



CONGREGATION MISHKAN ISRAEL CODE OF ETHICS

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, April 2, 2024

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Congregation Mishkan Israel (CMI) is a Reform Jewish community that exists in the context of our people's covenantal relationship with God. Ours is a vibrant, multi-generational congregation, guided by tradition, grounded in the modern world, and infused with the sacred values of our faith. As the Mission Statement of CMI states:

With both Jewish and non-Jewish communities, we act to advance *Tikkun Olam*: the repair and healing of the world. We strive to ensure the continuity and commitment of our Jewish culture and heritage—to sustain a belief in God and the Torah—through worship, study, inspiration, support and congregation.

In recognition of the beauty of our diverse human community, Congregation Mishkan Israel welcomes interfaith families and people of any race, background, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or ability.

Our Jewish values embody the teaching that every human being is created in the image of God (*b'tzelem Elohim*). 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, CMI is a safe, welcoming, and sacred environment.

This values-based code of ethics sets forth the principles and expectations for adherence to standards of conduct for our clergy, congregants, staff, visitors, and guests, whether participating in a Mishkan Israel activity that is in the building, online, or offsite.

PART 2: CODE OF ETHICS

EXEMPLIFY HOLINESS (*K'DUSHAH*)

CMI welcomes all who wish to engage with our sacred community. We embrace everyone without regard to religious background, age, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, 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.

INCLUSIVITY AND RESPECT

Every individual who enters our holy community is valued. Congregants and staff members will conduct themselves and their relationships in an open and honest way, treating others with respect, dignity, and fairness in accordance with the Jewish value of *derech erez* (decency and respect). To that end, congregants and staff members will:

- Conduct themselves with good manners and common courtesy.
- Refrain from *lashon hara* (negative talk, gossip, and slander).
- Refrain from derogatory speech.
- Encourage open discussion, while maintaining confidences.
- Express openness and willingness to engage with all other congregants and staff.
- Support one another's work.

Considering the impact of accepting gifts (such as a clergy or staff member's acceptance of a gift from a congregant or a congregant's or staff member's acceptance of a gift from a synagogue vendor), we should always be mindful of perceptions that such acceptance may generate. Accepting gifts should only be in accordance with gift and conflict of interest policies on such matters,

Those in a position to do so should refrain from hiring or firing, rewarding or punishing staff or volunteers, and awarding/denying contracts based solely on personal considerations (e.g., favoritism, nepotism, or bribery).

It is important to establish and enforce the appropriate procedures to protect the assets of the Congregation as well as to stay informed of and provide accurate information on issues, practices, policies, rules, regulations, and laws that govern our work, professional, and volunteer activities, always striving to implement them in a forthright, fair, and equitable manner.

We always report unethical or illegal conduct to appropriate internal and/or external authorities.

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. Wherever possible, 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.

HONOR (*KAVOD*)

CMI 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 sacred obligation to uphold financial agreements made with the synagogue. If a change in personal circumstances 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.

COMPASSION (*RACHAMIM*)

CMI 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, negative talk, gossip, and slander, whether in person or on social media. We oppose bullying, including any unwanted behavior that degrades, humiliates, or oppresses another. Verbal, physical, or cyberbullying is never acceptable.

JUSTICE (*TZEDEK*)

CMI 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 (*kol yisrael areivim zeh bazeh*). 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 of abuse or neglect, including spousal abuse, child abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and other types of domestic violence. Procedures for addressing allegations of unethical behavior are available on request from CMI's main office.

PERSONAL BOUNDARIES AND HARASSMENT

As synagogue partners, we must ensure that personal boundaries, including those related to romantic and sexual matters, are always respected. We also are responsible for responding appropriately to allegations or discovery of boundary-crossing by others. 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 a position or authority to intimidate, bully, or unduly influence others or allow other partners or guests of the synagogue to do so; or

Engage in abusive, harassing, or bullying behavior or unlawful discrimination.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT

Whether explicit or implicit, expectations of sexual favor as a condition of a person's employment or as they affect a person's standing within the community are unethical. Such conduct unreasonably interferes with a person's work or volunteer performance and creates an intimidating, hostile, and an offensive working environment. The following categories of behavior are inherently unethical and never acceptable in the synagogue community:

