

BETH SHMUEL SYNAGOGUE

Code of Conduct

Introduction from Rabbi Moishe Halpern

Mah Tovu Ohalecha Ya'akov! How good are your tents, O Jacob!

Rashi, the 11th century French commentator, tells us that the tents of our people were seen to be good because, in accordance with Jewish law, the tents did not have their openings and windows directly opening onto each other. There was space and sensitivity. We are a warm, non-judgemental community that brings people together, and insists that we respect each other. We interact with each other with Chesed, with loving kindness.

It may be felt that a Code of Conduct is unnecessary for a synagogue community. But I believe that it does us no harm to remind ourselves from time to time of the principles on which our community is based and the standards to which we aspire. We all benefit from having boundaries, and I hope this short document will make clear those which we do not expect to be crossed. Indeed, I hope that you even enjoy reading this document which gives a historical insight into the synagogue and touches upon a range of Jewish inter-personal values.

Principles

The principles on which Beth Shmuel Synagogue was established are:

- Our aim is to create a synagogue which will be an instrument for the pursuit of religious truth. We would seek for knowledge and charity and piety.
- We want a congregation that will be a source of encouragement to human progress and of comfort and inspiration to individual men and women.
- We would be a congregation of interested active members, personally committed to our Synagogue, accepting the responsibility of membership as a challenge to the best in each of us.
- We regard our membership as a high privilege, and we will not be content with a synagogue which is less than a vehicle of truth.

These principles are reflected both in our Sabbath prayer which exhorts us to: ‘...labour for the good of others, to have pity for those who suffer, to pursue justice and kindness in thought and deed, to be generous and forgiving to all’.

Commitment

Our commitment is to welcome anyone and everyone that wishes to engage with the Synagogue in a positive way. That requires our members and professional team to make every effort to be a warm and welcoming community, engaging with each other, friends and visitors, the children of our community and all those whose work supports it, in an inclusive way. We ask all those visiting our Synagogue to conduct themselves in a similar manner.

Expectations

As a practical guide to fulfilling our principles and commitment, we ask everyone who visits our building and participates in our religious services and social activities, together with those who are involved in the organisation of the Synagogue to follow the Code of Conduct set out below

- To follow the teaching of Rabbi Hillel ‘do not do unto others that which is hateful to you’
- To uphold Jewish values such as fairness, respectful engagement, mutual respect and sensitivity
- To respect the rights, dignity and worth of everyone involved in Synagogue life equally without regard to age, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, parental or marital status, class or social background, sexual orientation or religious or political belief
- Not to condone, or allow to go unchallenged, any form of discrimination
- Not to threaten or bully and to express oneself in a way that does not impinge on the freedom of others and respects their privacy
- To ensure that disagreements relate only to principles and priorities, not personalities
- To behave lawfully, appropriately and use appropriate forms of speech at all times
- To respect each other’s and the Synagogue’s property.

Contraventions of this Code

We expect contraventions of this Code to be rare. However, if it is felt that one has taken place

we ask that it is reported as soon as possible to the Rabbi, Chairman of Executive or another trustee. The matter will then be investigated in the way the Synagogue considers most appropriate. If the contravention is proven, the person or persons concerned, may be warned as to future conduct; temporarily or permanently excluded from the Synagogue's building.