

Calgary IMS Code of Ethics for Teachers and Board Directors

Calgary IMS recognizes that 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 ourselves and the community at large, we, as teachers and directors, agree to uphold the five lay training precepts. Furthermore, we have specifically expanded the scope of these five precepts to make them explicitly appropriate to our role as practitioners of the Dharma in our specific cultural setting.

We have thus agreed to the following guidelines:

1) We undertake the precept of refraining from killing.

In undertaking this precept we acknowledge the interconnection of all beings and our respect for all life. We agree to refine our understanding of not killing and non-harming in all our actions. We agree to hold the intention of non-harming and developing insight into our own speech, thoughts & actions and the understanding of how they can harm or support the participants and everyone else we interact with. Our intention is to support a safe, skillful, kind and non-harming environment.

2) We undertake the precept of refraining from stealing and taking that which is not given.

We agree to not take that which does not belong to us and to respect the property of others. We agree to be honest in our dealings with money and not to misappropriate money committed to Dharma projects. As teachers, we agree to offer teachings without favouritism in regard to students' financial circumstances. As Directors of the Calgary IMS Board, we agree to steward Calgary IMS finances responsibly. We will respect the generosity of time and effort offered by students, volunteers and other participants without taking more than what is offered.

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

We agree to avoid creating harm through sexuality and to avoid sexual exploitation or relationships of a sexual manner that are outside of the bounds of the relationship commitments we have made to another or that involve another who has made vows to another. Those of us in committed relationships will honour our vows and refrain from adultery.

We, as teachers and directors agree not to use our teaching or leadership role to exploit our authority and position in order to assume a sexual relationship with a student or other person with whom we are in a position of trust. We acknowledge there can be healthy relationships between teachers and students, but that great care and sensitivity are needed. We agree that in this case the following guidelines are crucial:

- a) Developing a sexual relationship is never appropriate between teachers and students.
- b) During retreats or formal teaching, any intimation of future student- teacher romantic or sexual relationship is inappropriate.
- c) If interest in a genuine and committed relationship develops overtime between a teacher and a student, the student-teacher relationship must clearly and consciously have ended and the student and teacher must then consult with a trusted teacher or mentor before any further development toward a romantic relationship. Such a relationship must be approached with restraint and sensitivity - in no case should it occur immediately after retreat. A clear understanding from both parties that the student-teacher relationship has ended must be coupled with a conscious commitment to enter into a relationship that brings no harm to either party.

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

We agree to speak that which is true and useful and to refrain from gossip in our community. We agree to hold in confidence what is explicitly told to us in confidence. We agree to cultivate conscious and clear communication, and to cultivate the quality of loving-kindness and honesty as the basis of our speech.

5) We undertake the precept of refraining from intoxicants that cause heedlessness or loss of awareness.

It is clear that substance abuse is the cause of tremendous suffering. We agree that there should be no use of intoxicants during retreats or while participating in any Calgary IMS education or practice activities. We agree our intention is to not abuse or misuse intoxicants at any time. We agree that if the Calgary IMS Board of Directors becomes aware that any teacher or director has a drug or alcohol addiction problem, it should be immediately addressed by the directors.

This code of ethics was created by Gil Fronsdal of Insight Meditation Center and has been adapted for Calgary IMS (October, 2019)

