

Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel

# Safeguarding Our Children A Child Protection Policy

*The safety and well-being of our children is sacred.*

5/31/2019

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*This child protection policy was approved by the CSAIR Board of Trustees on March 27, 2017. This document, the third version of the policy, was approved by the Board on May 21, 2019. As the policy includes a wide range of new protocols and practices to protect our children, the Child Protection Committee is implementing the policy in stages so that our entire congregation can be informed of the various components as they are implemented. As the policy is reviewed each year, the committee will continue to implement additional practices and make changes as needed.*

*We ask everyone to be patient and vigilant as our staff, volunteers and congregants are trained to comply with these new policies and procedures. Throughout this process, please notify the child protection committee if you notice a program, activity, or interaction that is non-compliant with this policy so that we may ensure our new policy is understood by everyone.*

*In addition, we encourage the entire CSAIR community to read the policy and participate in one of the various training opportunities. It is our intention that compliance with this policy will fulfill our goal that CSAIR is a physically and emotionally safe environment for all, including our children. Please share your questions and feedback with the Child Protection Committee at [childsafety@csair.org](mailto:childsafety@csair.org).*

*This policy was developed in consultation with Sacred Spaces. To adapt this policy for your institution, please contact: [info@JewishSacredSpaces.org](mailto:info@JewishSacredSpaces.org).*

## Child Protection - Values Statement

The Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale (CSAIR) is a community that holds the safety and well-being of our children as sacred. This policy applies to all members of the congregation and community - including all staff members, congregants, volunteers and guests.

CSAIR aims to provide children with a positive and enriching Jewish, educational, spiritual, social and cultural environment that promotes their intellectual, moral and emotional growth. We are deeply committed to safeguarding the young people in our community so they feel and are safe at all times. To that end, we strive for the highest standards towards protecting them from abuse. With that goal in mind, we have created *Safeguarding Our Children, A Child Protection Policy*.

This policy is meant to be a fluid and an evolving document. As time passes, and we learn from our collective experiences and the practical nature of the policy's implementation, its parameters may need to be altered - such change is a healthy process that will enable those charged with safeguarding our children to be responsive to altered circumstances and the practical needs of our community.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this statement:

**Child** refers to any youth from birth through 18 years old.

**Community Member** refers to CSAIR congregants, clergy, staff, volunteers, guests, visitors and contractors.

### **Regular and Intermittent Youth Volunteers**

A regular volunteer is an individual who routinely works with children in the congregation at known and expected intervals e.g. a volunteer who assists weekly with shabbat morning programming.

An intermittent volunteer is an individual who intermittently and without a set schedule works with the children of the congregation.

**Sexual Abuse** is any occurrence in which an adult engages a minor in sexual activity. Sexual activity may include but is not limited to:

#### *Contact behavior:*

- kissing
- fondling
- masturbation
- oral sex
- penetration of the vagina, anus, or other orifice by a penis, finger or other object or body part
- Other sexual contact, such as stroking or massaging a child's thigh

#### *Non-contact behavior:*

- Sexual communication (whether verbal or written, including by telephone, text message, email or social media)
- Voyeurism (spying on private or intimate behaviors, such as those involving undressing, nudity, or sexual activity)
- Exposing a child to pornography or other sexually explicit material
- Exposing part or all of an adult or child's naked body (except as necessary for caregiving or medical purposes)
- Exploiting a child by prostitution and/or pornography
- Any activity intended to abuse, degrade, arouse, or gratify sexual desires

Sexual activity between children can also be abusive; some indicators might include a significant disparity in age, development, or size; if one child is in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the other; if one child is unconscious; or anytime coercion is used.

**Physical Abuse** occurs when an adult inflicts non-accidental physical force that has a substantial risk of causing, or does cause, bodily injury or emotional trauma. Physical force between minor children can also be abusive.

**Emotional Abuse** is defined as acts toward a child that cause or have a substantial likelihood of causing harm to the child's physical, psychological, social, spiritual, or moral development. Emotional abuse might include, but is not limited to patterns of: restricting a child's movement, discriminating, blaming, belittling, denigrating, threatening, scaring, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostility or bullying.

**Neglect** is the failure of a responsible person to provide for a child's basic needs or to protect from harm to the degree that the child's health, safety, or well-being are threatened.

**Grooming** is when an adult may use seemingly innocent behaviors to gain the trust and cooperation of a child, establish a relationship with a child, the child's family, or the community, for the purposes of his/her own sexual gratification. Such behaviors may include but are not limited to - the giving of preferential gifts to a child, asking a child to keep a secret, seeking the attention of a child, spending an increasing amount of time with a child, being overly physical with a child, inappropriate interactions with a child in person or via electronic devices or social media, the testing or ignoring of professional boundaries or rules.

**Policy Violations** are those actions by individuals that either accidentally or intentionally breach or disregard the expectations for behavior and conduct delineated by this Child Protection Policy, such that they may or may not rise to the definition of abuse. Policy violations are reported to the Child Protection Committee, while suspected acts of child abuse or maltreatment are reported to the Statewide Central Register and/or the Child Protection Committee (as described in section 6 of this policy).

