

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS

(Queensland Sangha Association)

1. Preamble

A Buddhist Chaplain is a person (ordained or lay) who practises Buddhism and who aspires to the path of service - helping and supporting others, both inside and outside Buddhist communities.

The work of Buddhist Chaplains is wide ranging and may include: teaching meditation; instruction in Buddhism; supporting people who are in emotional distress; caring for the physical needs of others (eg preparing food, caring for children, the sick and elderly); supporting communities in times of natural disaster. This work is carried out throughout the community – in Buddhist temples, centres and groups; in family and friendship groups; and in hospitals, hospices, schools and universities, and volunteer organizations of all types; or online.

Buddhist Chaplains recognise the need for high ethical standards to be the foundation for their work. They recognise the need for those standards to be explicit and for appropriate ethical guidelines and complaints procedures to be available. This Code of Ethics seeks to codify the core ethical responsibilities of all Buddhist Chaplains registered by the Queensland Sangha Association (QSA). Our affiliation with Buddhist Chaplains is defined as non-employment related, and not directly representing QSA in any undertakings. Buddhist Chaplains are independent practitioners, arranging their own practice requirements with the organisations they volunteer with. QSA's role in chaplaincy services is as an association to connect, refer and recommend our member chaplains to those in need.

At the heart of the work of Buddhist Chaplains are three principles: **Not to create harm. To practice good. To actualize good for others.**

Buddhist Chaplains recognise that their ability to live up to the highest standards may not always be perfect, and that they rely on: the compassionate guidance of these principles; a core practice of honest self-reflection; the discernment and counsel of others; a commitment to embody the higher values of Wisdom and Compassion.

2. Scope of Work

Buddhist Chaplains who are registered by the QSA will not undertake work that is beyond their training, qualifications and competence. They will consult with others and refer clients appropriately (eg to medical practitioners, counsellors and psychologists, helplines, Buddhist teachers, monks and nuns).

3. Non-discrimination

Buddhist Chaplains will avoid discrimination, explicit or implicit, on the basis of difference, including in relation to: age, race or ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion, immigration status,

political views, disability, gender and gender identification, sexual orientation, parental and family status.

4. Mutual Respect and Safety

Buddhist Chaplains acknowledge that Right Speech and Right Conduct are core values, and undertake to foster relationships of mutual respect and safety, free from bullying, harassment, verbal or physical threat or abuse. Buddhist Chaplains will treat all people with respect and engage with others honestly and compassionately and with a positive intention.

5. Boundaries

Buddhist Chaplains will not violate trust or use power or position for personal gain or self-satisfaction in the course of their work, by crossing personal, emotional, physical, or sexual boundaries in ways that constitute exploitation or abuse. The ultimate responsibility for maintaining appropriate and clear boundaries always rests with the chaplain, and failure to maintain appropriate boundaries constitutes a serious ethical breach.

6. Confidentiality

In the course of their work, Buddhist Chaplains will often be privy to personal and private information disclosed by others. A Buddhist Chaplain will maintain the confidentiality of these disclosures under all possible circumstances. Exceptions here will include: where there is a danger that a person will suicide or self-harm; where a person is known or suspected to be a danger to others; where there is a disclosure or suspicion of harm involving children; where there is a legal requirement to disclose.

7. Protection of Children and Youth

Buddhist Chaplains fall under “Religious representatives” category of regulated employment and are committed by legal and ethical obligations to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people under 18 years of age. The term “registered Buddhist Chaplains” registered with the QSA will comply with all aspects of the QSA’s Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, highlights of which include:

- maintaining a current Blue Card (unless professionally exempted by Blue Card authorities). From 2023, all Registered Buddhist Chaplains, in accordance to Application Guidelines, will possess a current Blue Card linked to QSA Blue Card Register, regardless if working directly or potentially with children-under-18 in Queensland in-person or online. They are obligated under Blue Card guidelines to also link their Blue Cards to all the organisations they volunteer with.

