

THE SINAI SYNAGOGUE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy concerns the welfare of children and young people at Sinai Synagogue, defined as members aged 0-18 years.

This policy applies at any time when Sinai Synagogue undertake activities under the auspices of the synagogue, where the synagogue takes on the in loco parentis role. Parents remain responsible for their children when this is not the case, e.g. during regular Shabbat services and festivals.

Additionally, if matters come to light in the day-to-day life of the synagogue that concern the welfare of children then this policy would apply. 1

Within the Children Act 2004 the following outcomes, which are key to well-being in childhood and later life, have been identified: -

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Achieve economic well-being
- Making a positive contribution

All these outcomes are interdependent and work together as a whole, e.g. children and young people learn and thrive when they are healthy, engaged and safeguarded from harm.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to familiarise themselves with this policy and procedures. Copies of it should be readily available. Safeguarding Children training should be made available to all staff and volunteers, and support will be offered to both staff and volunteers by way of training and access to the nominated Safeguarding Children Officers. All staff and volunteers working with children will be expected to undertake basic safeguarding training facilitated by the Safeguarding Children Officers.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The overriding legislation which addresses Safeguarding Children issues is the Children Act 1989. S1 (1) of the Act states:

'The Welfare of the child shall be paramount....'

This principle known as the paramouncy principle - is absolutely vital. It means that when there is a possible Child Protection concern, priority should be given to ensuring the safety and welfare of the child. This may well mean that the needs or wishes of adults are overridden. Clearly it is important to attempt at all times to work in partnership with parents/carers of the children you are working with. However, in the final analysis, the welfare of the child must always come first.

1 with regard to Bar and Bat Mitzvah tutors who are engaged from outside of the Synagogue's list of tutors in a private arrangement by the family, Sinai cannot take responsibility for such arrangements and Parents/carers should satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any such tutor to supervise their child or any child under their care.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS

As stated above, it is important and always good practice to work in partnership with parents/carers of the children you are working with. In general, parental consent will be obtained, and information shared with parents/carers, in matters relating to safeguarding children. This applies in all cases unless there are specific and exceptional circumstances which make it either impossible or unsafe.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Research shows that children with disabilities can be at an increased risk of child abuse. Many such children need intimate physical care which increases the possibility of abuse. Sinai Synagogue recognises that organisations who work with children with disabilities need to ensure that they have robust policies in place - particularly concerning physical care of these children.

RECRUITMENT

All staff, including volunteers, who have direct and unsupervised access to children, will be subject to vetting checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service, (DBS). These will be updated on a three-yearly basis. These records will be kept by the Synagogue administrator.

N.B. Working with children is an activity/occupation which is exempt from the provisions within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (non-related convictions do not automatically preclude an applicant from working in this area).

N.B. Recruitment procedures must be established and adhered to in all cases, including an initial recruitment form and use of references.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN OFFICERS

The following have been appointed as Safeguarding Children Officers: Jonny Cohen and Naomi Goldman

The lead Safeguarding Officer is Naomi Goldman.

All staff and volunteers will be introduced to these officers as part of their induction training. The Safeguarding Children Officers will have

- The responsibility of promoting the Safeguarding Children policies within the organisation;
- An understanding and appreciation of the need for confidentiality;
- Knowledge of liaison with other organisations such as Social Services;
- The ability to follow procedures and the knowledge of when to seek advice rather than rely solely on their own judgement.

They must

- Ensure that all people working with children at Sinai are fully aware of what is required of them within the protocols of this policy;
- Advise the synagogue on matters of policy relating to safeguarding children;
- Act as a contact person on matters relating to safeguarding children at Sinai.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN GROUP

A Safeguarding Children group has been set up with the following people:

Safeguarding Children Officers

Early Years and Youth Worker

Rabbi (according to need)

This group will ensure the Safeguarding Children policy is kept up to date, and that it is widely available to members of the Synagogue. The group will also be responsible for training of staff and volunteers involved with young people.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND GDPR

Any matters relating to safeguarding children will be kept confidential to the Safeguarding Children group and limited to a need-to-know basis. Such information will be kept by safeguarding lead for children.

