



Emanuel Synagogue Child Safety Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Statement

Emanuel Synagogue (the Synagogue) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its members including Staff members and volunteer leaders and particularly for children under its care.

This policy has been formulated to prevent abuse taking place while a child is in our care, as well as provide a safe and caring environment for children.

1.2 Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All activities authorised by or under the control of the Synagogue, including those activities undertaken at the Synagogue's premises or away from the Synagogue's premises.
- All Staff members, volunteers, and contractors within the Synagogue or engaged by the Synagogue, as well as visitors.

1.3 Authority

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Emanuel Synagogue (then Temple Emanuel) on 27 February 2006, and has been updated since then to ensure that changes state and federal legislature are complied.

The Board and Leadership Team of Emanuel Synagogue are committed to implementing this policy, and to training the Synagogue's Staff members and volunteer leaders in its content and application.

1.4 Definitions

Abuse - Can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

Physical Abuse - Any non-accidental physical injury.

Sexual Misconduct – Any activity or incident which is not necessarily classified as abuse or a criminal offence, but which would still be in contravention of the Emanuel Synagogue Code of Conduct, and/or break the view of a "professional boundary". This includes sexually explicit comments, gestures, pornography, and behaviour that can reasonably be construed as involving an inappropriate and overly personal or intimate relationship with; conduct towards; or focus on; a young child or person, or a group of children or young persons.

Sexual Abuse - Any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two people. It may also appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

Emotional Abuse - The chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which is detrimental to a person's development.

Neglect - Any serious omission or commission which jeopardizes or impairs a persons' development.

Activity - Any organised activity that is authorised by the Synagogue.

Child - Any person under the age of 18.

Helper - Any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited by a Staff member or volunteer leader to assist them.

Members - Any person, including children, who attends or participates in Synagogue activities.

Staff member or volunteer leader - Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of Members placed in their care whilst holding a formal position at the Synagogue. A Staff member or volunteer leader could include but is not limited to:

- Rabbis or other member of the Synagogue's Staff,
- Small group Staff members or volunteer leaders,
- Music, Drama or other Staff members or volunteer leaders,
- Counsellors,
- Youth leaders or volunteer leaders,
- Teachers.

Synagogue – Emanuel Synagogue, located at 7 Ocean Street, Woollahra, NSW, 2025, or any other premises endorsed by the Synagogue for authorised activities.

Volunteer or volunteer leader - The person recognised and authorised by the Synagogue as head of a program or activity.

2. EXTERNAL POLICIES

The Synagogue acknowledges that some activities of the Synagogue have affiliation with other organisations. These organisations will possibly have policies governing the issues of Member and/or Child Safety and Abuse. This policy is not intended to replace or conflict with the other policies, but instead to operate in conjunction with them.

3. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually (by no later than March of that year), to ensure that it is appropriate for current operations and programs, as well as to ensure that any changes to state or federal legislature are applied.

4. OBLIGATIONS

4.1 Spiritual

The core beliefs of the Synagogue require all staff and volunteers to treat all people with respect and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

4.2 Legal

The Synagogue and its Staff members and volunteer leaders are subject to federal and state legislation and principles established through common law, with particular reference to the principal piece of legislation in the NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157.

4.3 Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as abuse, but are nevertheless unacceptable behaviour for Synagogue staff members and volunteer leaders. These include:

- Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature.
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature.
- Suggestive gestures or remarks.
- Jokes of a sexual nature.
- Inappropriate, but accidental touching.
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with young Children).
- Acts of violence committed by a staff member or volunteer leader in the course of an activity.

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is. Staff members and volunteer leaders will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

The Synagogue's *Acceptable E-mail & Internet Usage Policy* outlines appropriate and inappropriate use of the Synagogue's electronic media and communications platforms. The contents and conditions of that policy have are applicable to this policy and vice versa.

5. SELECTION & SCREENING

5.1 Staff and Staff members and volunteer leaders

Staff and Staff members and volunteer leaders involved in the Synagogue's activities relating to direct unsupervised work with children must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to them commencing their involvement in work with Children, the following precautions will be taken:

- Candidates will complete an application form which requests details of referees and permission to contact them (see Appendix 2).
- Referees will be checked and spoken to, using an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by the Synagogue. The questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.

- Short-listed candidates will be interviewed by an experienced and responsible member of the Synagogue prior to being accepted.
- All Staff that work with children must obtain a “Working With Children Check” (<https://wwwcheck.cyp.nsw.gov.au/Applicants/Application>). A copy of the confirmation from the relevant NSW Government Department must be submitted to the Synagogue as part of the application process. The applicant’s supervisor must have the applicant’s status against the NSW register, by contacting the General Manager, who will access the required information through the official portal.)

If the Synagogue has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for child related activities.

These offences do not preclude the applicant from serving in other, more appropriate, parts of the Synagogue’s activities, but the matter must be sent to the Leadership Team for approval prior to agreeing to any arrangements.

5.2 Helpers / volunteers

All helpers and volunteers must be aware of the contents of this policy, and they must agree to abide by all of the stipulations and requirements contained herein.

