

North London Buddhist Centre (Nalanda Trust) Ethical Guidelines

Read alongside the **NLBC Safeguarding Policy** and the **Child Protection Code of Conduct**. A link to both can be found in the footer of our website.

Introduction

These guidelines follow the framework of the Buddha's five ethical precepts. The precepts apply to every area of human behaviour; these guidelines are mainly concerned with one area, where Order members or other experienced members of our community present and communicate Buddhist principles to those who are new or less experienced, especially in public, where a particular duty of care is owed.

Once a year, everyone on the Centre team, all trustees, and everyone teaching or leading our events will be asked to read and agree to these guidelines, alongside our 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 our dealings with one another we aspire to behave in a spirit of kindness, expressing spiritual friendship. Those in positions of trust and authority must not misuse that position, real or perceived, for their own benefit, or to influence others inappropriately.

Physical violence and strong expressions of anger have no place among us. The North London Buddhist Centre is vegetarian and we aim to reduce our environmental impact of our activities where we can.

2. I undertake the training principle of abstention from taking the not given

With open-handed generosity, I purify my body.

We 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 on our council of trustees.

Those of us who handle money, property or other resources for the Centre will take care of them and avoid their deliberate misuse or misappropriation.

3. I undertake the training principle of abstention from sexual misconduct

With stillness, simplicity and contentment I purify my body.

It is natural that close relationships should 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 in teaching, supporting roles or with other positions of responsibility, carry a particular responsibility towards those new to Triratna. As someone begins to explore the liberation that Dharma practice offers, it is

easy to confuse strength of feeling for the Dharma with attraction to the individual who is their main point of contact with it.

So it is highly inadvisable for anyone leading activities, or in a position of leadership, to enter into a sexual relationship with someone new to Triratna. Even where there is clear mutual attraction, they will wait until the more experienced Buddhist is no longer a primary teacher or mentor, and until that person has formed other friendships with others in the community.

Where such a relationship is proposed, we ask that it be discussed openly with other Order members, usually the Order member's chapter, preceptor and kalyana mitras, and that notes are made of those discussions, should questions arise later.

Where the other person is under 18, this is not a matter of judgement. Sexual contact between someone in a position of trust and a person under 18 is a criminal offence. See section 3.1 of the Safeguarding Policy.

4. I undertake the training principle of abstention from false speech

With truthful communication, I purify my speech.

We are committed to truthful, meaningful, helpful and harmonious communication, written or spoken, and to an atmosphere of friendliness, co-operation and trust. We share information carefully, mindful of the wellbeing of those we discuss and of data protection law.

We encourage ethical reflection and disclosure in our community, in its own time and at its own pace.

Note that Buddhist confession offers no protection from UK law. Where someone discloses seriously harmful behaviour against an adult or a child, recent or historic, including sexual and violent offences, viewing indecent images of children, domestic violence and stalking, that disclosure goes to the Safeguarding Officer immediately and in some instances the police. See the Safeguarding Policy.

5. I undertake the training principle of abstention from intoxication

With mindfulness clear and radiant I purify my mind.

We aim to support the development of wisdom and compassion through deepening awareness, and to engage with our practice and with each other as mindfully as we can - providing a supportive environment for those wishing to live without intoxicants.

Alcohol, other intoxicants, smoking, e-cigarettes and vaping are not permitted on our premises.

If you have concerns

If you are concerned about the ethical behaviour of anyone in the Sangha, or about someone you believe may be at risk, contact the Safeguarding Officer at safeguarding@northlondonbuddhistcentre.com or the Chair at chair@northlondonbuddhistcentre.com.

They will consider whether your concern is a safeguarding matter or one of more general ethical concerns, and will talk with you about how it should be addressed. We will take it seriously. We cannot offer absolute confidentiality, the Safeguarding Policy explains what we would share, with whom, and when.