- Sexual abuse, including of a child.
- Sexual activity with a person who is legally incompetent or otherwise unable to give consent.
- Physical assaults or violence, or any attempt to commit such acts.
- Unwanted, intentional physical contact.
- Possession of or sharing of pornographic or sexually explicit material.
- Unwelcome sexual activities, advances, comments, bullying, electronic communications, stalking or invasion of privacy.
- Direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances will be a condition of employment, promotion, or affiliation with the synagogue

PART 3: ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

CMI's Ethics Code will be made available upon request to all congregants, staff, and clergy.

THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES DELINEATE HOW ALLEGATIONS OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR BASED ON THE CMI ETHICS CODE WILL BE ADDRESSED.

The synagogue president will appoint a congregant to chair an ad hoc Ethics Committee for receiving and addressing allegations of unethical behavior. They will also select a minimum of three committee members based on the following qualities: integrity, leadership, independence, and ability to handle challenging situations. The synagogue president shall be an ex-officio member of the Ethics Committee. The synagogue president, if unable to serve, shall appoint a member of the Executive Committee to serve in that capacity. Members of the Ethics Committee must recuse themselves if an allegation pertains to them in any way.

An allegation of unethical behavior, oral or in writing, should be directed to the synagogue president, rabbi, or Ethics Committee chair. In order to initiate an Ethics Committee process, the person who received the allegation will share the information with the other two. If the allegation pertains to any one of the three, that person must recuse themselves.

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 of Temple Administration (NATA), or Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the Ethics Committee will determine whether to handle the allegation or refer it to the appropriate organization. When an allegation of unethical behavior is made to the Ethics Committee chair, the chair will decide with the synagogue president whether they should consult independent legal counsel representing the synagogue.

The review and revision of the code is a recurring responsibility of the synagogue and is essential to ensuring the code's currency and relevance, and to enhancing its accuracy and comprehensiveness. Modifications to the code may be proposed to the ethics committee by any partner. Revisions to the code shall be approved by CMI's board of trustees.

If the alleged ethics violator is a member of a professional organization with its own code of ethics (e.g., CCAR, ACC, NATA, ARJE or the URJ), the committee shall consult with the ethics committee chair of that organization to coordinate CMI's process with that of the professional organization, balancing the needs of the congregation and those of the professional body. It shall be insured that those responsible for the review and enforcement of the code of ethics be knowledgeable of state laws addressing nonprofits, employment matters, administrative or law enforcement reporting duties, and other relevant legal requirements. When an allegation is first reported to the synagogue president, rabbi, or Ethics Committee chair, it may be prudent or necessary to consult or hire legal counsel when addressing allegations of unethical behavior, especially allegations involving more grievous allegations. Notice may also need to be made to the synagogue's insurance company.

Where an allegation raises the possibility of imminent and substantial harm to the person(s) of concern, legal obligations will take precedence and supersede any procedures otherwise delineated by this Code. The synagogue president, in consultation with the Ethics Committee chair, may take such action as deemed appropriate.

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.

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.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout any Ethics Committee process to the extent practicable and consistent with thorough assessment and restoration of the matter.

All attempts will be made to protect those who make an allegation of unethical behavior from retaliation.

Ethics Committee processes will 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 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.

While there is no time limit to making an allegation of unethical behavior, the time that has elapsed since the alleged violation will be one of many factors in the totality of circumstances considered by the Ethics Committee.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGED ETHICS CODE VIOLATIONS

The CMI Ethics Code will be made available to all congregants, staff, and clergy and will be available in the synagogue office. The synagogue is committed to promptly investigating any

reported violations. The following procedures delineate how allegations of unethical behavior based on the Ethics Code will be addressed.

