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## CONTENTS LIST

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<b>VOLUNTEER POLICY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
INTRODUCTION.....	3
TYPES OF VOLUNTEER.....	3
PRINCIPLES OF THE VOLUNTEER POLICY.....	4
RECRUITMENT .....	4
VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT .....	5
INDUCTION, TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND MENTORING.....	5
USE OF COMPUTERS AND E-MAIL.....	5
<b>CORE VALUES/ETHICAL GUIDELINES.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY.....</b>	<b>9</b>
STATEMENT .....	9
<i>Guidelines.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Procedures.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
INTER-PERSONAL PROBLEMS.....	12
GRIEVANCES ABOUT YOUR WORK AT THE CENTRE.....	12
GRIEVANCES ABOUT ANOTHER PERSON AT THE CENTRE.....	13
<b>DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY.....</b>	<b>16</b>
THE COUNCIL.....	16
VOLUNTEERS, FRIENDS AND USERS OF THE CENTRE:.....	16
<b>FIRST AID.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>FIRE PROCEDURE.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>FOOD HANDLING POLICY.....</b>	<b>19</b>
STATEMENT.....	19
RISKS.....	19
PURCHASING, TRANSPORTING & STORING.....	19
FOOD HANDLING – SPECIAL EVENTS.....	20
<i>Storage of Cooked Food.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>MOVING AND HANDLING POLICY.....</b>	<b>21</b>
STANDARD STATEMENT.....	21
MOVING AND HANDLING OPERATIONS.....	21
<b>RISK ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>22</b>
LOBBY & STAIRS & LANDINGS .....	22



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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<i>Trips and Falls</i> .....	22
<i>Security</i> .....	22
<i>Hazards</i> .....	22
SHRINE ROOM.....	22
<i>Security</i> .....	22
<i>Trips and Falls</i> .....	22
<i>Hazardous Substances</i> .....	22
<i>Electrical Safety</i> .....	22
SANGHA ROOM.....	23
<i>Security</i> .....	23
<i>Trips and Falls</i> .....	23
<i>Hazardous Substances</i> .....	23
<i>Electrical Safety</i> .....	23
RECEPTION/OFFICE/SERVERY.....	23
<i>Security</i> .....	23
<i>Trips and Falls</i> .....	23
<i>Electrical Safety</i> .....	23
TOILETS.....	23
<i>Hygiene</i> .....	23
<i>Trips and Falls</i> .....	23
<i>Hazardous Substances</i> .....	23
<i>Electrical Safety</i> .....	23
LIFT.....	24
<b>VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT.....</b>	<b>25</b>
The Centre .....	25
The Volunteer.....	25



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## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

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“The Centre” means the Ipswich Buddhist Centre

“Volunteer” means a participant or someone who gives their time or other resources to the Centre as part of their practice of generosity, which is one of our core values.

### **Introduction**

The Centre’s vision is to encourage people to live in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha, in particular through the Core Values (see Core Values section), the practice of which can be continuously improved and deepened.

#### **Our objectives are to:-**

- Further the advancement of the Buddhist Religion as a living practice relevant to our lives; and
- Maintain close communication with and work under the guidance of the Triratna Buddhist Order and in co-operation with other groups with the same objectives.

#### **The Centre is committed to:-**

- Maintaining and improving the practice of Buddhism in this place and amongst the community or Sangha;
- Being a Centre of Excellence for all manner of teaching and communication which is conducive to greater awareness and enlightenment; and
- Being open to all who seek to learn, to change and to heal, regardless of their faith or conviction.

The Centre is a voluntary organisation and volunteers are at the heart of its structure. The Centre is the fruit of our combined efforts and energies to live according to our agreed Core Values. Those values are communicated through our activities, and the atmosphere of awareness and friendliness with which we undertake those activities.

This policy sets out how The Centre intends to support its volunteers.

### **Types Of Volunteer**

The Centre recognises types of volunteer.

- Trustees and Council members who hold positions of legal responsibility and have been elected or selected on the basis of their Buddhist commitment, their skills and experience.
- Dharma teachers
- Volunteer without legal responsibility, who may volunteer occasionally or regularly
- Practitioners who offer services within the Centre

Volunteers have varying levels of commitment to Buddhist practice or to the Centre. There are five main categories:



**1. Members of the Triratna Buddhist Order** are ordained members who have undergone training with the Triratna Buddhist Order over many years and been ordained through the ordination process by two senior Order Members who have been approved as Preceptors.

