



Congregation Ahavat Achim

Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth (this "Policy")

- I. **Objective.** Congregation Ahavat Achim aims to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who attend our synagogue and participate in our programs and activities. By being proactive and setting clear and objective standards, we seek to protect our children and youth from potential misconduct or inappropriate behavior and ensure that our synagogue provides a safe and secure environment for everyone.
- II. **Code of Conduct for Shul Activities and Personnel**

A. Overview

This Policy is designed to help ensure the safety of the children and youth of our synagogue during functions and activities taking place in the synagogue building as well as during synagogue-supervised events off synagogue premises.

Our staff, group leaders, volunteers, members and guests:

- shall not abuse any child or youth, whether physically, emotionally, sexually or financially;
- shall seek to prevent abuse of children and youth while involved in synagogue activities;
- shall comply with this Policy regarding conduct with children and youth; and
- acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth by agreeing to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth or known or suspected Policy violations to appropriate synagogue leaders and state authorities in accordance with this Policy and applicable law.

B. Definitions

For purposes of this Policy, the following terms have the meanings set forth below:

"child" means anyone under the age of 12 years.

"child abuse" or "abuse" means any action (or failure to take action) that endangers or harms a child or youth's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse can occur in different ways and includes the following:

- *Physical abuse* – any physical injury to a child or youth that is not accidental, including beating, shaking, kicking, burning and biting.

- *Emotional/psychological abuse* – any actions that are likely to lead to emotional or psychological injury, including unwarranted or excessive criticism, belittling and persistent teasing or bullying, or creating or maintaining through action or inaction an environment that leads to or allows such behaviors.

- *Sexual abuse* – any sexual activity between a child or youth and an adult, including activities such as exhibitionism, incest, sexual contact, sexual communication, or any activity intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any child or youth, or the adult engaging in this activity with a child or youth, regardless of whether the adult or the child or youth is the initiator and even if there is no coercion involved. In addition, sexual abuse can occur between children and youth themselves if there is a significant disparity in the age, development, or size between the individuals involved or if one child or youth is in a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the other.

Sexual abuse can also include non-contact behavior such as:

- 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.

- *Neglect* – depriving a child or youth of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter and medical care.

- *Economic exploitation* – the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's property or money.

- *Grooming* – when an adult may use seemingly innocent behaviors to gain the trust and cooperation of a child and/or 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, and the testing or ignoring of professional boundaries or rules.

“group leader” means a youth receiving compensation for assisting with Ahavat Achim’s child or youth activities. Group leaders may assist with activities but are not considered adult volunteers and must be supervised by Ahavat Achim’s youth department leadership and/or director(s).

“guest” somebody who is visiting Ahavat Achim or those who attend who are not members.

“volunteer” means any person performing services for Ahavat Achim without payment or compensation.

“trained volunteer position” is any volunteer position that involves directly working with or supervising children or youth, but does not include either (i) a house duty volunteer or (ii) any other volunteer who does not directly work with children or youth except in the presence of a youth director and/or a group leader (such as guest speakers).

“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.

“host” is any individual or family unit who hosts a non-family member child (without the child’s family members present) to sleep over in the host’s home for an overnight or weekend stay.

“house duty volunteer” is an adult volunteer present in the child/youth area who assists the youth director(s) with various tasks (such as distributing snacks).

“member” individual or family that has been approved by the Board of Ahavat Achim for membership.

“staff” means any adult employee of Ahavat Achim hired to perform services on a scheduled or regular basis for the synagogue in exchange for payment or compensation. For the avoidance of doubt, staff shall not include group leaders, subcontractors or vendors as defined by this Policy.

“subcontractor” means any individual who is not an Ahavat Achim employee and is either hired (i) by the congregation to perform synagogue functions (such as, for example, maintenance and custodial work) or (ii) by individual synagogue members to perform functions at private events held on synagogue property (such as, for example, caterers, simcha entertainment, and party planners).

