

# Des Moines Zen Center Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy

## **Policy Statement and Scope of Applicability:**

The Des Moines Zen Center (hereinafter “DMZC”) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all priests, teachers, practitioners, and visitors. Sexual harassment and misconduct are strictly prohibited, will not be tolerated by the DMZC, and anyone, no matter their status or standing in the organization, will be subject to discipline for violating this policy. This policy applies to all.

Sexual harassment and misconduct are antithetical to the principles of compassion, mindfulness, and ethical conduct inherent in our practice. This policy outlines DMZC's commitment to preventing and addressing sexual harassment and misconduct, emphasizing the duty of care of the Board of Directors (the “Board”), establishing mechanisms for response, addressing peer-to-peer relationships, defining the reporting process, incorporating consent definitions, and referencing the DMZC's own Ethical Guidelines and Procedures.

## **Duty of Care:**

The Board of DMZC has a duty of care to prevent and address sexual harassment and misconduct within the DMZC. The Board is responsible for setting the tone, ensuring compliance with policies, and taking appropriate action in response to reported incidents.

## **Definitions:**

**Sexual Harassment and Misconduct:** Applies to any harassment or misconduct based on sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. It is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. This includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate comments, gestures, or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**Consent:** Clear, voluntary, and mutual agreement to engage in specific sexual activity. Consent is informed, enthusiastic, transparent, and can be withdrawn at any time.

**Ordination Path Student:** An individual actively engaged in pursuing ordination within the Soto Zen tradition.

**Prevention:**

DMZC is dedicated to preventing sexual harassment and misconduct through ongoing education, awareness programs, and mindfulness training. All teachers and practitioners will be informed about what constitutes sexual harassment, misconduct, and the procedures for reporting incidents.

**Reporting Procedure and Response Mechanism:**

Any individual who experiences or witnesses sexual harassment or misconduct should report the incident promptly. In the event of reported sexual harassment or misconduct, or if there is a suspicion of such conduct even though a complaint has not been made, DMZC will initiate a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation. Refer to the “Reporting Procedure and Response Mechanism” section of DMZC’s Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for the reporting and response procedures.

No one will face retaliation for reporting sexual harassment or misconduct or for testifying or assisting in the investigation thereof.

**External Reporting:**

In addition to internal reporting, individuals have the right to report sexual harassment or misconduct externally to local authorities or relevant regulatory bodies as needed. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment or assault and needs immediate assistance, or there is a clear and present danger, please call 911 for emergency services. They will be able to connect you to the appropriate resources and support.

Additionally, if you are seeking help or information related to sexual harassment, you can contact the Iowa Sexual Abuse Hotline at 1-800-284-7821. This hotline is available 24/7 and provides support, information, and resources for individuals who have experienced sexual harassment or assault.

**Peer-to-Peer Relationships:**

This policy applies equally to peer-to-peer relationships. All individuals within DMZC are expected to uphold the principles of respect, mindfulness, and ethical conduct in their interactions with peers.

**Consent:**

Consent is an essential element of respectful interactions. It is the responsibility of all individuals within DMZC to obtain clear and voluntary consent before engaging in any sexual activity.

**Role of Ordination Path Student:**

Ordination path students are to be treated with respect and fairness. It is the responsibility of priests, teachers, and mentors to maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid any exploitation or abuse of power, and report any potential relationships directly to the Board. Any concerns regarding the conduct of a priest, teacher, or mentor should be reported in accordance with this policy.

**Review and Revision:**

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness. Necessary revisions will be made to address emerging issues and maintain alignment with best practices.

**Compliance:**

All individuals associated with DMZC are expected to comply with this policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

By adopting and implementing this comprehensive policy, DMZC aims to uphold the values of mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct within the DMZC community and to ensure the well-being of all practitioners and stakeholders.