



Tara Mandala Code of Conduct and Ethics - Agreement

Approved by the Board of Trustees, August 5, 2021.

This agreement covers policies and conduct related to being a resident, employee, contractor, board member, Tara Mandala teacher, Sangha Leader and Mandala Committee member, or visiting teachers associated with Tara Mandala, an International Buddhist Organization with a Retreat Center in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. This code of conduct applies at any event where you are officially representing Tara Mandala in any capacity.

Everyone associated with Tara Mandala, aside from short-term visitors and retreatants (program attendees) must adhere to these policies and sign them as part of their agreements with Tara Mandala.

As board and staff members, teachers, sangha leaders of Tara Mandala, we do our work ethically and to the best of our ability in order to honor the mission of Tara Mandala, add value to our community, and preserve our reputation of trustworthiness.

1. Structure of Tara Mandala

Tara Mandala, Inc. was incorporated as a Colorado Nonprofit Corporation in 1994. Tara Mandala is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) religious organization and church. Tara Mandala is led by Spiritual Director, Lama Tsultrim Allione and managed by its Board of Trustees who provide overall governance and set policy, work on the strategic and master plans, and implement and follow its bylaws. In order to preserve Tara Mandala's core principle of the strengthening of the feminine voice, the organization commits to always having a majority of women as trustees on the Tara Mandala Board who identify with the feminine and the need for it in the world.

Tara Mandala's day-to-day operations are overseen and managed by its Executive Director. The Retreat Center is overseen by the Executive Director and Retreat Center Managers. The Executive Council (EC) aka "Upaya Council", provides support and oversight on key policy and operational issues and keeps the board updated on day-to-day operations of Tara Mandala. The EC is currently composed of the President of the Board, the Assistant Spiritual Director, the Executive Director, and the Dorje Gyaltsab. The Prajna Council is comprised of the Spiritual Director, Dorje Lopöns, and Dorje Gyaltsab who oversee the Programmatic and Spiritual Direction of Tara Mandala.

2. Code of Conduct

Adopted by Board - January 22, 2019; revised and approved August 5, 2021

This Code of Conduct ("the Code") establishes principles all individuals working with Tara Mandala are expected to honor in the performance of their work, whether they are staff,

Tara Mandala®

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residents, contractors, teachers, Living Dharma Program participants or members of the board (defined as “staff members” herein).

Tara Mandala is a non-profit, religious Buddhist organization whose mission is to benefit all beings through teachings leading to the development of wisdom and compassion. This Code of Conduct is based on the five precepts. These are practical, common-sense precepts that create harmony and foster trust in our community.

We have specifically expanded the scope of these Five Precepts to make them explicitly appropriate in our specific cultural setting. The 10 virtuous and 10 non-virtuous actions common in Buddhism are included at the end of this document (Appendix A).

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 Offerings) 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 C. Discrimination & Harassment).

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. Basic Principles and Values

This Code of Conduct covers, in general terms, some of the various situations that we may encounter. While it is not possible to cover every situation that we may face, there are certain basic principles and values to which all of us should adhere.

1. Be Inclusive

We welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities. This includes but is not limited to members of any sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, social and economic class, educational level, marital status, color, immigration status, sex, gender, pregnancy, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, physical ability, disability, military and/or veteran status. You can read more about Tara Mandala's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiative [here](#).

2. Be Considerate

We all depend on each other to produce the best effort and intention we can. Your decisions will affect participants, retreatants and colleagues, no matter the environment, such as onsite or online. Please take those consequences into account when making decisions. During periods of silence at onsite events, staff members will not engage in conversation in common space and keep work related conversations to minimum audible level and out of range of retreatants.

3. Be Respectful

We will not all agree all the time, but disagreement is no excuse for disrespectful behavior. We will all experience frustration from time-to-time, but we cannot allow that frustration to transform into personal attacks of others. An environment where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not a productive, spiritual, or creative one. Under no circumstances shall a conflict or disagreement be voiced, expressed in body language, social media, or in online chats or discussion forums, or discussed in front of or with retreatants or visitors at the Retreat Center.

4. Choose your words carefully

Always conduct yourself professionally. Be kind to others. Use Right Speech, which has four aspects:

- Abstain from false speech; do not tell lies or deceive.
- Do not slander others or speak in a way that causes disharmony or enmity.
- Abstain from rude, impolite, or abusive language.
- Do not indulge in idle talk, gossip, or discursive speech.

