

# STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

*OPEN MIND ZEN, MELBOURNE*

## PREFACE

The intent of this policy is to nourish and protect the treasure of sangha and to promote harmonious relationships among all its members, students, teachers, and other participants.

A compassionate standard of behavior is expected from everyone who participates in Open Mind Zen (OMZ) activities. This standard is based on respect for each person as a unique expression of Buddha nature regardless of age, race, gender, ethnic background, religious background, appearance, sexual orientation, physical abilities, political beliefs, social class, or occupation.

## DEFINITIONS

The following terms will be used throughout this document:

- **Members** participate at Open Mind Zen and support the Center but choose not to participate in the specific training methods set up for students.
- **Students** actively engage in the Open Mind Zen system of Zen practice with one of our authorized teachers. This category includes both beginning and more advanced students.
- **Teachers** are authorized within the Open Mind Zen system to teach, lead, and guide group activities. Depending upon the teacher's authorization, teachers may engage in one-on-one work with individual students. This category includes Assistant Teachers, Dharma Holder (Hoshi), Zen Teacher (Shiho), and Master Teachers (Roshi).

The members, students, and teachers of Open Mind Zen (OMZ) collectively comprise the OMZ sangha.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We aspire to relationships that are characterized by appropriate action. These relationships are based on trust, cooperation, openness to differences, good communication, fairness, kindness, and respect. The sangha cultivates these qualities as the practice of keeping the precepts and developing good dharma friendships.

Inappropriate action is harmful to others and ourselves. This may include, but is not limited to, physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and/or substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action. Persons who encounter inappropriate actions from any OMZ sangha member – including its teachers and senior instructors – or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit of the precepts and the practice of appropriate action.

OMZ sangha members that experience difficulties are encouraged to speak directly with the individuals involved. It is important that these communications be handled with care and respect for all involved. Therefore, the individuals involved are encouraged to reflect upon the Eight-Fold Path before engaging in challenging or difficult conversations. The Eight-Fold Path provides practical guidance for skillfully approaching difficult situations.

### EIGHT-FOLD PATH

1. **Skillful view.** What is your view of the situation? Describe it as clearly, factually, and concretely as possible. What might be missing from your viewpoint? How are your emotions affecting your view?
2. **Skillful intention.** What is your highest intention for the resolution of this situation? Consider your intentions for yourself, the “offending” person, and the sangha. Is your intention consistent with the precepts?
3. **Skillful speech.** How will you talk about this situation with others?
4. **Skillful action.** What action are you willing to take to resolve this situation? Is immediate action required, or is a more thoughtful, measured approach appropriate?
5. **Skillful livelihood.** How might this situation impact your home or work life?
6. **Skillful effort.** What are you trying to do or affect in this situation? How are you going about it? Is it aligned with your vows for liberating all beings?
7. **Skillful mindfulness.** What might you not be aware of or know about? How might you use this situation to expand your own awareness?
8. **Skillful concentration.** How can you bring focus, energy, wisdom, and care to this situation?

By reflecting deeply upon the Eight-Fold Path, everyone concerned has the opportunity to put the situation into the context of practice and the dharma.

## **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### ***GUARDIAN COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES AND SCOPE***

This policy establishes a Guardian Council to aid in the resolution of issues within the sangha. The policies listed below detail specific uses of the Guardian Council in the resolution of issues covered by this policy. Any sangha member may request a Guardian Council be formed to aid in the resolution of sangha issues, regardless of whether the issue is explicitly covered by this policy. Sangha members may request a Guardian Council be formed by sending a written request to the Board of Directors. Upon receipt of this request, the Board of Directors shall create and empower a Guardian Council to facilitate and monitor the reconciliation process.

The makeup of the Guardian Council is left to the discretion of the Board of Directors. However, it is recommended that the Board of Directors select the most senior teacher from three separate OMZ affiliates to serve on the Council. The Council shall consist of an odd number of participants (3, 5, etc.). Any person directly associated with the dispute in question must recuse themselves from this process. Such persons may not be a part of the Guardian Council selection process, and such persons may not serve on the Guardian Council.

