

Western Vajrayana Community Code of Conduct

A simple, signable ethical commitment for teachers, leaders, staff, volunteers, and community members

Preamble

The Buddhadharma is grounded in non-harming, compassion, wisdom, and ethical conduct. No spiritual title, lineage position, realization, vow, or relationship of devotion places any person above the law or above basic standards of human safety and dignity.

1. Safety and Respect

- No physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or spiritual abuse is acceptable.
- No intimidation, coercion, harassment, retaliation, grooming, or exploitation is acceptable.
- No harmful conduct may be justified as special training, wrathful practice, advanced teaching, compassion, or a test of devotion.

2. Sexual and Romantic Boundaries

Because teachers and senior leaders hold substantial spiritual and institutional power, sexual or romantic relationships with students under their authority are prohibited. No student should ever be led to believe that sexual, romantic, or personal access is required for teachings, advancement, initiation, belonging, or spiritual favor.

3. Money and Power

- Community finances must be transparent and subject to independent oversight.
- Personal and organizational funds must not be improperly commingled.
- Students must never be pressured, manipulated, or promised spiritual benefits in exchange for money, gifts, labor, housing, or personal loyalty.

4. Vows Do Not Require Silence

Samaya and other spiritual commitments never require a person to endure, conceal, excuse, or participate in abuse, criminal conduct, financial misconduct, or exploitation. A student may seek help, leave a community, consult outside professionals, contact authorities, or speak truthfully about harmful conduct without being threatened with spiritual punishment.

5. No Silencing Through NDAs or Defamation Threats

The community will not use non-disclosure agreements, confidentiality provisions, financial settlements, or threats of defamation or disparagement to silence people reporting abuse or misconduct, subject to applicable law. Nothing in this Code prevents lawful confidentiality for ordinary administrative matters or protects knowingly false statements.

6. Independent Reporting and Accountability

- Complaints involving teachers or senior leaders must have a reporting path outside the accused person's inner circle.
- Serious allegations must be handled through an independent process with appropriate safeguarding, documentation, and due process.
- The board must have authority to restrict or suspend a teacher or leader from duties when necessary to protect the community while an investigation is conducted.
- Allegations involving children or conduct that may constitute a crime must be handled in accordance with applicable mandatory-reporting and law-enforcement requirements.

7. Governance

The community will maintain accountable governance rather than concentrating unchecked spiritual, financial, and organizational power in one teacher or inner circle. Boards and leaders are responsible to the community, applicable law, and this Code, and they may not retaliate against people who raise good-faith concerns.

Acknowledgment

I have read this Code of Conduct. I understand that spiritual authority does not exempt anyone from ethical responsibility, accountability, or the law. I agree to uphold these standards and to support a culture in which people can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

Name

Role

Organization / Sangha

Signature

Date

Template note: This plain-language Code is intended as a community ethics document. Organizations should have local counsel review provisions concerning reporting, confidentiality, employment, privacy, and defamation before adopting it as a binding legal policy.