



Rigpa Code of Conduct

Introduction

The Rigpa sangha is an international community of individuals following the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Together, we endeavour to study, practise and embody the principles of peace, compassion and wisdom as taught by the Buddha and transmitted to us by many great masters, both past and present.

Extensive advice about ethical conduct already exists within the teaching of Buddha. Here, we summarise certain key features while providing practical guidelines to clarify what is expected of all who participate in Rigpa events and activities. Everyone in fact who participates in Rigpa has a responsibility to conduct themselves in accordance with the laws of the land and the values outlined in this *Rigpa Code of Conduct*.

In setting out certain values and standards of behaviour, we hope the Code of Conduct will not only serve as a basis for education and training, but also inspire individuals to reflect on their own behaviour in the light of contemporary secular and Buddhist ethical standards. In plain language, the Code seeks to identify unacceptable kinds of behaviour, and equally establish a straightforward pathway for reporting breaches of conduct and resolving grievances.

Over several months, the international Rigpa community took part in a series of workshops and discussions, and had opportunities to submit feedback on these issues. Their combined input was distilled into a broad set of *Shared Values and Guidelines*, which are rooted in the wisdom and compassion of the Buddhist path, and complement the Code of Conduct.

Rigpa role holders and representatives are required to sign the Code of Conduct and take part in regular training in ethical behaviour, to include topics such as recognising misconduct, receiving complaints and dealing with grievances.

In addition to the Code of Conduct, a grievance process has been developed, that is easy to use, with options for resolving conflicts, receiving formal complaints and making recommendations on misconduct to boards and national teams. Rigpa will set up national councils to offer advice on resolving grievances and to investigate breaches of the Code. The ultimate arbiter will be an international council with external members nominated by renowned Buddhist teachers.

Rigpa is committed to creating a culture where every person feels confident and empowered to give feedback fearlessly, express their concerns and report unethical behavior.

The Code and the Shared Values and Guidelines have been adopted by all the boards of the Rigpa organisations, and will be reviewed periodically.

Code of Conduct

Rigpa is an international community of individuals following the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. It is our shared wish to create a safe environment for the study and practice of the Buddhist teachings, one where we all feel a sense of responsibility for each others' well-being and spiritual path.

Whatever their participation or role in the activities associated with Rigpa, everyone has a responsibility to conduct themselves in accordance with the laws of the land and the ethical behaviour outlined in this document.

To care for others, ourselves and our community we are committed to:

- Acting in ways that are kind, loving and non-judgmental.
- Being aware of our actions and the way we may affect others.
- Acting in ways that are not aggressive or intimidating. Harassment and bullying of any kind are not tolerated under any circumstances.
- Never treating anyone in a way that might cause physical harm or psychological trauma.

Teachers, instructors and anyone representing Rigpa at any level also commit themselves to:

- Holding as their highest priority and motivation the welfare of the individual student, the Rigpa community and the Buddha Dharma as a whole.
- Not entering into an intimate relationship with a participant during an event, retreat, course, or any situation during which they are in a position of authority. In other circumstances, any intimate relationships are expected to be based on mutual respect and openly acknowledged, meaning non-secretive.
- Taking part in regular training in ethical behaviour, which will include recognising misconduct, receiving complaints and dealing with grievances.

Board members and members of management teams are also pledged to the highest standards of charity governance, to adhere to the requirements of statutory regulators, and to maintain the highest standards of financial transparency.

Clarification or reporting any misconduct is done through the Grievance Procedure. The first step is to contact a member of the local team or an instructor or the national council. There is also a recourse process with an international council. More details are provided under the Grievance Procedure.

This document will be signed by everyone with a role in the activities associated with Rigpa. The Rigpa Sangha has also developed a fuller set of *[Shared Values and Guidelines](#)*. Both are living and collaborative documents that will be amended and updated from time to time.

Please send your feedback to the Code of Conduct team [here](#) or address them to your national team or board.