



Tara Mandala Code of Conduct and Ethics - Agreement

Approved by the Board of Trustees, August 5, 2021. Updated and Accepted 4.21.25.

This agreement covers policies and conduct pertaining to Board Members, Residents, Employees, Contractors, Volunteers, Interns, (referred to as “staff”) Tara Mandala Teachers, Sangha Leaders, Mandala Committee members, Participants, and/or visiting or Guest 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.

As Board and Staff members, Contractors, Teachers, Volunteers, Interns, and 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.

Tara Mandala strongly believes in the importance of including our Participants in the work of creating safe, equitable, and trustworthy spaces for our retreats, events, and programs. Therefore, everyone associated with Tara Mandala, aside from short-term visitors must adhere to these policies and sign them as part of their agreements with Tara Mandala.

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 was founded by Lama Tsultrim Allione in 1994. It is strategically guided by the Board of Trustees who provide overall governance and set policy, work on the strategic and master plans, and implement and follow its bylaws. Spiritual direction is provided by the Prajna Council. Overall operations and staff are managed by the Executive Director. Tara Mandala’s day-to-day operations are overseen and managed by the following management staff and committees:

Executive Director. The Retreat Center is overseen by the Executive Director and Retreat Center Director. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Council (EC) aka "Upaya Council," supports the Executive Director on key policy and operational issues. The EC is currently composed of the President of the board, a Dorje Lopön, the Executive Director, the Dorje Gyaltsab, and another board member or senior teacher.

The EDI Council oversees the operational implementation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for Tara Mandala programs, and policies. Members include Teachers, Sangha Leaders, and

Sangha members who are invited to participate on the Council.

The Prajna Council is comprised of the Spiritual Director, Dorje Lopöns, and Dorje Gyaltsab who oversee the Programmatic and Spiritual Direction of Tara Mandala. The role of the Prajna Council is to oversee the Wisdom Streams/Lineage Programs, Tara Mandala's Dharma offerings, and to guide Program strategy, planning, and scheduling. The Prajna Council oversees the progress development of the Teacher Training Program.

Code of Conduct

Adopted by Board - January 22, 2019; revised and accepted 04.21.25

This Code of Conduct ("the Code") establishes the principles that all individuals working with Tara Mandala are expected to honor in the performance of their work, whether they are employees, staff residents, contractors, teachers, Living Dharma Program participants, Interns, Volunteers and/or members of the board (defined as "staff members" herein). This code also applies to Participants in any Tara Mandala program or event.

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).

A. The Five Precepts:

1. To abstain from taking life, to care for and protect all living beings, our mothers.

We undertake the precept 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.

Special note: At Tara Mandala, we do serve small amounts of meat at our Tsog (Feast 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. Although a vegetarian diet is preferable, sometimes eating meat is recommended by doctors or for other reasons, in which case a prayer or short tsog before eating it should be employed.

In cases where the presence of rats or insects is a threat to the health of the community or family, 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. And if it is necessary, they should be put on the Zhitro list held at Tara Mandala Retreat Center.

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.

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, abide by applicable laws, 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, loud 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.

We agree to maintain strict confidentiality regarding all personal information shared by staff, residents, and/or students during council circles, private interviews, or any other context. This includes but is not limited to personal struggles, practice experiences, health information, family matters, and any other sensitive information entrusted to them.

In cases where there is a legal obligation to report information (such as risk of immediate harm to self or others or sexual abuse of a minor) or when a staff, resident or student's situation requires consultation with other teachers or mental health professionals, we agree to exercise careful discretion in sharing only what is essential. Breaking confidentiality trust, except in cases of mandatory reporting or emergency situations, is considered a serious violation of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action (pertains to board and staff), removal from a program (pertains to participants), or revocation of teaching privileges (pertains to teachers).

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. 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 does not tolerate any form 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 Anti-Harassment policies (sections D & E of this document).

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.

5. *To abstain from intoxicants which tend to cloud the mind, cause harm, and lead to breaking the other precepts.*

Substance use and abuse can be a cause of tremendous suffering. We commit to refraining from intoxicants during work activities, retreats, sangha events, online events, or while on retreat premises - at Tara Mandala and elsewhere. There are occasions at Tara Mandala or at Tara Mandala Sangha events in which we have a Tsog (Feast Offering) or social gatherings where alcohol is offered. We agree not to abuse or misuse intoxicants at any time.

B. 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.

a) 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 initiatives on our website¹.

b) 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 levels and out of range of retreatants.

c) 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, in online chats or discussion forums, or discussed in front of or with retreatants or visitors at the Retreat Center or online². If conflicts arise, we will seek out the person and discuss directly and ask for a mediator if necessary.

d) Choose your words carefully

Always conduct yourself professionally and personably. 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 loud, rude, impolite, or abusive language and humor.
- Do not indulge in idle talk, gossip, or discursive speech.
- Consider addressing a group of people as 'friends', rather than 'guys'.

Do not insult or put down others or engage in unnecessary gossip or discursive speech. Be respectful towards all staff and board members, 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 yana, or on social media related to Tara Mandala activities, discussion forums, emails, texts, etc.

¹ <https://www.taramandala.org/about/edi/>

² Online includes virtual retreats, online courses, video conferencing, discussion groups, online forums, exchanges, chats, social media platforms, network, emails, etc.

e) 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 differing 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.

f) The Six Paramitas

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

g) Activity as Practice

We have the opportunity to become fully dedicated to practice and support the Dharma, seeing all work, regardless of its form or appearance, as opportunities to practice. All of our activities are opportunities to take the Dharma "off the cushion" and into the world. Personal challenges become an opportunity to use wisdom, skillful means, and compassion as methods for transforming our experiences.

