

ARJE Announcement of Ethics Code and Committee Established January, 2022

"A person should always measure their actions as if the Holy One dwells with them."
– Babylonian Talmud, *Taanit* 11a-b

The ARJE strives to inspire our members to achieve the highest level of excellence in all aspects of our work. Our professional association prides itself on encouraging regular self-reflection and evaluation as we work to ensure that we, as individuals and as a collective, are always prepared to meet the needs of our communities.

We are pleased to report that we continue to update our Ethics Guidelines (from 2009), with the goal of upgrading and transforming them into a relevant, meaningful and binding Code of Ethics for all of us to affirm and to uphold. Our Ethics Taskforce, chaired by Rabbi Carrie Vogel, RJE, has spent significant time reflecting on the values of our organization, researching and learning from experts, and discussing and exploring how we can best support and protect both our educators and those in the communities we serve. The result is an aspirational document which articulates what it means to be a Jewish educator at the highest level.

It is therefore with great pride that the Board of Trustees of the ARJE recently endorsed this Code of Ethics as binding for all of its members. This Code of Ethics reminds all ARJE members **that we are obligated to maintain the highest standards and to serve as role models in both our personal and professional lives.** The entire Code of Ethics, including information on how to ask questions or file a complaint, can be [found HERE on the website](#). We know that our Code of Ethics will be an evolving document, one upon which we regularly reflect and assess to ensure we are continuing to meet the highest standards.

The Ethics Committee will serve separately from the ARJE Board of Trustees in order to ensure transparency, confidentiality and an appropriate system of checks and balances. We are thrilled to share that Rabbi Rena Rifkin will serve as the inaugural Chair of the ARJE Ethics Committee. As a member of the Ethics Taskforce, Rena was an integral part of the creation of our Code of Ethics and has been an active member of the ARJE for many years.

We frequently remind our communities of the message, "*kol yisrael arevim zeh b'zeh*," that all Jews are responsible for each other. With the recent reports from HUC, the CCAR and the URJ, the ARJE is committed to functioning as a safe, collegial community in which we support one another during both good and challenging times. Indeed, we stand with the entire Reform movement in devoting ourselves to the highest possible professional standards of conduct and behavior.

Please know that we are here for you if you are a survivor of unethical or unwanted behavior. We are here for you as we commit ourselves to the effort to ensure that all

Jewish organizations create safe working environments for educators and our communities. And we are here for you as we pledge our continued commitment to this important and sacred work.

We are incredibly fortunate that in our unique roles as Jewish educators, we have an opportunity to ensure that we create safe and equitable work environments for those we supervise, while at the same time shifting the narrative for future generations. We are extremely grateful to the members of the Ethics Taskforce for their time and commitment involved in creating a Code of Ethics that is relevant, inspiring and one which holds us all accountable as we carry out this holy work.

May we continue to go from strength to strength.

Marisa Kaiser, RJE, ARJE President

Rabbi Stacy Rigler, RJE, ARJE Executive Director

Rabbi Stan Schickler, RJE, ARJE Executive Director Emeritus

Rabbi Carrie Vogel, RJE, Ethics Task Force Chair