2021 SRE Network Standards

*For Creating Safe, Respectful and Equitable Jewish Workplaces and Communal Spaces*

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REFRESH GUIDE

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SRE Network Standards For Creating Safe, Respectful and Equitable Jewish Workplaces and Communal Spaces

Updated July 2021

Preamble: The SRE Network has developed the following standards to prevent and address discrimination and harassment in Jewish workplaces and communal spaces. These standards, first released in 2018 with a focus on gender-based discrimination and harassment, were re-released in July 2021 as a practical tool for creating safe, respectful and equitable workplaces and communal spaces - for all. This is aligned with the SRE Network’s mission to serve as a Jewish network committed to creating safe, respectful, equitable workplaces and communal spaces - for all; and to address gender-based harassment, discrimination, and inequity, using an intersectional lens of gender justice.

The standards are built upon the universal and Jewish value of kavod ha bri’ut, the inherent worth and dignity of each and every person. To live out this value, our standards have been updated to more fully encompass the multiple forms of discrimination and harassment that occur, including intersectional discrimination and harassment in which an individual is targeted due to their multiple intersecting identities (such as race and gender).

The standards are not intended to, and do not constitute a contract or impose any legal obligation on any SRE Network member. The purpose of these standards instead is to ground, guide and inspire organizations in their journey to creating optimal workplaces and communal spaces. The standards emphasize prevention, intervention, and compliance. They focus specifically on the role executive and lay leadership plays in creating a positive and accountable work culture; the adoption of sound policies and guidelines; clear reporting and response procedures; and education and training.

In joining the SRE Network, SRE Network Members commit to adopting and proactively implementing the following standards within their organizations over time:

1. Leadership and Accountability
All organizational and communal leaders, including senior management (paid and non-paid), clergy, and boards, take reasonable steps to prevent and address discrimination and harassment. This includes communicating the importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace that is free of discrimination and harassment and modeling the behavior they are expecting of employees. Leaders allocate time, money, and other resources to prioritize diversity and inclusion as well as harassment prevention. Leaders are aware of and comply with relevant federal, state and local laws regarding discrimination and harassment and seek expert advice as necessary.

2. Policies and Guidelines
Clear and written anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies are created, distributed, and

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1 Discrimination and harassment can occur on the basis of sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), race (including hair texture, skin color, facial features, or marriage/association to a person of color) and color, perceived or actual national origin (including accents), ethnicity, religion, religious expression, gender identity (including transgender or non-binary status), gender expression, perceived or actual LGBTQ+ identity, age, citizenship, and disability.

2 See EEOC, EEOC Enforcement Guidance on National Origin Discrimination, Notice 915.005 (Nov. 18, 2016), available at https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/national-origin-guidance.cfm?RefID=21518864 ("Title VII also prohibits 'intersectional' discrimination, which occurs when someone is discriminated against because of the combination of two or more protected bases")
applied to all employees across all levels of the workplace, including the executive leadership. They empower employees (whether targets or witnesses) to report discrimination or harassment and encourage, but not require bystanders to intervene by speaking up and by supporting targets of these behaviors. They prohibit retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports harassing or discriminatory behavior or who attempts to intervene to stop the behavior or support a target of the behavior.

Anti-discrimination policies prohibit discrimination regarding the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, including hiring, promotion, pay, benefits, evaluations, and work conditions. They prohibit limiting or segregating applicants or employees on the basis of any protected characteristic that would deprive them of equal employment opportunities.

Anti-harassment policies prohibit harassment (including, but not limited to, sexual harassment) by or of an employee that occurs within a work context, whether on or off the workplace site, and through any means of communication including, but not limited to, social media and electronic communications such as email and texts. This includes harassment by co-workers, management, congregants, donors, volunteers, and others with whom employees regularly interact. Policies clearly outline prohibited conduct that is not limited to legally actionable behavior and include examples.

Romantic Relationships: Policies prohibit romantic relationships between supervisors and their subordinates. If such a relationship does develop, steps are taken so that the two individuals are no longer in the same supervisory chain.

Parental Caregiving Leave: Parental caregiving leave is provided equally to all parents, regardless of gender, LGBTQ+ status, or marital status or whether the child is biological, adopted, or being fostered. Medical leave related to pregnancy, delivery, and recovery is provided to birth parents in addition to parental caregiving leave.

Disability: Reasonable accommodations are provided to employees with disabilities who need them unless doing so poses an undue hardship.

