

Vancouver Buddhist Centre Child Protection Policy

(Children, as referred to in this policy, are all persons under the age of 18)

1. All main Teachers or leaders of Vancouver Buddhist Centre children's activities must be approved by the Safe Guarding officer or Chair of Vancouver Buddhist Centre.
2. All main teachers or leaders of Vancouver Buddhist Centre children's activities must have a background check with the police in Vancouver, paid for by Vancouver Buddhist Centre.
3. All assistant teachers or leaders of Vancouver Buddhist Centre children's activities must be approved by the Vancouver Buddhist Centre council but not subject to a background check.
4. Under no circumstances will any adult be alone with any child, unless the adult is that child's parent or legal guardian. This pertains to all Centre activities including but not limited to: classes, festival days, and social events.
5. No Vancouver Buddhist Centre teacher, staff or volunteer may assist children in the bathroom or change diapers. Children may not assist one another. Assistance may be given only by parents and legal guardians.
6. No Vancouver Buddhist Centre teacher, staff or volunteer may share sleeping accommodations with children, unless they are the child's parent or legal guardian.
7. Children under the age of 12 must have a parent or legal guardian present on site at all times. Children between 13 and 15 must have signed parental/guardian permission, and be checked in and out by a parent/guardian.
8. Children under the age of 7 must be under adult supervision at all times.
9. Children under age 12 must not be outside on the grounds without adult supervision.
10. No person who is likely to pose a risk to a child will be permitted to engage in activities at Vancouver Buddhist Centre that include children.
11. Parents' or guardians' telephone number or contact information must be available to teachers or leaders for all children participating in Vancouver Buddhist Centre Buddhist activities.
12. All Vancouver Buddhist Centre Buddhist Children's activities require signed parental or guardian permission for their child to participate.
13. Written permission must be obtained from parents or guardians to give a ride to a child who attends an Vancouver Buddhist Centre activity.

14. Activities held in our centre are limited to children of 10 years of age or older.
15. Activities held in our centre are limited to 6 children.
16. Teacher/student ratios will be determined by Vancouver Buddhist Centre Safe Guarding officers.
17. Teachers/leaders will be aware of and follow the Code of Conduct for Vancouver Buddhist Centre Buddhist Activities for Children. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and others working on behalf of Vancouver Buddhist Centre.

- To provide information to Order Members, mitras and others engaged in activities with children under 18 years old at Vancouver Buddhist Centre
- • To describe practices and procedures contributing to the prevention of harm to children.
- • To describe a course of action to be followed if harm is suspected. We recognize that:
 - • the welfare of a 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. We will seek to safeguard children by:
 - • valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
 - • adopting a child protection policy and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
 - • requiring background checks for teachers/leaders working with children at Vancouver Buddhist Centre.
 - • sharing information about child protection with people working with children at Vancouver Buddhist Centre
 - • reporting suspected harm to children to the appropriate agencies. This information, policy and code of conduct is an expression of our commitment to the Five Buddhist Precepts (see our Ethical Guidelines on website).
- Who is a child? A child is a person aged under 18 years. What is child abuse? The World Health Organization 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 health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of

responsibility, trust or power. Types of maltreatment: (a child who is a victim of harm may experience more than one type of maltreatment)

- • 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. • Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally. Signs of abuse:
 - • 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 Suspicion of harm may arise from:
 - • Behavior you observe in a child or something you see.
 - • Something you are told by someone else.
 - • Rumors about a person's previous behavior.
 - • Disclosure from a child directly.
- **What to do if a child reports abuse to you:**
 - • Keep calm and reassure the child. •
 - Accept what the child says without judgment. Look directly at the child. Be honest. Do not promise confidentiality; let them know you will have to tell someone else.
 - • Be aware the child may have been threatened and may be very afraid. Never push for information or question the child. Let them tell you as much as they are ready to tell you.
 - • Never suggest that the child may be wrong or mistaken.
- Reporting abuse: All reports or suspicions about abuse must be reported in accordance with Vancouver Social Services. Ensure the safety of the child. Report by contacting social services or police. • If you make a report by telephone, inform the Vancouver Buddhist Centre Council in writing that you

made a report. • Record as accurately as possible your conversation with the child and your observations including the date, time and location. • Do not be tempted to investigate yourself. • Do not discuss the matter with anyone else. This could prejudice a court case and put the child in danger. This document, Information Regarding Child Protection, is to be read along with the accompanying Vancouver Buddhist Centre Buddhist Policy and Code of Conduct for Teachers and Leaders of Vancouver Buddhist Centre Activities for Children.

- All three documents will be reviewed annually.
- We invite all our teachers, leader or assistant of Vancouver Buddhist Centre children's activities that they will:
 - • treat all children and young people with respect and kindness.
 - • be an example of the good conduct I wish to see in young people and others.
 - • respect a child's right to personal privacy.
 - • follow the Vancouver Buddhist Centre Policies Regarding Children.
 - • give guidance and support to less experienced helpers, colleagues and volunteers.
 - • report all allegations/suspicious of abuse to the proper authorities.
 - • ensure that there is more than one adult present during activities with children.
- We will not:
 - allow someone to have contact with children who is likely to pose a risk to them. (i.e. a known sex offender or someone who has disclosed sexual interest in children).
 - have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children.
- • We ask that all our teachers and OMs have read our safeguard documents and agree to abide by them.