

Congregation Ahavas Achim Sexual Abuse Prevention & Response Policy: Abridged Version

The following is a summary of Congregation Ahavas Achim's Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy. It is not meant to provide all details, but an overview of each aspect of the policy. Persons signing the acknowledgement below should read the complete policy before signing. The full policy includes a glossary and definitions of many of the terms used therein, and is available at www.ahavasachim.org.

1. It is a violation of the policy to neglect, or sexually, physically, or emotionally abuse a child or vulnerable adult, or groom a child or vulnerable adult for such abuse. It is a violation of the policy for any employee, lay leader, or community member to engage in any form of sexual misconduct against another adult.
2. The policy applies to all activities on-site and/or under the auspices of Congregation Ahavas Achim, and to anyone affiliated with the congregation, including all staff members, congregants, volunteers, and guests.
3. The policy and its procedures are designed, and should be applied, to promote fairness to (1) the complainant, (2) the respondent, and (3) the synagogue. Criminal standards of evidence do not apply to the proceedings described in the policy, and the investigations and hearings described are not bound by the rules of criminal or civil courts.
4. All policy violations are reported to the Congregant Safety Committee, while suspected acts of child/vulnerable adult abuse or maltreatment are additionally reported to the Statewide Central Register. By New Jersey law, *any person* having reasonable cause to believe that a child or vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse or acts of abuse is *required by law* to immediately report this information to the State Central Registry (SCR) by calling 1-877 NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873).
5. When the Congregant Safety Committee is notified of suspected sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, they will convene a meeting as soon as possible to initiate an investigation separate from any criminal investigation. Upon completion of its investigation, the CSC shall convene to determine what action, if any, it will follow.
6. All reports made to the Congregant Safety Committee will be treated as confidential in accordance with New Jersey regulations, protecting the confidentiality of the information and individuals involved. Information will be shared among the members of the CSC and if necessary with appropriate New Jersey personnel. Further, this policy protects all individuals, who in good faith report an episode of suspected abuse to the SCR or the CSC, from any form of retaliation.
7. Ahavas Achim requires a current background check to be completed for all adult staff hires. This screening is good for three years after which time a re-screening will be necessary. Ahavas Achim has the discretion to re-screen any individual earlier than the three year period and to terminate employment at any point for concerns regarding an individual's ability/reliability to keep community members safe.
8. Ahavas Achim will require completion of an annual in-person training for all Ahavas Achim staff members, members of the Congregant Safety Committee, youth group leaders, and regular volunteers. Ahavas Achim will offer optional annual in-person trainings and educational opportunities to children, teenagers and adult congregants.
9. The policy will limit the contact of any known sex offender with children, vulnerable adults, and survivors of sexual misconduct in our congregation.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I received and read the complete Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy. I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by all rules contained in the policy. I also understand how to report incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct as set forth in the policy.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____