

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS

Submit a request to speak to Chair at covenant@templesinaiatlanta.org regarding an allegation.

Involving Congregants

Formal Process

Submit formal allegation

Committee informed and
Investigation Team (IT)
assigned

Interviews by IT

IT Report

Covenant Committee
Review IT Report

Informal Process

Clergy Support through
Member-to-Member
resolution

Support could include
pastoral counseling,
suggestions for possible
solutions and/or
mediated resolutions

Involving Staff or Minors

Staff

Directed to Director
of HR

Minors

Directed to Senior
Director of Learning
& Engagement

Decision

Communicate Findings &
Remedy(ies)

Appeal Process reviewed
by Appeal Board



CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS

(as of 10/21/24)

In order to hold one another accountable to Temple Sinai's Congregational Covenant, the Covenant Committee (the "Committee") has established the following process to address any allegations submitted concerning a violation of the Covenant. As part of the accountability process, all allegations submitted to the Committee will be seriously evaluated to determine whether disciplinary consequences are warranted. It should be remembered that the potential resolution one seeks may take different forms. The Covenant Committee will approach every conversation and decision thoughtfully and through a lens of *tikkun* (healing) and *teshuvah* (repentance), mindful at all times that our congregation is a sacred community.

TWO PATHS: FORMAL OR INFORMAL

An allegation can take one of two different paths to resolution: formal or informal. The formal path is reserved for the most serious allegations and includes an investigation by the Covenant Committee. An informal allegation includes referral to Temple Sinai Clergy for resolution. Both processes are further explained in this document.

When one believes there has been a violation of the Congregational Covenant and chooses to file an allegation

Can I speak with someone about the Covenant and how all of this works before I do anything?	Yes, email covenant@templesinaiatlanta.org to be contacted by the Covenant Committee Chair.
When would an allegation allow for a formal process?	<p>Allegations of the following serious behaviors will be investigated and reviewed by the Committee:</p> <p><u>Sexual Harassment/Misconduct</u> Sexual harassment/misconduct involves physical and/or verbal conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome or considered offensive. Serious offenses include but are not limited to all forms of sexual intimidation, physical sexual assault, sharing or requesting pornographic materials, stalking, invasion of privacy, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome physical contact or conduct, or threatening someone as a consequence of refusing advances.</p> <p><u>Abusive or Hostile Behavior</u> Behavior that is abusive or hostile involves physical or verbal interactions in which one person behaves in a cruel, violent, or harmful manner toward another person.</p>

Degrading, Humiliating, or Oppressive Behavior

Behavior that is considered degrading, humiliating, or oppressive involves physical or verbal behaviors that intentionally seek to reduce the value or status of another person or purposefully disgrace or shame another.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as aggressive and persistent behavior or verbal abuse where an individual's actions are intended to have the effect (or the individual ought to know that the behavior would likely have the effect) of causing harm, fear, or distress to another individual. Bullying can include verbal threats, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or social misbehavior (e.g., spreading rumors and purposeful exclusion) intended to diminish another's sense of safety or comfort within the community.

Cyberbullying involves any of the above behaviors carried out through electronic technology or social media, persistent unwanted texts or phone calls, or posting another's private and personal information to social media.

How does one submit a formal allegation?

Anyone desiring to submit an allegation to be investigated through the formal process should send an email to covenant@templesinaiatlanta.org with the following information:

- detailed description of the incident;
- name(s) of the individual(s) involved;
- date(s) and time(s) of the incident(s);
- location(s) where the incident occurred;
- name(s) of any witness(es) to the incident;
- name(s) of others with relevant knowledge of the incident;
- description of impact on the reporting person, if any;
- the remedy or resolution requested;
- any other relevant information.