**2. Mitras who have asked for Ordination** are on the path of training to join the Order.

**3. Mitras** are people who have affirmed that they wish to orient their lives around the three jewels of Buddhism, the Buddha, the teaching or Dharma and the Sangha the spiritual community.

**4. Friends** are volunteers who have done a level 1 Meditation & Buddhism Course or equivalent; some Friends are also Practitioners.

**5. Practitioners** are fully qualified therapists in their area, carry up to date insurance, and have been approved by the Council to practice at the Centre. (to date we have two Practitioners, Matt Robbins, (Kung Fu) and Shubha (Tai Chi).

## **Principles of the Volunteer Policy**

This policy is consensual

The Centre is committed to good practice when supporting its volunteers.

The Centre recognises that volunteers donate their time. Their contributions and roles will be clearly explained and mutually agreed.

The Centre is committed to providing volunteers with induction, information, training, and support that is appropriate to their volunteer roles. This will enhance the experience of volunteers and enable them to effectively contribute to the Centre's activities.

The Centre aims, whenever possible, to give volunteers work that is satisfying and appropriate to their interest.

Volunteers have the right to express their views within the Centre structure. The Centre's aim is to build a community where all those taking responsibility through volunteering can have a voice.

Volunteers will work together in accordance with the Centre's Core Values, policies and procedures.

The Centre is committed to equal opportunities in relation to the recruitment, selection and involvement of volunteers.

## **Recruitment**

The Centre will make ongoing efforts to recruit volunteers in a way which aspires to create equal opportunities for all.

**There will be regular events to explain how volunteers can help out at the Centre.**

**Prospective volunteers will receive an interview that will identify the skills and interests of the volunteer and match these with the current needs of the Centre**

**All volunteers are asked to attend an induction session covering this Handbook and the Centre's Core Values.**



## **Volunteer agreement**

Volunteers will be asked to sign an agreement outlining the commitment of the Centre to the volunteer, and the role or specific tasks that the volunteer has undertaken although this may evolve and other duties maybe taken on.

The Council Member doing the induction will also sign this agreement

The agreement is by no means a contract; it is simply a guideline to help the volunteer feel supported and clearer about their responsibilities.

All Volunteers will receive a copy of this Volunteer Handbook to keep and refer to when necessary.

When the volunteer signs the volunteer agreement they agree to abide by the policies and guidelines in this Handbook

## **Induction, training, supervision and mentoring**

Volunteers will receive an appropriate induction, which will include information on the Centre and its policies, procedures and Core Values, health and safety, details of the volunteer's role and any additional information for the volunteer to carry out their work. The Centre will strive to make the induction sessions accessible and relevant to the needs of volunteers. Training opportunities to develop knowledge and skills may be provided if required

When a volunteer starts, a contact person from the Council will be responsible for providing the volunteer with supervision and mentoring, depending on the requirements of the volunteer's role.

A record will be kept about each volunteer's induction. This will be kept in a secure place only accessible by the Volunteer Coordinator, the Chairperson, and the person concerned.

## **Complaints**

Any volunteer who feels they have been discriminated against or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through the Centre's Grievance Procedure.

## **Use of computers and e-mail**

E-mail is recognised as a means of communication. Volunteers should bear in mind that e-mail is to be treated no differently to written communications in terms of observance of courtesy and avoidance of derogatory comments – See the Core Values

E-mail is not secure and sensitive material should not be sent via e-mail. Any messages that are intended to remain confidential to the recipient should be clearly marked as such.

All personal use of e-mail or the internet must be in the volunteer's personal time, not during the time they are undertaking their volunteer role. Volunteers are not permitted to set up personal accounts on our e-mail system.

Use of the Centre's facilities to deliberately access pornographic, racist or other material in contravention of our policies will be considered a matter of gross misconduct to be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.



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## **CORE VALUES/ETHICAL GUIDELINES**

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### **Ipswich Triratna Buddhist Centre Ethical Guidelines for those running and supporting activities**

The 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.

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

In principle all Triratna activities aim to support the awakening of the individual. In all our dealings with one another we aspire to behave in a spirit of kindness, expressing *kalyana mitrata*, which we translate as 'spiritual friendship'.

Our spiritual community has been defined by its founder, Sangharakshita, as a 'free association of individuals'. While respecting this principle, it is important that individuals in positions of trust and authority as members of Triratna 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 strong expressions of anger have no place among us.