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to all activities on-site and/or under the auspices/sponsorship or co-sponsorship of CSAIR.

## **Child Protection Committee**

In keeping with CSAIR's commitment to protecting children from abuse, a standing Child Protection Committee (CPC) has been established to oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of an ongoing child protection program at CSAIR. The guidelines included in this policy, along with educational trainings for the entire staff and congregation, are at the core of our child protection program.

### Role

The CPC's role is to coordinate and oversee:

- implementation of the policy
- educational forums and trainings
- ongoing maintenance of and compliance with the policy
- advisement to the congregation on questions of child protection
- timely and responsible handling of policy violations and other allegations of misconduct, abuse or concern.

The CPC shall not attempt to address issues related to the integration in the community of alleged child abusers or known registered sex offenders, or otherwise act outside their expertise, without consulting with independent child protection professionals. The engagement of an independent child protection professional is required to pursue a formal investigation of cases involving CSAIR community members, staff and nonmembers (see Section 9 below: Policy Compliance and Violations).

### CPC Members

CPC members shall be individuals possessing maturity of judgment, deep integrity, compassion, sensitivity, respect of the congregation, the ability to work well with others and in sensitive situations, and shall be members in good standing of the congregation.

The President will designate a Chairperson of the CPC, in consultation with the Rabbi. The Chairperson, in consultation with the President and Rabbi, will appoint CPC members as necessary. The CPC shall consist of at least three, and no more than five members, of which one shall be a member of the Board of Trustees. Initially, each CPC member shall commit to a three-year term, the first year of which is a non-voting training period during which the new member may be invited to meetings at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Additionally, at the discretion of the Chairperson, a member may remain on the committee for an additional consecutive term of two years, and may be reappointed to the committee after a one-year hiatus. When a member is re-appointed, the member does not need to repeat the aforementioned training period. These terms shall be staggered so that when feasible, no more than one new CPC member is replaced in any twelve-month period.

Additionally, the President, the Rabbi and the Director of Education shall be ex officio members of the CPC without voting privileges. They shall be invited to participate in all meetings, deliberations and regular communications of the CPC.

CPC members shall keep all meetings and communications confidential, except as otherwise stated within this policy.

CPC members must agree to follow the protocols as outlined in this policy for preventing and responding to child abuse.

Committee members, including the Committee Chairperson, who fail to comply with the policies and protocols set forth herein shall be removed by vote of the disinterested Committee members and the President (notwithstanding the President's ex officio status).

### Meetings

The CPC shall meet at minimum four times each year to oversee maintenance of this Policy, one meeting of which shall be dedicated to the annual Policy Review as described in Section 11. Additional meetings will be held as necessary to address child protection concerns that arise. A majority of voting CPC members must be present to conduct a meeting. A majority vote is required for CPC decisions relating to policy compliance and violations. In the event that there is no majority vote, the President shall be granted a vote. CPC members shall recuse themselves from deliberations and actions relating to family members and other situations in which there is a conflict of interest. At the discretion of the Chairperson, the CPC may meet in closed session, from which ex officio members are excluded.

Initial discussions by the CPC about a violation should be encouraged, whenever possible, to be name/identity blind - excluding the alleged violator's name, the child's name and the name of the individual reporting the incident. Actions or decisions recommended in these closed sessions are binding.

## Screening and Training

Prior to their appointment, all CPC members, including ex officio members, shall undergo thorough screenings, as set forth in the Screening Chart below (see Section 5: Staff and Volunteer Engagement and Hiring). All Committee members, including ex officio members, are required to have additional Child Protection training beyond the highest standards noted for other members of the community, as set forth in the Training Chart below (see Section 4: Training), and are expected to enhance their knowledge and training annually.

## Code of Conduct for Interactions with Children

### Identifying and minimizing risk

CSAIR will provide practical guidance and/or training to all members of the CSAIR Community (including staff, volunteers, contractors, vendors, congregants, parents and visitors) about acceptable and unacceptable behavior with children in order to minimize the risk of child abuse occurring within the community and at all CSAIR sanctioned events. It is a violation of this policy to neglect, or sexually, physically, or emotionally abuse a child, or groom a child for such abuse.

In addition, all members of the CSAIR community are required to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with being a positive role model (*Dugma Ishit*) for children and other adults, to follow to this policy.

### Conduct and Behavior

#### Physical Contact

Nurturing touch is an important part of healthy child development. This policy does not ban all physical contact between adults and children, but rather limits such contact to the parameters listed below.

#### Appropriate Touch

The appropriateness of physical contact will vary with different ages, the context of the interaction, and the stages of childhood development. **Three key principles regarding touch include: parental consent, child consent and ensuring that at least one additional adult is present (“ask twice and make sure you are not alone”).**

#### Parental consent:

- Whenever possible, when an adult intends to pick up, hug or comfort a child, that adult should seek permission from the child’s parent or guardian before doing so.

#### Child consent:

- Before touching whenever possible it is best to “check first” with the child, when developmentally appropriate and within context.
- An adult intending to pick up or hug a distressed child should first ask the child if that is acceptable to him or her and respect the child’s response.