<p>How does the formal process work?</p>	<p>The Covenant Chair, after consultation with the Committee, may determine a filed allegation does not implicate the Covenant and thus does not warrant evaluation or investigation by the Committee. Such a determination will be communicated accordingly.</p> <p>If the gravity of the allegation is a serious violation as defined in the Covenant and this document, the formal accountability process will start. The Chair will define the scope of an investigation and assign a minimum of two (2) committee members to serve as an Investigation Team ("IT"). The IT will interview individuals identified in the written allegation as possessing knowledge of the allegation as well as any others considered helpful to the investigation. After reviewing all pertinent and available information, the IT will compile and submit a written report to the Committee, which will then review the IT's report and evaluate whether there has been a violation of the Covenant. At any point, the Committee may request that the respondent and/or complainant meet with the Committee to discuss the matter.</p>
<p>What is the timeline and Investigative Process?</p>	<p>Unless circumstances necessitate an extended timeline, the Committee shall meet to discuss a submitted allegation and potential investigation within ten (10) days following receipt of the allegation.</p>
<p>How does the issue get closure?</p>	<p>If the Committee finds a violation of the Covenant, it will consider whether such violation warrants a disciplinary consequence. The Committee will then prepare a summary of its findings, the decision, and recommended consequences (when applicable). A committee designee will communicate the findings and recommended resolution to the parties.</p>
<p>What is a possible consequence if a member is found to have seriously violated the covenant?</p>	<p>Violations of the Covenant based upon any of the identified serious behavior will be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including termination of membership.</p>
<p>Appeal Board</p>	<p>Any party may file an appeal of the Committee's decision to the Covenant Appeal Board (defined below) within five (5) days of receipt of the Committee's written decision</p>

When an allegation concerns a member of the Temple Sinai Staff	Allegations that involve the actions of a Temple Sinai staff member are beyond the scope of the Congregational Covenant and Committee and should be reported to Sinai's Director of Human Relations mharvey@templesinaiatlanta.org .
When an allegation involves a minor	Any allegations that involve a minor are beyond the scope of the Congregational Covenant and Committee and should be directed to Sinai's Senior Director of Learning & Engagement mkaiser@templesinaiatlanta.org .
When would an allegation allow for an informal process?	When an allegation is not appropriate for the formal process it may follow the informal process. A resolution will be sought with the assistance of pastoral counseling and support from the Temple Sinai Clergy. Additional resources may also be recommended during this process.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Covenant Committee

The President will appoint a congregant to chair the Covenant Committee. The Covenant Committee is responsible for receiving, evaluating, and investigating allegations of behavior that violate the Temple Sinai Congregational Covenant. The President will select five (5) Committee members, including the Covenant Committee Chair and Vice Chair, based on the following qualities: integrity, leadership, independence, and a demonstrated ability to handle sensitive situations. Members of the Committee will serve a term of two (2) years. The initial Committee members and all successive Committees will have staggered terms. Three (3) Committee members will constitute a quorum for meetings. Members of the Committee must recuse themselves if an allegation pertains to them, directly or indirectly, if the Committee member is related to the complainant or respondent, or otherwise has reason to recuse themselves.

Covenant Appeal Board

A committee of three congregants selected by the President and with substantial experience in Temple Sinai leadership shall comprise an Appeal Board to review decisions of the Covenant Committee at the request of either party involved in such decision. The members of the Appeal Board shall not be simultaneously serving on the Covenant Committee.

Confidentiality

The Covenant Committee and Temple Sinai will use their best efforts to maintain confidentiality with respect to the reporting and investigative practice. However, the process necessarily involves the sharing of sensitive information between Covenant Committee members and others involved in the investigative process. Additionally, there may be situations where information contained in a report or subsequent investigation triggers a legal mandate to report, such as abuse of a minor or elder.

Time limit on Reporting

There is no time limit on reporting an alleged violation of the Congregational Covenant.

Retaliation Prohibited

Temple Sinai prohibits retaliation against anyone who makes a report in good faith or who participates in the investigation (for example, as a witness), the response, or remedy.

Role of Staff

Temple Sinai staff will not serve as investigators so as not to compromise their respective roles to all congregants and so they may be part of a resolution process if appropriate. If an individual reports a possible violation of the Covenant to Temple Sinai staff, the staff should refer them to the Covenant Committee Chair or clergy. The term "staff" is used in the Covenant and in this document to include clergy and staff.