We will work within our community, and with other like-minded groups, to reduce and minimise our impact on the environment, locally and internationally.

We agree to only bring vegan food into the Centre.

- **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.

We aspire to express generosity by caring for the Ipswich Triratna Community and those who work and practise within it. Participation in the Centre involves practising generosity – the Centre gives freely to you, and you have the opportunity to give time, energy and money to the Centre and offer support to those who undertake particular responsibilities in teaching and administration or serving as trustees or council members.

Those who handle money or property for a Triratna Buddhist centre or enterprise will take care of these resources and refrain from their deliberate misuse or misappropriation. If misuse is suspected, we will investigate and take action promptly.



- **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. It is natural therefore, that close relationships may develop between us. Some of these might become sexual relationships.

We encourage all members of our community to conduct their sexual relationships ethically, with awareness and kindness.

People in teaching roles or with other responsibilities have a particular duty in this area, especially to those new to Triratna. 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 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 sexual relationship between someone in a teaching role and a less experienced person is discussed openly in an Order context that ideally would be mixed. Usually this will also include their chapter and/or their preceptor and kalyana mitras.

- **4. 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 with those we teach 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 desire for the wellbeing and spiritual progress of those we discuss.

We encourage ethical reflection and disclosure in our community.

We note that confession may offer no protection from the law, though this may differ from country to country. Illegal activity disclosed in the context of confession may have to be reported to the relevant authorities.

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

The Ipswich Buddhist Centre aims to provide a context 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.

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 Ipswich Buddhist Centre or its events elsewhere.

We aim to provide supportive environments for those wishing to live without intoxicants.



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

*Sabbe satta sukhi hontu*

*May all beings be well and happy*



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## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

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Meetings, discussions and study groups take place under the Chatham House Rule

The Chatham House Rule reads as follows:

*"When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed".*

The Chatham House Rule originated at Chatham House with the aim of providing anonymity to speakers and to encourage openness and the sharing of information. It is now used throughout the world as an aid to free discussion.

It allows people to speak as individuals, and to express views that may not be those of their organizations, and therefore it encourages free discussion. People usually feel more relaxed if they don't have to worry about their reputation or the implications if they are publicly quoted.

**The Rule depends for its success on being seen as morally binding. The Complaints Policy applies for breaches of the Rule. As part of our practice of loving kindness we aim to respect others, by not disclosing information about them that they may not wish to be disclosed.**

### **Statement**

All personal information (computerised or otherwise recorded) collected and held by the Centre is covered by the GDPR.. The Act requires all those using or collecting the information to abide by the GDPR Principles.

Broadly, the principles state that personal data must be-

- Obtained and processed fairly and lawfully
- Held for the lawful purpose described in the registration
- Used only for those purposes, and disclosed only to appropriate people
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which they are held
- Accurate and where necessary, kept up-to-date
- Held no longer than is necessary
- Accessible to the individual concerned who, where appropriate, has the right to have information about themselves corrected or erased properly
- Safeguarded

The Centre acknowledges that all information in respect of

- The Triratna Buddhist Community Ipswich,
- Members of the Triratna Buddhist Order Ipswich,
- Practitioners and clients

should be handled in accordance with the GDPR Principles.



### **Guidelines**

The Centre will not hold any information of a sensitive nature and will only keep mailing lists. Contact details of Friends will only be retained by agreement with the individual.

Practitioners will be responsible for any notes they make relating to clients and will ensure that they are handled in accordance to the GDPR act and confidentiality according to the standard of their profession.

Information as to the level of experience of individuals will be retained in order to identify appropriate levels of support and/or study.

Information will only be shared with appropriate others and the individual will be informed.

Information given in confidence will not be shared against the individual's wishes.

Order Members when discussing others will do so in line with their ethical code of practice.



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## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

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**As part of our practice we cultivate warm-hearted friendliness, through acknowledging the interconnectedness of beings.**

Our aim is to provide an ethos of mutual respect and equality of opportunity for all – irrespective of religion, gender, marital status, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, political beliefs, disability, HIV status, mental health, employment status or age. No job applicant, employee, volunteer, trustee, member or client should receive less favourable treatment on any of these grounds. Nor will such person be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This principle applies to recruitment, training, benefits, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions of employment or volunteering.