#### Touching of a child should occur in a public space with another adult present:

- Whenever possible, the touching of a child should always occur in a public space with more than one adult present.
- Whenever possible, when picking up a child in distress there should be two adults in the room; the individual picking up the child and one additional adult.

*Several touching policies apply for all interactions with children:*

- Appropriate physical contact areas may include: shoulder, upper back, arms, hands.
- Other forms of touch in an appropriate context may include: a hand shake, a fist pump or high five, side hugs, or comforting a distressed child by picking him/her up or providing a hug.
- Whenever possible, verbal instructions and directions should replace physical contact.
- A hug may be appropriate at a moment of happiness (or sadness). For example a member of the clergy may want to so express that sentiment with a hug on the bimah during a bar/bat-mitzvah celebration. Such sentiments should always be expressed in public, and never in private. Ideally, the child should be asked in advance if s/he approves of a public hug in these circumstances.
- A child's development and age must be noted when considering if contact is appropriate. Examples of this type of touch, may include but are not limited to:
  - Infants through five years of age - appropriate touch may include assistance with the changing of clothing, toileting for those children that are not toilet trained, assisting a child in walking upstairs, lifting a child onto a chair or into a stroller, or providing comfort during moments of distress.
  - School aged children, and those older - Nurturing touch may be appropriate especially during moments of distress in order to provide comfort.

### **Inappropriate Touch**

Under no circumstances should a CSAIR community member have physical contact with a child that could be considered or result in sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect of a child, as defined in this policy. Example of inappropriate touch may include contact that:

- is private, in a one on one setting, or otherwise out of sight of other adults.
- is initiated against the wishes of the child.
- includes touching genitals, breasts, thighs or buttocks and would appear to a reasonable person to have a sexual connotation or purpose.
- Includes the touching of body parts that would normally be covered by a bathing suit.
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the student or child, including physical punishment.
- is overly physical and may include roughhousing, tickling, wrestling or carrying children.
- includes lap sitting unless it is a parent/guardian/family member, or in their presence.

Staff/Volunteers should gently block and redirect a child who attempts to touch him/her in an inappropriate or sexual manner. They will discourage children from inappropriate expectations of touch in a gentle manner, being mindful to not embarrass the child.

Staff and volunteers should gently set limits when children seek excessive, inappropriate, or sexual attention and obtain support services for children who continually struggle with these limits.

Additionally, all staff and volunteers should be mindful of the child's behavior and actions, taking notice of behaviors that may be suggestive of past abuse, as communicated during trainings. Such behaviors should be so communicated to the CPC as soon as possible.

### **Interactions with Youth**

All interactions with youth, including both instructional and non-instructional interactions, are to take place in spaces that are both **observable and interruptible**. This includes but is not limited to classrooms and/or spaces with observable windows, unlocked doors and reported as being used for instructional purposes (is taking place at a time and in a space known and designated for instructional use).

In addition to the above, the following guidelines apply in all instances of 1:1 interactions with youth at CSAIR (including both instructional and non-instructional interactions):

- 1:1 interactions should be scheduled on the calendar of the 1:1 instructor and whenever possible shared with the CSAIR administrative calendar.
- During 1:1 instruction, the room door should be open or with an unobstructed window view with clear visibility into the room. The door should be unlocked and the adult should not physically be between the child and the room exit.
- Ideally 1:1 instruction should be scheduled at times when additional staff and/or adults are present in the CSAIR building.
- When 1:1 instruction must occur at times when the CSAIR building is not otherwise occupied, an adult other than the instructor must accompany the child into the CSAIR building and remain in the building within a reasonable distance and within sight and hearing of the instruction for the duration of the session. The room door for the instruction should remain open during such sessions.
- This Policy applies when a parent/guardian engages a CSAIR Community Member for private teaching, such tutoring and/or instruction to be conducted off the CSAIR premises will be considered separate and distinct from CSAIR sponsored sessions.

## Language and communication

Words, what we say, and how we communicate with others can be nurturing and supportive. Language and communication can also be destructive and hurtful. All members of the community should be careful and cognizant of the language used at all times, and especially when we speak to and/or are in the presence of children.

All CSAIR Community Members, including teachers, tutors, peers, staff members or volunteers, must refrain from making any sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendos, behavior, or using inappropriate language with a child or in the presence of a child. In addition:

- Communications with children should include language that is encouraging, respectful and confidence-boosting.
- Adults may not use language that teases, belittles or shames a child.
- Adults should never ask a child to keep a secret.
- Adults should never share with children explicit sexual material including; pornography, photos, videos or other explicit media.
- Inappropriate language/conversation may include, but is not limited to:
  - Cursing
  - Using lewd or sexually suggestive language
  - Comments about the way a child looks, is dressed, or about his/her body
  - Questions about a child's sexuality
  - Information about an adult's intimate behaviors, relationships, desires, or body, except in the context of an educationally appropriate discussion.

