

Volunteer Code of Conduct

The Volunteer Code of Conduct
should be read in conjunction with
the Volunteer Agreement and
Problem-Solving Policy



Introduction

We are grateful to the hundreds of volunteers who serve our communities and support the wider work of the charity in a broad range of roles. The United Synagogue is known for its high standards of fairness, integrity and honesty in our relations with the Jewish and wider community. The strength of our communities rests on the commitment, care and integrity of our volunteers. Central to this is the way we treat one another. As Ben Zoma teaches:

"Who is worthy of honour? The one who treats others with honour." Pirkei Avot (4:1).

This principle reminds us that respect, dignity and consideration for others are at the heart of everything we do.

This Volunteer Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that, through our volunteers, we will continue to maintain the highest standards of honesty, fairness and integrity in all we do. It helps us to operate in a way that we can be proud of, enhancing our reputation with everyone we connect with.

Irresponsible or abusive behaviours are rare but can damage the charity's reputation and impact our ability to deliver our mission and aims. The Volunteer Code of Conduct helps us all avoid such situations and supports everyone to ensure that the behaviour of each individual meets the highest standards.

At the heart of our code is the simple ethos that we always follow English law and act according to the values and morals set forth by the Torah in a way which is faithful to Judaism and which makes a positive impact on wider society.

This Code is designed to support volunteers by setting out clear, proportionate and role-appropriate expectations, while recognising that we value volunteering.

Purpose

The Volunteer Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour that United Synagogue expects from everyone who serves with us as a volunteer, whatever their role and whether formal or informal.

The Code sits alongside our Volunteer Agreement and complements the charity's other policies, including the Employee Code of Conduct, the Rabbinic Code of Conduct and the Dignity at Work Policy, as well as the [Volunteer Confidentiality and Data Protection Agreement](#).

For those volunteering in appointed positions, i.e. Synagogue Council member, Honorary Officer or US Trustee, this Code of Conduct should also be considered in the context of the [United Synagogue's Byelaws](#). Honorary Officers have delegated authority from the US Trustees, so any issues involving them will follow a separate process to other volunteers.

Scope

The Volunteer Code of Conduct applies to everyone who volunteers for the United Synagogue, regardless of location, role, or level of seniority. This includes all Synagogue Council members, Local Honorary Officers, and United Synagogue Trustees, as well as everyone who volunteers formally or informally for the community.

The way this Code is applied will take into consideration the volunteer's role, responsibilities, and level of authority.

Every subsidiary and joint venture which the United Synagogue controls must follow this Code. Where we participate in, but do not control, a joint venture relationship, we will encourage our partners to meet the requirements of the Code in both the joint venture and their own operations.

Statement of Principle

- We are always accountable for our actions.
- It is each individual's responsibility to be informed about the requirements of the Code, to participate in training as required by the role and to ask questions if they need clarification.
- Every volunteer is expected to abide by this Code of Conduct whilst acting on behalf of the United Synagogue.
- No volunteer, no matter how senior in the charity, is permitted to instruct others to not abide by this Code of Conduct.
- No volunteer is exempt from the requirements of this Code of Conduct due to circumstances related to work/communal pressures, commercial demands or religious customs.
- Failure to comply with the Code by a volunteer is taken seriously and may lead to action in line with the organisation's interim Volunteer Problem-Solving policy. Similarly, breaching the Code could expose the United Synagogue, its volunteers and employees, to other sanctions and liabilities.

The Code of Conduct

1. Treat everyone you encounter through your role, including volunteers, employees, members and visitors with respect and dignity, and uphold their wellbeing in a way that is appropriate to them personally.
2. Be mindful and self-aware regarding the possible unintended impact that your speech and actions may have on others.
3. Use United Synagogue policies, training and values as the basis for how you engage with people you meet during your role as a volunteer.
4. Be aware of the health, safety and security of all members.
5. Have concern for vulnerable adults and children, in line with US safeguarding policies.
6. Comply with all security guidelines specific to your location.

7. Represent yourself and the United Synagogue with dignity, respect and a commitment to ethical conduct.
8. Declare any personal or financial conflicts of interest that may arise while you are acting as a volunteer.
9. Inform the Communications department about any requests for information or interviews from the media received in your role as a United Synagogue volunteer and secure permission and guidance in advance. Be aware that when you post on social media, you may be perceived as representing the United Synagogue.
10. Respect the boundaries of others' confidentiality, time, expectations and sensitivities (this includes all volunteers, professionals, Rabbinic teams and their families).
11. Represent the United Synagogue with pride, probity and care.

Appendix 1: Safeguarding

This should be read in conjunction with the forthcoming Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults hold positions of trust and must maintain professional boundaries at all times, including: never engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate communication with anyone under 18; never photographing members using personal equipment; keeping information confidential except where safeguarding requires disclosure; never sharing personal contact details with members; and ensuring any physical contact is appropriate, necessary and witnessed.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to Claudia Kitsberg, US Director of Safeguarding/Designated Safeguarding Lead (020 8343 5652/Out of hours: 0203 758 8440 or ckitsberg@theus.org.uk) without investigating yourself, alerting the person accused, promising confidentiality or delaying gathering more information.

Appendix 2: Extreme unacceptable behaviour

If an act of extreme unacceptable behaviour is suspected, the United Synagogue may need to suspend a volunteer immediately while an investigation is carried out.

Any action taken will be handled fairly, proportionately and in line with the US interim Volunteer Problem-Solving Policy.

Depending on the nature of the concern, we may also need to notify external agencies in line with Safeguarding and other legal requirements. This will apply where the police or another external agency has a statutory duty to investigate — for example, theft, fraud or allegations of abuse.

Examples of such behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Serious or repeated failure to comply with the policies and procedures of the United Synagogue, including this Code of Conduct.
- Failing to follow Health and Safety policy, guidelines or legislation and/or failing to report concerns affecting the health, safety or welfare of others.

- Conviction of a criminal offence relevant to the volunteer's role.
- Acts of abuse, discrimination, bullying or harassment, including but not limited to, acts based on protected characteristics.
- Violence or assault, abusive or offensive behaviour towards others.
- Theft, fraud, dishonesty or deliberate falsification of documents.
- Serious breach of confidence.
- Misuse of the charity's name.
- Inappropriate or unauthorised contact with the media including via social media.