

1TIRATANALOKA RETREAT CENTRE

Safeguarding adults policy and guidelines 2020

Tiratnaloka Retreat Centre
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Registered charity no: 1014180

Introduction

Tiratna is a worldwide network of friends in the Buddhist life. This is for many of us a source of great richness, support and strength. However, it also carries a risk that we may fail to notice, question or act on behaviours of concern, out of naivety, loyalty to friends or lack of awareness; or an assumption that “it couldn’t happen here” or “they would never do a thing like that.”

This policy is an expression of the first ethical precept taught by the Buddha: to avoid harming living beings. It refers to law and good practice mainly as defined in England and Wales. Tiratna bodies in other countries are requested to draw up similar documents in line with local requirements.

The purpose of this policy

This document is for Friends, Mitras and Order members involved in Tiratanaloka activities as employees, volunteers, leaders, and retreatants attending events, activities and Going for Refuge Retreats here.

It aims to provide

- Protection for adults attending Tiratanaloka Retreat Centre including those who may be “at risk” or vulnerable, and
- Protection for Friends, Mitras and Order members working with them.

It sets out

- information and practices contributing to the prevention of harm to adults.
- What to do if harm is suspected.

Our values

Tiratanaloka provides training for women who wish to be Ordained into the Tiratna Buddhist Order which is an international movement.

Our retreats aim to support retreatants deepening their practice.

The retreats are for women who have asked for Ordination. Although we do not run activities specifically for those with mental illness or addiction, we recognise that people who may be vulnerable in these ways do attend our retreats and engage and contribute in the life of their local sangha as well.

The trustees of the Tiratanaloka Retreat Centre recognise their responsibility to safeguard adults including those who may be deemed to be “at risk” or “vulnerable”, visiting or involved in Tiratanaloka retreat centre activities, as set out by the Charity Commission in its latest guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>.

Karunadhi is our Safeguarding officer, responsible for the protection of children and adults at Tiratanaloka Retreat Centre (See also our Child protection policy.) Karunadhi can be contacted on safeguarding@tiratanaloka.org.uk

Sunetri is our Safeguarding trustee, she is responsible for making sure Safeguarding is taken seriously by

As is made clear above in the reference to the vulnerability of those who have suffered grief and loss we recognise that many people who are generally emotionally and psychologically stable in most aspects of their lives may on occasion find themselves vulnerable or at risk. This may be because of illness, relationship breakdown or bereavement, or because their practice of meditation or Buddhism has made them more sensitive and self-aware, particularly if they are new to Buddhism.

For example, we will bear in mind that a person who is emotionally vulnerable for any reason may not be able to make balanced decisions regarding giving money or becoming more involved with Triratna, or entering into intimate relationships, whether friendship or relationships which are more romantic or sexual in nature. We will take great care to help each other avoid exploiting people in such everyday situations of vulnerability.

Protecting those with psychological disorder

We are aware that those attending our centre and activities include adults experiencing psychological disorders ranging from mild to severe.

Our retreats are only suitable for those who are able to effectively manage their own emotional wellbeing during their time at Tiratanaloka. Whilst retreat conditions, meditation and study can be very beneficial, it is worth bearing in mind that retreats context can be challenging in different ways. Individuals share accommodation and engage in periods of communal silence, personal discussion, intensive meditation and ritual. Such retreats are often unsuitable for those who are actively unwell, having acute or active symptoms for example self harming, neglecting themselves, suffering sleep deprivation, feeling emotionally unstable. If someone is unsure whether coming on retreat is appropriate for them, they can always be in contact with the team prior to booking on the retreat.

When an individual books onto the training for ordination retreats, we ask them to inform us if there are any emotional or mental health issues which could affect their participation in the retreat. If an individual states that they suffer from mental health issues, we are likely to contact them to clarify the suitability of the retreat for them before accepting the booking. If the individual is under medical supervision, for example, we may also require a recommendation from a local Order Member who knows the individual well and is familiar with the retreat conditions at Tiratanaloka.

If we are confident that the individual can manage their emotional wellbeing and we can make reasonable adjustments to support the individual, while they are here (such as offering a single room, where available), we will do so.

If however we are not confident that the retreat would be suitable for the individual, and that attending the retreat may put them and their health at risk, we would not accept the booking. The decision to accept someone on retreat is made by the retreat team, and where appropriate in communication with the safeguarding officer.

We recognise that as Buddhists we do not have the professional skills to diagnose or help people with psychological disorders and that they may not be helped solely by the kindness of Buddhists. In such cases we may need to advise them to seek professional help. If someone becomes unwell we may ask them to leave the retreat, after discussion with them. This because we have a duty of care towards all on the retreat, especially the individual at risk, which includes maintaining a safe environment for all concerned. The safeguarding officer may seek further advice from the Triratna Safeguarding team about specific cases.

