



Ethics Policy

Beth Hillel Temple
6050 8th Avenue
Kenosha, Wisconsin 53143

February 3, 2023

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Beth Hillel Temple 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.

Beth Hillel Temple is an inclusive congregation that demonstrates respect for the needs of all. Through worship, learning, and a concern for social justice, we strive to better ourselves, our community, and the world at large.

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, Beth Hillel Temple 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 Beth Hillel Temple activity that is in the building, online, or offsite.

PART 2: CODE OF ETHICS

EXEMPLIFY HOLINESS (K'DUSHAH)

Beth Hillel Temple 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 members and support one another's work.

HONESTY (YOSHER)

Beth Hillel Temple expects all who engage in our 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. For example, 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.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

We are expected to behave in a manner that brings credit to our congregation and to the community. This behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Conducting ourselves in an honest manner and being truthful in communications and conduct.
- Conducting all financial affairs with complete honesty and integrity and refraining from financial impropriety (e.g., embezzlement, nonpayment of just debts, inappropriate use of restricted funds, or tax evasion).
- Representing accomplishments and achievements accurately.
- Considering the impact of accepting gifts (such as a clergy or staff member's acceptance of a gift from a congregant; a congregant's or staff member's acceptance of a gift from a synagogue vendor) and accepting gifts only in accordance with gift and conflict of interest policies on such matters, always being mindful of perceptions that such acceptance may generate.
- Refraining from hiring or firing, rewarding or punishing staff or volunteers, and awarding or denying contracts based solely on personal considerations (e.g., favoritism, nepotism, or bribery).
- Establishing and enforcing the appropriate procedures to protect the assets of the Congregation.
- Staying informed of and providing 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.
- Reporting unethical or illegal conduct to appropriate internal and/or external authorities.
- Recognizing, respecting, and protecting the intellectual property rights and contributions of others, including complying with copyright laws that govern how published materials are used and distributed.

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 Leadership Council, 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 Leadership Council, officers, and staff must always be guided by the policies of the synagogue and in its best interests.

SOCIAL AND PUBLIC PERSONA

There are inherent challenges in using the internet, email, and social media, as well as texting and other electronic communications. Temple Staff, Clergy, and Congregants should demonstrate respect, professionalism, and good judgment when using any such technology.

Leaders' behavior outside the synagogue, which may seem private, could affect not only our own reputations, but also that of our synagogue. We must gauge our actions accordingly. 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. We should be mindful of when our personal communications could be misconstrued as representing the views of the synagogue or another organization, and we should refrain from communications that are inappropriate (e.g., obscene content and defamatory statements).

We must respect the rights of individuals not to be recognized either by name or likeness publicly on the temple's website, social media platforms, or publications without securing approval.

HONOR (KAVOD)

Beth Hillel Temple 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)

Beth Hillel Temple 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)

Beth Hillel Temple 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.

PART 3: ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Ethics Code will be made available to all congregants, staff, and clergy. The Code will also be published on the congregation website 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.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

- The Beth Hillel Temple's Executive Committee which includes the Temple's President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer as well as the Rabbi will serve as a standing Ethics Committee.
- The synagogue vice president will act as the chair of the Ethics Committee and be responsible for receiving and addressing allegations.
- Members of the Ethics Committee must have 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.
- Members of the Ethics Committee must recuse themselves if an allegation pertains to them in any way.

PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS

- An allegation of unethical behavior, oral or in writing should be directed to the synagogue president, Rabbi, or any member of the Ethics Committee.
- To initiate an Ethics Committee process, the person who received the allegation will promptly share the information with all Ethics Committee members.
- If the alleged ethics violator is a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), American College 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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 Leadership Council upon request of the person sanctioned.
- All steps, from an initial allegation of unethical conduct to ultimate resolution, will be documented in writing by the Ethics Committee. During the assessment, the Committee will keep all affected parties informed of the progress as they see fit.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout any Ethics Committee process to the extent practicable and consistent with thorough assessment and resolution of the matter.
- 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.
- 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 in weighing appropriate sanctions.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION/HEALING PROCESS

- Some alleged ethics violations may warrant or benefit from meetings aimed at facilitating healing of a breach between the involved individuals. The Chair, a committee member, the Rabbi, or the Board President may encourage and/or facilitate such a meeting, if those individuals are interested and willing. Upon the request of any individuals involved, the Chair shall provide referral information for professional help.

OUTCOME

- Every possible attempt will be made to conclude the matter as soon as possible
- Possible outcomes may include, but are not limited to:
 - Satisfactory resolution of the issue, as agreed upon by the individuals involved in the complaint;
 - Continued contention or disagreement between the individuals, with an agreement to move forward with the complaint;
 - Continued disagreement and request for additional intervention and/or appeal; and
 - Recommendation to the Leadership Council by the Committee that one or more involved individuals be removed from congregational membership or have a probationary period defined and implemented.
- All steps in the process, from initial allegation to ultimate or recommended resolution, shall be documented in a report written by the Ethics Committee. The Committee must review the report, and agree on the finalized report.
- The Ethics Committee may request further action, including the possibility of consulting legal counsel if this has not already been done.
- The final report is then given to the involved individuals.
- The final report and the outcome documentation will be kept by the Rabbi in a locked confidential file.