

## **Padmaloka Child protection policy 2018**

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<https://www.padmaloka.org.uk>  
Registered charity no: 273850

### **The purpose of this policy**

This document is for Friends, Mitras and Order members involved in Padmaloka activities (and those of any outreach groups run by this centre) volunteers, leaders or teachers.

It aims to provide

- protection for children (anyone under 18) who visit or receive Padmaloka services including children of Buddhists and other users of this Buddhist Centre and
- protection for Friends, Mitras and Order members who may have contact with children.

It sets out

- practices and procedures contributing to the prevention of abuse of children.
- a course of action to be followed if abuse is suspected.

### **Our values**

Although we do not run activities specifically for children, we recognise that they may happen to visit from time to time...

The trustees of the Padmaloka recognise their responsibility to ensure the welfare of all those aged under 18 visiting or involved in Buddhist Centre activities.

**Vidyavachin and Manjusiha are our Safeguarding officers, responsible for the protection of children and adults who may be at risk at Padmaloka (See also our Safeguarding Adults policy.)**

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm.
- partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

This policy applies to all community members, charity trustees and volunteers,

and anyone else working on behalf of Padmaloka, whether as a Friend, Mitra or Order member.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- adopting child protection guidelines and a code of conduct for community members and volunteers.
- recruiting volunteers safely, ensuring checks are made where necessary.
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, community members and volunteers.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- providing effective management for volunteers through supervision, support and training.

### **Who is a “child”?**

In the United Kingdom a “child” is a person who has not yet passed their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **What is “child abuse”?**

The World Health Organisation defines “child abuse” as “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”

### **Types of abuse**

- **Physical abuse** including hurting or injuring a child, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning, or smothering.
- **Sexual abuse** including direct or indirect sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in inappropriate sexual activities.
- **Emotional abuse** Repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings.
- **Neglect** The persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention.

A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of cruelty. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally.

### **Signs of abuse**

These are many and varied. Some have perfectly acceptable explanations. It is useful to bear in mind:

- Any injuries that cannot be explained
- Injuries not consistent with falls or rough games
- Malnourishment
- Any allegations made by children concerning abuse
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Self harm
- Eating disorders

## **Welcoming school visits safely**

Schools and other youth groups occasionally visit our Buddhist Centre. We will require every group to bring at least two adults capable of supervising the group. We will make clear that teachers should not leave children unsupervised at any time while here or leave them to be supervised by a Padmaloka team member

## **Managing those who pose a risk to children**

We will not allow someone who is likely to pose a risk to children to have contact with children (ie a known sex offender or someone who has disclosed a **sexual** interest in children).

Such a person will be asked by the Safeguarding officer to negotiate a behaviour contract setting out the terms of their continued participation in Padmaloka activities within agreed boundaries. (See the document 'Managing those who pose a risk'.)

## **Reporting concerns or allegations**

All reports or suspicions about abuse must be treated seriously. They may include

- something you see
- something you are told by someone else
- rumours about a person's previous behaviour
- behaviour you observe in a child and
- disclosure from a child directly.

## **What to do if a person under 18 alleges abuse**

- Be aware the child may have been threatened and may be very afraid.
- Look directly at the child.
- Keep calm and reassure the child that they are doing the right thing and are not to blame, even if they have broken some rules.
- Accept what the child says without judgment. Never suggest that the child may be wrong or mistaken. Your responsibility is to take them seriously, not to decide whether what they are saying is true.

- Never push for information or question the child. Let them tell you as much as they are ready to tell you.
- Be honest. Do not promise confidentiality; let them know you will have to get help for them but that you will *try* to agree with them what should happen next. This means that you will need to share what they say with others - on a need-to-know basis only.

## What to do next

- Your first concern is the safety and wellbeing of the child. Do not be distracted from this by loyalty to the person who has been accused or your desire to maintain the good name of Triratna or your Centre.
- If you think the child is in *immediate* danger phone local social services or police straight away. A telephone referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.
- Every person has a legal right to privacy under the International Convention on Human Rights; therefore if possible you need to get the child's consent to share the information they have given you, within the limits described here.
- However, if necessary, it is legal to report without their consent, if you believe they may be at risk of significant harm.
- If you are not the Safeguarding officer, tell one of Padmaloka's Safeguarding officers *only*. They bear overall responsibility for the future handling of the matter on behalf of the charity.
- The Safeguarding officer can contact the Triratna Safeguarding team for advice as to what to do next: [safeguarding@triratnadevelopment.org](mailto:safeguarding@triratnadevelopment.org)
- Meanwhile, make detailed factual notes about the discussion as soon as possible, including time, date and location. Give them to the Safeguarding officer. If you are the Safeguarding officer, keep notes yourself and keep them either locked away or password-protected.
- Confidentiality, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis, is very important. Nobody else has a right to know about the matter. This is not a matter of concealment, but is intended to protect all concerned. It will also protect your sangha from fear, rumour and disharmony which will make it much harder to deal with the matter effectively without causing further harm.
- No sangha member should attempt to investigate a criminal allegation. This is the job of the police and to attempt this could prejudice a court case and put the person in danger.
- Finally, if the allegation is criminal, without giving full details you should tell the Charity Commission that there has been a Safeguarding incident, that your charity has

addressed it according to your Safeguarding policies and that the police have been informed.

### **Secure, confidential record-keeping**

We understand our responsibility for secure and careful record-keeping. Our Safeguarding officer will keep a detailed record of all Safeguarding-related incidents as well as conversations and actions related to them. These are kept either in a locked cabinet or safe or in a password-protected electronic file on our computer system. Access to these records is only for the Safeguarding officers and one or two others approved by our trustees.

### **Keeping confidential records for at least 50 years**

We understand that many allegations of abuse come to light 30 or more years later, and that we are therefore required to keep our records safe for at least 50 years.

If our Centre closes down, we will therefore give our records to another Triratna Buddhist Centre to keep with their own past confidential records.

### **Reviewing our policies annually**

All our Safeguarding policies will be reviewed by the trustees and Safeguarding officer annually and the review recorded in the minutes of their meetings.

## **Padmaloka Retreat Centre**

**Chair's name and email address**

Dh. Sanghanischa, chairman@padmaloka.org.uk

**Chair's signature**

Sanghanischa

**Safeguarding officer's name and email address**

Dh Vidyavachin manager@padmaloka.org.uk

**Safeguarding officer's signature**

Vidyavachin

**Date**

24/7/2018

**The Padmaloka safeguarding officers are Vidyavachin and Manjusiha. The named safeguarding trustee is Viryashalin**

*This document is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying Padmaloka Child protection code of conduct*

*This policy is adapted by Vidyavachin, the Padmaloka safeguarding officer, based on a model document published January 2018 by Triratna's Safeguarding team [safeguarding@triratnadevelopment.org](mailto:safeguarding@triratnadevelopment.org)*