

# Vipassana Trust (Dhamma Sukhakari) Protecting People Policy

<b>Full Title</b>	Protecting People (and Safeguarding) Policy for Adults (PPP)
<b>Summary</b>	This policy, and the documents referred to in it, apply to the servers and students participating in the activities of Vipassana Trust (Dhamma Sukhakari)
<b>Approval</b>	Vipassana Trust (Dhamma Sukhakari)
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Vipassana Trust (Dhamma Sukhakari)
<b>Next Review Date</b>	May 2025

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The objective of Vipassana Trust (Dhamma Sukhakari) is to advance the teachings of the Buddha for the public benefit by organising and running courses of Vipassana meditation as taught by S.N. Goenka, in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin. The courses are offered completely free of charge and staffed by volunteers. People from all walks of life attend courses. An introduction to the technique can be found [here](#).
- 1.2. Vipassana is beneficial for most people, although we do not recommend it for people with certain mental or physical health problems. We ask all students and volunteers to disclose any such issues when they apply for a course (see point 6.6.).
- 1.3. Offering the courses for free and ensuring that no person receives remuneration for their service or teaching is a fundamental principle of Vipassana meditation as taught by S.N. Goenka, and serves an important purpose in the teachings of the Buddha. It is, in fact, part of the practice.
- 1.4. It is also an important principle that all our teachers are experienced in what they are teaching, undergo rigorous training, and meet stringent requirements for teaching meditation including exemplary ethical conduct in their role as teachers and in their private life. The fact that the teachers provide their services free of charge, enriches and does not undermine their expertise (for more information about teacher training see point 9.1.).
- 1.5. Ethical conduct (in the Pali language, *Sila*) is the foundation of Vipassana meditation. This includes abstaining from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from speaking lies or harsh words, backbiting etc, and from the use of intoxicants (i.e. alcohol and recreational drugs). In

addition, every student and volunteer observes celibacy while they are at the centre, and males and females are accommodated in separate areas and sit on different sides of the meditation hall. (We also have inclusive policies for transgender and non-binary people, see point 6.8.) No physical contact is permitted in the centre, save where it is unavoidable, for example for a safety reason. All servers commit to a 'Code of Conduct' during their stay (see appendix 17.2.). The effort to maintain ethical discipline and follow the 'Code of Conduct' helps to protect people at the centre.

- 1.6. Although Trust itself was established in November 2017, the courses are run in the same format at approximately 240 similar but autonomous centres worldwide. More than 2.3 million people have joined such Vipassana courses since 1969. As such, there is now considerable experience and expertise in providing courses in Vipassana meditation in the UK, and around the world, on which the Trust relies. In particular, the teachers may teach and train in different centres, and software (called CALM, see point 6.1.) has been developed to manage course applications and is used across European centres and in certain other countries.
- 1.7. There are normally volunteers (called 'long-term servers', see point 10.2.) who stay at the centre during and in-between courses to develop their spiritual practice and to support and maintain the centre.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this document is to set out our policy and approach to discharging our ethical and legal responsibilities for protecting people in relation to our activities.
- 2.2. A separate safeguarding policy applies to children's courses.

## 3. Organisation and overarching responsibilities

- 3.1. **The centre teacher** has overall responsibility for the teaching of Vipassana meditation at the centre. He<sup>1</sup> has oversight of courses at Dhamma Sukhakari and works with trustees to ensure the centre operates within the guidelines established by S.N. Goenka. He appoints the trustees and has an advisory role in the Trust. He attends the Trust Meetings and Centre Management Committee and approves all appointments for long-term service. He has regular interviews and other contact with long-term servers staying at the centre. He is also kept informed of any emergency or other serious incident at the centre, so that he can provide assistance. When he is not available, he ensures that another teacher is available to carry out his responsibilities.
- 3.2. **Teachers, senior assistant teachers, and assistant teachers (the teachers)** are responsible for the Vipassana courses which they conduct, including the spiritual welfare (ie that pertaining to

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<sup>1</sup> The current Centre Teacher is male, but may be of any gender, and may be single or a couple.

their practice of Vipassana) of all volunteers and students at the centre while the course is going on. Some of them are involved with the Trust and its committees (each committee has at least one teacher member to advise and support on matters relating to Vipassana). They are also responsible for reporting to the centre teacher at the end of the course and in relation to any serious incident during it.