3. Reporting and Response
All complaints are treated seriously, respectfully, and with urgency utilizing impartial procedures for reporting, tracking, and responding to complaints of discrimination and harassment with proportionate corrective action. The procedures for victims/targets or witnesses to report complaints, as well as the process for responding to, investigating, and resolving these complaints, are communicated to all employees, both orally and in writing. These procedures are well disseminated at regular intervals, and are easily accessible (e.g., in handbooks, on websites, etc.). Reporting and investigation protocols also specify that all individuals are protected from retaliation or reprisal for lodging a good faith complaint or for participating in investigations.

A. Reporting: Reporting procedures include multiple and accessible avenues for reporting and outline and describe the general steps and approximate timeframes the organization follows when responding to a report. Complainants and alleged perpetrators will be advised of the policy against retaliation and complainants are encouraged to report any future incidents or acts of perceived retaliation during the pendency of the investigation.
Reporting protocols specify that it is a violation to file a malicious or groundless complaint. Complainants are not prevented from pursuing legal remedies, contacting legal authorities, or retaining legal representation at any time.

**B. Investigations:** Investigations are conducted by individuals who are impartial and trained in handling discrimination and harassment cases. Third party investigators may be utilized. Investigation procedures should authorize certain non-executive personnel to retain third party investigators when complaints are made against executive level personnel or at other times as may be described. Management is prohibited from interfering in or impeding the investigation process. Findings of the investigation are documented.

**C. Response:** Complainants and alleged perpetrators are informed of the findings of the investigation. When harassment or discrimination has been found to have occurred, perpetrators are disciplined in a meaningful, appropriate, and proportionate manner. Consequences are documented and can range from coaching (e.g., following the making of an inappropriate joke) to termination (e.g., following sexual assault). Furthermore, corrective measures are implemented at the organizational level when necessary. Response mechanisms will ensure that the protective measures that are put in place during or following an investigation do not have the unintended consequence of harming a good faith complainant professionally or personally. Finally, to the extent that supports and resources are available to complainants who have had their discrimination or harassment complaints validated, such supports and resources are outlined for complainants and information on how to access them is provided.

**4. Education and Training**
Time, energy, resources, and staff are committed to educating and training employees across all levels of the organization regarding the many forms that discrimination and harassment can take, including intersectional discrimination and harassment. Training also focused on the actions staff should take to prevent, respond, and intervene when such discrimination and harassment arise. This includes training on all organizational policies including anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies as well as training on the mechanisms for reporting and investigating complaints. Training sessions on unconscious or implicit bias, bystander intervention, and respectful workplaces are also considered. Training is mandated for all employees as well as new hires and is comprehensive, interactive, properly resourced and performed on a regular basis by qualified trainers. Training is tailored to meet the needs of specific workplaces and various employee cohorts, and the content covers more than legal liability. Organizational leaders, supervisors, and managers receive training about their unique legal obligations and responsibilities in upholding these standards.

The SRE Network Standards are intended to provide guidance to organizations who wish to establish safe, respectful and equitable workplaces and communal spaces. They do not guarantee safety, respect or equity. Any use thereof should be based on the user’s own evaluation and consultation with legal counsel and is at the sole risk of the user. SRE Network and its members are not responsible for any harm that may result from any such use.
The Safety Respect Equity (SRE) Network has developed the following standards to prevent and address gender discrimination and sexual harassment in Jewish workplaces and communal spaces. These standards, first released in 2018 with a focus on gender-based discrimination and harassment, were re-released in July 2021 as a practical tool for creating safe, respectful and equitable workplaces and communal spaces - for all. This is aligned with the SRE Network’s mission to serve as a Jewish network committed to creating safe, respectful, equitable workplaces and communal spaces - for all; and to address gender-based harassment, discrimination, and inequity, using an intersectional lens of gender justice.

The standards are built upon the universal and Jewish value of kavod ha bri’ut, the inherent worth and dignity of each and every person. To live out this value, our standards have been updated to more fully encompass the multiple forms of discrimination and harassment that occur, including intersectional discrimination and harassment in which an individual is targeted due to their multiple intersecting identities (such as race and gender).

Jewish tradition recognizes that every person is created in the Divine image and should be treated as such, and the Jewish values of repairing the world, mutual responsibility, and not standing idly by while others are being harmed are fundamental to the creation, implementation, and upholding of these standards. In recognizing our moral and ethical obligations to one another, we urge Jewish workplaces and communal spaces to take active steps to prevent and address the many other, often intersecting, forms of discrimination and harassment.

