



Temple Sholom of Chicago
CODE OF ETHICS
May 10, 2022

Introduction

Temple Sholom is a Sacred Community that Embraces, Inspires and Matters. We are an inclusive community which finds purpose by centering our lives in contemporary Reform Judaism. Our Judaism invites spirituality (*Tikkun Nefesh*) and summons the sacred responsibility to repair the world (*Tikkun Olam*).

We strive to be a leading center for Reform Judaism, one which supports individuals and families seeking to develop and enhance their Jewish identity through worship, education, cultural programming, and social interaction, concern for the State of Israel, and community involvement — with an emphasis on enduring Jewish values.

Our Jewish values embody the teaching that every human being is created in the image of God (*B'tzelem Elohim*). We embrace a diverse community with people of varied religious backgrounds, ages, races, ethnicities, nationalities, genders, gender identities, abilities, sexual orientations, and marital and socioeconomic statuses. This inclusive environment allows all of us to feel a sense of belonging in which we continue to connect and grow.

We therefore strive to hold ourselves to the highest standards of personal integrity, social responsibility, and human decency. When we behave ethically and hold ourselves accountable, Temple Sholom is a safe, welcoming, and sacred environment.

The following values-based Code of Ethics sets forth the principles, expectations, and standards for the conduct of our clergy, lay leaders, congregants, staff, visitors, and guests. This Code of Ethics should not be regarded as limitations or restrictions, but as goals for which individuals should continually strive.

Code of Ethics

- I. **Exemplify Holiness (*K'dushah*):** Temple Sholom welcomes all who wish to engage in our sacred community.
 - We embrace everyone without regard to religious background, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.
 - We strive to make all who participate in our community feel a sense of belonging with the expectation that their ideas and concerns can be openly stated and responded to with respect.
- II. **Honesty (*Yosher*):** Temple Sholom expects all who engage in our sacred community to conduct themselves in an honest manner.
 - We promote open and honest communication that allows for addressing differences constructively.

- We protect the confidentiality of privileged information, either about an individual or the synagogue, and do not disclose it without permission. This includes personnel information such as employment status, compensation, and performance review, as well as personal information about an individual's health, financial status, or family matters.
- We respect the efforts of others and do not take credit for their work.
- We recognize, respect, and protect the intellectual property rights of our synagogue and others. We obey copyright laws governing the use and distribution of published materials.
- We make decisions regarding synagogue-related matters with transparency, openness, and accountability, unless confidentiality dictates otherwise. For example, it is especially important that we protect inadvertent and premature release of names of candidates for employment. This includes adhering to placement guidelines of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), American Conference of Cantors (ACC), and Association of Reform Jewish Educators (ARJE) when hiring clergy and/or educators.

III. **Honor (*Kavod*):** Temple Sholom values acting with integrity.

- We act solely according to the synagogue's best interest when acting on its behalf.
- We refrain from using one's synagogue position for personal advantage or benefit. For example, we refrain from hiring or firing, rewarding or punishing staff or volunteers, and awarding or denying contracts based solely on personal considerations such as favoritism, nepotism, or bribery.
- We conduct financial matters related to synagogue involvement with complete honesty. For example, we refrain from financial impropriety in decisions regarding restricted, committed, and discretionary funds.
- We are bound by the sacred obligation to uphold financial agreements made with the synagogue. If a change in personal circumstance occurs, we will inform those charged with managing synagogue finances and make appropriate arrangements.
- We conduct employment practices and related decision-making in an ethical and legal manner.
- We establish and enforce the appropriate policies and procedures to protect the employees of the congregation, such as fair employment policies, grievance reporting, and conflict resolution procedures.

IV. **Compassion (*Rachamim*):** Temple Sholom embraces the fundamental value of performing acts of lovingkindness (*G'milut Chasadim*).

- We treat others with respect, dignity, fairness, and compassion.
- We refrain from derogatory speech, gossip, and slander, whether in person or online, including online social media.
- We oppose any unwanted behavior that degrades, humiliates, or oppresses another. Verbal, physical, and online bullying are never acceptable.

V. **Justice (*Tzedek*):** Temple Sholom believes everyone entering our sacred space has the right to feel safe and respected, and that we are morally and ethically responsible for one another.