“vendor” means any individual conducting personal business on synagogue property for personal gain (such as, for example, businesses participating in a pre-holiday boutique at Ahavat Achim).

“youth” means anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth shall also include a student in high school regardless of age.

C. Staff and Volunteer, Engagement and Hiring

1. All Staff:

Written application: All applicants for staff positions must complete and sign a written application in a form supplied by Ahavat Achim. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children (to the extent relevant to the position), previous synagogue affiliation (if applicable), past employment information and references.

Personal interview: Following submission of the application, at least one face-to-face interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position as well as to review this Policy. CPPC is not required to interview candidates but the Youth Committee may seek their input as needed.

Reference checks: Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicant’s references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably (to the extent relevant to the position) from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past.

Internet and criminal background checks: All applicants will also be subject to an Internet check and fingerprinting. Applicants will be asked to provide all screen names and aliases when applying. In addition, a national criminal background check is required for all staff, regardless of position.

Before any background, reference or Internet checks are run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing Ahavat Achim to run these checks. If an individual declines to sign, he or she will be unable to be hired by Ahavat Achim. A disqualifying offense or alleged offense discovered during these checks that would prevent an individual from working with children will be determined by the synagogue president, in consultation with the Child Policy & Protection Committee (defined below), or the president’s or the committee’s designee, based on the particular circumstances, including the nature of the offense. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, fraud, sexual offenses or indecency will preclude someone from being permitted to work at Ahavat Achim. Failure to disclose a relevant conviction on the application form or information that would assist

Ahavat Achim in discovering relevant past behavior (including withholding screen names or aliases) will also be disqualifying.

Job application forms, reference checks and background check authorization forms and results will be maintained in confidence on file at Ahavat Achim.

2. Staff Working in Positions Directly Related to Children or Youth:

In addition to the above, those hired for staff positions that explicitly involve working with children (such as those involved with child or youth programming) will be required to undergo abuse recognition and prevention training prior to beginning their employment at Ahavat Achim. The structure and content of the training will be approved by the Child Policy & Protection Committee and reviewed annually by the Child Policy & Protection Committee.

3. Trained Volunteer and Group Leader Positions:

Applicants will be required to complete a written application and personal interview, as well as to undergo the approved abuse recognition and prevention training prior to beginning their volunteer or group leadership work. Ahavat Achim reserves the right to perform background, reference and Internet checks on potential volunteers and group leaders. Minors in the role of group leader or volunteer are not required to undergo a background check but are required to attend training and review this Policy.

All information gathered about an applicant for the above positions involving work with children or youth will be reviewed and evaluated by the Child Policy & Protection Committee to determine, in consultation with others, if necessary, whether or not the person is appropriate to work with children or youth.

In connection with or following their training, and in any case, before beginning work with children or youth, each staff member who directly works with or supervises children or youth, group leader and person serving in a trained volunteer position must sign a statement that he or she has read, understood and agreed to abide by this Policy. Minors who work for the Youth Department are not required to sign a statement. Instead, they will be required to sign an attendance sheet showing that they attended training.

4. Non-trained Volunteer Positions:

Volunteers serving in a position that does not involve directly working with or supervising children or youth shall be informed of this Policy, but no formal application process or training is required. Although not required, house duty volunteers shall be encouraged to undergo appropriate training.

5. Subcontractors and Vendors:

Often, individuals in paid positions providing services at Ahavat Achim (including some with direct access to children) are subcontracted through vendors and/or hired by individual synagogue members (caterers, simcha entertainment, party planners, etc.). Accordingly, subcontractors and vendors will be:

- made aware of Ahavat Achim's commitment to the safety of children and youth and this Policy.
- strongly encouraged to adopt internal background checks and safety precautions consistent with those outlined in this Policy; and
- required to abide by the workplace guidelines outlined in this Policy below regarding the two-adult rule, open door policy and use of force, which guidelines shall be furnished to subcontractors and vendors as appropriate. Failure to adopt these or similar precautions and policies may be used as grounds for the disallowance of business activity by subcontractors or vendors or their employees on Ahavat Achim property.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy regarding subcontractors and vendors shall similarly apply to activities run by other organizations using Ahavat Achim's facilities (such as for a Shabbatons held at Ahavat Achim), rather than the stricter policies applicable to Ahavat Achim run activities.