We are aware that for people with serious psychological disorders traditional Buddhist practices involving recognition of the illusion of self could be extremely dangerous. We may need to encourage them to focus more on other traditional Buddhist practices involving the calming of body and mind, or to avoid meditation altogether, especially during periods of relapse.

Where we believe a person to be at risk of suicide or self-harm, or to pose a risk to others, we will alert our centre Safeguarding officer, who will refer the case on to local mental health services and/or the police as

We understand that there is joint responsibility on our charity and those renting/using our premises for the Safeguarding of children and adults taking part in such activities, but that our trustees bear ultimate responsibility for Safeguarding in all activities on our premises.

Therefore we will ask the organisation or individual using our premises to sign a lettings agreement which says they have read our Safeguarding policies and agree to abide by them, or that they have shown us their own Safeguarding policies.

What is 'abuse'?

'Abuse' is not a legal term, but covers a number of ways in which a person may be deliberately harmed (legally or illegally), usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over them, or *who may be perceived by that person to be in a position of power, trust or authority over them*; for example by a Friend, Mitra or Order member who is helping to run Tiratnaloka activities for those newer to such activities. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional, or it may exploit the vulnerability of the person in more subtle ways.

However, harm can also occur less consciously, through naivety, idealism or lack of awareness.

Types of abuse

The 2014 Care Act identifies ten types of abuse, all of which have a psychological/emotional aspect.

1. physical abuse
2. sexual abuse
3. neglect and acts of omission
4. organisational abuse
5. self-neglect
6. modern slavery
7. domestic abuse
8. discriminatory abus
9. financial or material abuse
10. psychological abuse

Types of abuse, in more detail

Physical

- Bodily assaults resulting in injuries e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- Bodily impairment e.g. malnutrition, dehydration, failure to thrive
- Medical/healthcare maltreatment

Sexual

- Rape, incest, acts of indecency, sexual assault
- Sexual harassment or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, or could not consent or to which they were pressured into consenting.
- Sexual abuse might also include exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts; also sexual harassment, with or without physical contact.
- Sexual contact of any kind with anyone under 16 is a crime. In the case of Order members "position of trust" law means sexual contact of any kind with anyone under 18 could be considered a crime.

Abuse through neglect

- Ignoring medical or physical care needs
- Failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational service
- The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Organisational abuse

- Neglect or abuse within an institution (eg hospital/care home) or care provided in own home.
- One-off incident or continuing ill-treatment
- Poor professional practice, policies or structure of an organisation

- Bruising in well-protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/face/scalp
- History of moving from doctor to doctor, or between social care agencies; reluctance to seek help
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence
- Weight loss due to malnutrition; or rapid weight gain
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- Drowsiness due to too much medication; or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions

Sexual

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- Medical problems, e.g. genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down.
- Unusual circumstances, such as, for example, two people found in a toilet/bathroom area, one of them distressed

Signs of psychological or emotional vulnerability

- Isolation
- Unkempt, unwashed appearance; smell
- Over meticulousness
- Inappropriate dress
- Withdrawnness, agitation, anxiety; not wanting to be touched
- Change in appetite
- Insomnia or need for excessive sleep
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia; excessive fears
- Low self-esteem
- Confusion

Signs of neglect

- Poor physical condition
- Clothing in poor condition
- Inadequate diet
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Failure to be given prescribed medication
- Poor personal hygiene

Signs of financial or material vulnerability

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions
- Unusual level of interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's financial assets

Signs of discrimination

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Substandard service offered to an individual
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

If our charity closes down, we will give our records to another Triratna Buddhist centre/charity to keep with their own confidential Safeguarding logs.

Reviewing our policies annually

All our Safeguarding policies will be reviewed by the trustees and Safeguarding officer annually and the review recorded in the minutes of their meetings.

Tiratnaloka Retreat Centre

Chair's name and email address-

Candraprabha
chair@tiratnaloka.org

Safeguarding officer's name and email address

Karunadhi
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Trustee Safeguarding Officer

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Date 1st August 2020

Review 1st August 2021

This document will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding officer and trustees of Tiratnaloka Retreat Centre

Published 01 August 2020 by the trustees of Tiratnaloka Retreat centre

This policy is adapted by Karunadhi and the team, based on the model document published March 2020 by the Triratna Safeguarding team, part of the Triratna Ethics Kula. safeguarding@triratnadevelopment.org