*In addition, the following guidelines apply to staff and volunteers:*

- Personal contact (*home address, personal email addresses, personal home/cell phone numbers*) information should not be exchanged with an individual child.
- In the event that a teacher, tutor, staff member or volunteer is required to communicate with a child or student via email, text message, or social media, an additional staff member or parent/guardian must be copied on the communication.
- Staff members who have CSAIR email accounts must communicate with children using these accounts (*not from personal email accounts*) or CSAIR social networking profiles (*e.g., not personal Facebook or other social media accounts*).
- The posting of photos or other images of minors on social networking sites may only be done with the permission of the child and his/her parent/guardian.
- Staff and volunteers should not accept social media "friend" requests from a child utilizing a personal social media account.
- The tagging and inclusion of names on social media sites is to be avoided.

## Photography

CSAIR actively promotes photographic recording of our community for archival and promotional purposes. We also acknowledge that images of children may be used inappropriately or illegally. The following rules apply to photography *and* videography of children at CSAIR:

- Permission from the child and the child's parents/guardian must be obtained prior to the public posting of any photographic images or video recordings taken of children at CSAIR.
  - These images may include those used for promotional purposes, including, but not limited to, the CSAIR website, the CSAIR Facebook page, the CSAIR Marsha Dane Stern Hebrew School Facebook page, press releases, promotional flyers and other electronic or printed means of communication.
  - This permission may be obtained through an annual permission/consent.
- no photography may be conducted inside changing areas, bathrooms, while a child is in a state of undress.
- images of children may not include identifying personal information such as: full name, address, phone number.
- all photographers/videographers seeking permission to photograph at CSAIR must agree to and adhere to the guidelines set forth by this statement.
- any image (digital or other) of a child, taken with permission, but which unintentionally reveals private body parts, violates these rules, or is otherwise not suitable for public display is to be destroyed or deleted.

## Acceptable Boundaries

People who intend to inflict harm on children are known to engage in grooming behavior, such as giving compliments, gifts or affection. CSAIR staff members and volunteers should refrain from showing favoritism to children whom they supervise. This may include but is not limited to:

- Gift giving that is specific to an individual child. This does not include, for example, an appropriate Bar/Bat Mitzvah or other special gift from the *institution*.
- Meeting or contacting children alone or without the knowledge or permission of their parent/guardian.

## Peer to Peer Relationships

CSAIR seeks to promote and foster healthy childhood and teen peer to peer relationships. We are committed to preventing emotionally and/or physically harmful peer interactions. CSAIR does not seek to ban physical contact between peers.

Prohibited behaviors (including those between adults and children) include but are not limited to:

- sexual harassment
- sexually explicit language
- bullying
- sexting
- online bullying and harassment
- unwanted physical contact
- sexual pressure and/or coercion
- stalking

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

The supply of drugs or alcohol to children is a criminal offense and is prohibited at all CSAIR sanctioned events. Similarly it is prohibited for adults or teens to interact with children while under the influence or in possession of drugs or alcohol.

## Transporting Children

CSAIR staff and volunteers are discouraged from transporting children, other than their own children, to or from CSAIR sanctioned events. When transporting children other than one's own, at all times at least two adults should accompany the children.

In addition this must be communicated to the parent/guardian and to another CSAIR staff member before the journey takes place. This communication must include notification of the departure and a notification of the completion of the journey.

## Training

CSAIR will require completion of an annual in-person training for all CSAIR staff members, members of the Child Protection Committee, and volunteers who regularly interact with children. In addition, completion of an in-person training and/or a web-based training module will be required for all members of the Board of Trustees and Education Board. CSAIR will offer annual in-person training and educational opportunities to children, teenagers and adult congregants.

- CSAIR staff, CPC members and regular volunteers working with children who begin their duties mid-cycle will be expected to complete an online training module at the time they begin their duties, and subsequently complete an in-person training at the next available session.
- All employees and regular volunteers working with children must sign an affirmation that they have read and will abide by CSAIR's Child Protection Policy before engaging with children. Training should be completed within one month of beginning their employment or beginning their activities with children.

These trainings will be consistent with the requirements outlined in the following training chart below:

### Training Chart

<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>
Youth	Annual/ Fall	Educational sessions	CPC
Parents/ Congregants	Annual/ Fall	Dependent upon youth related activities **	CPC
Volunteers	Annual/ As needed	Share Policy/Affirm *	Education Director
Teachers/Teen Coordinator/ Group leaders	Annual/ As needed	In-person session/Affirm *	Education Director
Clergy/Full time staff	Annual	In-person session/Affirm *	CPC Chair
Maintenance Staff	Annual	In-person session/Affirm *	Executive Director
BIRCH	Annual	Share Policy/Affirm *	Executive Director
Board of Trustees and Education Board	Annual	On-line and/or in-person session and Affirm *	CPC Chair
Vendors and Subcontractors	As needed	Share policy/Affirm *	Executive Director
Scheduled Visitors	As needed	Share policy/Affirm *	Executive Director
CPC members	Annual	In-person session/affirm/ PLUS additional annual training *	CPC Chair

\* Required

\*\* In person training / online educational module / policy affirmation

## Staff and Volunteer, Engagement and Hiring

### Hiring and Screening

The objective of the Hiring and Screening section of this policy is to ensure that all employees and volunteers who will interact with CSAIR's children are appropriately vetted so that CSAIR can provide a safe and nurturing environment for all of our children. This process clearly illustrates to all employee/volunteer applicants and to our community that CSAIR is committed to protecting our children.