Information regarding the internal policies of subcontractors and vendors (such as whether or not they have conducted employee background checks or have internal systems in place to assure child safety) may be shared with synagogue members and others using Ahavat Achim property for events.

Intermittent volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, and lessees will likewise be required to sign an attestation 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 Ahavat Achim community or space.

D. Training and Education

Ahavat Achim will provide training (or approve off-site opportunities for training) regarding this Policy to all Ahavat Achim staff, group leaders and persons serving in trained volunteer positions as required by this Policy and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training opportunities on an annual basis. Such training shall be mandatory in accordance with this Policy.

E. Workplace Guidelines

Two-Adult Rule: It is our goal that a minimum of two group leaders be in attendance at all times when children or youth are being supervised during our programs and activities. In addition, as a

general rule, a minimum of two adults should be in attendance at each program or activity in a supervisory capacity; provided that one adult or two older youths may perform this supervisory role upon the approval of the youth director(s) or the Child Policy & Protection Committee. While these supervisors may not necessarily be in every room used for programming at a given time, except for short durations, they should remain on the same floor as the program or activity, stay within hearing distance of each room for the duration of the program or activity, and occasionally check-in on the activity by rotating in and out of the program rooms and/or observing through a window or open door.

It is understood that some child or youth activities may have only one adult/leader in attendance during the activity; in these instances, the door to the classroom or activity room should remain open or, if doing so would be disruptive (such as for a shiur), the activity should be held in a classroom or other location that has a window so that the activity can be observed from outside. In addition, these programs should occur at times during which the building is in use by others, who may drop in unannounced and sporadically. Parents are welcome to stop into any program at any time.

In all circumstances, the Open Door Policy described below shall apply.

Open Door Policy: Classroom and activity room doors should remain open when in use unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room, except during safety drills and emergency situations during which doors should be locked.

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/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 lifting 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, and hands.
- Other forms of touch in an appropriate context may include a handshake, 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 intense emotion. For example, a member of the clergy may want to express pride and joy with a hug on the bimah during a bar-/bat-mitzvah celebration. Physical expressions of this kind should always occur in public and never in private. Ideally, the child should be asked in advance if he/she approves of a public hug in these circumstances.
- A child's development and age must be noted when considering if contact is appropriate. Some relevant examples include:
 - Children ages 0-5: Appropriate touch may include assistance with the changing of clothing, toileting for those who 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 an Ahavat Achim 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. Examples of inappropriate touch may include contact that:

- is private, in a 1:1 setting, or is 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 child, including physical punishment
- is overly physical and may include roughhousing, tickling, wrestling, or carrying children

- includes lap sitting unless it is done by a parent/guardian/family member or is 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 not to embarrass the child. Staff/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.

No Use of Force: Ahavat Achim staff, group leaders and volunteers are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for management of behavior of children and youth. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to an individual (child, youth, group leader or adult), and the force utilized must be the minimal amount necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of the individuals present. Ahavat Achim staff, group leaders and volunteers shall not use overly harsh language, degrading punishment or mechanical restraint of any kind for behavior management. Ahavat Achim staff, group leaders and volunteers shall not participate in or tolerate any hazing activities relating to child or youth activities.

Bathroom Guidelines: Children five years of age and younger will be escorted to the bathroom as necessary. Youth leaders will first try to locate the parents of the child; however when this is not possible, the escort should remain outside the bathroom door (or stall, if a greater level of assistance is required) and escort the children back to the activity. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the escort should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the escort should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he or she assists the child.