Do not insult or put down others or engage in unnecessary gossip or discursive speech. Be respectful towards all residents, retreatants, teachers, students and guest teachers and their spiritual teachings. This includes in-person speech, speech while participating in online retreats, virtual retreats, on social media related to Tara Mandala activities, discussion forums, emails, etc.

5. Make Differences into Strengths

We can find strength in diversity. Different people have different perspectives on issues and that can be valuable for solving problems or generating new ideas. When we disagree, try to understand why. Differences of opinion and disagreements are normal. What is important is that we resolve disagreements and differing views constructively and kindly. Being unable to understand why someone holds a viewpoint doesn't mean that they are wrong. We all make mistakes and blaming each other does not promote a positive outcome. Instead, focus on resolving issues and learning from mistakes and finding growth from mistakes and conflict.

6. The Six Paramitas

Paramita means "perfection." We practice the Six Paramitas in order to cultivate compassion and mindfulness while living and working in community. The Six Paramitas are: Generosity, Ethical Conduct, Patience, Diligence, Concentration, and Wisdom.

7. Service to the Dharma

We have the opportunity to become fully dedicated to practice and being of service to the Dharma, seeing all work, regardless of its form or appearance, as opportunities to practice. Service is an opportunity to take Dharma "off the cushion" and into the world. Personal challenges become an opportunity to turn to wisdom, skillful means, and compassion as methods for transforming our experience.

B. Behavior in the Workplace

We are expected to conduct ourselves in a professional, kind, and ethical manner with other staff members and with any other individuals with whom we have contact on behalf of Tara Mandala. To this end, it is important that we do not insult or put down others or engage in unnecessary gossip or discursive speech. Tara Mandala will not tolerate inappropriate behavior, discrimination, harassment, or violence committed by or against any officer, employee or resident or program participant. Anyone who is found to be engaging in inappropriate behavior such as harassment, discrimination or violence will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and possibly immediate removal from the land and/or position.

Tara Mandala strives to create and maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment and expects that staff who are subject to this, or witness this, to make a timely report to enable Tara Mandala to investigate and correct any behavior which may be a violation of this Code or Tara Mandala's policies. Staff who report harassment or discrimination will not be subjected to any form of retaliation.

C. Discrimination and Harassment

Tara Mandala strictly prohibits all types of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and all other forms of workplace harassment or discrimination due to race, color, religion, pregnancy, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, genetic information, age (40 and over), 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 hiring, training, scheduling, advancement, compensation, benefits, discipline, and termination practices.

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 employment, training, promotion, or the provision of services, and that is related to a prohibited ground of discrimination. In general, if someone asks you to stop treating or talking to them in a manner they feel is harassing in nature, then stop.

D. Sexual Harassment

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 employment;

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

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.

E. Violence

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.

F. Intimate Workplace Relationships

Tara Mandala Retreat Center is a place where retreatants and staff members come to undertake accelerated spiritual growth. It is our aim to provide a safe place for the openness and vulnerability fostered by the retreat experience whether in person or online. Staff, teachers, or residents are not allowed to enter into intimate relationships with retreatants, solo retreatants, or other guests, including Living Dharma Apprentice (LDA) or Practitioner in Resident (PIR) participants, volunteers, work exchange participants while on the land or participating on a virtual or online program.

For the protection of all members of our community, we strongly discourage staff members from entering into intimate relationships with one another. Should an intimate and consensual relationship develop, it is the responsibility of all staff members involved to ensure the relationship doesn't interfere with work responsibilities or Tara Mandala's precepts, even if the relationship should come to an end. If a consensual, intimate relationship develops between a manager and a direct report or subordinate, the manager has a responsibility to report this to 1) their supervisor; 2) the People Services Manager; or 3) the Executive Director immediately so that the direct report or employee/resident can be reassigned to another department and manager. In instances where reassignment is not feasible, individuals involved may be asked to change roles/functions. If there are no alternatives, one of the two parties may be asked to resign from

his/her duties.

