



Addressing Allegations of Unethical Behavior

Informed by our congregation's mission statement, equity, inclusion and diversity statement, Director's Brit and Conflict of Interest agreement, our values-based code of ethics sets forth the principles and expectations for adherence to standards of conduct for our clergy, congregants, staff (whether full time or part time), visitors, guests, vendors and independent contractors whether participating in a Rodeph Shalom activity that is in the building, online, or offsite. The Code concerns the actions of the entire RS community but, additionally, it is important to note that actions by employer/employees/consultants/vendors may be governed by the RS Employment Manual, contracts, and/or other related policies and agreements. The Congregation Rodeph Shalom Ethics Code is available to all congregants, staff, and clergy. Visitors and guests are able to see the Code on request from the RS main office. The Code is also published on the Congregation Rodeph Shalom website. The Code itself, and the document Addressing Allegations of Unethical Behavior, will be updated as appropriate. Examples contained in the Code are not all-inclusive.

The following procedures delineate how allegations of unethical behavior based on the Congregation Rodeph Shalom Ethics Code will be addressed.

- ✧ Consistent with the RS Bylaws, the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, among other duties, shall serve as the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee will receive and address allegations of unethical behavior. Members of the Ethics Committee must recuse themselves if an allegation pertains to them in any way. All committee members are expected to be familiar with these policies and procedures.
- ✧ Ethics Committee processes will balance the Jewish principles of judgment (*din*) and compassion (*rachamim*).

All allegations will be responded to with sensitivity and compassion, and in a timely fashion. Judgment will be withheld pending completion of a full evaluation.

During information gathering and/or consideration of a resolution for an ethics violation, the committee shall bear in mind that, as a sacred community, healing and reconciliation are important goals to achieve. And we must do this work with cultural competency, compassion, and an awareness of marginalized identities and our own implicit biases.

- ✧ An allegation of unethical behavior should be directed to the synagogue president, synagogue executive director, or senior-ranking rabbi. In order to initiate an Ethics Committee process, the person who received the allegation will confidentially share the information with the other two. If the allegation pertains to any one of them, that person must recuse themselves and that matter shall be referred to the Executive Committee. Depending on the scope of the complaint, this committee of three may resolve the matter. And, if a majority of this group believes the allegation requires further exploration, they will convene the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee will decide on a process that includes information gathering, deliberation, and resolution based on the particularities of each allegation that is received. All efforts will be made to resolve matters as promptly as possible.
- ✧ When an allegation of unethical behavior is made, the synagogue president, executive director, and senior rabbi will decide whether they should consult independent legal counsel representing the synagogue and document their decision. This decision may be revisited later in the process by the Ethics Committee.
- ✧ At any point during the investigation, the Ethics Committee will decide whether they should consult and/or inform the Board of Directors. This decision may be revisited later in the process balancing confidentiality with organizational responsibility. If knowledge of the potential ethics violation that the ethics committee is reviewing could reasonably influence the larger board's decision making, the committee, in consultation with the

senior rabbi, the president, and executive director of the congregation, will either inform the board of the potential violation, or defer any decision-making on relevant issues.

- ✧ If an allegation of unethical behavior 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 will determine whether to handle the allegation and/or refer it to the appropriate organization.
- ✧ Legal obligations will take precedence and supersede any procedures otherwise delineated by this Code. For example, where an allegation raises the possibility of imminent and substantial harm to the person(s) of concern, there are specific legal obligations that must be used.
- ✧ Everyone involved in an Ethics Committee process is expected to comply with all Ethics Committee requests to assist in information gathering. All steps, from an initial allegation of unethical conduct to ultimate resolution, will be documented in writing by the Ethics Committee and stored confidentially to the extent practicable.
- ✧ Confidentiality will be maintained throughout any Ethics Committee process to the extent practicable and consistent with thorough assessment and resolution of the matter.
- ✧ Retaliation against those who make an allegation of unethical behavior will be treated as an ethical violation itself.
- ✧ While each outcome may be different due to the individual circumstances involved, the Committee shall make findings and recommendations of an action plan as needed to address the allegations.
- ✧ Regardless of whether the allegation was shared with the Board of Directors or other parties, the Committee will decide whether they should consult and/or inform the Board of Directors and/or other involved parties regarding the outcome, balancing confidentiality, community need, and organizational responsibility.

Consistent with the Jewish principle *dina d'malkhuta dina* (the law of the government is the law), nothing in this procedural document shall preempt relevant federal, state, and local laws.