3.3. **Trustees** have legal responsibilities for the Trust, including in relation to protecting people and ensure that all the appropriate policies and procedures are in place to achieve that. The trustees are members of and oversee the work of the committees, are kept informed regarding their activities, and take decisions proposed to them by the committees, including approving financial expenditure. The trustees meet regularly in order to discharge these responsibilities and minutes are kept of all meetings by the Trust Secretary.

3.4. **Committee members** are responsible for protecting people in the context, and to the extent that it is a function, of their particular committee. There are committees which set policies and oversee the operation of different activities in the centre including:

- Centre Management Committee
  - Health and Safety Sub-Committee
  - Dhamma Service Sub-Committee
  - Fire Safety Sub-Committee
  - Health and Safety Sub-Committee
  - Rodent Control Sub-Committee
  - Travel Sub-Committee
- Executive Committee
- Finance Committee
- Kitchen Committee
- Development Committee
- Registration Committee
- Accessibility Committee
- Maintenance Committee
- Children's Course Committee
- UK Privacy Team

3.5 Communication between the teachers, trustees, and committees is robustly integrated within the organisation's structure. The effectiveness of this structure is enhanced by an online facility, which houses policies, operation manuals, forms, talks, and planning documents. This aids participation by all responsible persons and facilitates suitable oversight.

## 4. Courses

4.1. **Types of courses** Dhamma Sukhakari usually runs 22 x adult (from 18+ years and over) 10-day residential courses, 3 x adult 3-day residential courses, and 3 x children's 3-day residential courses. In some years, 1-day non-residential adult courses are run.

- 4.2. **Student and server numbers** The capacity for adult students at Dhamma Sukhakari is about 86 (50 female, 36 male), with a total of about 22 servers. 10-day courses run at capacity with waiting lists, and the overall total number of students who attend courses is approximately 1,800 a year.
- 4.3. **Children's courses** for children from 8 years up to 17 years are protected by our 'VT(DS) Child Safeguarding Policy' which is available [[here](#)].
- 4.4. **New and old students** 10-day courses are open to new students (those who have not completed a 10-day course in this tradition) and old students (those who have completed a 10-day course in this tradition). Generally, courses are attended by about 2/3 new students, 1/3 old students.
- 4.5. **Old students only** 3-day and 1-day courses are open to old students only. Old students may also attend a 10-day course part-time, if space allows.
- 4.6. **Accommodation** students mostly sleep in dormitories at Dhamma Sukhakari, with male and female students accommodated in separate buildings, although there are plans to build more single room accommodation.
- 4.7. **Facilities and meals** Gender segregated toilets and showers are provided, as are cooked vegetarian meals for breakfast and lunch (plus a supper of fruit for new students, or a cooked meal for those who need it) and large fields for walking. There is a large, underfloor-heated and well-ventilated meditation hall (with cushions and shawls provided), plus purpose-built quiet meditation cells and private interview rooms for meetings with the teachers.
- 4.8. **Timetables** Each day (except the final, social "Metta" day 10) features 8 x meditation sessions per day (amounting to approximately 10 hours of meditation per day). These sessions include instructions and checking by the teachers and are interspersed by short breaks and three long breaks, interviews, meals, an evening discourse, questions for the teacher, and an early bedtime. The day commences with a morning meditation session starting at 4.30am, breakfast is served at 6.30am, lunch at 11am, with tea/supper at 5pm. The full timetable is published on the Trust's website within the '[Code of Discipline](#)'. This timetable remains the same for all types of adult courses.

## 5. Website

- 5.1. **Introduction** The Trust website is open to the public (save for the old student section which is only open to people who have successfully completed at least one 10-day course). Information about the technique, course structure, requirements, the schedules, application process and more, is all contained within our public facing website ([uk.dhamma.org](http://uk.dhamma.org)).

