

Bolton Street Synagogue Code of Conduct

The Bolton Street Synagogue (BSS) congregational Code of Conduct expresses BSS's values through the behaviors and actions we expect for all who are part of our community. By clearly stating our expectations, we strengthen our sacred partnerships with one another and our holy community.

At BSS, we value every individual who enters our space and attends our events. Everyone will be treated with respect, dignity, and fairness in concordance with our guiding values of inclusiveness, l'dor v'dor, spirituality and tikkun olam ([hyperlink to BSS Mission, Vision, and Values](#)).

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to “community members,” which includes BSS congregation members, lay leaders, clergy, staff, contractors and vendors, and participants. It applies to behaviors and actions at BSS's building as well as at synagogue-sponsored and synagogue-organized events held in other locations.

Legal requirements, including the Child Protection Policies and Procedures ([hyperlink](#)), will take precedence over these procedures.

Expected Behaviors and Actions

All individuals are expected to:

- Assume that everyone who enters our space is a part of the community. Welcome them warmly and identify any support they may need to ensure an accessible and inclusive environment.
- Foster open discussion while respecting privacy.
- Listen with an open heart and strive to understand different perspectives.
- Show respect for everyone in our congregation and community, regardless of ancestry, age, ability, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, medical condition, military or veteran status, national origin, race, religion, level of religiosity, sexual orientation, financial means, or political affiliation.

Unacceptable Behaviors and Actions

The following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- Exploiting another's vulnerability, taking advantage of power imbalances, compromising moral integrity, or creating an intimidating, offensive, abusive, or hostile environment—even if the behavior appears consensual.
- Using one's position or authority to intimidate, bully, or unduly influence others, or allowing others to do so.
- Engaging in abusive, harassing, bullying, or unlawfully discriminatory behavior.

Reporting Protections

If community members experience or witness violations of the Code of Conduct, they are encouraged to report those violations. BSS recognizes that because of their professional obligations, certain community members have a legal duty to report suspected or actual violations of laws, policies, or ethical codes. While serious concerns should be reported, community members should also avoid

unnecessary personal scrutiny of others. BSS is committed to promptly investigating reported violations, with assistance from the ethics committee when needed.

Examples of Minor Violations

- Language that is disrespectful, unwelcoming, or harmful
- Disruptive behavior that causes harm
- Unauthorized use of synagogue resources

In cases of minor violations, community members should identify concerning language and behaviors when they occur (if possible). Community members responsible for minor violations should be encouraged to self-correct. If immediate response is not possible, the community member should still be made aware, and offered an opportunity to self-correct and acknowledge harm.

Reporting Serious Violations

BSS maintains a safe and open process for reporting serious violations to congregational leaders including the rabbi, board president, and the ethics committee chair. Examples of more serious violations are but not limited to:

- Abuse, neglect, or sexual harassment
- Fraud
- Theft or misuse of assets
- Harassment or retaliation
- Discrimination
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Undisclosed conflicts of interest ([hyperlink to conflicts of interest policy](#))

Ethics Committee

The ethics committee will be a standing committee appointed by the board president, composed of one (1) member of the Board of Trustees (to serve as the ethics chair) and two (2) members at large, with a two-year commitment. The members of the committee will receive training at the beginning of their term in conflict resolution and mediation.

Community Engagement

All community members will be informed about this Code of Conduct through a summary document posted on BSS's website. If approached about a complaint, community members should respond with sensitivity and without judgment.

Reporting Complaints

Complaints or concerns should be reported via email to:

- The Bolton Street Board President (president@boltonstreet.org)
- The Rabbi of Bolton Street Synagogue (rabbi@boltonstreet.org)
- The Ethics Committee Chair (ethics@boltonstreet.org)

Investigating and Assessing Violations

The ethics committee chair will oversee committee investigations and resolution of complaints, keeping the Synagogue Board president and Executive Committee informed. All actions taken will be properly documented.

Addressing Violations

The ethics committee is responsible for promptly investigating and addressing serious violations of the Code of Conduct. When addressing violations, the ethics committee should remember that the Synagogue is a sacred community. Responses should prioritize healing and reconciliation while appropriately addressing the violation. Consequences, decided by a majority vote, will vary based on the severity of the issue and may include permanent revocation of membership and attendance privileges, severing of professional relationships, or other actions as appropriate.

There is no time limit for reporting violations, but the ethics committee may consider the time that has passed and the individual's behavior since the alleged incident.

Cooperation and Protection from Retaliation

Community members are expected to cooperate in ethics committee investigations. No member will face retaliation for reporting a violation in good faith or assisting in an investigation. Community members must not harass or take adverse action against anyone who makes a report internally or to an appropriate outside agency. However, this protection does not apply to intentionally made false accusations.

Confidentiality

Complaints, investigations, decisions, and consequences will be kept as confidential as possible and appropriate while ensuring a fair and thorough process. Information will only be shared when necessary to investigate, prevent harm, or comply with legal obligations.

No member of the ethics committee or others involved in an investigation may share details about a pending complaint outside of the process, including with the media, unless legally required. If an allegation suggests imminent harm, the board president, in consultation with the ethics chair, will take necessary action.