



**KASHRUT POLICY 2009**

**Introduction**

This policy may be amended or changed upon the approval of Geshher L'Torah's Rabbi and its Board of Directors in accordance with applicable guidelines of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

The observance and preservation of kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) is one of the cornerstones of conservative Judaism. Geshher L'Torah is a conservative synagogue which follows the Jewish dietary laws.

Geshher L'Torah encourages congregants to cultivate a personal understanding of Judaism so that each congregant may make personal decisions as to how to incorporate Jewish practice into their lives. At the same time, GLT takes equal responsibility in creating an atmosphere of community where people of any background will feel respected and comfortable. GLT's Kashrut Policy strives to balance the highest respect for diversity on the one hand, with a desire to share and break bread together as a community on the other.

Our overall goal is to *create an inclusive Jewish environment*, that is, to offer hospitality to all Jews regardless of their level of observance where all will be able to enjoy all aspects of participation in the GLT community.

When we come together as a Jewish community, we do so with reverence for God, respect for one another, and commitment to Jewish values. Keeping kosher within our synagogue is one way that we express our relationship with God and with each other. Following the Jewish dietary laws of kashrut within our synagogue helps us to take the basic human need for food and transform it into an opportunity for adding holiness to our lives.

As a conservative congregation, our kashrut policy is grounded in *halakhah* - Jewish law. We provide a service to our community by ensuring that food prepared and served in our facility conforms to the standards of *kashrut*. This allows all members of our synagogue family, prospective members and guests to join in celebration and observance regardless of each individual's level of observance.

While each conservative synagogue's kashrut policy differs somewhat, the principal theme is the same – an effort to accommodate all members of our community to create an environment so that any member, prospective member or guest that keeps kosher will be able to maintain those standards while eating at the synagogue.

As a congregation, we are a sacred community, and as such we must be welcoming and inclusive of members and guests who do not keep kosher as well as those who do keep kosher. Various people may have different interpretations of specific aspects of kashrut and varying levels of observance, but the synagogue should have one clear consistent policy. We trust that all of our members and guests, whatever their personal practice may be, are willing observe these policies, regardless of what their personal level of observance may be, so that any member of the Jewish community can feel comfortable dining with us.

While some of these policies are at variance with the personal practices of our members or even our Rabbi, there are important benefits to upholding these standards. First, it ensures that Jews from across the entire wide spectrum of the community will be comfortable dining with us. Second, it removes many possibilities for confusion or error. Things that we can do easily in our home kitchens are harder to manage in an institutional setting. More importantly, in observing the laws of Kashrut, we can make dining at Gesher L'Torah a holy and spiritual act, furthering our connection to our tradition, with each other and to God.

### **Scope**

The following document outlines the Kashrut policy that we have chosen to apply in the building and on the premises, including: the kitchen, utensils, kitchen equipment, acceptable ingredients, foods and beverages, and policies related to preparation of food.

### **Rabbi**

Our Rabbi is the *mara d'atra* of GLT, and is charged with setting halakhic – Jewish law - standards and answering questions of Jewish law that arise, including those related to this Kashrut Policy.

If at any point you have a question about this Kashrut Policy please ask the Rabbi.

### **Your Responsibility**

When you bring food to GLT for community events or prepare food at GLT for community events you are entrusted with the observance of *kashrut* of the entire congregation. Members, prospective members and guests are relying on you to uphold the standards of *kashrut* as outlined in this document. Please understand that this is a sacred obligation.

Anyone using the Gesher L'Torah facilities, particularly the kitchen and social hall or who deals with food and beverages at GLT is respectfully asked to be familiar with and comply with this policy.

### **General**

*Except as noted below*, all food items brought into Gesher L'Torah and on synagogue grounds should be certified as kosher.

### **Packaged Food**

*Except as noted below*, all packaged food brought into Gesher L'Torah or on synagogue grounds should have an approved symbol (called a hecksher) on the packaging, and the packaging should be closed and/or the seal should be unbroken.

### **Heckshers**

A list of commonly-found kosher symbols is found on page 6 of this policy.

### **Heckshers not required**

The following items may be used without a hecksher:

Fresh fruit  
Plain frozen fruit  
Fresh vegetables  
Plain frozen vegetables  
Platters of cut fruit or vegetables  
Whole fresh eggs  
Cheese made in the U.S., not cut or grated in the store  
Plain nuts  
Plain cocoa  
Salt  
Sugar  
Pure spices  
Flour  
Unprocessed grains, cereals and rice  
Extra virgin olive oil  
Fresh fish (kosher species with fins & scales) – whole (or cut from kosher provider)  
Milk  
Unflavored coffee  
Unflavored tea  
Pure juices, except grape juices  
Soft drinks  
All U.S. made wine (only wine labeled with an acceptable hecksher may be used for ritual purposes)  
Non-flavored domestic beer  
Light beer  
Dark domestic or dark German beer  
Single-malt and blended scotch  
Blended whiskey if labeled as “blended whiskey”  
Unflavored vodka  
Unflavored gin  
Unflavored light rum  
Tequila (when packaged without a worm)

### **Dairy & Meat**

Kashrutz laws require separation of dairy and meat (also called milchig and fleishig).