5.2. The webpages contain downloadable introduction to the technique, course structure and '[Code of Discipline](#)' and further information can be found within "[FAQs](#)". Sample information covered by the 'Code of Discipline' page:

- The **precepts** undertaken during courses for new students, with three additional precepts for old students (see point 1.5.). Note: new students and old students alike sleep on normal comfortable sprung mattresses, on standard framed beds, with clean duvets, pillows, and blankets.
- An explanation of '**noble silence**'.
- **Warning** to those who may have 'serious mental disorders' who are considering applying, an extract of which reads: *'Although Vipassana meditation is beneficial for most people, it is not a substitute for medical or psychiatric treatment and we do not recommend it for people with serious psychiatric disorders'*.
- **Timetable** (see point 4.8).

5.3. **Old student webpages** There are additional webpages for old students which provide information about local group sits, contacting a teacher, signing-up to email updates, virtual group sittings, daily practice, public events, and literature.

## 6. Course applications

6.1. **Introduction** New students, old students and course servers apply [online](#). Applicant data is stored on the Trust's bespoke, secure database, called 'CALM' (Course Application and Letters Management). CALM is registered in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, with Chamber of Commerce number 69501440. The CALM privacy policy is published [online](#). CALM is only accessed by trained Registrars [see point: 10.1] and the teachers (see points: 7.1 – 7.2). Applicants receive an immediate email receipt of submission. If accepted, a confirmation email is sent within two weeks. If the course is at capacity, applicants might be offered a place on the Waiting List. If further information is required, the conducting teacher commences the Special Handling procedures which include further questions to help establish whether it would be appropriate, at the present time, for the applicant to be accepted onto the course.

6.2. **Data protection information** We provide prospective applicants with details about CALM, the categories of information application forms cover, and the Trust's data protection policy (see 6.1. & appendix: 17.1.).

6.3. **'Introduction to Technique and Code of Discipline for Courses'** In a repeat of information available on the [websites](#), applicants are presented with this information in full. Applicants are asked to read 'attentively' and to complete all 'questions with full and honest answers.'

- 6.4. **Application data** includes name; date-of-birth; occupation; nationality; personal contact details; spoken languages; gender; emergency contact details; medical physical and mental history; any therapies undertaken; details of any past or current experience of meditation practices or spiritual healing techniques; any further comments.
- 6.5. **Application data for old students and course servers** repeats point 6.3 (also see appendix 17.2.), plus: number of all types of courses completed as a student or server in this tradition; date, location and conducting teacher of old student's first and last course(s); details of any practice of other meditation techniques, therapies or spiritual healing techniques since your last course; any maintenance of practice and/or precepts since last course.
- 6.6. **Medical Questions** in relation to medical issues, applicants are asked if they are pregnant; suffer physical health problems, impairments, or disabilities; mental health (appendix: 17.3.). In relation to mental health, the question reads:
- Do you have, or have you ever had, any mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, panic attacks, eating disorder, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, psychotic episode, etc.)?
- 6.7. **Applicant declarations** Applicants are asked to declare that they are aware their information will be used as stated in the privacy policy, and that they have chosen to provide information which relates to mental and physical health, beliefs or other sensitive data. Applicants sign a statement declaring that they understand the '[Code of Discipline](#)', as well as the serious nature of the course, that they are physically and mentally fit to participate, that information provided is true and correct and, finally, that they have read and agree to the [privacy policy](#) (appendix: 17.4. and 17.5.).
- 6.8. **Inclusion** The Trust welcomes all to its courses. Whatever race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability or background, people come to a Vipassana course united by a common purpose – to solve the problem of human suffering.
- 6.9. **Equality** The Trust's Equality Policy is published [online](#). It covers non-sectarianism, physical health (including physical disabilities), mental health, learning disabilities, sexual orientation, gender diversity and confidentiality.
- 6.10. **Accessibility** The Trust needs to know what a student will require in advance of their arrival so they can be comfortably accommodated. Applicants are asked to complete a questionnaire to gather further information. The conducting teacher contacts them to discuss how they might be best supported. At Dhamma Sukhakari, we have an audio induction loop for people with hearing aids. Blind or partially sighted students are accompanied by an old student to guide them around the site. Our meditation hall doors are currently wheelchair accessible and

all future building plans feature disabled access. The VT(DS) Accessibility Committee is consulted throughout building design and implementation.

