

Ethical Guidelines at the Auckland Buddhist Centre for People in Public Roles

The model guidelines

The guidelines below are based on the five Buddhist precepts which all mitras and Order members in the Auckland Buddhist Centre sangha put into daily practice. They are training principles rather than our personal achievements and as such need to be actively kept in mind.

In addition we need to remember that these precepts originated with the Buddha and have been handed down within the Buddhist tradition for over 2,500 years. Our experience is that they remain as spiritually vital and meaningful in the conditions of modern living as when they were first taught. However, we each need to discover this meaningfulness for ourselves in our own lives and we therefore always welcome questions and discussions on how they serve to support our Buddhist practice.

These ethical guidelines, adopted by the trustees of Auckland Buddhist Centre should be read in conjunction with Auckland Buddhist Centre policies for safeguarding children and adults, and its Child Protection Code of Conduct.

1.

**I undertake the training principle of abstention from harming living beings.
With deeds of loving-kindness I purify my body.**

In principle all Triratna activities aim to support the awakening of the individual for the benefit of all beings. In all our dealings with one another we aspire to behave in a spirit of kindness, expressing kalyana mitrata, which we translate as 'spiritual friendship'.

Our spiritual community has been defined by its founder, Sangharakshita, as a 'free association of individuals'. While respecting this principle, it is important that individuals in positions of trust and authority as members of Triratna do not misuse their trusted position or authority – real or perceived - for their own benefit or to influence others inappropriately.

Wishing to minimise the harm we do to living beings, we affirm that physical violence and strong expressions of anger have no place among us.

Auckland Buddhist Centre is vegetarian and vegan-friendly.

We will work within our community, and with other like-minded groups, to reduce and minimise our impact on the environmental, locally and internationally.

2.

**I undertake the training principle of abstention from taking the not given.
With open-handed generosity, I purify my body.**

We wish to offer the Buddha's teachings in a spirit of generosity, making them accessible to all.

We aspire to express generosity by caring for our community and those who work and practise within it, finding ways to support those who undertake particular responsibilities in teaching and administration or serving as trustees or council members.

Those of us who handle money, property or other resources for a Triratna Buddhist centre, group or enterprise will take care of them and avoid their deliberate misuse or misappropriation. Although misuse of charity funds is not a safeguarding matter, such concerns may be reported to one of our Safeguarding Officers (Vajrajyoti and Vasudhara) or the ECA Safeguarding team at safeguarding@triratna.community who will ensure that they are addressed as appropriate.

3.

I undertake the training principle of abstention from sexual misconduct.

With stillness, simplicity and contentment I purify my body.

Triratna is a community of people practising the Buddha's teachings together with a strong emphasis on spiritual friendship. It is natural that close relationships will develop between us, and that some of these may be sexual relationships.

We encourage all members of our community to conduct their sexual relationships ethically, with awareness and kindness.

Those of us in teaching roles, supporting roles or with other positions of responsibility within the sangha have a particular responsibility in this area, particularly to those new to Triratna. We have a duty of care in respect to our conduct and position and to have due regard both for our precepts and to the requirements of our policies for safeguarding adults in Aotearoa NZ.

We are aware that as a person starts to explore the liberation that Dharma practice can provide, it is easy to confuse strength of feeling for the Dharma with an attraction to the individual serving as their main point of contact with Triratna and to the Buddhist tradition more generally.

As such, we recognise that is highly inadvisable for those leading Buddhist activities, or in positions of leadership, responsibility or spiritual mentoring, to enter into sexual relationships with those new to Triratna.

Even where there is clear mutual attraction and wish to enter a relationship we will wait until the more experienced Buddhist is no longer a primary teacher/mentor to the person with less experience of Triratna, and until that person has formed other friendships in our sangha.

We ask that a proposed relationship between an Order member in a teaching role (or who

may be perceived as being in any position of authority) and someone less experienced in Triratna should be discussed openly with other Order members; usually with the Order member's chapter and/or their preceptor and kalyana mitras. We suggest also that such discussions be minuted by the chapter convenor, preceptor or kalyana mitras for the benefit of all concerned should questions later arise.

See also the 2017 College "Statement about relationships between preceptors and those they ordain" <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/preceptors/statement-about-sex-between-preceptors-and-those-they-ordain-preceptors-college> and the Auckland Buddhist Centre Safeguarding Adults Policy.

4.

I undertake the training principle of abstention from false speech.

With truthful communication, I purify my speech.

In all our dealings with those we teach we are committed to truthful, meaningful, helpful and harmonious communication, written or spoken.

We wish to create an atmosphere of friendliness, co-operation and trust. We will share information carefully, motivated by desire for the wellbeing and spiritual progress of those we discuss and taking note of data protection legislation.

We will encourage ethical reflection and disclosure in our community, taking care to emphasise that this happens in its own time and at its own pace.

We note that Buddhist confession offers no protection from Aotearoa NZ law. Disclosures or confessions of seriously harmful behaviours against adults or children, historic or recent (such as, for example, sexual and violent criminal offences, including the viewing of indecent images of children online, domestic violence and stalking) should be passed to one of the Safeguarding Officers of the Auckland Buddhist Centre who will consider what action must be taken, possibly in consultation with Triratna's ECA Safeguarding team.

5.

I undertake the training principle of abstention from intoxication.

With mindfulness clear and radiant I purify my mind.

The Triratna Buddhist Community aims to provide support for the development of wisdom and compassion through deepening awareness.

We aspire to engage with our practice and with each other with as much mindfulness as possible.

We aim to provide supportive environments for those wishing to live without intoxicants. We will not serve alcohol or other intoxicants at Auckland Buddhist Centre events.

Smoking and e-cigarettes/vaping are not permitted on our premises

If you have concerns

If you have any concerns about the ethical behaviour of sangha members or a person you believe to be at risk, please contact Vajrajyoti or Vasudhara, Safeguarding Officers for Auckland Buddhist Centre, safeguarding@aucklandbuddhistcentre.org.

Though we will take your concerns seriously, we cannot offer absolute confidentiality: in accordance with the requirements of safeguarding and data protection law, we keep secure, confidential safeguarding records and will share information only with those few who need to know in order to address the matter effectively and keep you and others safe from harm.

Where you are over 18 and we believe you or anyone else over 18 may be at risk of harm, we have a duty to report to social services or the police, with your/their consent if possible. Where you are under 18 and we believe you or anyone else under 18 may be at risk of harm, we have a duty to report, with or without consent.

Agreed by the trustees of Auckland Buddhist Centre

Date: June 2021

Review date: June 2022

Sabbe satta sukhi hontu
May all beings be well and happy!

These Auckland Buddhist Centre Ethical Guidelines 2021 are to be read in conjunction with

- *The Auckland Buddhist Centre Child Protection Code of Conduct 2021*
- *The Auckland Buddhist Centre Child Protection Policy 2021*
- *Auckland Buddhist Centre Adult Safeguarding Policy 2021*
- *The Triratna guidance document 'Caring for teenagers in Triratna 2021' and*
- *The Triratna guidance document 'Managing those who pose a risk 2021'*