

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults 2016

General advice for

Triratna Buddhist Centres and Order members worldwide

(not UK)

1. Our ethical values

Ensuring the sexual, physical and psychological safety of young people and vulnerable adults 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

We recognise that the 'Safeguarding' documents accompanying this guidance document are written according to standards of good practice expected today in Britain (home to half the Order) and may be culturally alien to Order members running centres or enterprises in other countries.

Whilst documents like these may be unknown in your country, if something went wrong it would become an extremely serious legal matter, affecting Triratna not just in your country but worldwide. Personally, it would be a disaster for any Order member or mitra involved even if they were wrongly accused and found not guilty in the end.

Sexual abuse of children within religious groups has been uncovered in many parts of the world over the last 30 years, most commonly but not exclusively in the Catholic church. We cannot assume Buddhists will never be accused of such misconduct. They already have been.

For the sake of the safety of children and vulnerable adults, I'd request that you raise these issues with your council and decide on a locally appropriate way to raise awareness among local Order members, agreeing procedures to be followed in the case of concerns or allegations. You are welcome to use the accompanying model documents if you find them useful.

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 and actions they are committing themselves to, record in their minutes that this discussion took place and inform local Order members; maybe also the wider local sangha.

The documents can then be kept on file for reference, displayed in public in your centre in a file or on a pinboard, and can also be put on your website, maybe under a heading such as "Our values". Many British Triratna centres have already done this.

The 'Managing a sex offender' document is not for public display.

4. Who should sign the Code of conduct?

The Child protection policy sets out your values and policy.

The Code of conduct is a simple guide to behaviour which will keep children safe from harm and keep Mitras and Order members safe from allegations of misconduct.

It can be signed by those running your centre/enterprise, teaching or leading activities and those

volunteering regularly. Filed away, should an allegation be made, the signed Codes are evidence that your organisation has shown awareness of its responsibilities and taken measures to minimise risks.

Munisha
Safeguarding officer, children and vulnerable adults
The European Chairs' Assembly's Development Team

Published 2016 by the Triratna Buddhist Order and Community's European Chairs' Assembly.
munisha@triratnadevelopment.org

To be read in conjunction with

- *the Triratna model Child protection policy 2016*
- *the Triratna model Child protection code of conduct 2016 and the*
- *Triratna model Vulnerable adults protection policy 2016.*