- 6.11. **Pregnant women** We ask pregnant women to ensure they are confident that their pregnancy is stable before applying. We provide the extra food they need and ask them to work in a relaxed way, sitting on a chair and taking more regular breaks, for example.
- 6.12. **‘Special Handling’** refers to the procedure registrars follow set-out in the Registration Manual, in accordance with which they refer cases, including physical and mental health issues, to the teacher responsible for ‘Special Handling’ for the particular course. The teacher carries out the special handling in accordance with the ‘Special Handling Manual’ and they may seek advice from another teacher during the process. The teacher conducting the course has some discretion within the framework of the Manual and will often discuss the case directly with the applicant or direct the Registrar to ask follow-up questions. In difficult cases, the teacher conducting the course has the final decision about whether to accept a student onto their course because they must be prepared to accept responsibility for the welfare of that student during the course.
- 6.13. **Refusals** where an application is refused the applicant is provided with reasons for the decision. In many cases an option to reapply is expressly mentioned with advice on the circumstances in which the course may be appropriate at some future date. In other cases, a period for reapplying is not expressly mentioned. A record is normally kept in CALM of the decision, to protect the person in question and assist with any future application.
- 6.14. **Day-0 forms** are completed on arrival at Dhamma Sukhakari, new students, old students and course servers complete their corresponding ‘Day-0 Form’ respectively. This is a folded paper form. The registrar on the desk will check the front and rear of the form to check it contains contact details and is signed, but the personally sensitive data contained within is only seen by the conducting teacher. Questions include basic personal details, plus practice of other meditation techniques or therapies, previous courses completed in this tradition (for old students and servers), physical and mental health and features a declaration, which amongst other checks, includes (appendix: 17.5.):
- Have you carefully read and understood the Code of Discipline in “Vipassana Meditation, Introduction to the Technique and Code of Discipline for Meditation Courses”? Yes/No
  - Do you agree to follow all the rules and keep to the timetable? Yes/No
  - Realising that a Vipassana course is a serious undertaking, can you confirm that you are in a reasonably good state of

mental and physical health? Yes/No

- Signed for understanding on use of personal data, privacy statement and data storage.

6.15. **Day-0 Interviews** (see point: 7.2.2.)

6.16. **Disclosure** In most, if not all, cases where a student (or server) has an unexpected or serious problem on a course it relates to a pre-existing history not disclosed as part of the application process. Unfortunately, despite repeated requests, warnings and full information about the demands of the course, a minority of people do not answer honestly or fail to mention important information in the application process. The teachers are trained to look out for this during the course, but the cooperation of applicants is also greatly appreciated to ensure that their welfare is protected, and they receive the support they need.

## 7. Course roles and responsibilities

7.1. **The centre teacher** has oversight of all the courses at the centre (see point 3.1.). When he is not teaching courses himself, he offers support to the teacher on the course including in relation to the local polices of the centre (which may be different to how things are done elsewhere). He is available to offer guidance and support on any issue and must be informed in the unlikely event of any emergency or serious incident at the centre in accordance with our emergency procedures. He also supports and has oversight of the centre management.

7.2. **The teachers** are responsible for conducting the Vipassana meditation courses to which they are assigned, including responsibility for the spiritual welfare (ie that pertaining to their practice of Vipassana) of the students and volunteers on those courses, and they are normally responsible for the special handling of course applicants for their courses.

7.2.1. In performing their role, the teachers (most are called 'Assistant Teachers' or 'AT's) are required to act in accordance with the guidelines and training principles in place for all courses in Europe, as well as local guidelines and procedures required by the centre teacher. There is a comprehensive "AT Handbook" available online and in hard copy in the teachers' residences. There is usually one teacher for each gender, although some teachers may teach both genders, and there are strict guidelines for co-conducting teachers who are not married. Further, no teacher may be left alone with a person of the opposite gender other than their spouse.

