



## Bnot Torah/Sharfman's Faculty Code of Conduct

### **OVERVIEW**

The Mission Statement of Bnot Torah/Sharfman's is to provide an academic setting in which its students can learn and grow in a safe, appropriate and halachic environment. All hired faculty members as Bnot Torah/Sharfman's staff, represent the school on and off school hours.

### **HALACHIC ENVIRONMENT**

With regards to standards of halacha observance, it bears noting that as an educational institution, Bnot Torah/Sharfman's is mindful that students will unknowingly and expectedly make mistakes. Even as Bnot Torah/Sharfman's affords students the room to make mistakes, Bnot Torah/Sharfman's faculty must behave according to halacha and expects that halachot of Negiah and Yichud are observed at all times.

While respect for one another can be communicated by gesture and tone of voice, language is the most powerful tool for conveying it. Consequently, "Nekiyut HaLashon," cleanliness of language, should guide all of the faculty. Words should be chosen with great care with regard to their impact upon the listener and should confirm a sense of self-worth to the faculty member, student, classroom of students, etc.

In all halachic matters relating to this document, the rabbinic authority of the school is: Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovits shlita. In the event that a matter of arbitration is needed, all agree that Rav Yitzchak Berkovits is the rabbinic authority.

### **IMPORTANT POINT**

Bnot Torah/Sharfman's faculty must be particularly mindful that students may lack verbal or psychological tools to identify or defend against inappropriate emotional or physical advances. Additionally, Bnot Torah/Sharfman's is concerned about all forms of abuse and harassment by persons in positions of authority. In these cases, victims often feel less able to defend against conduct that is inappropriate, unwelcome, and illegal. No matter the age of the target of the abuse or harassment, whether adult or an adolescent, it's important to note that acquiescence or the failure to complain does not always mean that the conduct was welcomed by the recipient or acceptable to Bnot Torah/Sharfman's.

### **PERMITTED PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Bnot Torah/Sharfman's faculty members (of the same gender) or students and female staff, are welcome to engage in normal physical contact such as acts of encouragement or consolation. This is permitted as long as the contact is appropriate and not of a sexual nature. Similarly, normal aggressive contact, such as that which would take place in a basketball game or activity in the park, is permitted as long as the activity is appropriate, welcome and is not of a sexual nature.

### **PROTOCOL**

**The following are behaviors that are deemed inappropriate by all faculty members:**

- Mocking, ridiculing, berating, excessive joking, nicknames or any other hurtful speech.
- Any attention in the form of remarks, jokes or innuendo about the body or clothing of a student - excluding a compliment given to a student by a female faculty member.
- Belittling, public or private, of parents or their central role in the lives of their children.
- Unrefined and insensitive language when discussing other sects of Judaism, religious institutions or their leaders, including synagogues and their Rabbis, as well as Yeshivot/Seminaries and their administration and faculty.
- No alcohol may be served to students by a faculty member other than wine for kiddush on Shabbos and Chagim. Alcohol may not be served to students on Purim.

## GUIDELINES FOR MALE FACULTY MEMBERS

- When a male faculty member has a meeting with a student in school, he may do so only if the door is left open or behind a glass door.
- When a male faculty member has a meeting with a student in school, he may do so only if he is sitting on the opposite side of the desk from the student or by different corners of a table.
- Male faculty may never walk with a student outside of the Bnot Torah/Sharfman's building once it is dark outside.
- Male faculty members may never drive a student once it is dark outside.
- Students can never sleep at the home of a male faculty member.
- If a student begins to discuss with any male faculty member about any sexual relationship(s), any sexual abuse, or any body image issue(s), the male faculty member must stop the conversation immediately and say: "This must be very hard, I think it's best if you discuss these specific points with a female staff member such as your Mechanechet, Rakezet, the Academic Advisor, etc. I really think that they are more well-suited. Is there any other topic you would like to discuss?"
- Male faculty members must not give students gifts of any sort (e.g. a food item, sefer, article of clothing). If the male faculty member feels that the student could benefit from something, and they would like to pass it on to the student, they must give it to a female faculty member or the Dean (who will decide who would be most appropriate to give it to student), and the gift must be given either anonymously, or in the name of the school.
- Male faculty members may not set up a private meeting with a student(s) in their home. If a student is invited to the home of a male faculty member for a Shabbos or Yom Tov meal, discussions after the meal may be conducted *only* if all of the following conditions are met: a) in a public place such as the living room b) their wife is awake and in a nearby room with the door open. Also, the wife of the male faculty member must not leave the house until the meeting is over. Meetings cannot be private enough for the wife to be told not to enter the room in which the meeting is taking place.
- Male faculty members may not arrange for a student to go to a therapist and must go to one of the following people who can facilitate this: the Dean, the Academic Advisor or the student's Mechanechet or Rakezet.
- Male faculty members are never allowed to text message a student or use any forms of social media to contact students. This excludes group text messages about technical matters as sent out by the Bnot Torah/Sharfman's office. Student may only be contacted by male faculty members via the phone or email.
- If a male faculty member emails a student, he must Bcc the email to [emailingstudents@bnottorah.com](mailto:emailingstudents@bnottorah.com), which is an email address that Bnot Torah/Sharfman's has designated as the email for such situations and is accessed by the independent ombudswoman (see below).
- Male faculty members (aside for the Dean and the Administrative Director) are not allowed to call students past 11:00 pm until the morning. If a male faculty member receives a call from a student after 11:00 pm, he must apologize for not being available and recommend that the student contacts a female staff member as he is not available to speak until the morning.

## GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY AT LARGE

- No faculty member is permitted to a) mention or b) arrange a Shidduch for a student without permission from the Dean.
- Every faculty member must be called by *both* students and other faculty members: Rabbi Ploni, Mr. Ploni or Mrs. Ploni. (The Dean is not required to abide by this rule.)
- Faculty members of the opposite gender should not comment on other faculty members of the opposite gender's appearance (ex: hairstyle, shirts, ties, necklaces).
- Faculty members may only have students meet with their husband if they are present in the same room for the conversation.

## **REPORTING A GRIEVANCE**

A faculty member or student who believes he or she has a grievance to report such as abuse or harassment, or any third person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute a grievance should report in detail the alleged act(s) to the independent ombudswoman, Dr. Shula Wittenstein (who is charged with both representing the interests of the students, staff and the public and investigating and addressing complaints of maladministration, violation and grievances) at 054-644-3532 or by emailing: [ombudswoman@bnottorah.com](mailto:ombudswoman@bnottorah.com). The ombudswoman will also notify Rav Berkovits and the Dean of the grievance. None of the above-mentioned reporting normally constitutes impermissible Lashon HaRa or any violation of any other Jewish Laws of Proper Speech.

1. Bnot Torah/Sharfman's is unable to take action in response to complaints that are reported anonymously. Bnot Torah/Sharfman's will not retaliate in any form, against any employee, student or parent for reporting, assisting, or cooperating with a person making a credible complaint. Bnot Torah/Sharfman's reserves the right to take any and all legal actions against individuals who are discovered as having made blatantly false or misleading accusations.
2. Depending on the nature of the grievance and the outcome of an investigation, disciplinary action may result in the issuance of a warning to faculty or student, a suspension of faculty or student, or immediate discharge of the faculty member without severance pay.

### *WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A COMPLAINT IS SUBMITTED?*

Upon receipt and review of the complaint, the ombudswoman will:

1. Inform the individual who submitted the complaint that sufficient information was present to initiate a full-scale inquiry or...
2. Inform the individual who submitted the complaint that there was insufficient information present in the complaint to warrant a formal inquiry. If there is disagreement with this assessment, an opportunity will be given to challenge this decision by submitting a letter of appeal to Rav Berkovits himself with additional information.

### *INQUIRY INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:*

In addition to conversations with the individual who submitted the complaint, full-scale inquiries include a comprehensive gathering of information from multiple sources. This research may include information gathered from conversations with Rabbis, parents, students, community leaders and Bnot Torah/Sharfman's faculty. When appropriate, the ombudswoman may also consult with mental health professionals as well as appropriate law enforcement agencies for further action.

After sufficient information has been gathered, the relevant findings will be shared with Rav Yitzchak Berkovits and the Dean. Rav Yitzchak Berkovits will decide upon a course of action commensurate with the findings. This includes the possibility of immediate termination of said faculty member without severance pay. Rav Yitzchak Berkovits will also determine if additional steps such as reporting abuse or harassment to the authorities is necessary.

### *INTERIM SUSPENSION*

Bnot Torah/Sharfman's has the authority to suspend the alleged offender from involvement in the school without pay during the interim period from the time of the complaint with the acquiescence of Rav Yitzchak Berkovits.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to be bound by the above terms and conditions:

---

Faculty Member's Signature

---

Date