

## **The Insight Meditation Center**

### **Code of Ethics for Teachers**

This document applies to all people who function in the following roles at IMC or in any IMC related events, programs or offerings: teachers, including senior students serving in a teaching role, guest teachers, mentors, chaplains and ministers.

The foundation of spiritual life rests upon our mindful and caring relationship to the life around us. In keeping with this understanding and for the long-term benefit of all we agree to uphold the five lay training precepts.

In this Code of Ethics, we explicitly expand the scope of the five precepts to make them appropriate to our specific cultural setting:

**1) We undertake the precept of refraining from harming living beings.**

We acknowledge the interconnection of all beings and a reverence for all life. We will refrain from all forms of violence. We will develop our understanding of non-harming. We seek to help students understand the implications of this precept in ways that support their practice.

**2) We undertake the precept of refraining from taking that which is not offered.**

We will not take what belongs to others unless it is freely given. We will bring consciousness to the use of all of the earth's resources in a respectful and ecologically sensitive way. We will be honest in dealing with money and not misappropriate money committed to Dharma projects. We will offer teachings and Dharma support freely.

**3) We undertake the precept of refraining from sexual misconduct.**

We will avoid creating harm through sexual conduct and will refrain from all forms of sexual exploitation. In particular, we will not use our teaching role to pursue or encourage a sexual relationship with a student; nor will we accept or accede to sexual interest or advances from a student. In order to nurture an atmosphere of safety, we will model and encourage non-sexualized communications and behavior.

With respect to relationships between a teacher and a student, we will abide by the following agreements:

- a) Teachers will refrain from engaging in sexual activity with students without exception, including refraining from any speech or action on the part of the teacher indicating or implying sexual interest in a student.
- b) Teachers will remain mindful of the ways students and teachers alike can engage in transference and/or projection of feelings, including sexual feelings, onto the student-teacher relationship. When a teacher recognizes this is occurring, the teacher will consult with wise peers, their guiding teacher and possibly another professional in order to protect and maintain the safety and integrity of the student-teacher relationship.
- c) If mutual consensual interest in a sexual relationship occurs between someone in a

teaching role and someone in a student role, then the teacher-student relationship must definitively end before a sexual relationship begins. Once the student and teacher mutually agree that their student-teacher relationship has ended, there will follow an extended period of limited contact between the two. The details of this limited contact are to be established with the guidance of the EAR Council and the guiding teacher(s) at IMC (or their designee). A typical time frame for this limited contact period will likely range from 3-12 months but will vary. The predetermined period of limited contact must elapse before any sexual relationship is entered into.

**4) We undertake the precept of refraining from false and harmful speech.**

We will speak what is true and useful and refrain from harsh speech, divisive speech, and disparaging speech. In addition, we aspire to speak in ways that are increasingly inclusive and respectful of all people. We will cultivate conscious and clear communication and the quality of loving-kindness as the basis of our speech in order to support the development of harmony among students in the sangha. Teachers will support sangha members to speak in ways that are sensitive to all beings and that promote a community where people feel free to speak what they believe is true. Teachers will preserve the privacy of students and not share identifying details of students' practice histories or stories without their consent.

**5) We undertake the precept of refraining from intoxicants that cause heedlessness or loss of awareness.** We will not abuse intoxicants and we will refrain from all use of intoxicants in the presence of students. If any teacher has a drug or alcohol addiction problem, the Guiding Teachers and the IMC Board of Directors commit to addressing the situation immediately. In order to facilitate a supportive environment for all students adhering to this precept, teachers will endeavor to keep IMC related events, programs and gatherings free of intoxicants.