All staff members and volunteers, and those applying to become CSAIR employees or volunteers, who interact with children and adolescents will be required to read and acknowledge receipt of this policy prior to commencing their responsibilities at CSAIR. In doing so, these individuals affirmatively demonstrate their understanding of, and agreement to adhere to, this policy.

### Interview Process and Screening

The basic screening program for all staff and volunteer applicants may include the following elements depending upon the position applied for (see ***Application and Screening Table*** below):

- A completed employment/volunteer application form
- Personal interviews
- A conversation
- Reference checks
- Background check
- Social media and internet check
- Subject to the above information obtained, the employee/volunteer applicant may be denied

Applicants are informed during the initial conversation that CSAIR is vigilant in the protection of our children. During the interview the applicant's beliefs and values in relation to the treatment of children and young people (including beliefs about discipline and reinforcement), his or her reasons for wanting to work with children and young people, and general awareness and understanding of child protection issues and this policy should be explored. New employees/volunteers may not begin their engagement at CSAIR before the interview and screening process has been successfully completed.

### References and Checks

CSAIR requires a current background check to be completed for all staff hires and volunteers. This screening is good for 3 years after which time a re-screening will be necessary. CSAIR has the discretion to re-screen any individual earlier than the 3 year period and to terminate employment at any point for concerns regarding an individual's ability/reliability to keep children safe.

## Application and Screening Chart

	Applicant - employees	Applicant - Regular volunteers	Applicant - Intermittent volunteers	Hosts - CSAIR member	Hosts - CSAIR non-member
application/ screening questionnaire	required	required			
2 personal interviews	required	required			
1 conversation			required	required	required
Two reference checks	required	required			required
Background check	required	required			
Social media check	required	required	required	required	required
Affirmation of child protection policy	required	required	required	required	required

## Policy Dissemination and Affirmation

This Policy shall be disseminated widely to the CSAIR community through publications, public discussion, educational opportunities, rabbinic teachings, training programs and other means of communication that will raise awareness and create a safe environment for our children. The policy will be available on the CSAIR website, in the CSAIR office and will be communicated to every member. CSAIR requires all staff and volunteers who have responsibilities with children, and Board of Trustees members to sign an affirmation indicating that they have read and agree to abide by the terms of this Policy.

Intermittent volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, and lessees will likewise be required to sign an affirmation indicating that they have read either the entire policy or an abridged version of the policy and agree to abide by its terms, as a precondition of engagement with the CSAIR community or space.

## Reporting

### Requirements:

State laws mandate that certain persons (*Summary Guide for Mandated Reporters NY State Mandated Reporters* - see Resources section) report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to civil authorities. Extending the NYS statutes to our community, CSAIR policy requires all CSAIR staff and volunteers, whether they are mandated reporters according to NYS law or not, to report ***any reasonable suspicion that a youth is being abused or maltreated***. In addition, all members of the community are empowered and encouraged by this policy to report incidents of suspected child abuse and maltreatment.

Reports may be made directly by an individual to the Statewide Central Register (SCR) of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. Individuals are encouraged, but not obligated to notify the Child Protection Committee (CPC) after making such a report.

Alternatively, individuals may directly notify the Child Protection Committee of any suspected incident of child abuse. The Committee will support this individual in reporting the incident to the SCR; or when necessary by law or to protect a child, report directly to the SCR.

To the extent that is possible, all reports facilitated by the CPC will be held in the strictest of confidence protecting the confidentiality of the information and the individuals involved.

Additionally, this policy encourages reporting to the SCR and other authorities suspected historical events that are suspicious for child abuse or maltreatment.

There may be cases in which the SCR may not be the appropriate reporting body, in which case the appropriate governmental agency should be notified (eg District Attorney's office, Police Enforcement, Federal Hotline)

For any noted violation of this policy that does not meet any of the definitions of child abuse, and thus SCR notification is not indicated, a report should be made to the CPC.

This policy protects all individuals, who in good faith report an episode of suspected abuse to the SCR or the CPC, from any form of retaliation.

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse to the Statewide Central Registry:**

- A. Ensure the child is in a safe environment.
- B. In cases of emergencies, call 911 immediately
- C. The reporting congregant is strongly encouraged but not obligated to contact the Child Protection Committee so that they may work together with SCR and take additional steps where necessary to protect CSAIR's children. CSAIR staff and regular volunteers are required to notify the CPC or their supervising staff member subsequent to making a report.
- D. A telephone report must be made to the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (i.e. the SCR). The telephone number for NY State legally mandated reporters is: 800-635-1522.  
The telephone number for all others is: 800-342-3720.
- E. Upon completion of the call, the reporter is encouraged but not obligated to complete an incident Report (see Appendix C). This may be completed with the guidance of the CPC or the reporter may choose to complete on their own.
- F. If the report was communicated to the Child Protection Committee then the Committee is thereafter responsible for the filing, appropriate distribution, and preservation of all such forms.
- G. The parent or guardian of the victim should be notified as soon as possible, with permission of the SCR.

