

# London Buddhist Centre

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## London Buddhist Centre: Ethical Guidelines

These guidelines follow the framework of the Buddha's five ethical precepts – widely known throughout the Buddhist world - offering a general principle for each and one or two specific applications.

The precepts can be applied to all areas of human behaviour. These guidelines are mainly intended to offer guidance in one key area: where Order members, or other experienced members of the Triratna community, are presenting and communicating Buddhist principles to those who are new or less experienced, especially in public situations, where a particular duty of care is owed.

### First precept

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

In all our dealings with one another we aspire to be kind.

Individuals in positions of trust and authority as members of the London Buddhist Centre (LBC) do not misuse their trusted position or authority 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 verbal abuse have no place among us.

We will endeavour to work within our community to reduce and minimise any harmful impact on the environment, locally and internationally.

### Second precept

*I undertake to abstain from taking the not-given.  
With open-handed generosity, I purify my body.*

The LBC runs on generosity: teachers and class teams offer their time, skills and experience voluntarily. We are keen to develop this culture of generosity ('dana'), so many of our events are offered free of charge, but with an invitation to attendees to give what they can.

This culture of generosity extends to all levels of the LBC. For example, everyone employed by the LBC is given a 'support' package which covers their basic financial needs (food, rent etc), with a little extra for spending and travel. On this basis, people give what they can and take what they need. It is therefore generosity that is the principal motivation for a deepening commitment within the LBC, rather than status or the accumulation of wealth. Generosity is a virtue that is highly regarded in Buddhism and we hope that this quality is brought to the fore at the LBC.

Those who handle money or property for the LBC or an LBC enterprise will take care of them and avoid their deliberate misuse or misappropriation. If misuse is suspected, we will investigate and take action immediately.

### **Third precept**

*I undertake to abstain from sexual misconduct.*

*With stillness, simplicity and contentment, I purify my body.*

The LBC (which is part of the wider Triratna Buddhist Community) is a community of people practising the Buddha's teachings together. While members of the Triratna Buddhist Order do not regard themselves as laypeople, the Order is not an exclusively monastic one either. As such 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. People in teaching roles or similar have a particular responsibility in this area, especially with regard to those new to the LBC. We propose that they do not start a relationship while they are the other person's main connection with Buddhism and Triratna, even when there is clear mutual attraction and they both wish to enter into a relationship. Rather, we would ask them to wait until the less experienced person has established other effective friendships within our community.

We suggest that any proposed relationship between an Order Member in a teaching role and a less experienced person is discussed openly in an Order context. Usually this will mean in their chapter and/or with their preceptor and kalyana mitras.

### **Fourth precept**

*I undertake to abstain from false speech.*

*With truthful communication, I purify my speech.*

At ordination, members of the Triratna Buddhist Order undertake ten training precepts, of which four concern ethical communication. In all our dealings we are committed to truthful, kindly, 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 a desire for the wellbeing and spiritual progress of those we discuss.

We encourage ethical reflection and disclosure in our community, but are careful to

emphasise that this happens in its own time and at its own pace. We note that confession may offer no protection from the law. Illegal activity disclosed in the context of confession may have to be reported to the relevant authorities.

#### **Fifth precept**

*I undertake to abstain 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 will not serve alcohol or other intoxicants at any LBC activities.

#### **Reviewing this document**

This document will be reviewed two years from now, in December 2022

London Buddhist Centre, December 2020

**Chair's name: Suryagupta**

**Chair's signature**

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