7.2.2. The course teachers appoint the Kitchen Manager and Course Managers, on the recommendation of the Centre Manager, and oversee all the pre-course procedures. They review the 'Day-0' forms completed on the eve of the course, including ensuring every student has given the name of an emergency contact. They give interviews on

‘Day-0’ before the course starts where appropriate, and have the final say on admission to the course.

- 7.2.3. The course teachers stay on site for the entire course and are available day and night for everyone participating in the course. They meditate with and observe the students in the meditation hall during most sessions of the day, play recorded instructions by S.N. Goenka, check each student regularly, give private interviews, and have an open question and answer session every night for the students at 9pm.
- 7.2.4. The course teachers have frequent contact with the Course Managers throughout the day including dedicated daily meetings where the teacher ensures the Course Manager is aware of their role, reports on their contact with the students, and understands that all meditation questions or issues are to be referred to the teacher. The Course Manager’s role is to attend to the basic material needs of the students. Every night the teacher conducts “servers’ *metta*” where all the servers at the centre meditate together for a short time. After that the teacher discusses key points with the servers about the course and their roles and ensures that any questions are clarified.
- 7.2.5. A Vipassana meditation course is serious, intensive and demanding. It may involve strong emotional and physical experiences. During the course, students are required to meditate for ten hours per day. They must be self-disciplined and able to follow detailed instructions and the ‘[Code of Discipline](#)’. At times, unpleasant experiences may come up onto the surface of the mind and a certain degree of mental fortitude is needed to face them. The teacher provides guidance, instruction and support to help, but students must be fit to do the work. If a student has a physical health issue the teacher may offer adjustments, such as a chair or evening meals. If a student has a psychological difficulty, the teacher needs to ensure they can support the student appropriately during the course.
- 7.2.6. The teachers are trained and experienced in teaching Vipassana. Even if they have their own medical knowledge, they cannot offer medical treatment or advice in their role as Vipassana teachers. If there is any doubt as to whether a student requires medical treatment during the course, they are asked to leave the course to receive it. This is a rare occurrence because students are required to confirm that they are in reasonable health prior to attending the course and are requested to disclose any health issues during the application procedure (see points 6.6., 6.7. & 6.12.).
- 7.2.7. The teachers offer positive encouragement and support to the students as they learn the meditation progressively with different instructions each day. They also help students work in different ways according to the situations they face. Experience shows that students need to complete the full course to gain the proper benefit from their efforts and for that reason we ask students, at the outset

of the course, to confirm that they are committed to staying for its duration. Strong determination may be needed. The teachers are trained to spot genuine difficulties, however, and to distinguish cases where students need encouragement and guidance to work in a different way, from physical or mental health issues where medical attention may be needed. They are trained to take a 'safety first' approach and, as noted in point 7.2.6. any student with a medical issue (no matter how minor) is always free, and may be strongly encouraged, to leave the course and seek medical advice.

7.2.8. After the course, the teachers are available to answer any questions. A student or volunteer may contact the centre for this purpose. The teacher conducting the course may answer such questions from old students who are not on the course, during telephone discussions or by email.

7.3. **Course managers** are old student volunteers appointed by the teachers for the duration of the course in order to help the teacher maintain the course discipline and attend to the material needs of the students. They act under the close guidance of the teachers in accordance with the written guidelines and policies they are provided. Under no circumstances do they ever provide any meditation instruction or guidance and all issues relating to the students' meditation and welfare are referred to the teachers. Although extensive written guidance is provided about their role, the teachers assume no knowledge on the part of the course managers and are prepared to train them on the job.