We welcome the diversity in the people we provide a service to and in our volunteers. Diversity is not just seen as something to aim for but as something to be valued.

However, as a Centre based on the Core Values and Buddhist ethical precepts, it is for those who follow a different religion to ascertain for themselves whether they can agree to these Core Values in their contact with the Centre.

Everyone who comes to the Centre will be afforded equal respect. Volunteers needing special support will be afforded equal opportunities provided they have the necessary attributes for the post and that the Centre can make 'reasonable' accommodation to meet their needs.

### **Guidelines**

The day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Council members and the Volunteer Coordinator, although everyone has a responsibility to ensure the positive application of this policy.

### **Procedures**

Any incident within the Centre that reflects an attitude that is discriminatory or undermines the self-esteem of others should be discussed immediately. The Centre values such incidents being brought to attention – they demonstrate loyalty to the Centre and its Core Values.

You may wish to refer to the "Grievance Procedure" for guidance on how to deal with an interpersonal difficulty in an informal way.

Any incidence of sexual harassment, racial abuse etc. either verbal or physical should be dealt with by the Safe Guarding Officers and Chairperson using the formal Grievance Procedure.

Any volunteer who breaches this policy may be the subject of disciplinary action, in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Anyone who is reported as practicing harassment of a sexual, racial nature etc. will be engaged with in an honest and supportive manner that allows learning to take place.

The person reporting the incident will receive full support from the Safe Guarding Officers, Chairperson and Council.



## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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All volunteers will be made aware of the Equal Opportunities Policy during their induction period. Volunteers will be made aware that differences of culture and lifestyle in both user and volunteer groups are to be valued and enhanced not just accepted and tolerated.



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## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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**Whilst we aim to behave according to our core values, we are often motivated by greed hatred and delusion – whilst our practice is not yet perfect, we can be helped by others pointing out our unmindfulness.**

The Centre values your comments - your complaint demonstrates your loyalty to the Centre and your desire to improve matters.

This document falls into three sections:-

- Inter-personal problems
- Complaints about organisational matters
- Complaints about a volunteer or individual's behaviour at the Centre

There are also draft policies for **whistleblowing** and **harassment** but at this stage the Centre considers the Core Values document together with this Complaints policy to be comprehensive enough – when in doubt follow the procedure below.

### Inter-personal problems

Getting upset or having difficulties with someone is not a disaster.

The Centre believes that inter-personal problems are often a matter of miscommunication and that most grievances can and should be addressed informally whenever possible. We value open communication and recognise that getting upset or having difficulties with someone is part of deepening connection, not a barrier to it.

Good Practice is as follows:

- Speak with the person concerned to clarify the situation.
- You may wish to ask for a third person to be present.
- Agree what has been said or done and what, if anything, is to happen.

It is quite natural to talk to someone else when we are upset – if we do this we should be mindful that we may be misrepresenting or slandering, and in a community such as this there is always the danger of such talk turning into slanderous disharmonious gossip. The fault may be clear to our eyes, but we may be unaware of our own value judgement. Good practice is to talk to a suitably experienced person making it clear that we wish to clarify how **we** feel and what **we** think, rather than clarify the faults of others. Distinguish observed behaviour from value judgement.

If informal resolution is not possible or has not been successful, a formal grievance can be made and the procedure below will be followed.

### Grievances about your work at the Centre

If you have any questions or grievances relating to your work at the Centre you may seek redress orally or in writing in the following manner:



- In the first instance you should refer your grievance to the Volunteer Coordinator (or the Chairperson if they are not available) and the matter will be discussed informally with you.
- We undertake to respond to your complaint within 2 weeks of the date of your grievance.
- If the grievance is still not resolved, or you still consider that you have not been fairly treated, you may take the issue to the Council, who will nominate a person or persons to consider the appeal within 14 days of the decision at the previous stage. A meeting will be held with all relevant people and you will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague.
- If the grievance is not thereby resolved, or if you consider that you have not been fairly treated, you may take the grievance to our Centre President, Arthapriya, Padmakula, 9A Auckland Road Cambridge, Cambridgeshire. CB5 8DW

### **Grievances about another person at the Centre**

If you suspect that anyone using the Centre, or anyone in a position of responsibility at the Centre, is acting in a way that is contrary to our Core Values then you may raise this matter using the following procedure.

