

Sheffield Buddhist Centre

Ethical guidelines

These guidelines are intended as a statement of our values as order members and mitras leading, supporting or administering classes or other activities at Sheffield Buddhist Centre.

1

I undertake to abstain from harming living beings. With deeds of loving-kindness I purify my body.

Sheffield Buddhist Centre aims to support the awakening of the individual in the context of a spiritual community. In all our dealings with one another we aspire to behave in a spirit of kindness, expressing kalyana mitrata, or spiritual friendship.

Our spiritual community has been defined by Sangharakshita as a 'free association of individuals'. Respecting this, it is important that individuals in positions of trust and authority do not misuse their position or authority for their own benefit or to influence others inappropriately.

We wish to minimise the harm we do, to any living being and to the natural world that sustains us.

We affirm that physical violence and displays of anger have no place among us. As far as possible, conflicts will be resolved through discussion and, if necessary, with mediation. We wish to create a safe space for people practising at the Centre and if necessary we will take action to ensure that anyone behaving in a threatening manner does not challenge the safety of others.

We will buy only vegetarian products and ingredients and serve or permit to be served only vegetarian food at the Centre. This expresses an attitude of metta and non-harm towards all living beings and towards the entire natural world, consistent with Triratna's practical approach to ethics.

Sheffield Buddhist Centre is part of the Triratna Sustainable Centres scheme. We are committed to protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint by following the ten-point plan outlined in our 'Sustainable Centre' certificate, which is displayed in our tea room.

2

I undertake to abstain 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.

At Sheffield Buddhist Centre we operate an economy based on generosity: a 'dana' economy. We undertake to share the Dharma in a spirit of generosity, making the Buddha's teachings available to all regardless of financial circumstances. We do not charge for Dharma activities, including retreats.

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

We value openness, transparency and accountability. Those with responsibility for collecting or administering the Buddhist Centre's financial or material resources will do so with the utmost care and respect for the generosity of donors who support the Centre financially, in consultation with others as appropriate.

Where misuse is deemed to have occurred, we will investigate and take action promptly. We have systems in place to minimise the possibility of financial misuse.

Generosity is at the heart of Sheffield Buddhist Centre's activity. The Centre gives generously financially to other Buddhist activities both nationally and internationally and will do this every year unless it is not possible for financial reasons.

The Sheffield Buddhist Centre is also part of the broader community and the natural world. We will express generosity through our engagement in altruistic activity locally and nationally. We undertake to make responsible and ethical purchases. We try to avoid taking the not-given in relation to the environment by minimising the Centre's consumption of natural resources, in accordance with the Triratna Sustainable Centre Scheme.

3

I undertake to abstain from sexual misconduct. With stillness, simplicity and contentment I purify my body.

Triratna is a community of people practising the Buddha's teachings together. As such it is natural that close relationships should develop between us, and that some of these may be sexual relationships.

We encourage people to conduct their sexual relationships ethically, with awareness and kindness, whether with people of the same or opposite sex.

People in teaching roles, or otherwise helping to lead SBC activities, have a particular responsibility in this area, especially to those new to Triratna. We propose that they do not start a new relationship while they are the other person's main connection with Buddhism and Triratna, even when there is a clear mutual attraction and a wish to enter a relationship.

Rather we would ask them to wait until the less experienced person has established other effective relationships within our community.

We suggest that any proposed relationship between someone in a leading role and a less experienced person is discussed openly in an Order context. Usually this will mean their chapter and/or their preceptor and kalyana mitras (spiritual friends).

The team supporting newcomers classes will be asked to discuss any potential relationships with the Order members leading the class and ideally to wait until the new person is established within the sangha before starting a relationship.

Where inappropriate sexual behaviour is deemed to have occurred, we will investigate and take action promptly. Please also see SBC's Safeguarding Policy.

4

I undertake to abstain from false speech. With truthful communication, I purify my speech.

In all our dealings with one another, we are committed to truthful, meaningful and harmonious speech which encourages spiritual growth and creates community. This applies to online communication as well as face to face communication.

We affirm that swearing and harsh language have no place among us.

We agree to hold and share information carefully and respectfully, motivated by desire for the wellbeing and spiritual progress of those we discuss.

We need to be clear with individuals and groups when confidentiality may not be appropriate and that we may need to disclose any issues or concerns to others, via our safeguarding procedures.

5

I undertake to abstain from intoxication. With mindfulness clear and radiant I purify my mind.

Sheffield Buddhist Centre aims to provide a context for the development of wisdom and compassion through deepening awareness and the practice of mindfulness. Intoxicants, by their very nature, undermine and hinder the development of awareness. Therefore we will not serve, or permit to be served, alcohol or other intoxicants at the Buddhist Centre.

In the spirit of exemplification, those engaged in leading, supporting or administering activities for Sheffield Buddhist Centre are also expected to demonstrate a responsible attitude to alcohol and other intoxicants.

We are also concerned about the potential for intoxication through the use of electronic devices and we expect phones and other devices to be turned off during classes and meditation sessions and for those leading and supporting activities to exemplify moderation in the use of electronic devices.

General Remarks

The inspiration for these ethical guidelines has been a process currently taking place across the wider Triratna Buddhist Community to clarify thinking in these areas.

The guidelines are to be kept under review by the Centre Team. Any recommended changes are to be referred to the Council

Procedures

If at any time there is a perceived breach of these guidelines, the Trustees ask that it be made known in the first instance to the Chair, Maitridasa or any member of the Centre Team or Council.

The Centre also has a Safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Trustee is Punyamala and the Safeguarding Officer is Satyajyoti.