The standards are not intended to, and do not constitute a contract or impose any legal obligation on any SRE Network member. The purpose of these standards instead is to ground, guide and inspire organizations in their journey to creating optimal workplaces and communal spaces. The standards outlined below are designed to help ensure that an organization’s workplace is free of harassment and discrimination. The standards emphasize prevention, intervention, and compliance. They focus specifically on the role executive and lay leadership plays in creating a positive and accountable work culture; the adoption of sound policies and guidelines including, but not limited to, harassment policies with clear reporting and response procedures; and education and training. The standards are not intended to, and do not constitute a contract or impose any legal obligation on any SRE member.

In joining the SRE Network, SRE Network Members commit to adopting and proactively implementing the following standards within their organizations over time: Network members mutually commit to taking proactive measures to prevent and address gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct and to adopting the following standards across their institutions:

1 Discrimination and harassment can occur on the basis of sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), race (including hair texture, skin color, facial features, or marriage/association to a person of color) and color, perceived or actual national origin (including accents), ethnicity, religion, religious expression, gender identity (including transgender or non-binary status), gender expression, perceived or actual LGBTQ+ identity, age, citizenship, and disability.

2 See EEOC, EEOC Enforcement Guidance on National Origin Discrimination, Notice 915.005 (Nov. 18, 2016), available at https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/national-origin-guidance.cfm#_Toc451518804 ("Title VII also prohibits ‘intersectional’ discrimination, which occurs when someone is discriminated against because of the combination of two or more protected bases.")
1. Leadership and Accountability

Jewish All organizational and communal leaders, including senior management (paid and non-paid), clergy, and boards, are obligated to take reasonable steps to prevent and address discrimination and harassment. This includes communicating the importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace that is free of discrimination and harassment and modeling the behavior they are expecting of employees. Leaders will also allocate time, money, and other resources to prioritize diversity and inclusion as well as harassment prevention. Leaders must also be aware of and comply with the relevant federal, state and local laws regarding discrimination and harassment and seek expert advice as necessary.

2. Policies and Guidelines

Clear and written non-anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies will be created, distributed, and applied to all employees across all levels of the workplace, including the executive leadership. They will empower employees (whether targets or witnesses) to report discrimination or harassment and should encourage, but not require bystanders to intervene by speaking up and by supporting targets of these behaviors. They will also prohibit retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports harassing or discriminatory behavior or who attempts to intervene to stop the behavior or support a target of the behavior.

Non-anti-discrimination policies will prohibit gender discrimination regarding the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, including hiring, promotion, pay, benefits, evaluations, and work conditions. They will also prohibit limiting or segregating applicants or employees on the basis of any protected characteristic that would deprive them of equal employment opportunities.

Anti-harassment policies will prohibit sexual harassment (including, but not limited to, sexual harassment) by or of an employee that occurs within a work context, whether on or off the workplace site, and through any means of communication including, but not limited to, social media and electronic communications such as email and texts. This includes harassment by co-workers, management, congregants, donors, volunteers, and others with whom employees regularly interact. Policies will clearly outline prohibited conduct that is not limited to legally actionable behavior and include examples.

Romantic Relationships: Policies prohibit romantic relationships between supervisors and their subordinates. If such a relationship does develop, steps are taken so that the two individuals are no longer in the same supervisory chain.

Parental Caregiving Leave: Parental caregiving leave is provided equally to all parents, regardless of gender, LGBTQ+ status, or marital status or whether the child is biological, adopted, or being fostered. Medical leave related to pregnancy, delivery, and recovery is provided to birth parents in addition to parental caregiving leave.

Disability: Reasonable accommodations are provided to employees with disabilities who need them unless doing so poses an undue hardship.
3. Reporting and Response

Jewish workplaces will treat all complaints seriously, respectfully, and with urgency and will establish impartial procedures for reporting, tracking, and responding to complaints of discrimination and harassment with proportionate corrective action. The procedures for victims/targets or witnesses to report complaints, as well as the process for responding to, investigating, and resolving these complaints, will be communicated to all employees, both orally and in writing. These procedures should be well disseminated at regular intervals, and should be easily accessible (e.g., in handbooks, on websites, etc.). Reporting and investigation protocols will also specify that all individuals will be protected from retaliation or reprisal for lodging a good faith complaint or for participating in investigations.