- In the first instance, bring your concern to the attention of a member of the Council. Members of the Council are Bodhivamsa (Chair) Jnanamitra, Swadipa, Ariyanivata, (Safeguarding Officer, Carumani, (Safeguarding Officer) Viryamati, Avril Miller and Clare Rodger. They will discuss your concern informally with you and, if appropriate, bring it to the attention of the rest of the Council.
- If your grievance needs to proceed to a formal process, an individual agreeable to all will be selected as the process facilitator.
- The individual, or their representative, will present concerns during a personal meeting with the chairperson and the facilitator.
- The chairperson will make a statement based on the information discussed and notify all involved within seven days of the meeting.
- If not satisfied with the outcome, the individual's representative will submit a written statement to the President (Arthapriya) within ten days of receiving the chairperson's statement.
- The President will make a statement after meeting with the chairperson and will notify the individual / representative of that statement within a mutually agreed timescale.
- If appropriate, separate disciplinary action will be taken against the person about whom you raise a grievance.

Throughout this procedure, all involved will have as their measure the highest quality and standard of support as is fair, reasonable, practical and deliverable.

If you do not feel you have been heard you can take your concern to Arthapriya as above.

In cases of theft or other criminal activity the Police will be involved.



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## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

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This disciplinary procedure provides for warnings to be given if a volunteer or employee fails to meet the organisation's standards of conduct or work-related performance. The procedure applies to all volunteers and employees.

If any disciplinary matter involving you arises, in the first instance an Order Member or Volunteer Coordinator will establish the facts concerning the problem, having discussions with any relevant people.

If he or she considers it is not necessary to resort to the formal disciplinary procedure he/she will discuss the matter with you suggesting areas for improvement. The discussions will, as far as possible, be in private and you will be informed that no disciplinary action is being taken.

### **Formal warning procedure**

If it is considered necessary to use the formal warning procedure you will be informed.. The following procedure will then apply.

1. You will be given a formal warning or warnings. The way this warning is given will vary, depending on the seriousness of the offence.
  - In the case of minor offences you will be given a formal oral warning. You will be advised that the warning constitutes the first formal stage of the disciplinary procedure and that a note will be placed on your personal file.
  - In the case of serious offences, or a repetition of earlier minor offences, you will be given a written warning setting out the precise nature of the offence, the likely consequences of further offences and specifying, if appropriate, the improvement required and by when.
  - In the case of a further repetition of an earlier offence, if you still fail to improve or if the offence, you will be given a final written warning setting out the precise nature of the offence, containing a statement of the likely consequences for you of any recurrence and, specifying, if appropriate, the improvement required and over what period.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter and all the other circumstances, any of the above stages can be omitted. In the case of gross misconduct, or if all the appropriate stages of the warning procedure have been exhausted, you will normally be asked to leave, but only after consideration of other possible disciplinary action.

2. In all cases, other than an oral warning, before any disciplinary action you will be interviewed by a member of the Centre's Council and will be informed of the allegations made against you. You will be given the opportunity to state your case at the interview, accompanied by a friend or other representative of your choice. If the complaint is upheld you will be informed of the disciplinary action to be taken, the stage in the disciplinary procedure to be adopted depending on the seriousness of the offence, and your right of appeal.
3. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of any stage of the procedure you may appeal in writing within 14 days to the Centre Chair who will consider the appeal within 14 days of the decision at the previous stage.



The following are non-exhaustive examples of the sort of occurrence which, if committed, will normally lead to formal disciplinary action being taken.

**Minor offences (oral warning), include but are not limited to:**

- Not fulfilling the role assigned to the Volunteer in accordance with the Volunteer Handbook.
- Unreliability. .

Oral warnings will be deemed to have expired six months from the date of issue unless there is a repetition of the relevant conduct.

**Serious offences (written warnings), include but are not limited to:**

- Negligence resulting in minor loss;
- Damage or injury;
- Smoking, vapping or using other intoxicating substances in the Centre;
- Failure to comply with a specific instruction;
- Irresponsibility in relation to other volunteers or employees;
- Activities or impropriety in respect of tasks carried out for the Centre which the Centre reasonably considers to be detrimental to, or conflicting with the interests of the Centre or its clients;
- Failure to disclose any personal interest which conflicts with the matter with which you are engaged or any breach of confidence relating to the Centre's affairs.

Written warnings will be deemed to have expired twelve months after the date of issue, unless there is a repetition of the relevant conduct.