Except as provided below, for children over the age of five, at least one male group leader or adult should escort boys to the bathroom and at least one female group leader or adult should escort girls. The escort should remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the activity.

Ahavat Achim recognizes that children with special needs may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. If a child with special needs requires assistance, the escort should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he or she assists the child.

Older children who are deemed by the staff present to be able to safely use the bathroom without supervision will not require escorts. For the safety of these children, two adult staff or volunteers will make random bathroom checks during programming hours.

For the protection of all, staff, group leaders and volunteers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Online Interactions: In addition to the above, the following guidelines apply in all instances of virtual 1:1 interaction with youth at Ahavat Achim (including both instructional and non-instructional interactions):

- Whenever feasible, Zoom meetings and classes should be hosted on the Ahavat Achim account and not a personal account.
- Zoom links for online sessions should be shared with students and their parents/guardians.
- Zoom sessions should never be saved/recorded on personal accounts.
- Peer-to-peer chat functionality can be enabled or disabled by instructors. It is recommended that instructors (i.e., teachers, tutors, etc.) guide students about the appropriate use of the chat function, focusing specifically on the importance of respectful communication and interactions.
- Only tabs used for the current lesson plan should be visible during the session. Adults should always be mindful of what is visible when sharing their screen, ensuring that all items that are visible or potentially visible are appropriate for children.

Some Recommended Best Practices for Online Interactions

- As with in-person interactions, we recommend that a parent or other adult be present (within sight and hearing of the instruction) at the time of a student's class or lesson.
- We recommend that observability and interrupt ability be guidelines for families to use within their homes as well. Thus, we suggest that doors remain open when children are attending online lessons/meetings and/or that online sessions be held in common areas of the home, including the kitchen, dining room, or other common living spaces.

All interactions (Both In-person & Online):

- 1:1 interactions, whether online or in-person, should be scheduled on the calendar of the 1:1 instructor and whenever possible shared with another Ahavat Achim employee or Board Member.
- 1:1 sessions with children should be planned in advance. One-on-one meetings in particular should not be spontaneously scheduled or rescheduled. Spontaneity reduces the likelihood that the meetings can be observed, especially online.
- All interactions with children should be documented, including the date, start time, end time, agenda, names of participating adults and names of participating children.

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 speaking to and/or in the presence of children. All Ahavat Achim Community Members must refrain from making sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendos, 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

Acceptable Boundaries: People who intend to inflict harm on children are known to engage in grooming behavior, such as giving compliments, gifts, or affection. Ahavat Achim 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.

Drugs and Alcohol: The supply of drugs or alcohol to children is a criminal offense and is prohibited at all Ahavat Achim-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: Ahavat Achim staff and volunteers are discouraged from transporting children, other than their own children, to or from Ahavat Achim-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 Ahavat Achim staff member before the journey takes place. This communication must include notification of the departure and a notification of the completion of the journey

F. Overnight Guidelines

In the event of synagogue-sponsored overnight programming, whether in or outside the synagogue building, the following guidelines shall apply:

- Separate rooms for adults and child/youth should be assigned with at least two children or youth per room;
- Random monitoring hall trips and room checks shall be made at night by two adults of the same gender as those being checked; and
- For outside programming, lodging should be selected where the rooms open to the interior of the building (i.e., do not open to the outside).

G. Transition Period for Current Staff, Group Leaders and Trained Volunteers

Following adoption of this Policy, the Child Policy & Protection Committee will design a transition period for the implementation of this Policy, including providing for abuse recognition and prevention training for current Ahavat Achim staff, group leaders and persons serving in trained volunteer positions during such transition period.

H. Waivers/Interpretation

Any waivers of this Policy shall be made by, and any questions regarding its application or interpretation shall be referred to, the Child Policy & Protection Committee.