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Policy Violations to the Child Protection Committee:**

- A. As above, ensure that the child is in a safe environment, and if indicated call 911
- B. For guidance regarding non-emergent incidents that may require reporting to the SCR, and for notifications of policy violations, the CPC can be contacted at [childsafety@csair.org](mailto:childsafety@csair.org) or members of the committee can be contacted individually.
- C. For urgent concerns about suspected abuse, or uncertainties regarding reporting, the designated CPC committee member can be contacted - during regular business hours by contacting the synagogue office (718-543-8400), and after hours by contacting the emergency synagogue phone number as indicated by the after hours CSAIR phone message.

## Suspected Abuse/Policy Violation Reporting Chart

Incident	Action	Means of notification	CPC involvement
Suspected Child Abuse	Option 1 - Direct report to SCR by individual	NY State Suspected child abuse hotline - 800 342 3720 and/or other relevant governmental agency	Encouraged, but not obligated to notify CPC
Suspected Child Abuse	Option 2 - Contact CPC for SCR reporting guidance	* <a href="mailto:childsafety@csair.org">childsafety@csair.org</a> * or contact individual member of the CPC	CPC provides guidance and facilitates report to SCR and/or other relevant governmental agency
Child Protection Policy Violation (that does not require SCR notification)	Incident is reported to CPC	* <a href="mailto:childsafety@csair.org">childsafety@csair.org</a> * or contact individual member of the CPC * or incident report/note is placed in CPC mailbox	CPC review

## Communication with the Committee

The CSAIR Child Protection Committee welcomes questions, concerns and input about child safety at CSAIR and the terms of this policy. The Committee can be reached by:

- Email address - [Childsafety@csair.org](mailto:Childsafety@csair.org). Emails sent to this address are automatically forwarded to all members of the Committee (*excluding the Ex Officio members*) to ensure that emails are not overlooked. The Chair of the Committee will acknowledge receipt of an email within 24 hours of receipt, or by another committee member if the chair is unavailable. The sender will be updated weekly until the Committee has determined the issue to be resolved and communicated this to the individual.
- CSAIR members are also welcome to approach or contact directly individual members of the Child Protection Committee or CSAIR staff. The names of the Committee members are listed on the CSAIR website.
- A locked Child Safety mailbox and incident reports can be found in the lower lobby. CSAIR members can leave identified or anonymous reports or other correspondence for the Committee here. Only CPC members will have access to this mailbox.
- The Child Protection Committee will host ongoing conversations dedicated to discussing issues of child protection and abuse and answering questions.
- The Child Protection Committee will present a report on child safety at the annual CSAIR membership meeting and welcomes questions at that time.

## Policy Compliance and Violations

All members of the community are responsible for the safety of our children. In the event that one observes any violation of this policy, s/he is expected to report such incidents to the Child Protection Committee.

Information will be shared with the Child Protection Committee and if necessary with appropriate New York State personnel.

Reports can be made verbally to a member of the Child Protection Committee, in writing as noted in the “Communication with the Committee” section of this document, or via email [Childsafety@csair.org](mailto:Childsafety@csair.org). A written Policy Safety Incident Report shall be generated for all such events.

Any violation of this policy reported to the Child Protection Committee will initiate actions that may include but are not limited to the following:

- notification of the child’s parents or guardians of the violations
- immediate actions to protect the child
- separation of the alleged violator from the child and other children at CSAIR
- police notification of the occurrence
- Notification to the State Central Registry
- Upon completion of a State Central Registry investigation, if determined necessary, an independent investigation may be conducted
- If the incident involves a CSAIR employee or staff member, an investigation will be conducted and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination. Alternatively, the case may be closed or declined by the investigative individual.
- If the incident involves a CSAIR member, a warning, limited access, assignment of a *Shomer*, or termination of membership
- Notification of other Synagogues of the actions taken by CSAIR if it is determined that the individual may seek to participate in services at those Synagogues
- In those instances where a report is made to the SCR and the authorities are unable or unwilling to move forward, CSAIR’s CPC will continue to execute due diligence in responding, which may include enlisting the assistance of an independent investigator.

If the violation is one of CSAIR’s policies but does not rise to a required notification of the SCR, then the actions taken may include, but are not limited to the following:

- a discussion regarding the violation between the violator and a minimum of 2 members of the committee. During that discussion the Policy and the violation will be reviewed to ensure the violator understands the guidelines. There will be written documentation of the policy violation and subsequent discussion that will be added to the violator’s file, and affirmation by the violator to abide by the Policy going forward.

