



# Shared Values and Guidelines

The Amita Buddha Centre (hitherto known as 'Amita') is committed to the highest standards of care and ethical conduct and expects its members to abide by the Amita Code of Conduct and the laws of our country.

These Shared Values and Guidelines apply to anyone with a role in the activities associated with Amita - such as employees, contractors, volunteers, instructors, teachers and visiting teachers from other organisations.

The Shared Values and Guidelines inform, but do not override the Code of Conduct.

## For the whole Amita Buddha Centre

*Commit not a single unwholesome action  
Cultivate a wealth of virtue,  
To tame this mind of ours,  
This is the teaching of all the buddhas.*

—The Buddha

## Refraining from Harm

Based on the view of interdependence and an understanding of karma—the law of cause and effect—we recognize that all our actions, words and thoughts have their corresponding consequences, and we strive to avoid harm of any kind. This means:

- We aim to provide an environment that is safe and supportive for everyone. Therefore, we avoid any action done with an intention to harm, or that could cause physical, emotional or psychological harm
- Our goal is an environment free of discrimination of any kind, whether based on race, age, ethnicity or national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability
- We respect others' personal limits and boundaries and take care of ourselves by communicating our own
- Any instances of upsetting behaviour, intimidation, bullying or physical or psychological harassment need to be identified so they can be stopped immediately
- We take special care to safeguard those who are particularly vulnerable, including children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding policies are maintained by Amita



- We refrain from:
  - taking anything that is not freely given;
  - taking advantage of anyone or cheating them financially; and
  - being careless with sangha resources or using them for personal gain. This includes using Amita materials or data without permission, and so violating copyright or breaching confidentiality
- As practitioners on the path, we take great care to conduct relationships with awareness and kindness. Sexual harassment of any kind, unwanted sexual advances or improper behaviour will not be tolerated within our community
- Mindful of the damage caused by lies, hurtful words, divisive communication, and thoughtless gossip, we make a point of speaking truthfully, with kindness, awareness and attention to the impact of our speech
- Recognizing that intoxication can jeopardize our ability to act with awareness and compassion, we refrain from becoming intoxicated by drugs or alcohol while involved in any Amita activity
- We endeavour to reduce our harmful impact upon the environment

## Working for the Welfare of All

At the heart of everything we do lies bodhichitta: the compassionate wish and commitment to bring ourselves and others to complete awakening - a state of lasting peace and happiness, and freedom from all suffering. This we do by training the mind in love and compassion, by understanding our common humanity, putting ourselves in other people's place and minimizing self-centredness.

- Always keeping in mind this common purpose, in all our interactions, we relate to other people with respect, friendliness and kindness. We make an effort to benefit others
- We strive to create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation, where every individual feels valued, has a way to participate, and feels a sense of responsibility for each other's welfare
- Whatever happens in life, whether happiness or misfortune, we seek to transform it into the path toward awakening and into an opportunity for deepening compassion, for ourselves and others
- In recognition of the fundamental goodness of all beings, we treat ourselves and others with dignity and respect. This means being patient, courteous and encouraging with others who make suggestions or express viewpoints other than our own
- We care for our community, and we support each other on the path, and in our study and practice of the Buddhist teachings



## Training the Mind

We recognize our freedom to work skilfully with thoughts, emotions and perceptions through meditation and reflection, so as to clarify confusion and give rise to wisdom.

- We examine our motivation deeply, looking at the consequences of what we think, say and do
- In order to tame, train and transform our minds, we set aside time to study and practice the teachings of Buddha
- As often as we can, we examine our minds, to undermine habits of clinging, hostility and indifference, and enhance qualities of faith, self-discipline, generosity, study, decency, self-control and wisdom

## For those representing Amita at every level

In addition, while representing Amita, in any position, we are representing the Dharma, and we not only avoid acting unethically, but also avoid any suspicion or appearance of misconduct.

That means we will avoid:

- Soliciting sponsorship or accepting gifts and hospitality inappropriately
- Acting in order to gain financial or other material benefits
- Concealing any conflicts of interest, which we need to declare
- Misrepresenting our position and taking advantage of others because of our role and any authority it entails. This includes, for example, never entering into an intimate relationship with a participant during an event, retreat, course, or any situation during which we are perceived to be in a position of authority or power. In other circumstances, any intimate relationships are expected to be based on mutual respect and openly acknowledged, meaning non-secretive

## For Teachers and Instructors

*This section is specific to initiated disciples and instructors*

Teachers and Instructors support Amita's vision and mission, and it is the task of Amita teachers/instructors to be as knowledgeable as required, to be self-disciplined and to be kind and warm-hearted. We honour the trust placed in us, carrying out our responsibilities to the best of our abilities and with the aim of maintaining the authenticity of the Dharma. In so doing, we strive to practise generosity, discipline, patience, enthusiasm, meditation and wisdom, while at the same time pursuing qualities of selflessness, integrity, accountability, openness, honesty, trustworthiness, and leadership.



We will:

- Reflect deeply on and cultivate our intention of bodhichitta
- Maintain our study and practice, instruct only what we have personally studied and practised, and participate in ongoing training where possible
- Respect appropriate boundaries between our role as a Dharma teacher/instructor and other competing professional roles that we are qualified to hold (such as consultant, health professional, therapist, coach, psychologist or psychiatrist etc.)
- Disclose to the Amita management team any elements of our personal history or current life situation that may have a negative impact on our role as teacher/instructor
- Handle our personal interactions with students with confidentiality, and where appropriate and agreed with the student, communicate any decisions taken
- Ensure that confidential material, for example material about individuals, is handled with care and sensitivity

## For Board and Management

*This section is specific to board and management*

We are committed to the highest standards of charity governance, to adhere to the requirements of statutory regulators, and to maintain the highest standards of financial transparency.

Clarification or reporting any misconduct is done through the Grievance Procedure. The first step is to contact a member of the local team or an instructor. More details are provided under the Grievance Procedure.

*This is a living document that will be reviewed periodically.*