

Sunyata Buddhist Centre's Code of Ethics for Lay Teachers

The Sunyata Board of Trustees has reflected upon the application of the Five Precepts for our lay teachers and have agreed to the following commitments. Everyone at Sunyata who is in a teaching role is required to adhere to this Code of Ethics.

1. We undertake the precept of refraining from killing.

In undertaking this precept we acknowledge the interconnection of all beings and our respect for all life. We agree to refine our understanding of not killing and non-harming in all our actions.

2. We undertake the precept of refraining from stealing.

We agree to not take that which does not belong to us and to respect the property of others. We agree to bring consciousness to the use of all the earth's resources in a respectful and ecological way. We agree to be honest in our dealings with money and not to misappropriate money or goods donated to Sunyata. We agree to offer teachings without favouritism regarding retreatants' financial or social circumstances.

3. We undertake the precept of refraining from sexual misconduct.

To nurture an atmosphere of safety, we will model and encourage non-sexualized communications and behaviour. With respect to relationships between a teacher and a student, we will abide by the following agreements:

We agree to avoid creating harm through sexual misconduct. We agree not to use our roles as teachers to exploit our authority and position.

We agree to the following guidelines:

- a. A sexual relationship is always inappropriate between teachers and students. Teachers will refrain from engaging in sexual activity with students without exception, including refraining from any speech or action indicating or implying sexual interest in a student.
- b. During retreats of formal teaching, any intimation of teacher-student romantic or sexual relationship is inappropriate. Teachers will remain mindful that students and teachers can transfer/project feelings, including sexual feelings, onto the student-teacher relationship. When a teacher recognizes this is occurring with either parties, the teacher will consult with a trusted peer, and if appropriate, end the teacher /student relationship to safeguard the integrity of the student.
- c. If a genuine and committed relationship develops over time between a teacher and a student, the teacher - student relationship must have ended before any further development toward a romantic relationship. Such a relationship must be approached with restraint and sensitivity – in no case should it occur immediately after a retreat and our recommendation is a "cooling off period" of 6 to 12 weeks.

4. We undertake the precept of refraining from false speech.

We agree to speak that which is true and useful and to refrain from unskillful speech in our community. We agree to hold in confidence what is explicitly shared with us as teachers with due consideration given to our legal obligations in disclosing when an adult or a child is at risk. We agree to cultivate conscious and clear communication, and to cultivate the quality of loving-kindness and honesty as the basis of our speech.

5. We undertake the precept of refraining from intoxicants that cause heedlessness or loss of awareness.

We agree that there should be no use of intoxicants during retreats or while on retreat premises. We agree to not abuse or misuse intoxicants. Teachers in active addiction should cease teaching and seek support.