Inappropriate relationships include:

- Managers engaging in sexual relationships with subordinates
- Staff members having sexual relationships with retreatants
- Staff members having sexual relationships with LDA or PIR participants
- Authorized or Apprentice Teachers having sexual relationships with staff members, students, or retreatants
- Board Members or Officers having sexual relationships with staff members or retreatants or Living Dharma participants
- Staff members having sexual relationships with Board Members or Officers

G. Code of Conduct for All Teachers – Visiting, Lamas, Rinpoches, Authorized and Apprentice

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. Teachers with vows of celibacy will live according to their vows. Teachers in committed relationships will honor their vows and refrain from adultery. All teachers agree not to use their teaching role to exploit their authority and position in order to engage in a sexual relationship with a student. A sexual relationship is never appropriate between teachers and students. During retreats or formal teaching, any intimation of future student-teacher romantic or sexual relationship is inappropriate.

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. Inappropriate sexual conduct that could lead to a claim of sexual harassment is expressly prohibited by this Code and Tara Mandala's policies. 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.

Teachers with vows of celibacy will live according to their vows. Teachers in committed relationships will honor their vows and refrain from adultery. All teachers agree not to use their teaching role to exploit their authority and position in order to engage in a sexual relationship

with a student. A sexual relationship is never appropriate between teachers and students. During retreats or formal teaching, any intimation of future student-teacher romantic or sexual relationships is inappropriate.

We acknowledge that there may be occasions when a single teacher and student may want to enter into a devoted intimate relationship. In this case, great care and sensitivity are needed. We agree that in this case, the following guidelines are crucial: If interest in a genuine and committed relationship develops over time between a single teacher and a student, the student teacher relationship must clearly and consciously 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. A minimum time period of three months or longer from the last formal teaching between them and a clear understanding from both parties that the student-teacher relationship has ended must be coupled with a conscious commitment to enter into a relationship that brings no harm to either party.

If a relationship begins between you and a former student after three months of a retreat ending, you must notify Lama Tsultrim Allione and Lopön Chandra Easton so that they are aware of it, and we can avoid any gossip spreading in the community.

H. Mindful and Present: Alcohol and Drug Use

While at Tara Mandala 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 Tara Mandala, please do so with mindfulness and be respectful of those who abstain. Drinking alcohol is not allowed in the community building specifically. Please refrain from being intoxicated on the land and driving intoxicated on the land (or anywhere else). Driving a Tara Mandala vehicle while intoxicated is grounds for dismissal.

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 psychedelics, illegal drugs of any kind or the overuse of prescription drugs is prohibited. Any possession, use or sale of drugs is also prohibited. Simply going outside the Tara Mandala gate to smoke cannabis and returning intoxicated is not acceptable as well.

I. Violation of the Code of Conduct

If one or more of these codes of conduct or ethics are broken, Tara Mandala reserves the right to take performance action that is commensurate with the offense, up to and including termination for staff, and being asked to leave the land for others, including long term residents. Any teacher(s) who violates this policy will not be invited back to Tara Mandala onsite or online programs.

Any violation of the Code or failure to uphold and adhere to the spiritual mission of Tara Mandala

may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment or resident status.

Acknowledgement and Signature

I, _____, have read this Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy and agree to the policies stated above and to follow these rules and requirements while living at Tara Mandala or participating in a Tara Mandala program of any kind.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A: Ten Non-Virtuous Actions, the Ten Virtuous Actions

The Ten Non-Virtuous Actions, the Ten Virtuous Actions, and the Karmic Results:

1. By avoiding killing and harming others, and by protecting life, we will gain a long life and good health.
2. By avoiding stealing and practicing generosity, we will have wealth, not be bothered by thieves, and have a strong body.
3. By maintaining pure sexual conduct, we will have a good faithful partner and few enemies.
4. By avoiding lying and speaking sincerely and directly, we will be appreciated, and our words will be respected by everyone.
5. By avoiding slander and being a peacemaker, we will have good disciples and respectful employees.
6. By avoiding harsh words and talking calmly, amiably, and gently, we will hear positive words.
7. By avoiding useless talk and gossip and talking about meaningful wholesome things, our words will be listened to respectfully.
8. By avoiding greed and cultivating an open and generous attitude, our aspirations will be realized.
9. By avoiding negative covetous thoughts and by cultivating love and goodwill, we will be free of fear and harm.
10. By avoiding wrong view, and by cultivating right view and practicing it, we will have a direct experience of reality.