**A. Reporting:** Reporting procedures will include multiple and accessible avenues for reporting and outline and describe the general steps and approximate timeframes the organization follows when responding to a report. Complainants and alleged perpetrators will be advised of the policy against retaliation and complainants should be encouraged to report any future incidents or acts of perceived retaliation during the pendency of the investigation. Reporting protocols will specify that it is a violation to file a malicious or groundless complaint. Complainants will not be prevented from pursuing legal remedies, contacting legal authorities, or retaining legal representation at any time.

**B. Investigations:** Investigations will be conducted by individuals who are impartial and trained in handling gender discrimination and sexual harassment cases. Third party investigators may be utilized. Investigation procedures should authorize certain non-executive personnel to retain third party investigators when complaints are made against executive level personnel or at other times as may be described. Management is prohibited from interfering in or impeding the investigation process. Findings of the investigation will be documented.

**C. Response:** Complainants and alleged perpetrators will be informed of the findings of the investigation. When harassment or discrimination has been found to have occurred, perpetrators will be disciplined in a meaningful, appropriate, and proportionate manner. Consequences will be documented and can range from receiving coaching (e.g., following the making of an inappropriate joke) to termination (e.g., following sexual assault). Furthermore, corrective measures will be implemented at the organizational level when necessary. Response mechanisms will ensure that the protective measures that are put in place during or following an investigation do not have the unintended consequence of harming a good faith complainant professionally or personally. Finally, to the extent that supports and resources are available to complainants who have had their discrimination or harassment complaints validated, such supports and resources will be outlined for complainants and information on how to access them will be provided.

4. Education and Training

Jewish workplaces will commit time, energy, resources, and staff to educating and training employees across all levels of the organization regarding the many forms that gender discrimination and sexual harassment can take, including intersectional discrimination and harassment. Training also focused on and about the actions they should take to prevent, respond, and intervene when such discrimination and harassment arise. This includes
training on all organizational policies including non-anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies as well as training on the mechanisms for reporting and investigating complaints. Training sessions on unconscious or implicit bias, bystander intervention, and respectful workplaces are also recommended considered. Training will be mandated for all employees as well as new hires and should be comprehensive, interactive, properly resourced and performed on a regular basis by qualified trainers. Training will be tailored to meet the needs of specific workplaces and various employee cohorts, and the content covers more than as well as go beyond legal liability. Organizational leaders, supervisors, and managers will receive training about their unique legal obligations and responsibilities in upholding these standards.

5. Additional Standards to Consider
In addition to complying with the above expectations, the Jewish workplaces may wish to implement the following standards to be a model employer. These standards address other forms of discrimination and harassment on other protected bases, financial donations, parental leave, workplace romances, disclosure of corrective action, and risk factors for harassment and discrimination.

Other Forms of Discrimination and Harassment: While gender discrimination and sexual harassment are the central issues that these standards are designed to combat, best practices require attention to combatting all forms of illegal discrimination and harassment including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy. Furthermore, non-discrimination policies should prohibit limiting or segregating applicants or employees on the basis of a protected class that would deprive them of equal employment opportunities.

Relationship to Known Harassers: Jewish workplaces should reevaluate their relationships to affiliated individuals who have been found to have engaged in discrimination, harassment, or assault. This reevaluation should include reconsidering the usage of the funds or services these individuals provide to the organization.

Parental Leave: Jewish workplaces should provide parental leave equally to all parents, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital status and to those fostering or adopting. Medical leave related to pregnancy, delivery, and recovery should be provided to mothers in addition to parental leave.

Romantic Relationships: Jewish workplaces should have a policy that addresses romantic relationships and abuses of power.

Sharing of Information: Targets of harassment or discrimination in Jewish workplaces should be informed of the disciplinary measures taken against perpetrators. Jewish workplaces should have a process for protecting other workplaces when providing referrals for employees who are found to have discriminated, harassed, or engaged in prohibited behaviors. They should also compile annual data on the findings of discrimination and harassment and make them publicly available in an anonymous aggregated report.

Training: Leaders in Jewish workplaces should be trained in identifying, assessing, and responding to risk factors in their workplace that may make discrimination and harassment more likely to occur.
The SafetyRespectEquity Coalition (SRE) Network Standards are meant intended to help provide guidance to organizations who wish to establish safe, respectful and equitable workplaces workplaces and communal spaces. They do not guarantee safety, respect or equity. Any use thereof should be based on the user’s own evaluation and consultation with legal counsel and is at the sole risk of the user. The SafetyRespectEquity Coalition (SRE) Network and its members are not responsible for any harm that may result from any such use.


