



Tara Mandala Code of Conduct and Ethics - Participant Agreement

Approved by the Board of Trustees, October 2021. Updated October 2024.

This agreement covers policies and conduct related to being a participant in a Tara Mandala program. Tara Mandala is an International Buddhist Organization with a Retreat Center in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. This code of conduct applies to all event participation, including live online programs, virtual retreats, and in-person onsite retreats.

The entirety of Tara Mandala's staff, board, teachers, and residents are required to adhere to an extensive Code of Conduct and Ethics. Tara Mandala strongly believes in the importance of including our participants in the work of creating safe, equitable, and trustworthy spaces for our retreats, events, and programs. Therefore, Tara Mandala has created this abbreviated Participant Code of Conduct and Ethics Agreement for all of our participants to engage in and commit to. May this effort serve to remove any and all forms of discrimination and harassment from our Sangha and global community and provide clarity with respect to the general code of conduct policies set forth by Tara Mandala.

Code of Conduct and Ethics for Participants

This Code of Conduct ("the Code") establishes principles all individuals attending Tara Mandala programs are expected to honor while attending one of Tara Mandala's in-person on-site retreats, live online, virtual retreats, courses, or events.

The Five Precepts:

1. *To abstain from taking life, to care for and protect all living beings, our mothers.*

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. While some of us recommend vegetarianism, and others do not, we all commit ourselves to fulfill this precept in the spirit of reverence for life. The Buddha was not a vegetarian, he took the middle path, eating meat if it was given to him, but he never engaged in the act of taking life.

At Tara Mandala, we serve small amounts of meat at our Tsog (Feasts Offering) in accordance with our Tantric samaya vows. We eat meat in mindful awareness and with the intention to bring that being to a higher rebirth.

In cases where the presence of pests is a threat to the health of the community, we

have been advised by our guiding teachers that we must eliminate the threat to public health; however, in general, we try to avoid taking life.

2. *To abstain from taking what is not given, to respect the property and boundaries of others.*

We agree to not take that which does not belong to us and to respect the property and boundaries of others, both physical and personal space. We agree to bring consciousness to the use of all of 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 committed to Dharma projects.

3. *To abstain from false speech, to tell the truth with compassion.*

We agree to speak that which is true and useful and to refrain from gossip, lying, divisive, and discursive speech in our community. We agree to hold in confidence what is explicitly told to us in confidence, except when it threatens the safety or health of the community. We agree to cultivate conscious and clear communication and to cultivate the quality of loving-kindness and honesty as the basis of our speech.

4. *To abstain from sexual misconduct: refraining from breaking the sexual boundaries of your own or others' committed relationships.*

We agree to avoid causing harm through sexual misconduct and to avoid sexual exploitation or relationships of a sexual manner that are outside of the bounds of the relationship commitments we have made to another or that involve a person who has made vows to another.

Tara Mandala strongly opposes any type of sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Inappropriate sexual conduct that could lead to a claim of sexual harassment is expressly prohibited by this Code and Tara Mandala's policies (see section A. Discrimination, Harassment and Violence).

5. *To abstain from intoxicants which tend to cloud the mind, cause harm, and lead to breaking the other precepts.*

It is clear that substance abuse is a cause of tremendous suffering. We agree that there should be no use of intoxicants during retreats, sangha events, or while on

retreat premises. There are occasions at Tara Mandala or at Tara Mandala Sangha events in which we have a Tsog (Feast Offering) or social gatherings where small amounts of alcohol are offered. We agree not to abuse or misuse intoxicants at any time.

A. Discrimination, Harassment and Violence

Tara Mandala strictly prohibits all types of harassment, including sexual harassment, and all other forms of harassment or discrimination due to race, color, religion, pregnancy, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, genetic information, age, marital status, disability, military and/or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. All forms of harassment of, or by, any person who is associated with or employed by Tara Mandala are not tolerated.

Harassing or discriminating conduct is unacceptable. This includes any time during the program, event, or retreat whether online or onsite.

Harassment, including sexual harassment, is a form of discrimination. It can involve, but is not limited to, unwelcome and offensive comments, persistent pursuit of unwanted relationships, conduct, gestures, or any other contact likely to cause offense or humiliation or that might reasonably be perceived to place a condition of a discriminatory nature on our participants. In general, if someone asks you to stop treating or talking to them in a manner they feel is harassing in nature, then stop.

Tara Mandala strongly opposes violence, including, but not limited to, behavior that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another staff member, retreatant, or member of the public. Prohibited violence also includes all acts of harassment or threat of violence made verbally or in writing. Prohibited violence also includes any other conduct (including email, text, or other electronic communication, telephone, and social media network postings) that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm, harassment, or intimidation.

B. Sexual Harassment

We expect teachers and participants to avoid sexual misconduct, harassment or engagement with each other in any way that is deemed inappropriate, offensive, intimidating, or violates this Code of Conduct. Tara Mandala strongly opposes sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of your participation;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting a participant's continuation in a program;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive retreat space.

Inappropriate sexual conduct that could lead to a claim of sexual harassment is expressly prohibited by the Code of Conduct. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, sexually implicit or explicit communications whether in:

- Written form, such as cartoons, posters, calendars, notes, letters, email;
- Verbal form, such as comments, jokes, foul, or obscene language of a sexual nature, gossiping or questions about another's sex life, or repeated unwanted requests for dates;
- Physical gestures and other non-verbal behavior; or
- Unwelcome touching such as grabbing, fondling, kissing, massages, or brushing up against another's body.

C. Alcohol and Drug Use

While at Tara Mandala and in communal settings, including the community building and temple, online events, or your local Sangha meetings and events, we are committed to working on our minds and emotions, and in doing so we are agreeing to use alcohol mindfully and abstain from intoxication from drugs and alcohol. Having a clear mind is central to this pursuit. Specific policies include:

Alcohol: At Tsog (feast offering ceremony) and other social gatherings there will be a small amount of alcohol offered. If you choose to drink alcohol while at a Tara Mandala program or event, please do so with mindfulness and be respectful of those who abstain. Drinking alcohol is not allowed in the onsite community building specifically. Please refrain from being intoxicated on the land and driving intoxicated on the land (or anywhere else).

Drugs: We do not tolerate smoking of any kind on the land, including but not limited to cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping, cigars, and cannabis. Also, the use of illegal drugs of any kind or the overuse of prescription drugs is prohibited. Any possession, use, or sale of drugs is also prohibited. Going outside the Tara Mandala gate to smoke cannabis and returning intoxicated is not acceptable.

D. Violation of the Code of Conduct and Ethics

If one or more of these codes of conduct or ethics are not upheld during a Tara Mandala program or event, the lead teacher of the event, senior staff, or the Programs Team reserves the right to take action that is commensurate with the offense, up to and including removal from the program or event.

Tara Mandala®

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