- Initial discussions by the CPC about a violator should be encouraged, whenever possible, to be name/identity blind - excluding the violator's and the child's name.
- a formal written warning may be delivered following an initial violation
- for subsequent violations further discussion and/or warnings, a limited access agreement, may be initiated depending upon the circumstances and nature of the violation
- referral of the child for a medical evaluation
- referral of the child for psychological evaluation and mental health supportive services
- dismissal of the violator from the community, with membership revoked
- consultation with an outside expert
- referral of the violator for appropriate supportive and/or mental health assistance.
- notification of other community institutions

### **Alleged abusers suspension of contact with children**

An alleged perpetrator of abuse or policy violator who is a staff member or an individual that otherwise has regular interactions with children; upon CPC notification of such allegations the individual's access to children in the synagogue will be immediately suspended, pending discussion by the CPC that may additionally include an independent investigation.

### **Exceptions**

Every effort should be made to strictly adhere to this policy. There may be exceptional situations where these guidelines do not apply, for example, in an emergent situation (such as a medical emergency or a situation requiring a building lockdown) where compliance with these guidelines would place the child or another individual's safety in danger. At such times, when security and safety are the primary concerns, an adult occupying a room alone with a child with secured and/or locked door and/or with lowered blinds may be necessary.

In the event that the guidelines are deviated from, the Committee should be notified as soon as possible after the incident.

Similarly, violations to the policy may be anticipated and therefore exception requests may be made to the Committee in anticipation of a potential policy violation. Such requests should be made in writing and at least one week in advance of the need. The Committee will convene and determine if the exception is acceptable.

All policy exceptions will be documented in writing by the Committee.

## Supporting Victims and Survivors of Child Abuse

The purpose of this Policy is to prevent occurrences of child abuse. Yet we understand that no matter how hard we try to protect children, there will always be some individuals seeking to harm them. Should the Committee or CSAIR leadership become aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been, abused, they will take the following steps to clearly communicate support for the child and the child's family:

### Support Person

CSAIR's rabbi or other relevant professional or lay leader will be designated as "Support Person(s)" and will reach out to the child and the child's family within 24 hours of learning of the abuse to express the synagogue's unequivocal support. Understanding that abuse can have ongoing impact on a child and a child's family, the Support Person will seek permission from the child and the child's family to continue offering support on an ongoing basis. This support will include:

- Showing up
- Listening
- Affirming
- Offering to accompany the child/family in filing a police report, meeting with Child Protective Services, to court hearings or trial and other related meetings, interviews, or hearings
- Asking the child and the child's family how else CSAIR can support them

Support Persons will understand the limitations of their role and will not offer therapeutic, legal or other expert advice, but will instead function as members of a multidisciplinary support team, working when possible to support and complement the efforts of involved professionals to support the child and family.

### Mental Health Treatment

CSAIR will offer to help the family find a qualified mental health practitioner with expertise treating victims of abuse and their family members.

## **Creating a Culture of Ongoing Support for Victims of Childhood Abuse**

CSAIR aims to create a space that is safe for all victims of childhood abuse – both those we know about and those we don't.

*To this end, CSAIR will:*

- Make every effort to protect the privacy of victims of child abuse.
- Create and distribute a referral list of local organizations and therapists who specialize in abuse prevention and treatment.
- Post signs throughout the building about child abuse prevention and reporting
- CSAIR may host a support group for adults who have experienced childhood abuse
- Speak about child abuse publicly and
  - At the rabbi's discretion s/he will speak from the pulpit about child protection
  - Initiate communal dialogue
  - Post the contact information for Committee members who are available to answer any questions about child safety

## Integration of Individuals Known or Suspected to Pose a Risk to Children

CSAIR is deeply committed to protecting our children from potential and known offenders of child abuse and maltreatment. The safety of our youth is paramount. This is a core value of our community and the unifying principle upon which this policy is based. Inclusion is another core value of our community.

As in all communities, there may be individuals already within the CSAIR community, or who may wish to join, visit, or participate in our activities, who pose a known or potential risk to children. These may include individuals who: have been convicted of child abuse or neglect or otherwise have substantiated findings against them; have unresolved allegations of child abuse or neglect; have otherwise behaved in a manner that is potentially harmful to children, or who have violated this policy. In considering whether and how to integrate such individuals into our community, CSAIR will prioritize the safety of our youth. As such, the unqualified inclusion of an individual who presents a known or suspected risk to children is prohibited, as it violates the protective mission of this policy.

Prioritizing child protection while also upholding CSAIR's value of inclusion is a complex endeavor that requires nuance, sensitivity and expertise. While the Child Protection Committee (CPC) aims to manage all situations in this manner, it also recognizes the limits of its expertise and role in addressing the complicated issues of integrating those who may pose a potential risk to children. At the discretion and direction of the CPC, an expert consultant may be engaged prior to including or excluding said individuals. Based on the CPC's review of the consultant's recommendations, access will be denied, permitted, or permitted with clear limitations set forth in writing.