Any person who provides assistance in children’s activities must be supervised by a staff member or volunteer leader at all times and will be accountable to that staff member or volunteer leader.

Staff members and volunteer leaders who accept the assistance of a helper must be satisfied of the helper’s maturity and their suitability for children’s activities.

6. TRAINING

All Staff members and volunteer leaders will be issued with a copy of this policy, including reporting procedures and associated legal requirements.

In addition, staff members and volunteer leaders responsible for recruiting staff members or volunteer leaders for child related activities will undertake to communicate this policy to all staff and volunteers that they work with.

7. A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, when possible we will seek to have two staff members or volunteer leaders present when working with or supervising children.

Staff members and volunteer leaders will not visit children in their homes unless a parent or guardian is present or another Staff member or volunteer leader accompanies them.

When transporting children, staff members and volunteer leaders should never be alone with a child in a car. Where this is not practical, staff members and volunteer leaders will take children

directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.

All personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of another staff member or volunteer leader.

Staff members and volunteer leaders will respect a member's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

Adults and children are expected to respect each other's privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Staff members and volunteer leaders will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No staff member or volunteer leader will be alone in a room with a child while either is changing.

Initiations and secret ceremonies are prohibited. All aspects of every child-related program will be open to observation by parents/guardians.

Staff members or volunteer leaders have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at child-related activities, to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

8. DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

It is not the responsibility of the Synagogue or its staff members or volunteer leaders to discipline a child.

If a child does not abide by the rules set down by the staff member or volunteer leader, or is an obstruction to the care of other children or may cause harm to other children, the child will be removed and referred back to their parent or guardian.

At no time will a staff member or volunteer leader administer any form of physical, emotional or mental discipline.

9. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Emanuel Synagogue supports and is committed to a culture where everyone feels capable of raising a concern, and the Synagogue encourages all concerns to be reported.

The General Manager has the specific duty of dealing with any allegations that arise. That person's name, address and contact telephone number will be freely available to all staff members, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

Documented reporting and escalation procedures have been established by the Synagogue for handling allegations of abuse.

Documented reporting is to be sent through to the General Manager, as soon as possible, using the "Sexual Misconduct Report Form" (Appendix 4).

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been or is suffering abuse, the General Manager must be contacted **immediately**. The General Manager will contact the police, as well as notify the Leadership Team, and the Synagogue's insurer.

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

1. A Child discloses that he or she has been abused, and/or
2. Someone close to a child (e.g. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of that child.

The Police will also be notified if a child discloses an incident of abuse that has occurred somewhere other than the Synagogue (e.g. home or school).

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care of the one making the disclosure. This will include:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.
- Not pushing the Child to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the Child that they are understood that their disclosure is being taken seriously that what has happened is not their fault, and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- Reporting the abuse to the police and the Synagogue's insurer.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If the Staff member or volunteer leader is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, another person will assume this responsibility for the duration of any investigation.
- If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the Child should be retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Any disclosures by a child and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

Where an allegation is made the accused staff member or volunteer leader will be removed from all children's activities pending the outcome of all investigations.

10. ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Children are, by law, prohibited from consuming alcohol, as well as possessing or using illegal drugs. Any child found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counselled and the parents/guardians contacted so the child can be returned home immediately.

Any child required to take prescription medication will provide a letter from the parents/guardians to the activity's staff member or volunteer leader.

APPENDIX 1 – Legal Obligations

NEW SOUTH WALES

Registration

The NSW Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 and the NSW Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 are the two statutes that establish the NSW Working With Children Check.

The Working With Children Check applies to people in child-related employment. Child-related employment means any employment of a kind listed in Section 3 of the NSW Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 that primarily involves direct, unsupervised contact with children. Work in a religious organisation is identified in that list.

Anyone applying for child-related employment, including volunteers, must make a Prohibited Employment Declaration confirming they have not been convicted of a serious sex offence or the kidnapping or murder of a child.

In addition to Prohibited Employment, background checks are mandatory for preferred applicants for paid child-related employment, as defined in the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998, anyone seeking to provide foster care (“authorised care”) to children, and ministers of religion or other members of a religious organisation seeking child-related employment.

The term “other members of a religious organisation” covers those members whose work is analogous to that of a minister of religion.

More information on the Working With Children Check can be found in the Working With Children Check Guidelines. These are available from the NSW Commission for Children and Young People’s website at www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check.

NSW Commission for Children and Young People
Level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
Telephone: 02 9286 7219
Fax: 02 9286 7201
Email: check@kids.nsw.gov.au

Police Checks

See above

Reporting Abuse

While there is no specific legislation requiring volunteer Synagogue Staff members or volunteer leaders to report suspicions of abuse unless they also hold a management position, as a responsible community organisation, we require all reasonable suspicions of abuse be reported.

All people who are in paid employment and who work with children (e.g. Youth Workers, Children Workers and Music Staff members and volunteer leaders) are legally required to report suspicions of abuse.

Where the Synagogue is a provider of education, principles and those responsible for the schools oversight are required to report reasonable suspicions of abuse.