The OMZ Board of Directors has the legal authority to change OMZ policy or to change the status of an OMZ teacher. Therefore, should the Guardian Council recommend changes to an OMZ policy or changes to the status of a sangha member or teacher, the Guardian Council must submit a written request to the cognizant OMZ Board of Directors to enact the change. The OMZ Board of Directors shall vote on the recommended changes within two weeks of receiving the written request.

### ***GENERAL GUIDANCE***

All Open Mind Zen sangha members are encouraged to treat one another with fairness, kindness, and respect. Should interpersonal difficulties arise between OMZ sangha members that are not explicitly covered by OMZ ethics policy, these individuals are encouraged to use the reconciliation process described later in this document to mediate disputes and facilitate constructive change.

### ***TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS***

Anyone serving in an official leadership position at OMZ, such as a member of the Board of Directors or a member of the Guardian Council, shall be held to the same standard of ethical conduct as a teacher.

Interpersonal relationships should be based on mutual respect, compassion, and kindness. We acknowledge the inherent power differential and inequality between a teacher and a non-teacher (student, member, or visitor). We specifically acknowledge the risk of great harm, both psychological and spiritual, that results from teachers becoming sexually involved with sangha members, both for the individuals involved, and for the sangha as a whole.

Intimate (dating and/or sexual) relationships between Teachers and OMZ members is discouraged. However, it is recognized that healthy relationships between sangha members (including teachers) are possible. Therefore, it is left to discretion of the Guardian Council to ~~determine~~ **DV** recommend an appropriate course of actions, should such a relationship occur.

Should a teacher form a relationship with another sangha member, the teacher must immediately cease being that sangha member's direct teacher, refraining from one-on-one instruction such as counseling and Dokuson. In addition, the teacher **must** inform the Board of Directors of the relationship. The Board of Directors shall form a Guardian Council to review the situation and make recommendations as appropriate.

If corrective actions are necessary, the Guardian Council may recommend a probationary period and/or other corrective actions that they deem appropriate. Any recommendations made by the Guardian Council shall be provided to the Board of Directors, as described previously in this policy. Before the end of the probationary period, the Guardian Council will meet to determine whether a return to full teaching status is recommended. If necessary, the Guardian Council can elect to recommend an extension or modification of the probationary period.

## ATONEMENT

Any person who acts inappropriately is expected to make every effort to realign their conduct in accord with the precepts and to take the actions necessary to restore the harmony of the sangha and mitigate any harm done. Such atonement is an integral part of our spiritual practice. This spirit is captured in the verse of Atonement, which is repeated during Sunday service.

### Verse of Atonement

All negative karma, ever committed by me since of old,  
On account of my beginningless greed, anger and ignorance;  
Born of my actions, speech and thought;  
Now I atone for it all.

## RECONCILIATION

We are committed to solving problems and resolving issues that may arise from inappropriate action. If a person believes that they have been inappropriately treated and seeks resolution, one or more of the following reconciliation methods may be used.

### *OPTION #1: INFORMAL RESOLUTION*

The aggrieved person directly contacts the person(s) who has (have) allegedly acted inappropriately, making an effort to reach an understanding and to resolve differences. All the parties involved are encouraged to treat one another with kindness and respect, consistent with the Guiding Principles outlined in this policy. If the dispute is not resolved, then the aggrieved person may proceed to either Internal Mediation or an appeal to the Guardian Council.

### *OPTION #2: INTERNAL MEDIATION*

The aggrieved person may request a meeting with the senior-most Teacher not involved in the grievance to mediate the dispute. The role of the Teacher in this process will be to facilitate discussion, helping the parties reach a mutually agreed upon resolution of the issues. If the parties are unable to resolve the differences through this mediation process, then the aggrieved person may make an appeal to the Guardian Council.