1. The synagogue president will appoint a congregant to chair an ad hoc Ethics Committee for receiving and addressing allegations of unethical behavior. Together they will select a minimum of three committee members based on the following qualities: good judgment, integrity, leadership, independence and ability to handle challenging situations. Members should be able to balance a strong sense of right and wrong with an ability to see multiple sides of a situation. If the congregation By-Laws require it, the appointment of committee members is subject to review by the Board. The synagogue president shall be an ex-officio member of the Ethics Committee. The synagogue president, if unable to serve, shall appoint a member of the Executive Committee to serve in that capacity. Members of the Ethics Committee must recuse themselves if an allegation pertains to them in any way.
2. An allegation of unethical behavior should be directed to the synagogue president, Rabbi, or Ethics Committee Chair. To initiate an Ethics Committee process, the person who received the allegation will share the information with the other two. If the allegation pertains to any one of the three, that person must recuse themselves.
3. If the alleged ethics violator is a member of 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 must consult with the Ethics Committee Chair of that organization, to coordinate the congregation's process with that of the professional organization, balancing the needs of the congregation and those of the professional body.
4. When an allegation of unethical behavior is made to the Ethics Committee Chair, the Chair will decide with the synagogue president whether they should consult independent legal counsel representing the synagogue.
5. Where an allegation raises the possibility of imminent and substantial harm to the person(s) of concern, legal obligations take precedence and supersede any procedures otherwise delineated by this Code. The synagogue president, in consultation with the Ethics Committee Chair, may take such action as deemed appropriate.
6. 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.
7. Everyone involved in an Ethics Committee process is expected to comply with all Ethics Committee requests to assist in information gathering. All members and staff are expected to cooperate with any requests to assist in an investigation. Failure to do so is itself an ethical violation and may lead to sanctions as the Ethics Committee may deem appropriate, subject to review by the Board upon request of the person sanctioned.
8. All steps, from an initial allegation of unethical conduct to ultimate resolution, will be documented in writing by the Ethics Committee.
9. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout any Ethics Committee process to the extent practicable and consistent with thorough assessment and resolution of the matter.

10. Harassment or taking adverse action affecting the employment or volunteer status of anyone who makes a good faith report of unethical conduct under the Code is itself unethical conduct and violates the Code. Good faith reporters and participants in any part of the complaint and investigation process should expect to endure no form of retaliation for their participation.
11. Ethics Committee processes will balance the Jewish principles of judgment (*din*) and compassion (*rachamim*).
12. All allegations will be responded to with sensitivity and compassion. Judgment will be withheld pending completion of a full evaluation.
13. 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.
14. While there is no time limit to making an allegation of unethical behavior, the time that has elapsed since the alleged violation will be one of many factors in the totality of circumstances considered by the Ethics Committee in weighing appropriate sanctions.

ADDENDUM: THE URJ VALUES STATEMENT

Values (the moral and ethical imperatives that undergird everything we do):

SHARED HUMANITY (Genesis 1:27)

B'tzelem elohim בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים

“In the image of God.”

We see everyone as created in the divine image and, as such, treat everyone with respect, dignity, and kindness.

JUSTICE (Isaiah 1:17)

Dirshu mishpat דַּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט

“Seek justice.”

We seek justice for all people throughout the world.

BELONGING (Deuteronomy 29:9)

Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem אַתֶּם נִצְבִים הַיּוֹם כְּלֶכֶם

“You stand today, ALL of you.”

We build, connect, and enrich communities – congregations, camps, programs, social justice work, and more – where youth and adults across all identities, generations, and lived experiences feel a deep sense of belonging.

LEARNING (Mishnah Peah 1:1)

Talmud Torah k'neged kulam וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כָּלֶם

“The study of Torah, above all.”

We honor Torah; wrestle with Jewish traditions and beliefs, including God; and engage directly with the difficult questions of our age.

EVOLVING (Yotzeir Or, daily liturgy)

U'vtuvo mechadesh b'chol yom tamid ma'aseh v'rayshee

וּבְטוּבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכָל-יוֹם תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרָאשִׁית

“With goodness, the Holy One renews creation every day.”

We awaken to new awareness, holding ourselves accountable for changing as we grow.

ISRAEL AND JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD (Shevuot 39)

Kol yisrael arevim zeh ba'zeh כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרִבִים בְּזֵה זֵה

“All of Israel and the Jewish people are responsible, one for the other.”

We are committed to the safety and vitality of the Jewish people and to a secure and just state of Israel as a home – for all Jews and for all its inhabitants.