

## About Temple B'nai Torah-A Reform Congregation

Temple B'nai Torah is a diverse, caring congregation that embraces a progressive and inclusive vision of Reform Judaism. Existing in the context of our people's covenantal relationship with God, we are creating a vibrant, multi-generational home in our region by staying connected to our roots – guided by tradition and infused with the sacred values of our faith – but grounded in the modern world.

Temple B'nai Torah offers spiritual enrichment, Jewish education, and community engagement. Through worship, learning, and a concern for social justice, we strive to better ourselves, our community, and the world at large. Temple B'nai Torah embraces the fundamental value of performing acts of lovingkindness (*g'milut chasadim*), and our Jewish values embody the teaching that every human being is created in the image of God (*b'tzelem Elohim*). Bearing that in mind, the values of Holiness (*Kedushah*), Justice (*Tzedek*), Honor (*Kavod*), Compassion (*Rachamim*), and Honesty (*Yosher*) are entwined throughout our ethical code, even where not specifically called out. We strive to hold ourselves to the highest standards of personal integrity, social responsibility, respect for all, and human decency.

## CODE OF ETHICS

Temple B'nai Torah is a Holy Community and welcomes all who wish to engage for the short or long term. Everyone entering our sacred space has the right to feel safe, respected, and valued. We are morally and ethically responsible for one another (*kol yisrael areivim zeh bazeh*). In Jewish thought, Justice (*Tzedek*) isn't merely about how things work, but how they ought to be.

We embrace everyone without regard to religious background, age, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.

We expect clergy, congregants, guests, and staff members (synagogue partners) to:

- Treat others with respect, dignity, and fairness
- Conduct themselves with good manners, common courtesy, and kindness
- Conduct themselves and their relationships in an open and honest way
- Focus on the good (*hakarat hatov*)
- Come from a spirit of curiosity
- Refrain from derogatory speech (*lashon hara*): negative talk, gossip, and slander
- Encourage open discussion
- Maintain confidences
- Express openness and willingness to engage with all other congregants and staff members
- Support one another's work

## ***PERSONAL BOUNDARIES (G'VULIM) AND HARASSMENTS***

Personal boundaries should always be respected. We strive to protect those who appear to be the victims of abuse or neglect, including spousal abuse, child abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and other types of domestic violence. Whether explicit or implicit, any sexual harassment and/or misconduct is unacceptable, as well as unethical, and is never acceptable in the synagogue community.

Synagogue partners should never:

- Engage in any act or behavior, even if it appears to be consensual, that exploits the vulnerability of another, takes advantage of a power imbalance, compromises one's moral integrity, or creates an intimidating, offensive, abusive, or hostile environment.
- Use one's position or authority to intimidate, bully, or unduly influence others or allow other partners or guests of the synagogue to do so.
- Engage in abusive, harassing, or bullying behavior or unlawful discrimination, physical assault or violence.
- Commit unwanted, intentional contact including, but not limited to: unwelcome sexual activities, advances, comments, bullying, electronic communications, stalking, or invasion of privacy.
- Possess or share pornographic or sexually explicit material.

## ***HONOR (KAVOD)***

Temple B'nai Torah values acting with honor (*kavod*) and integrity.

- We should be mindful of when our personal communications could be misconstrued as representing the views of the Temple, and refrain from such communications.
- Within our larger community, we are mindful that synagogue leaders' behavior outside the synagogue, which may seem private, could affect not only our own reputations, but also that of Temple B'nai Torah. A positive reputation, including our presence on social media, is one of the most difficult assets to establish and one of the easiest to lose. Actions should be moderated accordingly.
- We insist financial matters related to synagogue involvement be conducted with transparency as confidentiality allows. We are bound by sacred obligation to uphold financial agreements made with the synagogue, whether personal or commercial. If a change in personal circumstances should occur, we expect affected congregants to inform those charged with managing synagogue finances and make appropriate arrangements.

- In dealing with synagogue and religious school staff and clergy, we endeavor to conduct employment practices and related decision-making in a thoughtful, ethical, and legal manner.

### ***HONESTY (YOSHER) AND INTEGRITY***

Temple B'nai Torah expects all who engage in our community to conduct themselves in an honest manner that brings credit to our congregation and to the community. We promote open and honest communication that allows for addressing differences constructively. We also pledge to:

- Protect the confidentiality of privileged information, either about an individual or the synagogue, and do not disclose it without permission.
- Respect the efforts of others and not take credit for their work. We recognize, respect, and protect the intellectual property rights of our synagogue and others, obeying copyright laws governing the use and distribution of published materials.
- Make decisions regarding synagogue-related matters with transparency, openness, and accountability, unless confidentiality dictates otherwise.
- Consider the impact of accepting gifts (such as a clergy or staff member's acceptance of a gift from a congregant; a congregant or staff member's acceptance of a gift from a synagogue vendor) and only do so in accordance with Temple B'nai Torah's policies on such matters, and being mindful of perceptions that such acceptance may generate.
- Refrain from hiring or firing, rewarding or punishing staff or volunteers, and awarding or denying contracts based solely on personal considerations.

### ***CONFLICTS OF INTEREST***

Synagogue partners should avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest. Those in positions of authority and influence, including members of the board, officers, and staff members, must conduct all congregational business in a manner that is morally, ethically, and fiscally of the highest order and can bear public scrutiny at all times. Decisions of the board, officers, and staff must always be guided by the policies of the synagogue and in its best interests. Conduct should be based solely on the best interests of the synagogue under applicable laws and regulations. Actions should not be influenced by personal considerations or the appearance of such factors.

For our purposes, a "conflict of interest" means one or more of these scenarios:

- A transaction in which a synagogue partner or a close family member has a direct or indirect interest, financial or otherwise, in the outcome of any transaction or matter involving the synagogue.
- A situation in which a synagogue partner has a relationship with other parties that might reasonably be expected to affect the conduct of the congregant or staff member in a manner inconsistent with the overriding duty he or she has to advance the interest of the synagogue.
- When acting on behalf of the synagogue, a congregant or staff member should never, without full disclosure and appropriate approvals from relevant synagogue leaders:
  - Divulge or release proprietary or confidential information about the synagogue, its deliberations, or congregants and staff members.
  - Obtain personal advantage or benefit due to one's synagogue position.
  - Use the synagogue's property or resources for personal benefit.

## ***CONCLUSION***

This values-based code of ethics sets forth the principles and standards of conduct we expect our clergy, congregants, staff, visitors, and guests to adhere to, whether participating in a B'nai Torah activity that is in the building, online, or off-site. We are each human, seekers of connection, and part of this physical and spiritual community. In behaving ethically and holding ourselves accountable, we ensure Temple B'nai Torah continues to be a safe, welcoming, and sacred environment.