Information should be kept for as long as it might be useful, i.e. until:

the child is no longer a minor;

and/or moves away from Sinai;

and/or Sinai is informed that the safeguarding issue no longer applies.

The information should be kept for a longer period of time in order to demonstrate that the information had been passed on to relevant parties in the interests of the child. For this reason each case will be judged on a case-by-case basis, using the above guidance.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information it must be kept in a secure way:

If in paper form in a locked cabinet;

If in electronic form, secured with a password. Information should not be shared by email unless in the form of a document protected by a password, and the password should be sent by another method of communication.

Wherever possible permission must be obtained from the person providing the information for that information to be shared

with any other organisation where the child will be in their care/responsibility;

Where it is thought to be relevant and in the best interests of the child to do so. This would include RSY/LJY/the Zone;

As a general rule information should only be given out on a need to know basis.

The person making the disclosure should be asked if they give consent for the Rabbi to be informed;

The person making the disclosure should be asked if they give consent for the Chair of the Synagogue to be informed;

Only those of the Safeguarding Group directly involved in a report of an incident will know the identities of individuals, the other members of the group will be informed that a report has been made, but will not be given details such as identities;

Where there is an incident which could impact the synagogue, whether legally, financially or its reputation, the Rabbi and Chair will be informed of the incident while maintaining the confidentiality of those involved. The parties involved will be made aware of these developments unless to do so would cause other safeguarding issues.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

In the event of an allegation being made against EITHER a staff member or volunteer, the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board procedures will be followed. All matters relating to Safeguarding Children issues will be referred to the local Social Services department and / or the police.

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

The definition of the different forms of abuse, used in "Working Together" is as follows:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy of Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they met the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involved forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying

Can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist, homophobic, threats, name calling) and emotional (isolating the individual from activities). They will all include deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim, an imbalance of power between the victim and those bullying and an outcome which is painful and distressing for the victim.

CONCLUSION

Child abuse is an unfortunate reality. It can raise anxieties amongst professionals, volunteers and parents/carers. Clarity at the beginning of any working relationship can both ease anxieties and ensure that there is no misunderstanding at a later date.

What to do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child

1. Do not dismiss any concerns you may have about the welfare of a child.
2. If immediate medical attention or police involvement is required, this must take priority.
3. Do not question the child in detail, simply listen to what s/he has to say and make notes of what is said. Reassure the child that it was right to tell you and that you may have to share what they have told you with other people for their safety. Explain to the child that you cannot keep secrets.
4. If you see behaviour or a possible injury which is of concern, make a detailed note of what you have seen. Do not speculate about what may be happening or what has happened - simply be factual.
5. Report the incident/concern to the responsible adult on the site, in charge of the activity.
6. The person to whom the concern has been reported must make a decision about whether to refer the concerns to Social Services and/or the police. Where possible, they will discuss the situation with the Safeguarding Children Officers and must inform them of any matters relating to Safeguarding Children. The information you would need to give Social Services or the Police would include the following: the name and contact details of the child and their parents, whether the parents have been informed, the nature of the allegation/incident, what's happened since then, and any action taken.
7. If you are concerned about the welfare of a child, you should, wherever possible, consult with his/her parents. However, if this would leave the child in more potential danger, you must contact the relevant authorities without informing the parents. NB, normally you would still inform the parents that this action has taken place.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR MAKING REFERRALS

- Emergency Duty Team (out of hours Social Services): 0113 240 9536
- Social Work Services Call Centre (office hours referrals): 0113 398 4702 /0113 222 4403.
- Police (emergencies only): 999
- Sinai Safeguarding Children Officers: Naomi Goldman (lead) and Jonny Cohen – email childsafeguarding@sinaileeds.uk or further contact details are available through the Synagogue Office or the synagogue Chair.