Reports should be made (through the General Manager) to:

Department of Community Services
4 – 6 Cavill Avenue
Ashfield, 2131
Phone Number: 132 111 (24/7)
URL: www.community.nsw.gov.au

APPENDIX 2 – Interview Questions

WORKING WITH CHILDREN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions asked in this interview may make you feel uncomfortable but they are a necessary part of our child safety policy and must be answered. The answers you provide will be kept confidential where possible but may be divulged to other Staff members and volunteer leaders with in the Synagogue.

1. Why have you applied for this position and why do you feel you are suitable for the role?

2. Please describe any positive experiences you have had with children or young people

3. Please describe any negative experiences you have had with children or young people

4. Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a child or young person, if so how did you handle this situation?

5. Have you ever been investigated for violent or sexually related offences, if so, what were the circumstances?

6. Is there any other information relating to your suitability for this position, which we should be aware of?



Reporting child abuse

New South Wales

Legislation

What gets reported ?

A report should be made to Community Services if you suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm. This means you have current concerns for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person. You don't have to be certain, you only need to make sure your concerns are well founded and based on information you know or have from a reliable source.

A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or well being of the child or young person are present to a significant extent.

Who is required to report ?

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact the NSW Police immediately by dialling **000**.

Anyone (regardless of whether they are mandatory reporters required to do so by law) who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm *should* report it to the Child Protection Helpline on **132 111**.

In NSW, individuals working within sporting or recreation organisations are **not** mandatory reporters (i.e. they are not required by law to report suspicions of a child at significant risk of harm).

However, individuals working within sporting and recreation organisations may be a mandatory reporter due to another employment position they hold (e.g. a teacher who is a volunteer coach). For more information about mandatory reporting, go to the [Family and Community Services – Community Services website](#).

APPENDIX 3 (contd)– Reporting Child Abuse

Action

How do I make a report ?

If you are a **mandatory reporter**, you can call the Child Protection Helpline on **133 627**.

Members of the public can make a report about a child or young person at risk of harm to the Child Protection Helpline, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, on **132 111** (TTY 1800 212 936).

Useful information

Child-safe environments

There are currently no legislative requirements within NSW relating to child-safe environments other than conducting the Working With Children Check if you provide child-related employment. Introducing child-safe measures will help your organisation manage risks and keep children safe.

Child-safe environment strategies are put in place to prevent and minimise opportunities for child abuse within your organisation including preventing offenders from gaining access to your organisation. They include ensuring your staff and volunteers understand their child protection obligations and that staff and volunteers know who to go to should they have suspicions a child may be at risk of harm.

Organisations working to create child-safe environments and strengthen their environment are committed to and understand the importance of children's safety.

What does establishing a child-safe environment involve?

Basically it requires putting strategies in place to prevent offenders from gaining access to your organisation and reducing opportunities for abuse.

These strategies include:

Understanding the different types of child abuse.

Identifying potential risks and dangers to children (e.g. going away on camps) and managing those risks.

Developing guidelines and processes that clearly outline how to respond to child protection issues.

Choosing your staff with care.

- State your commitment to a child safe environment when advertising vacant positions.
- Seek criminal history checks for employees/volunteers working with children.
- Conduct referee checks (particularly with previous child-related employers, if possible).

Nominating a child protection officer or Member Protection Information Officer who people can trust and go to with concerns.

Ensuring that all staff (paid and volunteers) understand their mandatory/ethical reporting obligations for suspected child abuse.

Ensuring staff have a clear understanding of acceptable/ unacceptable behaviour and know who to contact to about concerns they may have.

Talking openly about the importance of ensuring the safety of children within your organisation.

Resources

Where can I get further information or resources on reporting ?

- [NSW Family and Community Services – Community Services](#)
- [NSW Commission for Children and Young People](#)
- [Communities NSW - Sport and Recreation](#)
- [Child Wise – “Choose With Care: 12 Steps to a Child Safe Organisation”](#)

APPENDIX 4 – Sexual Misconduct Report Form



SEXUAL MISCONDUCT REPORT FORM

This report must be sent to the General Manager, as “private and confidential”.
 All information will be handled with sensitivity and will be investigated appropriately.

COMPLAINANT’S INFORMATION:	
Complainant’s Name:	Complainant’s Affiliation to Emanuel Synagogue (staff, volunteer, contractor, visitor, other):
Complainant’s Contact Information:	
Phone:	E-mail:
ALLEGED OFFENDER(S) INFORMATION:	
Alleged Offender’s Name:	Alleged Offender’s Affiliation to Emanuel Synagogue (staff, volunteer, contractor, visitor, other):
INCIDENT INFORMATION:	
Date and Time of Incident:	Location of Incident:
Brief Description of Incident (nature of misconduct, context or circumstances, other related information):	
REPORTER’S INFORMATION:	
Reporter’s Name:	Date of Report:
Reporter’s Affiliation to Emanuel Synagogue (staff, volunteer, contractor, visitor, other):	Reporter’s Contact Information:
	Phone:
	E-mail:

Acknowledgement & Acceptance of Policy

I have read and understood the Emanuel Synagogue Child Protection Policy.

Name of Employee

Signature of Employee

Dated