

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults



Guidance for Triratna Buddhist Centres and Order members in the UK

Written by the Triratna Development Team, on behalf of the Triratna European Chairs' Assembly.
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1. Our ethical values

We consider that ensuring the sexual, physical and psychological safety of young people and vulnerable adults is an ethical and legal value for all Triratna Buddhist Centres and institutions. This is a direct implication of the First Precept: the principle of non-harming, or love.

2. Meeting our ethical and legal obligations

To ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults, and to comply with the law, we would advise that every Triratna Buddhist Centre/charity in the UK should have proper policies and procedures regarding the care of such people and what to do if questions are raised or allegations made of misconduct.

British law and government policy in this area is evolving and not entirely clear. It also varies between the British regions. Recent case law has suggested that the Triratna Buddhist Order or one of its Centres or charities could be held responsible in the case of an Order member or mitra found guilty of abuse of children or vulnerable people, whether or not they were acting on behalf of a Triratna institution, or even specifically as Order members or mitras.

Whilst it is not clear whether or how this might be done legally, it is our first responsibility to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people with whom we have contact, as well as the good standing of our Order and Community.

We therefore strongly advise that every UK Triratna Centre joins the **Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)**, a charity dedicated to helping religious organisations meet their legal obligations to protect the young and vulnerable.

CCPAS membership costs are very reasonable, according to your charity's size and means. Membership entitles you to help and advice, to model policies and to an online system for conducting DBS security checks, previously known as CRB checks. (DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service.)

CCPAS will be happy to help you.

members@ccpas.co.uk

0845 120 4550 Ext 208

www.ccpas.co.uk

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3. Triratna Buddhist activities: who needs DBS checks?

CCPAS will help you work this out in detail. However, in brief

- The core team running an event or series of events for, or involving, children and young people under 18, on behalf of any Triratna Centre (or other Triratna charity such as Buddhafield) should be DBS checked. This applies whether the core team member is an Order member, mitra or Friend, volunteer, staff, parent etc.
- Someone supporting or helping the core team (as a one-off or regularly, but without overall responsibility) would not need a DBS check, but should be supervised at all times by at least one member of the core team. This applies whether the supporter is an Order member, mitra, Friend, volunteer, staff, parent etc.
- All these adults, whether core team or supporters, should have read and signed your charity's Child Protection Policy.
- You don't need checks for those running an adult event at which the odd under-18 year old happens to attend - but of course you should still have policies in place.

4. Triratna Buddhists working with schools

Order members and mitras commonly work with schools in two ways:

- **At a Buddhist centre, or on behalf of a Buddhist centre**
Anyone working with schools visiting a Buddhist Centre, or regularly visiting schools where they may be seen as a representative of that Centre or of Triratna, should be DBS checked by that centre and covered by its Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

Whether they are paid or unpaid recent case law has considered such people as employed by that Centre, which can be held legally liable in the case of allegations of misconduct.

- **Freelance, independently**
If an Order member or mitra works with a school as a one-off, very occasionally, or as a last-minute stand-in, they do not need to be DBS checked but they should make it clear to the school that they are not DBS checked. School staff should ensure that the Buddhist is never left alone with a child or children, which is in any case a requirement of the school's own Child Protection Policy.

If an Order member or mitra regularly works with schools, voluntarily or paid but not as a representative of any particular Centre, it is their responsibility to get themselves DBS checked. We suggest you get yourself checked by your nearest Triratna Buddhist Centre.

Concluding recommendation: all Order members in the UK

For the safety of children and young people, and to safeguard the good name of the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and Triratna Buddhist Order and Community, all mitras and members of the Triratna Buddhist Order working with schools in the UK should either

make sure they are DBS checked by the Triratna Buddhist Centre they represent, or by their nearest Triratna Buddhist Centre, or

make sure the school knows they are not DBS checked and that they require never to be left alone with a pupil or pupils.