

Standards for safeguarding and child protection policies in Masorti communities

Approved by the Board of Trustees of Masorti Judaism – June 2020

1. Masorti Judaism's approach to safeguarding and child protection in relation to programmes and activities we directly operate are governed by Noam's policies.
2. As part of their membership agreement with Masorti Judaism, every Masorti community is required to have 'adequate safeguarding and child protection policies'. This document sets out the standards expected of these policies and the associated procedures.
3. As independent entities, individual Masorti communities are ultimately responsible for their own safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Masorti Judaism's role is to carry out checks to ensure communities are meeting our standards and to provide the support communities need to put adequate arrangements in place.
4. As part of this process, we will work with our member communities to review their safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures on a regular basis. We may then recommend changes and improvements, and either support the community in making these improvements or refer them to another agency for expert support.
5. Every safeguarding and child protection policy will be different so as to meet the individual needs of the specific community. However, every policy should include the following sections which should be tailored to meet the individual community's structure:
 - a. **Purpose** of the policy
 - b. Organisation's **mission statement**: this should include the organisation's ethos around safeguarding and child protection (e.g. children and young people should feel safe and heard, all staff/volunteers/members/parents are encouraged to talk about concerns).
 - c. Relevant **legislation** that informs the policy: the Children Acts [1989](#) and [2004](#) with reference to HM Government's [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) guidance; the London Safeguarding Children Partnership's [Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance](#); and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989](#).
 - d. The **age range** of young people covered by the policy: from birth up to the child's 18th birthday and also covering concerns about unborn children.
 - e. **Roles and responsibilities** of every stakeholder in the organisation regarding safeguarding (including staff, trustees and volunteers), reinforcing the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Each community should have a **designated safeguarding lead (DSL)**, most often a trustee or senior member of staff, who has undergone safeguarding training. Make sure the nominated safeguarding/child protection lead can easily be contacted and make arrangements for cover if they are not available

As well as setting out the responsibilities of specific post-holders, this section should include a statement like: ‘Rabbis and chazanim, trustees, volunteers and other staff acquire positions of trust in children’s and young people’s lives. They have a duty of care to children and young people which includes safeguarding their welfare and protecting them from harm.’ This emphasises that child protection and safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with children, not just front line workers, and gives the message that it is not acceptable to overlook possible signs of child abuse on the grounds that ‘it is not my job to deal with this’.

All members of staff, trustees and volunteers who have contact with young people should undergo regular (usually annual) **training** on child protection and safeguarding.

- f. **Understanding child abuse:** this section should include types of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect) and a definition/description of each one. Signs and symptoms of abuse should also be included here. Neglect should be included in the definition of child abuse rather than a separate add-on, e.g. ‘Staff, carers and volunteers may encounter cases of alleged child abuse including neglect’ rather than ‘alleged child abuse or neglect’ to emphasise the fact that neglect is child abuse and that neglect is no less of a priority or reason for intervention. Some organisations also choose to include bullying and the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children in this section.
- g. **Procedures** setting out what to do when becoming aware of suspected child abuse. This should include a relevant organisational escalation procedure (ie. who should suspected child abuse be reported to and how), local authority numbers and the names of designated people in the organisation.

The policy needs to state clearly that if child abuse is suspected, a risk assessment needs to be completed. If as part of this assessment it is deemed that a child may be at further risk or that concerns will be silenced if parents are informed, then parents should not be informed before the case is referred to children services.

- h. **Recording:** why it is imperative to record all suspicions, allegations or actions taken around child protection (it protects the child, the organisation and the personnel dealing with it). Recording must be timely, relevant, record facts separate from opinions. Clear links to recording forms and where they can be found should be included here.
- i. **Confidentiality and Duty to Share Information** section: all decisions about information sharing following a child protection referral are made by local statutory child protection agencies within the provisions of the Children Act (section 17/47 protocols). Your child protection policy needs to include clear guidance about when to share information with other agencies and on what basis (for example, concerns that a child is being harmed or could be at risk of harm overrides the requirement to maintain confidentiality). The requirement to share information on a need to know basis should be stated. Statements like ‘confidentiality will be maintained at all times’ should be avoided since this is not always possible.

- j. **Safe Recruitment:** what is the community's policy on safe recruitment for staff and volunteers? This should refer to the requirement to carry out relevant DBS checks and to take references from and have conversations with previous employers and volunteering placements, including other Masorti communities where relevant.
- k. **Whistleblowing:** a child protection policy should include clear whistleblowing procedures. We encourage you to name Masorti Judaism's DSL as an address for whistleblowing in the event that safeguarding concerns are not being dealt with appropriately within the community. Masorti Judaism's DSL will respond to any such concerns by following up with the DSL of the community in question, supporting them in taking the appropriate action, or by referring any incident which has not been properly dealt with to the statutory authorities as required.

Additional points to consider when writing a policy:

- It is important to distinguish between safeguarding and child protection. Safeguarding policy includes what we do to keep all children safe whereas child protection policy informs us of steps we take when we become aware of a specific child being harmed or at risk of abuse. Typically both policies are needed.
- Policies regulating safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults should be written separately as they refer to different pieces of legislation and are dealt with by separate statutory departments.

These standards are based on guidance from Reshet (the network for Jewish youth provision); the original document can be accessed here: reshetnet.com/safeguarding2/safeguarding-and-child-protection-policies/

Sample policies from Noam and St Albans Masorti Synagogue are included overleaf. More detailed information and standards published by the NSPCC can be found here: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1079/safeguarding-standards-and-guidance.pdf>

Further guidance is available from Reshet's director, Shelley Marsh on 07970 718334 or shelley@reshetnet.com.

Please contact Masorti Judaism's deputy chief executive and DSL, Rachel Sklan at rachel@masorti.org.uk for further support or information.