

# ETHICS AND ETHICAL POLICY

Ethics in the FPMT

Ethical Policy

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The purpose of FPMT's Ethical Policy is to help maintain and foster a supportive environment for Buddhist practice within the FPMT organization.

A fundamental responsibility of each person in a position of authority within the FPMT network is to uphold an environment that is safe, respectful, and supportive of Dharma practice. In this, each such individual safeguards the community's well-being and shares in the responsibility to foster an environment of integrity. This shared responsibility includes refraining from behaviour that harms others or negatively affects the environment in which Dharma is practiced and taught.

Those in positions of responsibility in the FPMT organization are trusted to behave in ways that further the well-being of their local FPMT community. In addition, these individuals are seen as representing Lama Zopa Rinpoche and the FPMT; they are ambassadors, and their behaviour reflects on Rinpoche and FPMT.

Misconduct on the part of persons in positions of power or trust can undermine the integrity of the organization, causing demoralization and loss of faith. Hence, the behaviours described in the Ethical Policy below are prohibited, and a center, project, or service's grievance procedures should be put into effect if a breach occurs.

Each individual in a position of authority, within their area of responsibility in the FPMT organization, is also required to act on any appearance or complaint of misconduct. It is crucial that such individuals identify and express concerns about conduct that may be harmful, so that procedures for dealing with problems can be implemented.

FPMT's Ethical Policy applies to all activities, interactions, or communications including those on-line, on social media, by telephone, in person, or by any other means as long as the activity, interaction, or communication in question concerns or pertains to FPMT-related actions, duties, or responsibilities.

FPMT's Ethical Policy must be signed by:

- FPMT center, project and service board members, directors, spiritual program coordinators, resident teachers, interpreters, introductory class leaders, employees and staff.
- FPMT registered teachers.
- FPMT study group, regional and national coordinators.
- FPMT Inc. board members and International Office employees and staff.

## ETHICAL POLICY

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1. **The Five Lay Precepts:** The five lay precepts are the foundation of ethics for all persons while in the course and scope of performing duties, responsibilities or actions for, on behalf of, or related to FPMT. The five basic rules are not to kill, steal, engage in or commit sexual misconduct, lie, or take intoxicants. Intoxicants include alcohol, recreational drugs, and tobacco products.

2. **No Discrimination:** The FPMT organization shall not discriminate in its programs, services, employment, volunteer opportunities, or other activities or benefits on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, age, or disability.

3. **No Harassment:** FPMT is committed to promoting safe environments wherein the dignity of every individual is respected. Everyone participating in FPMT-related activities has the right and shall be free from harassment of any type, be it sexual harassment, intimidation, bullying, or other forms of harassment. Everyone coming into contact with the FPMT network shall be treated with dignity and respect.

4. **Relationships:** Sexual relationships between Dharma teachers and students while a student is attending the teacher's teachings, course or retreat are prohibited, and are strongly discouraged at all other times as long as there is a Dharma teacher-student relationship. Please see below for a policy specific to Dharma teachers. Others in positions of authority are also strongly discouraged from entering into sexual relationships in situations where there may be a real or perceived power imbalance. As well, no teacher, volunteer, staff member, or other representative of the hosting center shall make sexual advances to any participant during a teaching, course or retreat.

5. **Right Speech:** Those in positions of authority must avoid gossip and harsh or abusive language, since overhearing conversations in which others are

disparaged can have a negative impact on those involved in FPMT activities. Harsh or abusive language may also constitute harassment or bullying.

6. **Finances:** All income and expenditure in FPMT affiliates must be accounted for according to generally accepted accounting principles. Money that has been donated for a specific project must be used for the project it has been donated for, and not for operating expenses or other projects. Income from the sale of Dharma items must be used for Dharma purposes, not for operating expenses.

7. **Whistleblower Protection:** If an individual or group believes that a practice or activity within the FPMT organization is illegal and/or against this Ethical Policy, and brings their concern to the relevant management, that individual or group shall be protected from retaliation.

#### ***Additional Policy for FPMT Registered Teachers, Class Leaders, and Interpreters***

Because of the uniqueness of the teacher-student relationship, FPMT registered teachers, interpreters, and introductory class leaders are required to observe the following additional policy:

- **Confidentiality:** In any situations where disclosures are made by students with a stated expectation of privacy, including but not limited to during private interviews, teachers, interpreters, and class leaders shall respect the confidentiality of students, and treat all communications from students as confidential, not disclosing information acquired from students without the consent of the student: unless required by law to disclose certain information.
- **Honesty:** Dharma teachers and class leaders are to be honest about their qualifications, and shall correct any misrepresentation of their qualifications as soon as it comes to their attention.
- **Avoiding Inappropriate Relationships:** Dharma teachers and class leaders, shall not engage in a sexual relationship or communicate an interest in doing so while a student is attending the teacher's course, teachings, or retreat. Dharma teachers and class leaders must never use, or create the appearance of using, their authority or position to pursue or initiate sexual relationships with students, volunteers, or other participants in teachings, courses, or retreats.