C. 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, resident, volunteer, support staff, teacher, leader, 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, removal from a program, and/or revocation of teaching privileges.

Tara Mandala strives to create and maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment and expects that staff, resident, or participant 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, residents and participants who report harassment or discrimination will not be subjected to any form of retaliation.

Any violations should be submitted to the People Services Manager. If a reporter wishes to be anonymous, they can use our anonymous reporting form at: <https://faceup.com/ctmreport>

D. 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, as well as anytime during a Tara Mandala event or program, onsite, offsite, in-person or online.

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, talking to, or communicating with them in a manner they feel is harassing in nature, then STOP.

E. Sexual Harassment

Tara Mandala does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, virtual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as 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.

F. Violence

Tara Mandala will not tolerate violence, including, but not limited to, behavior that threatens, intimidates or coerces another staff member, teacher, retreatant, volunteer, 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 or network postings) that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm, harassment, or intimidation.

G. Intimate Workplace Relationships

Tara Mandala Retreat Center is a place where retreatants, volunteers, 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 strictly prohibited from entering into intimate relationships with retreatants, solo retreatants, or other guests, including Living Dharma Program (LDP) participants, volunteers, interns, and 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 does not interfere with work responsibilities or Tara Mandala's precepts, even if the relationship should come to an end. Any staff entering into an intimate relationship with another staff member must report this to their supervisor, the People Services Manager, and the Executive Director immediately. Tara Mandala may reassign staff to avoid potential conflicts of interest or violations of the Code of Conduct and Ethics policy.

If a consensual, intimate relationship develops between a manager and a direct report or subordinate, the manager has a responsibility to report this to their supervisor, the People Services Manager, and the Executive Director immediately. Management and staff may be reassigned to another department and manager to avoid potential conflicts of interest or violations of the Code of Conduct and Ethics policy. In instances where reassignment is not feasible, individuals involved may be asked to change roles/functions.

Inappropriate relationships include:

- Managers engaging in sexual relationships with subordinates
- Staff members having sexual relationships with retreatants/practitioners
- Staff members having sexual relationships with LDP, interns, or other volunteer program participants
- Authorized or Apprentice Teachers having sexual relationships with staff members, students, volunteers, or retreatants
- Board Members or Officers having sexual relationships with staff members, retreatants, LDP, interns, or other volunteer program participants
- Staff members having sexual relationships with Board Members or Officers

H. Code of Conduct for ALL Teachers and their Staff, including Visiting/Guest Teachers, Translators, and Attendants.

All teachers and their staff, including visiting teachers and guest teachers, translators and attendants are required to read, sign and follow the Tara Mandala Code of Conduct & Ethics. All teachers, their staff, guest teachers, translators and attendants must adhere to this Code and agree to avoid causing harm through sexual misconduct, to avoid sexual exploitation or relationships of a sexual nature with our staff or students or volunteers. 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 Tara Mandala student, our staff, or volunteers. A sexual relationship is never appropriate between teachers and students. During retreats or formal teaching settings, any intimation of future student-teacher romantic or sexual relationship is strictly prohibited.

I. Mindful and Present: Alcohol and Drug Use

While at Tara Mandala in communal settings including the community building and temple, online events, or at 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, alcohol may be offered. If you choose to drink alcohol while at Tara Mandala, please do so with mindfulness and be respectful of those who abstain, and do not become intoxicated. 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 or removal from the event/premises.

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 also not acceptable.

J. Reporting Misconduct

Any misconduct can be reported without fear of retribution to an immediate supervisor or manager, Director, and/or People Services Manager. We intend to resolve disputes through compassionate communication and collaboration. In cases where this does not feel possible or the nature of the complaint is due to violence, abuse, or intimidation, people can file an anonymous report through our reporting system, FaceUp. These reports are investigated by the People Services Manager and/or the Administrative Operations Director. File a report through this link: <https://faceup.com/c/tmreport>

K. Violation of the Code of Conduct

If one or more of these codes of conduct or ethics are broken or are not upheld, Tara Mandala reserves the right to take performance action that is commensurate with the offense, up to and including termination of staff, removal from the land, including long-term residents, removal from a program, and/or revocation of teaching privileges. Any teacher(s) who violates this policy will not be invited back to Tara Mandala's 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, removal from a program, and/or revocation of teaching privileges.

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 or working 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, amicably, 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.

Translation Addendum to Tara Mandala Code of Conduct

This addendum acknowledges that Tara Mandala is an international Buddhist community with teachers and members who speak many languages. For teachers whose first language is not English:

1. I confirm that this Code of Conduct has been translated into my native language of _____, or has been thoroughly explained to me in my native language.
2. I affirm that I fully understand all expectations, guidelines, and responsibilities outlined in this Code of Conduct.
3. I commit to upholding all aspects of this Code of Conduct in my role as a teacher within the Tara Mandala community.
4. I understand that language differences are not an exemption from any part of this Code of Conduct.
5. I acknowledge that if I have questions about any aspect of this Code of Conduct, it is my responsibility to seek clarification through official Tara Mandala channels before proceeding with teaching activities.
6. I recognize that this translation serves as a support but that the English version remains the authoritative document for administrative purposes.

Name: _____

Native Language: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Translator (if applicable): _____