



The Samatha Trust

Protecting People from Mistreatment, Bullying and Harassment Policy

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

- 1.1. The Samatha Trust aims to offer a high level of care and attention to the teaching of meditation in all our classes, courses and associated activities including the governance, administration and management of the Samatha Trust's activities.
- 1.2. This policy applies to harassment, mistreatment or bullying on the grounds of disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, race and ethnic origin, and any other personal characteristic.
- 1.3. The Samatha Trust will take seriously any feedback, concern or complaint received and to resolve problems through the effective use of the Trust's Concerns and Complaints Procedure. We endeavour to make those whom we teach aware of this procedure and will provide a copy of the procedure on request. If a complaint alerts us to possible abuse or neglect we will alert the adult safeguarding officer who will decide how to investigate.
- 1.4. In appropriate cases we may suggest the involvement of a trusted third party to help resolve any disagreement.
- 1.5. A report to the Charity Commission will be made if a serious safeguarding risk materialises. This will usually be if any of the following occur:
 - A. incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of beneficiaries of the Samatha Trust (adults or children) which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them;
 - B. this happened while they were under the care of the Samatha Trust;
 - C. someone connected with the Samatha Trust, for example a trustee, teacher, member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual);
 - D. other incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of people who come into contact with the charity through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to the Samatha Trust's activities;
 - E. breaches of procedures or policies at the charity which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm, including failure to carry out relevant vetting checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified in law from holding their position within the charity. This might be, for example, because they are disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with children and/or adults at risk;

- F. The above may include incidents in the workplace that have resulted in or risk significant harm to trustees, teachers, members or volunteers.
- 1.6. As well as reporting to the Charity Commission we will notify the police, local authority and/or relevant regulator or statutory agency responsible for dealing with these incidents

2. Principles

- 2.1. The Policy applies to all Trustees, office holders, teachers and course members.
- 2.2. Respect and Dignity: Treat everyone with respect and dignity, valuing diversity and promoting equality.
- 2.3. Compassion and Understanding: Address conflicts and concerns with compassion and a willingness to understand different perspectives.
- 2.4. Safe Environment: Maintain a safe and supportive environment free from bullying and harassment.
- 2.5. The Samatha Trust is committed to ensuring that any form of harassment is dealt with both sensitively and speedily. All Trustees, teachers, mediators and those having contact with the us are encouraged therefore to raise any issues immediately in accordance with this procedure in the knowledge that these will be treated seriously and in confidence.
- 2.6. The Samatha Trust acknowledges the fact that people do sometimes make genuine mistakes. This procedure is designed to enable problems to be dealt with sensitively and in accordance with the wishes of the person subjected to inappropriate behaviour.
- 2.7. Formal action may be taken under the Complaints Procedure against any person who has been found to have bullied or harassed anyone connected with the Samatha Trust's activities.

3. Definition

- 3.1. The current definition of harassment - as applied to age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief and race and ethnic and national origin is:
- 3.2. Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual"
- 3.3. The essential characteristic of harassment is that the action(s) is (are) unwanted by the recipient.
- 3.4. Forms of harassment include many kinds of unacceptable behaviour. For example: Uninvited, unreciprocated and unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature, which is offensive to the person involved and causes that person to feel threatened, humiliated, or embarrassed. Action, behaviour, comment

or physical contact which is found objectionable or which causes offence, including: offensive jokes, verbal abuse, language, graffiti or literature of a racist or sectarian nature, or offensive remarks about a person's skin colour, physical characteristics, age, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic.

- 3.5. Bullying is the intimidation or belittling of someone through the misuse of power or position, which leaves the recipient feeling hurt, upset, vulnerable or helpless. It is often inextricably linked to the areas of harassment described above.
- 3.6. Examples of bullying include
 - A. Unjustified criticism of an individual's personal or professional performance
 - B. Shouting at an individual, criticising an individual in front of others
 - C. Spreading malicious rumours or making malicious allegations
 - D. Ignoring or excluding an individual from the team / group

4. Responsibilities of All

- 4.1. All associated with The Samatha Trust have a personal responsibility not to harass or bully people attending Samatha Trust activities, or to condone harassment or bullying by others.
- 4.2. Harassment and bullying is misconduct and action may be taken under the Complaints Procedure against anyone found to have harassed or bullied an individual.
- 4.3. All associated with The Samatha Trust have a duty to assist in the creation of a safe environment, where unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. This may include challenging unacceptable behaviour, ensuring their own behaviour does not contribute to or collude with unacceptable behaviour, and cooperating fully in any investigation undertaken by the Samatha Trust.
- 4.4. Anyone who becomes aware of harassment or bullying occurring should bring the matter to the attention of the Samatha Trust using the guidelines found in the Samatha Trust's Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

5. Responsibilities of Samatha Trustees, Teachers and Course Leaders

- 5.1. Samatha Teachers and Course Leaders have an obligation to prevent harassment or bullying and to take immediate action once it has been identified, whether or not a complaint has been made. They must ensure that the Samatha Trust provides environments where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

- 5.2. Samatha Teachers and Course Leaders should use the guidelines in the Samatha Trust's Concerns and Complaints Procedure to respond to complaints swiftly and sensitively, and be aware of behaviour which would cause offence, if necessary reminding other staff members or volunteers of expected standards.

6. Harassment and Bullying Complaints Procedure

- 6.1. Where possible and appropriate, complaints regarding harassment and bullying should be dealt with by using an informal approach, at least in the first instance. Informal action provides the opportunity to resolve allegations of harassment through informal discussion and mediation. Some people may not be aware that their behaviour in some circumstances is being perceived as bullying or harassment. Using an informal approach gives the alleged harasser the opportunity to stop if directly approached by a Trustee, Samatha Teacher or Course Leader.
- 6.2. Should the informal approach fail to stop the harassment or bullying, or if it is agreed that the situation warrants formal action, the formal approach should be taken using the Samatha Trust's Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

Samatha Trust's Concerns and Complaints Policy

In the first instance email

administrator@samatha.org

with your concern or complaint.

To find the Samatha Trust's Concerns and Complaints Policy go to

www.samatha.org

click on "The Samatha Trust" at the bottom of any page.

Choose "Complaints Procedure" for the Downloads list.

Alternatively go directly to

[https://samatha.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Samatha Trust
Concerns and Complaints Procedure_0.pdf](https://samatha.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Samatha%20Trust%20Concerns%20and%20Complaints%20Procedure_0.pdf)