Currently, applicants who do not have a current Blue Card cannot be registered with QSA. Should you practise on your own, you fall under Blue Card’s “no card, no start” rule, if working in children’s environment for more than 7 days a calendar year and not running a business or are already a restricted person. Such practitioners are restricted in practice to serving adults only (eg.

prison, military or aged care ministries, etc) and maintains by law, restriction from operating in children's environment in Queensland, ie. conducting religious activities directly involving children online or onsite, eg, sunday school, attending children's hospital or hospital's children ward, places where adults and children are kept in separate areas, or see a child 1-1 at their home. On case by case assessment, Blue Card requirement can be waived if the child is accompanied by an adult (but not for online service), and if service is not more than 7 days a year. In doubt, please kindly consult Blue Card Services directly.

Inactivity of practice is not a requisite to maintaining Blue Card status, meaning that a Chaplain can suspend his work indefinitely without needing to give up Blue Card status. Hence, the previous Inactive Register is no longer relevant and is abolished.

All other Buddhist Chaplains not "child-safe ready" to operate will be listed separately from child-safe ready Registered Buddhist Chaplains, in accordance to Blue Card regulations.

In relation to physical contact with children and youth: There are circumstances in which it may be appropriate for Buddhist Chaplains to have physical contact with children or youth, e.g. injury management, correcting posture in meditation, teaching ritual practices. However, Buddhist Chaplains will never engage in inappropriate physical contact with children or youth, for example violent or aggressive behaviour such as hitting, kicking, slapping or pushing; kissing; or touching of a sexual nature.

8. Criminality

Any Buddhist Chaplain who is convicted of a crime may be de-registered by the QSA. The Management Committee of the QSA will make the final decision in this regard.

9. Communication

Buddhist Chaplains registered with the QSA will maintain up-to-date contact details (email address and telephone number) with the QSA. It is the registered Buddhist Chaplain's responsibility to update information and renewals directly with Blue Card Services as required, while linked to QSA. Blue Card Services in turn will automatically notify QSA of any renewals or changes in the Register. In the case when Chaplains decide to terminate registration and practice of services, they should inform QSA to remove their linked listing from QSA's Blue Card register. For any reasons should their Blue Card validity lapses or becomes invalid, they must inform QSA for update of status to restricted practice.

10. Self-Care and Ongoing Training

Buddhist Chaplains will pay attention to their need for self-care (supportive relationships, adequate rest, participation in Buddhist practices and rituals). They will also engage in ongoing training to build their knowledge and skill base.

QSA at the moment does not have the number demand nor resources to conduct its own CPD and Supervision best practices.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Practice

The BCSB tries its best to run ongoing training workshops for Buddhist chaplains (so that their skills can be regularly updated) in accordance to demand. Chaplains can continue their own chaplaincy CPD through their religious or volunteering organisational training, or attend public training by Chaplaincy Australia, Spiritual Care Australia or equivalent.

Supervision of Practice

While registered Buddhist Chaplains operate independently (doing a wide range of volunteer work in the community), they remain as associates of QSA and are responsible for their own accountability and supervision of practice. Supervision can come from their volunteering organisations; their religious teachers, mentors, supervisors or qualified peers; and/or from supervisors or supervision interns from Chaplaincy Australia and the like.

11. Complaints

Complaints regarding ethical breaches by Buddhist Chaplains registered with the Queensland Sangha Association (QSA) should, in the first instance, be discussed with the Chair of the Buddhist Chaplaincy Services Board (BCSB) within the QSA. If the decision from this is to proceed to a formal complaint, the BCSB – or a sub-committee of the BCSB - will investigate the complaint and report their findings to the Management Committee of the QSA. The outcome of this process may include: providing further education and training to a registered Buddhist Chaplain; requiring supervision of a registered Buddhist Chaplain; de-registration of a Buddhist Chaplain; reviewing or developing new policies and procedures; no further action. The BCSB will keep a record of all complaints, including outcomes.