7.4. **The Kitchen Manager and kitchen servers** are old student volunteers responsible for working in the kitchen and providing meals for all the students and servers. The kitchen manager is normally an experienced volunteer who manages the kitchen team with the support of the Kitchen Coordinator and Centre Manager. The teacher appoints the Kitchen Manager on the recommendation of the Centre Manager. All significant issues are reported to the teacher who meets with them daily and is ultimately responsible for their welfare as pertains to their meditation practice during the course. There is extensive operational guidance, manuals, talks, and training materials provided to the Kitchen Manager and servers which they refer to and are required to follow during the course. All the kitchen servers meditate for at least three hours a day and follow the 'Code of Conduct' for servers (see appendix 17.2.). They have the chance to integrate their meditation practice with their role while working as part of a team in a safe and supportive environment.

7.5. **Centre Managers** have oversight over all managerial matters of the day-to-day running of the centre, which do not relate to the teaching of meditation. Centre Managers are guided and supported by the Centre teacher. During courses, they refer to the conducting teachers. Example Centre Manager duties include:

- Meeting with the teachers and liaising with the registrars.

- Following the guidance of the teachers with respect to the management of students and servers.
- Office and administrative duties.
- Administering first aid.
- Giving student and server orientation talks, which covers the practicalities of courses and the centre, including the details set out in this policy as appropriate.
- Ensuring student and server valuables are secured in lockers (students have keys) and mobile phones are stored in accordance with procedures.
- Checking that buildings and the site are secure.
- Chairing and reporting to the Centre Management Committee (CMC)
- Organising the course set-up and clean-up, including allocation of tasks for non-course servers.

## 8. Other aspects of course management

- 8.1. This section concerns certain aspects of courses which are not addressed above.
- 8.2. **Early Arrivals** occur when a new student happens to arrive early (i.e. before 2pm) on the course start day. The Centre Manager will greet them, they will complete a Day-0 form which will go to the conducting teacher. The Centre Manager will help them to settle-in, offer tea, and so forth. New students are not permitted to stay overnight prior to the course starting. Old students are welcome to arrive early and, if they do so, are invited to help set-up for the course. In that event, they will be asked to complete a Day-0 form for Dhamma Servers (see point 6.14).
- 8.3. **Valuables** are stored at the Centre in lockers for which the student has the key in accordance with the valuables policy.
- 8.4. **Mobile phones** are stored in a secure location and returned to students and course servers at the end of course.

**Early Leavers** occur when a student or server has to leave a course before it officially ends due to physical or mental health concerns or outside family or other emergency. The conducting teacher will liaise with the Centre Manager regarding appropriate action. In such cases, care is taken to assess and ensure their health and safety. The Trust has comprehensive Guidelines for the Centre Managers to follow in the case of Medical Emergency, which cover Severe Physical Illness, Accidents and Mental Episodes (appendix 17.6) The student or server is invited to, and usually does, meet the teacher before leaving, but in some cases they leave without doing so. In those cases, they have usually spoken to the course managers or the centre managers before leaving. If they leave without notifying anyone, they are contacted by the Centre Managers to ensure they are alright and if the Centre Manager cannot get hold of them, they call the Emergency Contact.

8.5. **Course cancellations** occur in rare circumstances. When courses are cancelled in advance, an ideal two weeks – or minimum one week - notice is provided to students. In even rarer circumstances, when a course is cancelled midway through (as has only happened due to COVID), the conducting teacher and Centre Manager support and assist students as needed.

## 9. Course server training

9.1. **All the teachers** have done thousands, and often tens of thousands, of hours of meditation over many years, including long retreats, before they are appointed. They are required to take their own meditation course every year, to meditate for at least two hours every day, and they adhere to a strict ethical code of conduct. By any standard they are experienced and highly competent in what they are teaching. The UK has teachers who have taught thousands of students over decades. All newly appointed teachers must complete a training programme with at least three different training supervisors over at least three courses. It is a progressive training where trainees observe and are observed by trainers. Trainees may be asked to repeat a stage and, in some cases, discontinue the training. The training programme is delivered in accordance with a Training Handbook for teachers which covers every aspect of the teacher's role and responsibilities. All teachers are required to be familiar with the Mental Health Guidelines, which were prepared by a psychiatrist and teacher, as well as the 'Special Handling Manual' which covers all 'Special Handling' issues including physical and mental health. The manual was prepared by medical doctors with deep experience of the meditation courses. All teachers undergo continuous development including training delivered by experienced teachers, medical experts, and other professionals, at least annually.

