

Triratna Model Safeguarding policies for children and adults 2023

Triratna Model Ethical Guidelines 2023

General advice for Triratna Buddhist centres and enterprises worldwide

1. Our ethical values

Ensuring the sexual, physical and psychological safety of young people and all adults (including those who may be particularly vulnerable to influence or 'at risk') involved in the activities of Triratna Buddhist centres and other enterprises is an expression of the First Precept: the principle of non-harming, or love.

2. Meeting our ethical obligations

The Triratna Model Safeguarding documents and Triratna Model Ethical Guidelines accompanying this guidance document are written according to law, terminology and good practice as required by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and may be different from what is expected of Triratna centres or enterprises in other jurisdictions.

NB In addition to Safeguarding policies the Charity Commission for England and Wales expects all charities in England and Wales to adopt what it calls a Code of Conduct setting out its ethical values more generally. The Triratna Model Ethical Guidelines meet this requirement.

However, any allegation of abuse in Triratna anywhere would be very serious: personally, for any Order member or Mitra accused, but also for Triratna worldwide.

Sexual abuse of children within religious groups has been uncovered in many parts of the world over the last 30 years. Buddhist leaders and teachers have also been found to have abused children sexually. Religious groups are an easy target for those who wish to gain access to children for criminal purposes. Furthermore, in the last few years there has been a dramatic increase in the creation, use and trade in, indecent images and video of children and video online worldwide.

While UK law does not currently require police reporting, the Charity Commission for England and Wales does expect criminal matters to be disclosed to the police; and in May 2023 the UK Government began consulting on proposed new laws to make it mandatory to report concerns, allegations or disclosures of **child** sexual abuse to the police (details tbc).

Please raise these issues with your council and decide how to raise awareness among local Order members, agreeing locally appropriate procedures to be followed in the case of concerns or allegations. As the Safeguarding officer employed by Triratna's European Chairs' Assembly (ECA) I offer the Triratna model Safeguarding policies (updated and published every year) as the basis of your own policies, adapted and translated as necessary.

3. What does it mean, to 'adopt' a policy?

Adopting a policy means that your council/trustees discuss the document, agree a form of wording which reflects the values, procedures and actions they are committing themselves to, record in their minutes that this discussion took place and inform local Order members and Mitras; maybe also the wider local sangha.

For easy reference these documents can then be displayed in public in your centre, in a file or on a pinboard. It's recommended they are also put on your website, maybe under a heading such as "Our values". Many Triratna centres have already done this. They are no use if they only sit on a shelf!

4. Signing your policies

The policies set out the values and legal responsibilities of the council/trustees of your centre/enterprise.

The Child Protection Code of Conduct is a simple guide to behaviours that will keep children safe from harm and keep Mitras and Order members safe from allegations of misconduct.

Those running your centre/enterprise, teaching or leading its activities and those volunteering regularly should add their signatures to a sign-up sheet/list of those who have read and agreed to abide by your policies. Should an allegation be made and your organisation be subject to external scrutiny the signatures are evidence that your organisation showed awareness of its responsibilities and had taken measures to minimise risk.

(However, anyone in the sangha who is already known to be a risk to children cannot be asked to sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct as they should not be having any contact with those under 18 in the course of Triratna activities anyway. (See the Model Child Protection Policy for more details.)

It is recommended that anyone who does not wish to sign to accept your charity's policies is not permitted to teach or run activities at your centre, as this means they do not support the values of your council/trustees, who are legally responsible for the running of your centre/enterprise and therefore legally accountable for any harm which could occur in the course of your activities.

*This guidance published 2023 by Triratna's ECA Safeguarding officer.
safeguarding@triratna.community*

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/search/node/safeguarding>