### **Pareve**

Foods which are neither meat nor dairy are called "Pareve."

### **Kitchen - Dairy & Pareve Only**

Phase 1 of Gesher L'Torah's building has one kitchen, and we have decided that the kitchen is a dairy and Pareve only facility.

Meat or products containing meat should not be brought into, prepared, stored or served in the Gesher L'Torah kitchen. Dishes or utensils used to prepare, store or serve meat or products containing meat should not be brought into, used, cleaned or stored in the Gesher L'Torah kitchen.

### **Rest of Building & Premises**

*Except as noted below*, kosher meat with an approved hechsher may be served in Gesher L'Torah's building or on the premises only by an approved kosher caterer, ***provided*** that such meat or products containing meat should not be brought into, prepared, served, stored, cleaned or disposed of in the Gesher L'Torah kitchen.

Kosher meat with an approved hechsher may be prepared and served on Gesher L'Torah's kosher grill(s), ***provided*** that such meat or products containing meat should not be brought into, prepared, served, stored, cleaned or disposed of in the Gesher L'Torah kitchen.

Dishes, containers, utensils or equipment used to prepare, store or serve meat or products containing meat should not be brought into, used, cleaned, stored or disposed of in the GLT kitchen.

### **Food Preparation**

Please prepare all food in the GLT kitchen, except that food prepared outside of the kitchen may be prepared by approved caterers, or as otherwise set forth in this policy, or as approved in advance by the Rabbi.

The GLT kitchen contains equipment and utensils for your use in preparing and serving food for GLT community events. Please only use equipment and utensils, including but not limited to, dishes, plates, bowls, flatware, drink ware, pots, pans or serving items which are provided in the GLT kitchen (other than unused packaged disposable equipment or utensils), unless you obtain prior approval from the Rabbi.

### **Preschool**

Preschool students may bring dairy or pareve food prepared outside of GLT for individual personal consumption during preschool, which should not be brought into the GLT kitchen. Preschool parents are encouraged but not obligated to only send food and ingredients with approved hechshers, except with respect to those food items and ingredients described in this policy which do not require hechshers.

### **Staff**

GLT staff may bring dairy or pareve food prepared outside of Gesher L'Torah for individual personal consumption during work hours, which should not be brought into the kitchen. GLT

staff may use the refrigerator and microwave located in the office. GLT staff are encouraged but not obligated to only bring food and ingredients with approved hechshers, except with respect to those food items and ingredients described in this policy which do not require hechshers.

### **Caterers**

Please use only caterers certified as kosher by the Atlanta Kashrut Commission (“AKC”) as listed at <http://www.kosheratlanta.org/>, *or otherwise listed below or approved in advance by the Rabbi* to provide catering services on the premises.

In addition to those caterers listed as certified at [www.kosheratlanta.org](http://www.kosheratlanta.org/), the following caterers are currently approved to prepare food on their premises or at Gesher L’Torah:

The Silver Platter  
Chef Cary

If you wish to use a caterer which is not listed as certified at [www.kosheratlanta.org](http://www.kosheratlanta.org/) or above, please contact the Rabbi.

### **Kitchen Use**

The oven may be turned on during Shabbat only to warm food, but not to fully cook food. Please provide the Rabbi with advance notice of any need to warm food during Shabbat so the Rabbi may assist you with preparations.











Coffee and tea may be prepared on Shabbat.

Please do not turn on the dishwasher during Shabbat.

### **Passover**

The ritual committee will develop procedures for preparation and use of the kitchen during Passover.

**Kosher Symbols (heckshers):** Any products bearing one of these labels are certified as kosher. *If a symbol does not appear here, it does not mean that it is not allowed – please consult the Rabbi if you have any questions about a particular food or any kashrut symbol.*

	Called the O-U. Often followed by a D- meaning dairy. P means Passover, <b>not</b> Pareve
	Organized Kashrut
	 <b>DAIRY</b> Star-K and Star-D
	"Chof-K"
	Atlanta Kashrut commission. Some items, like Krispy Kreme and dairy products will have the letters AKC on the packaging, rather than the regular symbol. However, not all Krispy Kremes are kosher, so make sure your box has the symbol.
	Chicago Rabbinical Council
	Kosher Va'ad Ha'ir Boston
	Beit Din of Johannesburg
	Also acceptable- Rabbi New's Hechsker (Fountain Oaks Kroger) and the signs below. This list is not exhaustive.
	

Please note that there is a difference between trademarks and heckshers. For instance, the letter K with no further markings may not be an acceptable hecksher. As always, please consult with the Rabbi if you have any questions.