## Policy Review

The CSAIR Child Protection Committee will engage in an annual review of child safety at CSAIR, which will include:

- Feedback received from staff, volunteers, lay leaders, and the congregation's membership.
- Soliciting feedback from parents and children
- Soliciting feedback from youth staff and volunteers
- Review of the general compliance of the community with this policy
- Review of Incident Reports and reports of CSAIR individuals known to have engaged in behavior concerning to the safety of children (quarterly meetings)
- Review of the language and details of this policy, and revisions as necessary to ensure it meets the daily and programmatic realities of CSAIR.
- The CPC is empowered to make ongoing minor changes as needed to this statement, however any qualitative or substantive changes to the policy will be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Revised versions of the policy will be presented for endorsement to the Board of Trustees annually at the May Board meeting, or sooner as dictated by the need for revisions.
- Expert review of this policy to ensure that it is up to date with current research and best practices
- Items that are not included in this policy and may be included in future revised statements include:
  - A policy regarding known sex offenders that live in the community.
  - A policy regarding known sex offenders that would like to join CSAIR and/or participate at CSAIR sponsored events, with or without children in attendance.
  - Further development of the Human Resources section of the policy that addresses in more details the hiring/engagement of employees/volunteers. This policy may include more specific guidelines regarding: background checks, detailed applicant interview expectations, an employee/volunteer application, reasons to defer an applicant employee or volunteer application.
  - Guidance regarding orders of protection in the community, current and past
  - Guidance regarding sharing of information and cooperative interactions with other child protection efforts in the community.

The results of the above review will be compiled in a report presented to the congregation at CSAIR's annual membership meeting each June. A summary of this report will be available on CSAIR's website and the full report will be available for viewing in the CSAIR office.

### Third Party Use of this Policy

Any organization wishing to use all or part of this policy is asked to submit in writing such a request to the CSAIR Child Protection Committee ([childsafety@csair.org](mailto:childsafety@csair.org)). If permission is so granted, they are then further requested to acknowledge CSAIR when using the document for their own purposes.

This policy is adopted by action of the CSAIR Board of Trustees this 21st day of March 2017.

  
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Abby Pitkowsky, President CSAIR

3/21/17  
Date

Version three of this Policy was last reviewed by an independent consultant, the CSAIR Child Protection Committee, and approved by the Board of Trustees on May 21, 2019.

## Appendix

### Policy Safety Incident Report Part 1

*This form should be used to report to the CSAIR Child Protection Committee any violation of the CSAIR Child Protection Policy, boundary violations, disclosures of abuse, child safety concerns, or other behaviors or allegations of behavior that might jeopardize the safety of a child. Proof or first-hand direct knowledge of a behavior or incident is not necessary to submit this form. The information contained in this report is confidential and will only be shared as part of its discussion regarding the incident with the members of the CPC and legal authorities if so directed.*

1. Date/Time of incident/behavior \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location of incident/behavior \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name individual(s) – adult or child – who accidentally or intentionally violated the Child Protection Policy, harmed or potentially harmed a child, or who otherwise engaged in a concerning behavior

4. Name of the child(ren) involved in noted incident

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Describe, with as many details as possible, the incident/behavior

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Individual submitting this report (optional):

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Email Address*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Cell phone number*

*Please submit this form to the CSAIR Child Protection Committee by emailing [childsafety@csair.org](mailto:childsafety@csair.org), mailing it to the synagogue to the attention of the Child Protection Committee, 475 West 250th Street, Bronx NY 10471, or dropping it in the slot of the Committee's private, locked mailbox, located in the lower lobby of the synagogue.*

# Policy Safety Incident Report

## Part 2

(For Child Protection Committee use)

1. Date/Time/Name of CPC member in contact with individual submitting report in Part 1

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2. Summary of conversation between CPC member and reporting individual

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3. Date/Time of full CPC discussion of reported incident, including those in attendance

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4. Key discussion points, and actions recommended by the CPC

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5. Follow up to discussion, and recommended actions

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6. Additional information

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***Please submit this form to the CSAIR Child Safety Committee by emailing [childsafety@csair.org](mailto:childsafety@csair.org), mailing it to 475 West 250<sup>th</sup> Street, Bronx NY 10471, or dropping it in the slot of the Committee's private, locked mailbox, located in the lower level lobby.***

## Resources

Sacred Spaces

<http://www.jewishsacredspaces.org/>

New York State - Child Protective Services, main web page

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse within Youth Serving Organizations  
Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingchildsexualabuse-a.pdf>

Summary Guide for Mandated Reporters New York State

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/publications/Pub1159.pdf>

Safehorizon

<https://www.safehorizon.org/get-help/child-abuse/#our-impact/>

Creating Child Safe Institutions  
Royal Commission (Australia)

<http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/getattachment/5d0dc659-68c2-46f9-847b-fafd52f58673/Creating-child-safe-institutions>

Key Elements of Child Safe Organisations - Research Study  
Royal Commission (Australia)

<http://childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/getattachment/5d988506-a260-4b7a-b5bc-4f555f2d2ca/Key-Elements-of-Child-Safe-Organisations>

CSAIR Child Protection web page

<https://csair.org/safeguardingourchildren/>

Preventing Abuse in Jewish Organizations that Serve Youth: Ten Policies to Create Safer Environments

<http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/preventing-abuse-in-jewish-organizations-that-serve-youth-tenpolicies-to-create-safer-environments/>