

# Temple Emanu-El Code of Ethics

## BACKGROUND

**2019:** The Union for Reform Judaism created a Code of Ethics and established an ongoing committee to assist congregations in developing their own code of ethics. The initiative also resulted in a guide to help member congregations develop and implement their own ethics codes.

**2020:** The Temple Emanu-El Board of Trustees addressed complaints against a congregant on an ad hoc basis. This congregant's membership was revoked. As part of this process, the Board requested an ethics policy be written and a procedure for addressing allegations be developed to guide future complaints or allegations against a congregant. A task force was formed and goals articulated for the project.

**2021:** Temple Emanu-El hired the Arcadi Jackson law firm to gather facts following allegations against Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman emerging from an investigation and findings of Central Synagogue in New York. The Arcadi Jackson report found no instances or allegations of inappropriate behavior in regard to Rabbi Zimmerman during his tenure at our congregation. As part of its report, Arcadi Jackson recommended Temple Emanu-El develop a Congregational Code of Ethics and communicate it to all members.

**2023:** The Board of Trustees approved the Congregational Code of Ethics. A statement that accompanied the Code of Ethics underscored its importance: "As we learn from the past, and look toward the future, a code of ethics that reinforces our values and sets forth expectations for congregant behavior and standards is vital to our community."

## PROCEDURES TO REPORT ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS

The Code of Ethics provides guidance to congregants, lay leadership, professional staff, and clergy on the standards of behavior expected by every member of the congregation.

A Board-approved process is in place for addressing allegations of violations. An allegation of unethical behavior may be reported by any individual to the President, Executive Director, Senior Rabbi, or any other clergy member of Temple Emanu-El. All alleged violations of the Code of Ethics will be addressed through the procedures approved by the Board, with as much urgency, confidentiality and fairness to the accusers and the accused as possible.

Temple Emanu-El shall not retaliate against any individual raising a concern or allegation of unethical behavior. Retaliation may be deemed a violation of the Code of Ethics.

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February 2023

*Temple Emanu-El of Dallas is an inclusive congregation that demonstrates respect for the needs of all. Through worship, learning and social justice, we strive to better ourselves, our community, and the world. We strive to hold ourselves to the highest standards of justice, which include personal integrity, social responsibility, and human decency. The following Code of Ethics is based in Jewish values for behavior in our congregational community. It sets forth the guiding principles and expectations for standards of conduct for the interaction of our congregants with clergy, staff, guests, and congregants while participating in a Temple Emanu-El related activity in the building, online, or offsite.*

## RESPECT (KAVOD) IN EVERY RELATIONSHIP

Temple Emanu-El believes that everyone entering our sacred space has the right to be safe and respected.

- We welcome everyone without regard to religious background, age, race, color, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.
- We treat everyone with respect, dignity, fairness, and compassion.
- We do not condone sexual harassment, including unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any and all other verbal, physical, written, or visual conduct of a sexual nature.
- We do not condone intimidation, retaliation, offensive or abusive behavior, or creation of a hostile environment or atmosphere.
- We do not condone any humiliating, oppressing, degrading, or bullying behavior, including verbal, physical or cyberbullying.

## INTEGRITY (YOSHER) IN EACH ACTION

Temple Emanu-El expects that all who engage in our community will conduct themselves with integrity and in an honest manner.

- We act solely in the best interest of Temple Emanu-El when acting on its behalf.
- We refrain from using one's position at Temple Emanu-El for personal advantage, gain, or benefit.
- We do not engage in favoritism, nepotism, or bribery in any context.
- We conduct financial matters related to Temple Emanu-El with complete honesty and transparency.
- We represent Temple Emanu-El as lay leaders in a moral, ethical, and legal manner.
- We protect the confidentiality of privileged information, either about an individual or Temple Emanu-El.

*Temple Emanu-El shall not retaliate against any individual raising a concern or allegation of unethical behavior. Retaliation may be deemed a violation of the Code of Ethics.*

This Code of Ethics is an evolving guide which cannot address every situation or contingency; a level of common sense and good judgment is expected from all. This Code of Ethics is subject to revision and review at any time.

Adopted/approved by the Board of Trustees on February 15, 2023.