- We do not tolerate sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, written, or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

- We do not tolerate acts or behaviors that exploit the vulnerability of another, take advantage of a power imbalance, compromise one's moral integrity, or create an intimidating, offensive, abusive, or hostile environment.
- We strive to protect those who appear to be the victims / survivors of abuse or neglect, including spousal abuse, child abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and other types of domestic violence.

Addressing Allegations of Violations of the Code of Ethics

The following procedures delineate how allegations of violations of the Code of Ethics will be addressed.

1. Clergy members, lay leaders, congregants, staff, visitors, contractors, or other guests of Temple Sholom ("participants") may (and are encouraged) to report allegations of unethical behavior based on the Code of Ethics to the President, Senior Rabbi, or Executive Director within a reasonable period of time after the occurrence of the alleged unethical behavior. Allegations involving actions that occurred greater than twelve (12) months prior to the date of the report will not be considered. All allegations must be in writing and signed. Anonymous allegations will not be addressed. The person submitting an allegation must acknowledge and agree that the allegations will be shared with the accused in order to afford such individual the ability to respond.
2. The President, with the assistance of the Executive Director, Senior Rabbi, and legal counsel, will review any allegations and determine if they warrant further investigation. If it is determined that further investigation is necessary, the President will establish an *ad hoc* Ethics Committee for the purpose of reviewing and investigating the allegations (with the assistance of the Executive Director and legal counsel). The Ethics Committee will be comprised of three (3) members of the congregation in good standing, one of whom will be appointed by the President to serve as Chair. No officer or director may serve on the Ethics Committee. The President will strive to appoint members to the Ethics Committee who demonstrate the following qualities: integrity, leadership, independence, and ability to handle challenging situations. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, members of the Ethics Committee must recuse themselves if they have an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest arising from or in connection with their relationship to any of the involved parties or witnesses or the allegations pertain to them (or their family or friends) in any way. The Ethics Committee will automatically disband upon the ultimate decision addressing the allegations.
3. If an allegation pertains to a member of a professional organization with its own code of ethics, such as the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), American Conference of Cantors (ACC), Association of Reform Jewish Educators (ARJE), National Association for Temple Administration (NATA), or Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the Ethics Committee (with the assistance of the Executive Director and legal counsel) will determine whether to handle the allegation or refer it to the appropriate body. Allegations involving an individual who is responsible to a separate, specific body or committee of Temple Sholom will be handled in accordance with Temple Sholom's Employee Handbook, Bylaws, and other policies and procedures. Notwithstanding anything set forth herein to the contrary, all allegations concerning Temple Sholom's employees will be addressed and handled by the Executive Director (or other appropriate member of the Temple Sholom staff) in accordance with the Temple Sholom Employee Handbook. The Ethics Committee will not review, investigate, or otherwise be involved with disciplinary or other matters involving Temple Sholom's employees. If an allegation raises the possibility of imminent and substantial

harm or implicates an issue governed by law, the President, in consultation with the Executive Director, legal counsel, and the chair of the Ethics Committee, may take such actions other than those described herein as they deem necessary and appropriate including, without limitation, contacting the proper authorities.

4. The Board of Directors will adopt a policy setting forth the process for handling allegations alleging violations of this Code of Ethics, and such process shall afford the accused due process. The Ethics Committee will document its work and use its best efforts to resolve matters as promptly as possible. Participants are expected to comply with any Ethics Committee requests to assist in information gathering. At the conclusion of its investigation and deliberations, the Ethics Committee will recommend an appropriate resolution to the Board of Directors, which will either accept the committee's recommendation or take such other action as it deems appropriate based solely on the information gathered and presented by the Ethics Committee (e.g., no additional facts or information may be considered). No disciplinary action will be taken by the Board without first affording the accused the right to appear before the Board and appeal the recommendation of the Ethics Committee.
5. The Ethics Committee's process should balance the Jewish principles of judgment (*din*) and compassion (*rachamim*). All allegations will be responded to with sensitivity and compassion. Judgment will be withheld pending completion of a full evaluation. During investigation and information gathering and/or consideration of a recommended resolution for a violation of the Code of Ethics, the Ethics Committee shall bear in mind that, as a sacred community, healing and reconciliation are important goals to achieve.
6. The Ethics Committee and any participant involved will maintain confidentiality with respect to allegations to the extent practicable and consistent with the values of the Code of Ethics and should make every effort to protect those who make an allegation of behavior violating the Code of Ethics from retaliation.