

Children's and Teens' Course Safety Guidelines

These "Children's and Teens' Course Safety Guidelines" are set within the context of the "Dhamma Workers Code of Discipline" and should be followed with the same diligence to protect and preserve all participants during a children's or teens' course, as well as to preserve and protect the purity of the course and center atmosphere.

The Code of Discipline

The principles set out in the "Code of Discipline" have been produced to ensure a peaceful, harmonious atmosphere during courses, conducive for all (children, teens and adults) to meditate.

The basis of the code of discipline is the five precepts that anyone of any age at a course or center are asked to follow:

- not to kill
- not to steal
- not to commit sexual misconduct
- not to lie
- not to take intoxicants

The goal of the following guidelines is to further ensure the welfare of children and teens while at a children's or teens' course at either a center or non-center site and to insure that any suspicions of abuse or inappropriate conduct are responded to efficiently and effectively.

Guidance for Servers on Children's and Teens' Courses

Contact with Children

- Any one-to-one work with children should be done in full view of others.
- All responsibilities involving the custodial care of children (e.g., contact in private or semi-private areas such as bedrooms and bathrooms) should be done in full view of others, and/or in pairs of adults.
- If in exceptional circumstances one-to-one contact cannot be avoided in more private areas, others should know about and support your actions (i.e., telling people before and after the event).
- Groups of children (three to six in number) should be attended to by assigned group leaders who are responsible for their care. However, in sleeping arrangements, adult group leaders should stay in a neighboring room whenever possible. If adult group leaders must sleep in the same room as the children, then the adults should only do so in pairs, not singly.

- In this Vipassana tradition, people are asked to refrain from physical contact with any other person while at meditation centers or during courses. However, it may sometimes be inevitable that physical contact between servers and children is required, such as when a child is injured or sick. Servers should ensure that any contact is for the benefit of the child and not the server and is not open to any misunderstanding.

Confidentiality

- Any information about children, such as contact details and other background information, problems and issues on a course, dietary requirements and medical needs should be kept confidential and shared only with others on a need-to-know basis.

Harm to Children

- Should there be a suspicion or an accusation that any inappropriate conduct or harm (physical, sexual or emotional) has been done to a child while on a children's or teens' course, either as a result of an action by a server or another child then the conducting CCT must be informed as soon as possible, 24 hours at the latest, (and notes made about what happened). The CCT should then take appropriate action which may involve informing the relevant civil authorities, and the Area Teachers responsible for the center.

I understand and will follow the guidelines outlined and described in this document.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print name: _____

Please return this signed form along with your Child/Teen Dhamma-Service Application form, to:
VMC, 386 Colrain-Shelburne Rd, Shelburne, MA 01370