### *OPTION #3: APPEAL TO THE GUARDIAN COUNCIL*

The person filing the grievance may send a written request to the Board of Directors, requesting that a Guardian Council be formed. Senior teachers within the sangha may also request a Guardian Council be formed, should they deem it necessary to resolve issues within the sangha. Upon request, the board of directors shall create and empower a Guardian Council to facilitate and monitor the reconciliation process.

The person filing the grievance will provide the Guardian Council with a written description of the alleged inappropriate action and the efforts already undertaken to resolve the matter. The person who allegedly acted inappropriately shall respond to the allegation in writing to the Guardian Council within one week. The Guardian Council shall request a meeting within four weeks of receipt of this response to discuss the matter with all involved parties.

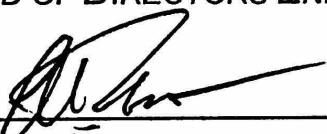


The Guardian Council shall hold a meeting that includes the person alleging the grievance, the person(s) who allegedly acted inappropriately, and at least one member of the OMZ Board of Directors. The selected OMZ Board member shall serve as an observer only, not as an active participant in the process. If the parties agree, this meeting may include others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Guardian Council will caucus to determine what corrective actions, if any, are to be instituted. The Guardian Council shall provide a written statement describing the recommended course of action to each of the parties involved and to the OMZ Board of Directors, within one week of the meeting.

## CONCLUSION

This policy was issued on Aug 6, 2022 after being endorsed by the Board of Directors for Open Mind Zen, Melbourne. This policy applies to all who practice, study, and teach at Open Mind Zen, Melbourne. The policy shall be kept on file and freely distributed to all.

Affiliate OMZ organizations may elect to use this policy as guidance for their sangha, or they may create their own policy. The specific policy to be used by each affiliate must be determined by that organization's Board of Directors.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS ENDORSEMENT, OPEN MIND ZEN, MELBOURNE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Al Rapaport8-6-22  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Vittoe8/6/22  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kellie Garza8/14/22  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Petersen8/6/22  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Stamper8/8/22  
Date

# THE PRECEPTS

Students wishing to deepen their commitment to the practice may participate in the Jukai ceremony. Jukai means "to receive the precepts" and is considered a formal initiation into the Zen Buddhist Community. During the Jukai you will affirm your commitment to the precepts, receive the rakusu, which represents the robe of the Buddha, receive the Blood Lineage Chart, which connects you to the lineage of masters who practiced in the past, and receive a Dharma name that captures your unique qualities as a member of our sangha.

## THE 3 REFUGES

1. May I be one with the Buddha, the Awakened Unborn Mind.
2. May I be one with the Dharma, the teaching of how to awaken.
3. May I be one with the Sangha, those who practice awakening together.

## THE 3 PURE PRECEPTS

1. May I practice not knowing, thereby giving up fixed ideas about myself and the universe. This is ceasing from evil.
2. May I cultivate a life of compassion and wisdom. This is doing good.
3. May I heal myself and then heal others. This is true helping.

## THE 10 GRAVE PRECEPTS

1. May I realize that I am not separate from all that is. This is the precept of non-killing.
2. May I be satisfied with what I have and not take what is not freely given. This is the precept of non-stealing.
3. May I enter all relationships with respect and dignity. This is the precept of chaste conduct.
4. May I listen and speak from the heart. This is the precept of non-lying.
5. May I cultivate a mind that sees clearly. This is the precept of not being ignorant.
6. May I unconditionally accept what each person has to offer. This is the precept of not talking about others' errors and faults.
7. May I not be prideful and blame others for my faults. This is the precept of not elevating oneself and blaming others.
8. May I not withhold spiritual or material aid. This is the precept of not being stingy.
9. May I transform suffering into wisdom. This is the precept of not being angry.
10. May I honor my life as an instrument of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. This is the precept of not thinking ill of the 3 Treasures.