

KHN POLICY

Title: Physical, Mental or Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct and Molestation Prevention Policy

Date Adopted: 1/21/16

FIRST READING 10/15/15

SECOND READING 11/19/15

THIRD READING 12/17/15

Introduction

With the adoption of this policy, Kehilat HaNahar (KHN), the Little Shul by the River, acknowledges the reality of physical, mental, and sexual abuse in our community. We hope to prevent abuse and also seek to be able to respond compassionately to everyone involved when we learn of an allegation of abuse and to ultimately promote the process of healing.

The Torah and rabbinic sources have recognized the reality of abuse and violence in domestic and communal contexts. Our traditions on this issue have been in evolution since the Torah codes first emerged. This evolution has been marked by decisions that offer increasing protections for those of lesser power.

As Jews, we know that, if one of us is enslaved or endangered, none of us is free. As a congregation, we want to affirm that the safety and healing of every member of the community is one of our highest priorities. Therefore, it is necessary for us to do what we can to prevent abuse and to confront it with compassion when it occurs within our congregation.

Statement of Policy

We intend KHN to continue to be a safe place for all persons. KHN does not permit actual or threatened acts of physical or mental abuse, sexual abuse, sexual molestation or sexual misconduct ("prohibited conduct") to occur on synagogue property, at any synagogue-sponsored activity, or event where a staff person, officer, or director is present.

We will protect the safety of every member of our KHN. We will do what we can to prevent and stop any physical, mental, or sexual abuse.

We will be scrupulous in our attention to due process and a fair hearing to those who come forward to report abuse and to those who have allegedly committed abuse.

To ensure the safety of the KHN community, we will:

- Screen all staff and screen volunteers who care for children
- Train all staff and train volunteers who care for children
- Monitor and supervise the implementation of this policy
- Respond to all allegations of improper conduct in a timely fashion
- Develop individual agreements for inclusion/exclusion of registered sex offenders
- Periodically review the procedures for implementing this policy.

Responsibility of mandatory reporters

Regardless of procedures, each person who is considered a "mandatory reporter" under the statutes of PA shall in good faith report if they know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected.

Nothing in this policy or associated procedures shall be considered a restraint of an individual's statutory obligation to report to authorities. Furthermore, no person shall be restrained from reporting an incident on the basis that (s)he is not a "mandatory reporter."

Need to report potential or actual violations of this policy

When any employee or volunteer observes violations of this policy, whether committed by an employee, volunteer or other person, or observe any other circumstance they find suspicious or feel is inappropriate, or may rise to the level of “suspected abuse,” they have a **right and duty to report** it directly to the Rabbi, President of KHN or Education Director. The observer or victim shall be permitted to report violations of policy or circumstances of abuse anonymously.

All reports will be treated as credible and require further timely investigation. Once the allegation is reported, we will promptly, thoroughly, and impartially initiate an investigation to determine whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that the prohibited conduct has occurred and that it was committed by the target(s) of the investigation.

Penalties

If the investigation substantiates the allegation, our policy provides for disciplinary penalties, including, but not limited to, termination of the target’s relationship with KHN.

Retaliation prohibited

We prohibit retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports prohibited conduct. Retaliation against a participant in the investigation is also prohibited.

Anyone who retaliates against someone who has made a good faith allegation of prohibited conduct or who intentionally provides false information to that effect will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of any relationship with KHN.

Process for inclusion or exclusion of a convicted adult sex offender

To even consider inclusion, KHN must ensure that the convicted sex offender does not have the opportunity in our congregation to re-offend. This includes avoiding situations where he or she can be accused falsely. One clear boundary that must be set from the beginning is: **No person who has been convicted of, or with an unresolved accusation of, any sexual misconduct can be permitted to be involved in any youth religious education or youth group activities.**

Definition of volunteers

For the purposes of this policy, “volunteers” refers to non-compensated individuals (over 14 years of age) who are working on a regular basis in programming for children. It does not include volunteers who work on a regular basis in programs that may have children present, but are not designed solely for children nor does it include volunteers who provide limited time or occasional assistance in a children’s program that has a screened and trained volunteer or staff person supervising.

Grandfathering not permitted

At the time this policy is first adopted, all employees and all volunteers shall execute and sign applications and submit to a background check, as is required for candidate employees and volunteers if a similar background check has not already been completed within the time frame specified by law.