



Dear Members of our USCJ/USY Community,

On March 8, 2023, The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and United Synagogue Youth released a Report on the Investigation conducted by Sarah Worley, Esq., of Sarah E Worley Conflict Resolution, P.C.

Ensuring that USY operates within a culture that places safety above all, and that fosters and promotes respect for all participants has been and remains our top priority. We remain steadfast in enhancing our youth programming and critical child safety protocols and would like to provide our community with an update on this incredibly important work.

Recommendation Implementation Update

The Report on the Investigation included many recommendations on enhancing the safety of our programs. We took those recommendations seriously and have been implementing them aggressively since March 2023. Many of the recommendations had already been implemented or were already underway such as implementing a restorative justice program, reinforcing policies already in place for safety in groups, regularly offering required training to staff and volunteers on mandated reporting as well as youth protection, and articulating from the top that no one within USCJ or USY is above reproach and that child safety is preeminent.

All USY staff and volunteers will continue to complete mandated reporter and youth protection training annually. Since I onboarded in January 2023 our staff and volunteer training has been enhanced, our social media policy has been updated to include defined boundaries on appropriate topics for virtual communication, and more standardized selection procedures for program/event admission, housing, transportation, and staffing have been created.

Additional recommendations that are currently underway include introducing healthy relationships and consent curriculums into our programming as well as working with USCJ member congregations to communicate clear expectations with respect to policy guidance.

Going Above and Beyond

In addition to pursuing the recommendations set forth in the Report on the Investigation, USCJ and USY are going above and beyond to ensure the safety of our programs and youth participants.

In April 2023, USCJ/USY purchased a cloud based help desk subscription to create a centralized reporting system. A reporting form has been customized for USCJ and USY's purposes and can be viewed [here](#). This system will maintain organized records and provide data on incidents that can help inform future policy/procedure changes needed. Going forward, USY events and programs will have posters with QR codes linked to the reporting form and the same QR code will also be on the back of youth participant badges. This will ensure that participants have a way to report a concern even when they are not sure who to speak with or do not feel comfortable speaking with a USCJ/USY staff member.

We're also taken our training to the next level. USY Summer on WHEELS and EPIC staff were the first to pilot the new Child Safety Onboarding and the remainder of USCJ/USY's paid youth facing staff will complete the training in August 2023. Volunteers will go through the same training as they register to volunteer at events and programs.

The training consists of 8 modules on the following topics:

1. Policies and Expectations
2. Mandated Reporting
3. Trauma Informed Care
4. Bullying & Hazing
5. Bystander Intervention
6. Fostering a Safe Environment
7. Consent & Healthy Relationships
8. Sexual Abuse/Assault & Grooming

We would like to begin preparing to offer training and webinars for our stakeholders. Please respond to [this survey](#) to provide input on what kind of training you would like to see offered.

Lastly, we are in the process of updating our Policies and Procedures for the Safety of Program Participants. The only change to existing policy language is that readers are encouraged to go to the Director of Child and Youth Protection for policy related questions before contacting another member of Leadership.

We have added a Part 2 that focuses on Youth Participant and Parent Expectations. This section includes an updated Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) statement as well as inclusion related policies. It also includes policies and procedures on Bullying, Participant Infractions, and Complaints. Finally, there is now a Staff Code of Conduct and Parent Code of Conduct in the appendix. The new policy document has been updated on our website and can be viewed [here](#).

Conclusion

I am proud of the portfolio of work I have been able to complete in my first 6 months as USCJ/USY's Director of Child and Youth Protection and I am honored to be working together with our dedicated professional team to bring the safety of our programs up to the highest standards.

USCJ/USY will continue to provide periodic updates to our stakeholders on the child safety work being conducted and on recommendation implementation progress. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

B'Shalom,

Mauria Atzil, LMSW

Director of Child and Youth Protection
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism