



## **Summary of the Ahavat Achim Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

### **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. Towards that end, Ahavat Achim has created a Child Protection & Policy Committee.

### **Code of Conduct for Shul Activities and Personnel:**

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.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **Parent responsibility:**

All parents should ensure that their children under the age of 12 are either with them or with another responsible individual (e.g., group leader, another parent). Children should never be left outside unattended.

#### **Staff, Volunteers, Members and Guests Responsibilities:**

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 Protection & Policy Committee for further action.

#### **Youth director responsibility:**

The youth director will conduct reference checks on all group leaders prior to hiring them by contacting the schools and/or camps they have attended. The youth director should ensure that all group leaders receive training concerning what is considered appropriate behavior and boundaries while supervising children. The youth director will monitor that the staff is creating a positive and safe environment for the children.

#### **The responsibility of all adults:**

In New Jersey, any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or acts of abuse must immediately report this information by calling the State's Child Safety Authorities 1-877 NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873). If the child is in immediate danger, call 911 as well. A concerned caller does not need proof to report an allegation

of child abuse and can make the report anonymously. State law expressly provides that anyone making a report is immune from civil and criminal liability.

**Committee responsibility:**

The committee will help the youth director identify appropriate training for the group leaders. The committee will respond to any questions and concerns about child safety, potential misconduct, or inappropriate behavior within 48 hours. The committee will review the shul's policy on a yearly basis. If anyone has questions, concerns, or suggestion concerning enhancing child safety, they can contact the committee. A committee member will email a response within 48 hours. The concerns will remain confidential within the committee. However, the committee is legally required to report any reasonable suspicions of child abuse. A copy of Ahavat Achim's Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth will be available on the shul's website.