



**safety · respect · equity**

## **2021 SRE Network Standards**

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



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Last updated: July 2021

# 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. These standards, first released in 2018 with a focus on gender-based discrimination and harassment, were re-released in July 2021 to more fully align with the SRE Network mission and to serve as a practical tool for creating safe, respectful and 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<sup>1</sup>, including intersectional discrimination and harassment in which an individual is targeted due to their multiple intersecting identities (such as race and gender).<sup>2</sup>

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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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](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")

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 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.**

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<https://srenetwork.org/sre-overview/how-to-join/>



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