**Gross misconduct which may result in you being asked to leave includes, but is not limited to:**

- Negligence resulting in serious loss;
- Damage or injury;
- Assault or attempted assault;
- Theft;
- Malicious damage to property;
- Wilful disregard of duties or instructions relating to your duties;
- Deliberate and serious breach of confidence relating to the Centre's affairs;
- Misusing personal information obtained through your role at the Centre;
- Falsification of records;
- Conduct violating common decency or conviction for a criminal charge relevant to your role at the Centre;
- Coming to the Centre unfit for work due to intoxication by alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs.

Final written warnings will be deemed to have expired after two years, unless there is a repetition of the relevant conduct.



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## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

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**As part of our practice we maintain mindfulness of things, self, and others – awareness of health and safety is therefore part of our practice and our care for each other.**

### **The Council**

The Council will ensure that the health, safety and welfare of friends and visitors are protected, so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular the council must:

- Provide and maintain equipment and work systems which are safe and healthy,
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision,
- Maintain safe and healthy areas with the necessary facilities,
- To review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

They must also ensure that the Centre and Centre activities do not put friends and members of the public at unnecessary risk.

In order to maintain a healthy and safe environment for everyone, the Council will:

- Carry out regular Risk Assessment Reports
- Place Health & Safety Issues on the Agenda of Council Meetings regularly
- Establish, Monitor and review Emergency Procedures,
- Provide Health & Safety information and training where necessary,
- Seek the support and co-operation of Volunteers to achieve this end.

### **Volunteers, Friends and users of the centre:**

Friends also have legal responsibilities. They must:

- Take care of their own Health and Safety,
- Take care of the Health and Safety of others wherever possible,
- Co-operate with the Council
- Not misuse or interfere with anything provided for Health and Safety purposes,
- Bringing to the attention of the chairperson any issues which they feel requires attention,
- Recording in the Accident/Incident Book any accident, however minor, and bringing this to the attention of the chairperson.



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### FIRST AID

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**As part of our practice we maintain mindfulness of things, self, and others – administering first aid when needed is therefore part of our practice and our care for each other.**

There is one First Aid kit within the Centre, which is located in the Office, together with an Accident Book.

Any competent person can assist with minor First Aid. This includes, for example,

- Cleaning of small cuts, grazes and abrasions with clean running water;
- Application of a plaster/dressing to the injury (if patient not allergic);
- Application of a cold compress to minor bruising or cold running water to minor burns.

All other injuries should be referred to a GP, Practice Nurse or the Casualty Department at the hospital.

It is imperative that ALL head injuries are referred to the hospital.

The person administering the First Aid will record ALL events requiring First Aid in the Accident/Incident Book.

Any reported 'near incidents' should be reported to the Centre Council via the Administration Assistant.



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## **FIRE PROCEDURE**

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**As part of our practice we maintain mindfulness of things, self, and others, which includes responding quickly and mindfully to any fire emergencies.**

All class leaders and volunteers should be inducted into using the fire extinguishes as part of their induction as a volunteer.

All class leaders must be aware of everyone on the premises at the start of each and every class.

1. A Fire may be detected by
  - a. Automatic operation of the Fire alarm
  - b. A Fire being observed within the building
2. If a Fire is observed
  - a. The alarm should be operated by Manual Break Glass point
  - b. The Class Leader should be informed
3. Once the alarm has been raised all persons should evacuate the building, Class Leader(s) being responsible for the evacuation
4. If the person who has observed the Fire feels competent to do so, and feels that it is safe to make the attempt, they could use the appropriate extinguisher to extinguish the Fire. (Extinguishers may be found in the Refuge on the upper floor landing, and under the stairs by the disabled toilet on the ground floor)
5. The Class Leader(s) should ensure evacuation of everyone within the building, ensuring that there is no one remaining in subsidiary rooms such as the toilets, and Servery.
6. If a disabled person is present they should
  - a. Be assisted to safety if on the Ground floor
  - b. If on the first floor, assisted to the Refuge on the landing, with someone designated to stay with them. Once able bodied people have descended the stairs the disabled person should be assisted to the exit.
  - c. The lift should not be used
7. Once out of the building
  - a. The Emergency Services should be contacted
  - b. All evacuated people should assemble at the paving opposite the exit
  - c. Class Leader(s) should check that all members of their class(es) are accounted for
8. The building should not be re-entered until declared safe by the Emergency Services



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## **FOOD HANDLING POLICY**

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**The Servery is an expression of our mindfulness, and it is our public face – the quality of our practice shows through the state of cleanliness and tidiness – which is visible at a glance. All of us contribute – there are no exceptions!**

### **Statement**

The centre has a Servery, which should be used for teas, coffee, biscuits and very light refreshment only. For this reason the potential risks, though still present, are minimal. All food must always be handled in such a way that there is no risk to those eating the final product this includes milk and biscuits. Occasionally food is brought in for special events and classes. In this case the onus is on the individuals who bring food into the centre to follow the Food Handling Policy.