The Coalition is grateful for the input of the following experts and professionals into the development of these standards: Guila Benchimol, Gali Cooks, Sharon Masling, Mordy Walfish and Sharon Weiss-Greenberg.

Summary of Key Changes:

Preamble:

1. Added the word “preamble” to distinguish the preamble from the standards.
2. Added “and communal spaces” throughout.
3. Removed the words ‘gender’ and ‘sexual’ in reference to discrimination and harassment throughout.
4. Added refreshed contextual language to the preamble of the Standards, including historical context and refreshed Jewish framing.
5. Added a footnote outlining various forms of discrimination and harassment.
6. Added language around intersectional discrimination and harassment and added a footnote providing a link to the EEOC resource that defines intersectional discrimination and harassment.
7. Added refreshed language around the purpose of the standards.
8. Added refreshed language around the link between adopting and implementing the Standards and being a SRE Network member.
Universal Updates to the Four Sections of the Standards:
9. Changed language throughout from future tense to present tense (e.g., “clear policies are created” vs. “clear policies will be created”) with the understanding that these are standards that organizations are proactively in a process of working towards implementing.
10. Changed ‘non-discrimination’ language to ‘anti-discrimination’ language throughout to specify a proactive approach to workplace culture that actively combats discrimination.
11. Replaced references to Jewish with the word “All” throughout the four sections of the Standards in instances where it was previously used as an identifier for workplaces and leaders, to ensure clarity that these standards are intended to apply to all workplaces and all individuals within those workplaces regardless of identity and affiliation. This should not be interpreted as a change in terms of the mission of SRE Network nor the membership we serve, which are Jewish workplaces and communal spaces in North America.

Policies and Guidelines
12. Moved up from previous position (in the prior “Additional Standards to Consider” section) language regarding romantic relationships, specifying that if a romantic relationship between a supervisor and their subordinate develops, steps are taken so that the two individuals are no longer in the same supervisory chain.
13. Moved up and refreshed language from previous position (in the prior “Additional Standards to Consider” section) around parental caregiving, including ensuring that all parents receive leave equally whether the child is biological, adopted, or being fostered. In reference to parents that give birth, removed the term ‘mothers’ and replaced it with ‘birth parents.’
14. Added new language regarding reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.

Additional Standards to Consider
15. Removed this section altogether from the refreshed standards, with the purpose of ensuring greater clarity around what is being presented as actionable standards versus areas that require ongoing evaluation and further development.
16. As stated above, items previously in this section that were incorporated in the refreshed preamble and standards include a) multiple forms of discrimination and harassment, b) parental leave, c) disability accommodation and d) romantic relationships.
17. The two areas not moved into the standards at this time, but of continued importance and active and ongoing evaluation by the SRE Network, our members and the field:
   a. relationship to known harassers (“Jewish workplaces should reevaluate their relationships to affiliated individuals who have been found to have engaged in discrimination, harassment, or assault. This reevaluation should include reconsidering the usage of the funds or services these individuals provide to the organization.”
b. sharing of Information ("Targets of harassment or discrimination in Jewish workplaces should be informed of the disciplinary measures taken against perpetrators. Jewish workplaces should have a process for protecting other workplaces when providing referrals for employees who are found to have discriminated, harassed, or engaged in prohibited behaviors. They should also compile annual data on the findings of discrimination and harassment and make them publicly available in an anonymous aggregated report.")

These two areas are of continued importance and active and ongoing evaluation by the SRE Network, our members and the field. The removal of these from the “Additional Standards to Consider” should not be interpreted as a deprioritization of these matters, but instead a move toward greater clarity and transparency around the areas with existing, well-defined protocols (as outlined in the four areas of the standards) and the areas that require further attention and development.

Methodology:
These standards, first released in 2018 with a focus on gender-based discrimination and harassment, were re-released in July 2021 as a practical tool for creating safe, respectful and equitable workplaces and communal spaces - for all.

The 2021 refresh of the SRE Network Standards was conducted in consultation with Sharon Masling, Partner and Director of Workplace Culture Consulting at Morgan, Lewis & Brockius LLP and Dena Robinson, Trial Attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Employment Litigation Section of the U.S. Department of Justice, with additional input from Dr. Guila Benchimol, Rabbi Sarah Mulhern, Dr. Shira Berkovits and the SRE Network staff team.


To learn more about SRE Network Membership, visit: https://srenetwork.org/sre-overview/how-to-join/