III. Child Safety Committee

To help administer this Policy and address related issues, Ahavat Achim has established and will maintain a Child Policy & Protection Committee. The names of the members of the Child Safety Committee will be posted on the synagogue's website.

In the event of any allegation of abuse, whether involving a staff member, a group leader, volunteer, member or guest, or otherwise occurring on the synagogue premises, the synagogue president in consultation with the Child Policy & Protection Committee, shall determine what course of action to take under the circumstances, in addition to reporting the allegations to the authorities and taking all other action required by applicable law. Subject to the requirements of the synagogue's Constitution, potential responses may include denial or revocation of synagogue membership, restriction of entrance onto synagogue property or areas of synagogue property, a shadowing requirement while on synagogue property and/or notification to other communal institutions. The synagogue may determine to take action regardless of the action, or failure to take action, by the authorities.

The synagogue's desire to protect children and youth extends to other situations where abuse is alleged, not only within the context of Ahavat Achim staff, group leaders and volunteers, but also within the general membership, whether or not on synagogue premises. In such an event, the Child Policy & Protection Committee will serve as a resource to the broader community.

IV. Responding to Allegations of Abuse; Mandated Reporting

If adult staff, volunteers, members or guests suspect the occurrence of abuse, they should report their concerns immediately to their supervisor, the president or a member of the Child Policy & Protection Committee for further action, including evaluating the cause for concern, clarifying the appropriate legal procedures and requirements and reporting the event to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

New Jersey law categorizes all adults as "mandated reporters." Therefore, in addition to following the above procedures, they are required to follow appropriate legal procedures. If adult staff or volunteers are unsure about the appropriate legal procedure in a specific situation,

they should discuss their concerns with their supervisor, the president or a member of the Child Safety Committee.

Group leaders and non-adult staff or volunteers should report suspicions of abuse immediately to their supervisor, the president or member of the Child Safety Committee for further action.

In the event that an incident of abuse is alleged to have occurred at Ahavat Achim or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following additional procedures shall be followed:

- The parent or guardian of the child will be notified. If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, the advice of the authorities concerning notification of others will be followed.
- The appropriate authorities will be notified, and Ahavat Achim will fully cooperate with their investigation of the incident and comply with all applicable legal requirements.
- The person alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children, and instructed to remain off the shul premises, until such person is cleared of the alleged abuse or misconduct or it is otherwise determined that such person is safe to return.
- The opportunity for a pastoral visit, or referral to a mental health professional, may be made available for those affected by the incident, if desired, including the alleged victim and other involved parties.
- The sole spokespeople for the synagogue regarding incidents addressed by this Policy will be the synagogue president, the Rabbi and their designees.

V. Failure to Report Suspected Abuse

Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate authorities is a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. New Jersey law provides immunity from civil liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice.

VI. Distribution of Policy

This Policy will be made available to all members and applicants for membership and posted on the synagogue website.

VII. 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 Ahavat Achim leadership become aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been, abused, Ahavat Achim and the Child Protection & Policy Committee will take the following steps to clearly communicate support for the child and the child's family:

Support Person. Ahavat Achim'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 when filing a police report, meeting with Child Protective Services, appearing at court hearings/trials, and attending other related meetings, interviews, or hearings
- Asking the child and the child's family how else Ahavat Achim 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. Ahavat Achim 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

Ahavat Achim 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, Ahavat Achim 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
- Speak about child abuse publicly and
 - At the rabbi's discretion 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

VIII.. Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Child Policy & Protection Committee.

References:

Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale New York (2022, April 24). Safeguarding Our Children. Csair.org. <https://www.csair.org/safeguardingourchildren>

Congregation Shomrei Torah. Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth. <https://www.shomrei-torah.org/>. <https://www.shomrei-torah.org/childsafety>

JFS Clifton Project SARAH: <https://jfsclifton.org/portfolio/domestic-violence-sexual-abuse/>

Aleinu Campaign: <https://www.aleinucampaign.org/>