### **Risks**

The main risks, for consideration, are as follows:

1. Contamination from microbiological organisms. This is prevented by these measures:
  - Washing hands before handling food or utensils used to prepare or serve food.
  - Ensuring all surfaces, equipment and utensils are clean and dry.
  - Storing foods correctly in clean, covered containers and at the right temperature.
  - Buying good quality food from reputable shops.
  - Transporting in appropriate carriers.
  - Ensuring prompt delivery from shop to home and stored immediately.
  - The cleaner will be responsible for discarding food that is out of date.
2. Contamination from foreign bodies or pests. This is prevented by these measures
  - Checking visually that food does not have any foreign bodies in/on or near it. e.g. broken glass, insects, hair and that packaging is not torn.
  - Ensuring that pests and insects cannot gain entry into cupboards, fridge etc.
  - Keeping food in covered containers.
3. Contamination from chemicals. This is prevented by these measures:
  - Ensuring that cleaning products used in the servery are stored in the cupboard under the sink. All other products should be stored in the downstairs toilet and extra supplies in the wall cupboard in the refuge.
  - Never using cleaning materials in the servery that are harmful.
  - Never carrying out routine cleaning of the servery whilst food is being prepared or served.



## **Purchasing, Transporting & Storing**

1. Food purchased will be of good quality and purchased from reputable stores.
2. Foods will be checked at purchase to ensure that they are properly packed and in good condition.
3. Food will be transported from shop to centre in clean bags. It will be brought directly to the centre to prevent spoiling. Chilled foods will be transported in a 'Cool Bag'.
4. Food will be stored correctly. Food will be checked for their 'use by' date and any out of date food will be discarded. New foods will be stored behind previously purchased food. Use of stickers with dates when food needs to be disposed of is recommended.
5. Foods in the fridge will be stored so that:
  - All cooked food will be stored at the top half of the fridge.
  - Food products will be stored in separate containers.
  - Raw food will be stored separately in covered containers on a lower shelf.
  - Perishable Foods will be kept in separate containers.
  - NO opened tins to be stored in the fridge.
  - All hazardous substances will be carried in a separate carrier and not allowed to mix with food.
  - Fresh fruit and vegetables will be washed before eating.

## **Food Handling – Special Events**

These guidelines will be followed when catering for special events such as Festival Days and Special Celebrations etc.

### Storage of Cooked Food

If cooked food is not to be eaten immediately it must be stored correctly – covered or wrapped and placed into the fridge once it has cooled. This cooling must not take longer than 1½ hours – if it does, then the food must be discarded.

Raw food will be kept separately from cooked, in separate containers.

Food brought in cool to be reheated must be heated through to the correct temperature

### Microwave

The Centre has a Microwave which can be used for re-heating your own food if you consider it appropriate to do so. Do not reheat food for general consumption unless all parties have agreed to this.

**All surplus food to be removed at the end of a day/evening event.**



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### MOVING AND HANDLING POLICY

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**Noting our precept to avoid harming living beings (including ourselves) we are mindful when lifting and carrying in the centre.**

#### Standard Statement

To ensure the centre safeguards its volunteers, staff, and visitors from injury, it is necessary that all individuals do not attempt to lift anything in the centre they think they cannot manage comfortably. The centre regards chairs, light furniture and ornamentation as being the main objects that will constantly require moving and handling. The centre will ensure individuals do not undertake moving and handling duties that have inherent health/safety risks until they have received adequate instruction. Otherwise, if individuals lift sensible loads, i.e. one chair at a time, using correct lifting procedures the potential for injury will be kept to a minimum.

