son's 13th birthday is [click here](#).



There are three main ways to celebrate this:

1 Tefillin

The optimum occasion for a Bar Mitzvah boy to wear tefillin for the first time is the day he turns 13 in the Hebrew calendar. It is customary to wear tefillin for a month or two before this date as practice, but the blessing is only recited from the time of the actual birthday. Tefillin are only worn midweek and not on Shabbat or chagim. Boys will learn how to put on tefillin in the Bar Mitzvah programme (see page 5) and are more than welcome to come to the morning service on the day of their birthday to 'lay tefillin' and celebrate!

2 Being called up to the Torah

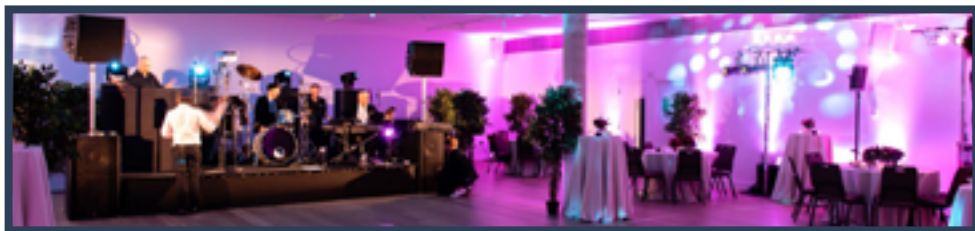
At South Hampstead, Bar Mitzvah boys often attend the Thursday morning service prior to their Shabbat service, where they are called up to the Torah for the first time. Some people host a celebratory breakfast afterwards.

3 Shabbat ceremony

When you book the Shabbat you want to celebrate your Bar Mitzvah, we will confirm the relevant Torah portion and Haftarah reading (portion from the prophets) for that date. You can decide together with your Bar Mitzvah tutor how much your son would like to learn. Some boys choose to learn how to lead some of the Shul service as well.



Organising your Bar/Bat Mitzvah



Booking

You can book your Bar/Bat Mitzvah 3 years in advance. Please do this in writing by emailing tamara@southhampstead.org. This way we can ensure that we have a record of your booking. You may also want to follow up by calling the **office 020 7722 1807** ext 2. It is possible that your first choice may not be available, especially as we try not to have two Bar or Bat Mitzvahs on the same Shabbat. However, we will do whatever we can to accommodate your date.

Once it is in the diary, sit back and relax - you don't need to think about it until nearer the time! If you do need to change the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please contact the office in writing. If you want to book a tefillin celebration and to have a call up on Monday or Thursday morning, please book this with the office approximately 3 months in advance.

Tuition: Bar/Bat Mitzvah learning

Our year-long Bat Mitzvah programme is for mums and daughters and runs from the spring term of year 6. It is an informal group that meets once a month, covering key topics for the thinking Jewish pre-teen.

Similarly, our Bar Mitzvah programme is for dads and boys. It runs from the spring term of year 7, meeting once a month on topical issues.

There is one joint session for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah group about the Shabbat morning service which is open to the whole family. This aims to empower families to be able to follow the service on the morning of their special day (and more importantly for the rest of their lives!)

We also recommend having private tuition for 6-12 months prior to the Bat Mitzvah to prepare for the Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Boys will normally start 12 months before their Bar Mitzvah. Please be in touch with Rabbi Eli / Rebbetzen Lauren who will help set you up with the right Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor for your child.

If you want your Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher to be present on the day, they may require accommodation in the area for shabbat. Please discuss this with them directly in advance.

Dress Code

As the ceremony will be held in the synagogue, we request that a dress code is adhered to by family members participating in the service in accordance with the sanctity of the space.

This includes:

- Male attendees should wear a kippah. If you would like to have a bespoke kippah made for all your guests, click here: www.hebrewwear.com
- The Bar Mitzvah boy wears a tallit. Please speak to Rabbi Eli about the best places to purchase a tallit and bag.
- Married women cover their hair with a hat or scarf.
- Modest knee length clothing should be worn and shoulders covered.



Final Plans

Bat Mitzvah: The Dvar Torah should be ready approx. 6 weeks before. Please then send it through to office@southhampstead.org. Rebbetzen Lauren will review it and revert with any comments.

Rehearsal: Bat Mitzvah girls will usually want one or two rehearsals in the shul and Bar Mitzvah boys want to practise with the Sefer Torah. These sessions generally take place with the teacher present. Please book a rehearsal in the shul by emailing office@southhampstead.org.

Preparing for the service: You will be able to submit names of male relatives you wish to be honoured in the synagogue through a call up to the Torah or opening the ark. You can watch the blessing to be recited upon being called to the Torah here: JOG: Having an Aliyah (being called up to the Torah).

You will be able to choose one or two female relatives to recite the prayer for the royal family and the state of Israel.

Meeting the Rabbi: The officiating Rabbi will meet with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sometime in the week before the ceremony. The shul office will be in touch to arrange this around three weeks in advance.

On the day

The service starts at 9.15am or 9.30am depending on the week. Please check with the shul office. A Bar Mitzvah boy will begin their reading at approx. 10.15am. A Bat Mitzvah girl will begin their Dvar Torah at approx. 10.45am.

The gabbayim and the baggayot will be there to support you, your family and guests during the service.

You can see the text of these prayers by clicking here: [Royal Family](#) and here: [State of Israel](#)

Following the boy/girl's piece, it is customary to throw sweets. Please contact tamara@southhampstead.org to arrange this.

Following the Rabbi's address the parents and/or grandparents will be called up to bless the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This is generally recited in Hebrew and English or the family mother tongue. You can find a video of this blessing here: [JOG: Blessing Children on Friday Night - YouTube](#).

Kiddush

Bar and Bat Mitzvah families often like to sponsor or co-sponsor a kiddush after the service for the community. Shul policy is to provide our standard kiddush with the opportunity to augment in terms of quantity or variety and to add one or two specials e.g. cholent and kugel, salt beef on rye, sushi etc. Please speak to Tamara in the shul office (tamara@southhampstead.org) if you wish to arrange this.



Check list

You may find the following checklist helpful as you consolidate your Bar/Bat Mitzvah plans:

- ☐ **Bat Mitzvah Dvar Torah/
Bar Mitzvah portion**
- ☐ **Invitations**
- ☐ **Rehearsals at shul**
- ☐ **Kippot**
- ☐ **Sweets**
- ☐ **Kiddush**
- ☐ **Call-ups/honours list**
- ☐ **Bar Mitzvah Thursday morning**
- ☐ **Tefillin/call-up to the Torah Accommodation
for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor (if required)**
- ☐ **Accommodation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor (if required)**

Hall Hire

Our beautiful building has excellent spaces that are suitable for larger or smaller gatherings over Friday night dinner, Shabbat lunch or Seuda Shlishit. Catering arrangements can be made with external caterers who are under London Beth Din supervision. For Bar or Bat Mitzvah parties, our hall, terrace floor and foyer reception areas provide outstanding ambiance and flexibility.

For function bookings please speak to Melissa in the shul office
(melissa@southhampstead.org).

Donation

The shul relies on voluntary donations to maintain a high level of activities for all ages and particularly to engage our young people. Many members make a donation at the time of their simcha. Donations are usually in the region of £1,000 - £10,000 but all donations are gratefully received. You may be approached by one of the gabbayim or gabbayot close to the date of your simcha. Alternatively, please email harvey@southhampstead.org or call the shul office on **020 7722 1897 ext 3**.

**We look forward to discussing your simcha
and joining you on this special journey.**

MAZAL TOV!

