

BOISE ZEN CENTER
STATEMENT OF ETHICS AND PROCEDURE

BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS

The Three Refuges

We take refuge in Buddha
We take refuge in Dharma
We take refuge in Sangha

The Three Pure Precepts

To do no evil
To do good
To live to benefit all beings

The Ten Prohibitory Precepts

A follower of the Way does not kill but rather cultivates and encourages life.
A follower of the Way does not take what is not given but rather cultivates and encourages generosity.
A follower of the Way does not misuse sexuality but rather cultivates and encourages open, honest, and acceptable relationships.
A follower of the Way does not lie but rather cultivates and encourages truthful communication.
A follower of the Way does not intoxicate self or others but rather cultivates and encourages clarity.
A follower of the Way does not slander but rather cultivates and encourages respectful speech.
A follower of the Way neither extols self nor demeans others but rather cultivates awareness of the interdependent nature of self.
A follower of the Way does not attach to anything, even the teaching, but rather cultivates mutual support and shares the dharma with all beings.
A follower of the Way does not harbor ill will but rather cultivates loving-kindness, understanding, and forgiveness.
A follower of the Way does not turn away from the Three Treasures but rather cultivates and encourages taking refuge in them.

It is our sincere intention to realign our lives continually in accord with these precepts.

Ethical Standards, Teacher Relationships, Confidentiality, Power and Position and Grievance Procedures

While the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts are the foundation of practice, we recognize that ethics standards and guidelines are needed to provide commentary and processes for addressing difficult situations that may arise in community or in relationships with other practice communities.

Appropriate actions

We aspire to relationships that are based on trust, cooperation, and openness to differences, communication, fairness, kindness and respect.

Inappropriate actions

These are actions harmful to self and others. They may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments and manipulative speech or action.

Teacher/Student Relationships

A teacher at Boise Zen Center is anyone involved in an instructional capacity. This includes the Head Priest and anyone offering meditation instructions, teaching workshops, and leading study groups. The teacher student relationship is founded on deep trust and respect that is the mutual responsibility of both parties to honor. However, the authority of the teacher carries with it an increased responsibility to avoid situations and actions that could result in harm to the student, the community or the teacher. We recognize that harm may result if a teacher and student become sexually or inappropriately emotionally involved, or if a teacher violates trust, or uses power or position for personal ends.

Confidentiality

Matters discussed in individual meetings with the teacher are kept in confidence except as may be required by law. However, students should know that teachers might share information between themselves for the intention of benefitting the student and for the purpose of teacher training. Students are encouraged not to engage in idle talk about matters discussed in teacher-student meetings. Personal information offered at meetings, practice events or Community gatherings is not considered confidential. There may be circumstances in which it is necessary for a teacher to consult a professional for legal or psychological expertise. It may be necessary to disclose confidential information in the context of such a consultation. Such consultations are also kept in confidence and are undertaken only in the interest of the practice community and/or the student.

Use of Power and Position

All those in positions of confidence or trust must not misuse status or authority to achieve privileges or other consideration, or to inappropriately influence others. If entrusted with handling funds or assets on behalf of practitioners, they bear responsibility to provide accountable and transparent stewardship.

Procedures for Addressing Ethical Concerns

Recognizing that transparent communication is an important guiding principle for harmonious relationship, and that remaining in relationship is an important factor to help resolve interpersonal conflict, the following processes are offered to address questions concerning the Head Priest or any teacher's ethical conduct. We are committed to solving problems and resolving differences from inappropriate action. If a person believes that she/he has been treated inappropriately and seeks resolution, the following steps may be taken. All interested parties may agree at their discretion to waive a particular step.

Informal Process

In an informal resolution, the aggrieved person can directly contact the person who has allegedly acted inappropriately and make an effort to reach an understanding and to resolve the differences. This step is not suggesting that anyone place himself or herself in a situation where they feel threatened or endangered. If the grievance is not resolved, the person may request a meeting with those not included in the grievance i.e. Head Priest, and another Board member and the person who allegedly acted inappropriately. If more that one concerned student raises the same ethical issue, a delegation of community members may bring the issue directly to the Head Priest and/or other Board member for discussion. If the parties are unable to reconcile, the aggrieved person may proceed with an **Informal Meeting**.

Informal Meeting The person filing the grievance should contact the Board President or Secretary. If the President and Secretary are named in the grievance, a Board member who is not named in the grievance may be contacted. The person filing the grievance will provide the contact person with a written description of the alleged inappropriate action and the effort to resolve the matter in the **Informal Process**. The person who allegedly acted inappropriately shall respond to the allegation in writing to the contact person within one week. The contact person shall request a meeting with a professionally trained mediator to be held within four weeks of receipt of response, and shall include the person alleging the grievance and the

person(s) who allegedly acted inappropriately. The mediator may contact and seek information from others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The meeting shall consist of an attempted mediation led by the mediator, and may be supplemented, if the parties agree, by a meeting with others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The mediation meeting shall result in a written statement of the position reached by the parties in the mediation process, and this statement will be given to the contact person who originally received the grievance.

If this results in a statement resolving the grievance, Boise Zen Center will keep a copy of the statement. If a resolution has not been reached, the aggrieved person may proceed to the **Reconciliation Council**.

Reconciliation Council The person filing the grievance may notify the Board of Directors that they wish to proceed with the unresolved grievance. Thereupon, the Directors will form a Reconciliation Council consisting of the President and Secretary of the Board (or one other Board member if these are named in the grievance), the Head Priest if not named in the grievance, one person chosen by the person filing the grievance, and one person chosen by the person(s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. The Council will notify the concerned parties in writing, and all written records of actions heretofore filed shall be provided to the Council within two weeks of notification that they are needed. The Council shall set an appropriate date for a hearing within four weeks of receipt of the written records.

At the hearing, the Council shall hear the presentation of the person filing the grievance and the response of the person(s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. The Council may also solicit views of other persons where that is deemed appropriate. Additional meetings may be called and may include the entire Community, should the Council deem them necessary.

The Council shall make a finding based on the above process. The findings will be written and communicated to the person filing the grievance and the person(s) allegedly behaving inappropriately within four weeks of the completion of the reconciliation process.

The Reconciliation Council will keep written records of all meetings and findings. And finally, if the matter still remains unresolved, the person(s) may pursue a formal ethics complaint process through the Grievance Committee of the SZBA. This process is outlined below.

***Conflict Resolution and Formal Grievance Process through the Grievance Committee of the SZBA**

The SZBA expects ethical issues within a Community to be worked out through the processes in effect within that Community, and will always try to direct complaints into those processes. A community that has been subjected to clergy misconduct or other breach of trust can be deeply injured. Should this occur, it is our recommendation that Community call on specially trained interveners.

The SZBA will maintain a list of lay and ordained people trained as mediators who are familiar with and sympathetic to the function and purpose of Soto Zen temples and communities and by extension to the SZBA as a whole, and who are willing to help with clergy misconduct intervention and conflict mediation upon request. They will be available for helping resolve conflicts arising within communities and between individuals, including Student/Student, Student/Director conflicts. The parties involved in the dispute will handle costs.

Any suspected illegal activity involving moral turpitude by a (SZBA) Member or Associate Member will be reported to the appropriate legal authority. We consider ourselves mandatory reporters of child and elder abuse and will always refer suspect cases to the appropriate authority. We will maintain a list of applicable laws for reference purposes only. Parties to a grievance will bear their own costs.

