

Temple B'nai Torah Ethics B'rit (Covenant)

Temple B'nai Torah (TBT) is a joyous, loving, and inclusive community that strives to better ourselves as we better the world. Our ethics b'rit helps us cultivate k'dushah (holiness) in our community. These standards are guided by Torah and our values; they act as a shared set of ethical expectations for interactions between us. This b'rit includes members of TBT and the wider community who work with us, pray with us, and share our space. Members, visitors, employees, contractors, and renters are all part of our lives and part of this b'rit. .

Dignity and Kavod (Honor)

Everyone is made b'tzelem Elohim (in the image of God). We respect the dignity of each person. We work to maintain a community atmosphere where everyone may feel a sense of belonging and can expect that their ideas and concerns can be openly shared and will be responded to with respect.

- Everyone is welcome at TBT, without regard to religious background, age, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.
- Discriminatory behavior, which includes hateful or demeaning speech or behavior, is never acceptable.

Chesed (Loving Kindness) and Rachamim (Mercy)

We understand that in order to be the best community we can be, we must treat each other with compassion and loving-kindness. We approach differences of opinion with respect and seek to understand, not condemn.

- We refrain from derogatory speech, negative talk, gossip, and slander, both online and in person.
- We do not allow bullying, including any unwanted behavior that degrades, humiliates, or oppresses another. Verbal and physical bullying of any kind are never acceptable.

Tzedek (Justice)

Our community spaces must be safe and just in order to be sacred.

- We refrain from hostile words and actions.

- We do not intimidate, abuse, or exploit others.
- We work to avoid situations that compromise our moral integrity. We work to avoid putting others in situations that compromise their moral integrity.
- We strive to protect the victims of abuse or neglect, including spousal abuse, child abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and other types of domestic violence. This includes taking all such reports seriously and investigating them.
- Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, written, or visual conduct of a sexual nature is never acceptable.
- In general, we expect that all actions within the TBT community and with others when representing the Temple obey the law and respect the intent of the law. However, this b'rit recognizes the possibility that our community may choose to follow our values when, in the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "a higher moral law [is] at stake."

Accountability

Volunteers and lay leaders who act on behalf of the Temple or conduct business for the Temple are also expected to uphold the following standards.

- We protect the confidentiality of privileged information, about individuals, organizations and the Temple, and do not share it without permission. 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 make decisions regarding Temple-related matters with transparency, openness, and accountability. This is superseded only by circumstances which require confidentiality. For example, it is especially important that we protect inadvertent and premature release of names of candidates for employment.
- We act solely according to the Temple's best interest when acting on its behalf and we refrain from using one's Temple position for personal advantage or benefit.
- Conflicts of interest arise when someone acting on behalf of an organization is positioned to make an organizational recommendation or decision which may directly and materially benefit themselves or a close relation. In the case that conflicts of interest arise when acting on behalf of TBT, we disclose them promptly and ensure that we have adequate arrangements to manage them. In general, decision-makers with a conflict of interest must disclose them and recuse themselves from both discussion and voting.

Reporting and responding to concerns

The following section outlines the process for raising, evaluating, and remediating concerns related to this b'rit. Our primary goal when addressing complaints and violations is resolution (which may involve escalation beyond the Temple B'nai Torah community when appropriate). As a sacred community, we also strive for healing and reconciliation.

As a first response, we encourage all community members to address interpersonal conflicts directly and compassionately between affected parties.

If escalation is needed, any community member may approach any member of the Board of Directors or clergy in order to raise a concern about a possible breach of this b'rit.

Responding to concerns: priorities

- All reports are taken seriously and will be investigated in good faith.
- Every effort will be made to exercise due diligence and confidentiality in all investigations, both throughout the active investigation and any potential response, and in perpetuity afterward.
- All efforts will be made to resolve matters as promptly as possible.
- If a complaint has been filed against a party, any investigation must include hearing from both sides of the complaint.
- Where an allegation raises the possibility of imminent or substantial harm to a person, legal obligations will take precedence and supersede any procedures otherwise laid out in this document.

Responding to concerns: process

- When an allegation of unethical behavior is made, the person to whom the complaint was made will alert the Senior Rabbi, Temple President, and Executive Director (ED).
 - If the Temple does not have an ED, the First Vice President will substitute.
 - In the event that the Senior Rabbi, Temple President, and/or Executive Director cannot participate or must recuse themselves, the Board of Directors will choose their replacement and transition the investigation as necessary (e.g., to the CCAR).
- The Senior Rabbi, Temple President, and ED will convene to learn the details of the report and decide on a course of action that includes information gathering, deliberation, and resolution based on the particularities of the allegation.
 - This may include consulting independent legal counsel representing the Temple.
 - This may include appointing a small, discrete Incident Review Team to further investigate and make recommendations based on their findings.

- The choice of the Incident Review Team members shall be based on the following qualities: integrity, leadership, independence, and ability to handle challenging situations.
- No individual may serve on an Incident Review Team if an allegation pertains to them in any way or involves a direct report or family member.
- As appropriate or contractually required, concerns will be escalated to other organizations, such as the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), American College of Cantors (ACC), Association of Reform Jewish Educators (ARJE), National Association for Temple Administration (NATA), the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), or law enforcement.

B'rit Maintenance: Access, Review, and Renewal

The following section outlines the maintenance of this b'rit, so it can act as the living covenant it was intended to be.

- This b'rit is posted on TBT property and online, and is available at request from the office.
- The maintenance of this b'rit includes a yearly review in time to announce any changes at the annual congregational meeting.
- The b'rit will be reviewed by at least 2 but not more than 5 community members, to be appointed jointly by the Temple President and the Senior Rabbi.
 - At least 1 member of the Executive Board (may be the President)
 - At least 1 member of Temple clergy (may be the Senior Rabbi)
 - Up to 3 congregational volunteers (may be Board members)

B'rit Maintenance: Document History

Year	Notes
2023 / 5783	B'rit adopted by the Board of Directors on behalf of the congregation
2024 / 5784	Review committee: Nicky Walker, Andy Held (Executive Board members), Rabbi Molly Weisel (clergy), Lis Cardy (congregant) Overview of changes: ● Added Document History to B'rit Maintenance ● Extensive cosmetic changes for style, clarity, and brevity (without intentional change to overall meaning) in all sections

	• Style-only formatting changes • Made explicit the Jewish notion of higher law which may override civil law on very rare occasions • Specified preference of Executive Director over 1st VP for participation in group responding to concerns • Specified procedure in the case that a complaint is made about the Senior Rabbi, Temple President, or Executive Director
2025 / 5785	Review committee: Andy Held, Lis Cardy (Executive Board members), Rabbi Molley Weisel (clergy) • No content changes proposed • Style-only formatting changes