#### Moving and Handling Operations

All individuals at the centre must:

1. Avoid where possible moving and handling operations which involve a risk of injury.
2. Assess all moving and handling operations.
3. Reduce the risk of injury.
4. **All** objects should be handled using the correct moving and handling techniques i.e. straight back and bent knees. If an object is awkward or heavy then assistance should be sought



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## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

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**Risk assessment is part of our practice of mindfulness – it helps us to be aware of common hazards and to help minimise risk. Each area of the Centre has been assessed for risk so that you can be aware of yourself and others safety.**

### **LOBBY & STAIRS & LANDINGS**

#### Trips and Falls

The stairs and passages are a Fire Exit and must be kept clear at all times – No bicycles should be stored in the lobby. The stairs and stair edgings must be regularly checked for loose carpeting and protruding screws and nails and any offending areas dealt with.

#### Security

The Front door should be kept locked at all times when not in use.

#### Hazards

The cupboards must be kept in a tidy condition.

### **SHRINE ROOM**

#### Security

Be aware that the 'Office' and Sangha room may be vulnerable if left unsecured whilst in the Shrine room.

If there is no-one else on the premises, the front door of the Centre should be closed before starting activities.

#### Trips and Falls

Doors must be kept clear.

Be mindful of the positioning of heaters to avoid trip hazard from flex.

#### Hazardous Substances

The last person to leave the Shrine Room must make sure candles have been put out. The event leader is responsible for checking that all candles have been extinguished at the end of the event.

Candles and incense should be used in appropriate holders and placed on a non flammable surface, such as a glass mat or mirror

#### Electrical Safety

The Fires and Storage Heaters must be regularly safety tested, (PAT) and display the labels.

Check that the fires are off at end of day or end of the event – leave storage heater on in winter.



## **SANGHA ROOM**

### Security

When answering the bell, use the intercom system. **Do not open the door to anyone that you feel uncomfortable about. Instructions for using the intercom and displayed by the screens.**

### Trips and Falls

Chairs must be stacked neatly against a wall when not in use.

The floors must be kept clear of trailing cables.

Be mindful of the positioning of heaters to avoid trip hazard from flex.

### Hazardous Substances

The last person to leave the room must make sure that candles have been put out.

### Electrical Safety

The fires and standing lamp, and other movable electrical equipment must be regularly safety tested, and display the label.

## **RECEPTION/OFFICE/SERVERY**

### Security

The cupboard must be kept closed when not in use.

### Trips and Falls

The floor must be kept clean, and clear of obstacles.

### Electrical Safety

The kettle, water boiler, and computer equipment must be regularly safety tested and display the safety labels.

Water boiler – turn to “Standby” after use

## **TOILETS**

### Hygiene

Wash hands

### Trips and Falls

Floor space to be kept clear

### Hazardous Substances

Bleach and other cleaning materials must be kept in a safe place

Light fittings must be of the appropriate type for toilets and should the covers become detached they must be replaced as soon as possible.



### **LIFT**

The lift is designed to be used by designated persons only, not for general use

Any person needing to use the lift should be trained in its use by someone experienced in its use, and their name then added to the list of designated users in the folder in the office

Do not use the lift for transferring chairs etc from the Shrine Room or visa versa.



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## **VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

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This agreement is intended to indicate the seriousness with which we treat our volunteers. The intention of the agreement is to assure you both of our deep appreciation of your services and to indicate our commitment to do the very best we can to make your volunteer experience here a productive and rewarding one.

### **The Centre**

The Ipswich Buddhist Centre accepts the services of \_\_\_\_\_ as a volunteer beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ and commits to the following:

1. To provide adequate information, training and assistance for the volunteer to be able to meet the responsibilities of his or her volunteer job.
2. To ensure satisfactory supervisory support to the volunteer and to provide feedback on performance.
3. To respect the skills, dignity and individual needs of the volunteer, and to do our best to adjust to these individual requirements.
4. To be receptive to any comment from the volunteer regarding ways in which we might mutually better accomplish our respective tasks.
5. To treat the volunteer as an equal partner with the Centre's staff, management and other volunteers, jointly responsible for completion of the Centre's goals and the fulfilment of its mission.

### **The Volunteer**

I agree to serve as a volunteer and commit to the following:

1. To perform my volunteer duties to the best of my ability.
2. To adhere to the Centre's rules and procedures, including record-keeping requirements and confidentiality of information about the Centre or its members.
3. To meet time and duty commitments, except in exceptional circumstances, or to provide adequate notice so that alternative arrangements can be made.

### **Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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This agreement is not a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created, either now or at any time in the future.