9.2. **Course servers** are trained by the teachers and the Centre Managers. They also receive written guidance and instructions.

9.2.1. The Kitchen Manager is normally an experienced server who has served in the kitchen before under other Kitchen Managers. They are trained, so far as necessary, by the Kitchen Coordinator. They have full access to manuals, guidance and protocols on every aspect of their role. They are supported by the teachers.

9.2.2. The kitchen servers are trained by the Kitchen Manager and the teachers. They have full access to manuals, guidance and protocols on every aspect of their role.

9.3. **Centre Managers** are experienced servers who have been trained by other Centre Managers, and in some cases have carried out the role for long periods at a stretch over years. They participate in fortnightly Centre Management Committee meetings and are in regular contact with the Centre teacher. They all have access to the 'Centre Managers Manual' which contains policies and procedures for virtually every task they need to carry out. They have first aid training paid for by the Trust.

## 10. Other servers, their roles & training

- 10.1. **Registrars** process student and server applications within the Trust's CALM software (see point 6.1). Registrars liaise closely with centre teachers and conducting teachers and are trained to know when applicants require further questionnaires, which activates the involvement of conducting teachers. Registrars receive an extensive period of training from an experienced registrar, may refer to a detailed registration manual and, as members of the Registration Committee, frequently reflect on best practice with fellow registrars and the teachers. Their committee regularly reports to the Trust.
- 10.1.1. To volunteer as a registrar, in addition to having attended courses as students and servers, these old students need to be fully committed to this tradition of meditation, maintaining regular daily meditation practice, keeping five precepts (see point 1.5.).
- 10.1.2. In their training, registrars are informed about the principles, procedures, and importance of confidentiality and data protection.
- 10.2. **Long-term servers** are old students who wish to live, meditate, and serve at Dhamma Sukhakari for 3 weeks or longer. Long-term servers may have managerial roles, or serve in other ways alongside the management team, the teachers, trustees and committee members and local community. Long-term servers may share existing skills, or to try something new.
- 10.2.1. To serve long-term old students must have completed one 10-day course in this tradition, have full confidence in Vipassana as taught by S.N. Goenka, not have practised any other techniques since their last course, be trying to maintain their regular daily practice and minimum of an annual 10-day course, trying to maintain the five precepts (but certainly be abstaining from sexual misconduct and taking intoxicants), and have the support of family members to stay at the centre. In addition to these basic requirements, and over-and-above the standard server application questions (see points: 6.5. - 6.7.), long-term server applicants are asked to confirm they have reasonable financial security and about their plans for when they leave the centre.
- 10.2.2. **Applications** are submitted via email and are processed by the centre teacher and old students hoping to serve for longer than one month who are new to such service, are given a one-month trial period.
- 10.2.3. **Courses** Long-term servers may sit usually one course every three months, in consultation with the centre managers and centre teachers. This ensures that these old students are meditating in a balanced, paced manner.
- 10.2.4. **Timetable** for long-term servers typically features breakfast from 6.30am and they meditate for three one-hour group sessions per day. They receive three cooked meals a day, including supper.

Long-term servers are accommodated in warm, comfortable rooms away from students.

- 10.2.5. **Breaks** are built into the daily timetable. Long term servers are encouraged to take 2 days off per week, including taking trips outside the centre.
- 10.2.6. **Support** for long-term servers includes meeting the centre teacher and other conducting or local teachers on a regular basis.
- 10.2.7. **Total number** of long-term servers at Dhamma Sukhakari is 13 (7 male, 6 female)
- 10.2.8. **In sum**, these limits, requirements, and other processes amount to protecting both the welfare of long-term servers' applicants and those at the centre.
- 10.3. **The Kitchen Coordinator** is responsible for the overall management of the kitchen between courses. This includes food ordering, menu review, maintaining kitchen hygiene, health and safety, and inducting kitchen volunteers. The Kitchen Coordinator may or may not also be the Kitchen Manager during courses. The Kitchen Coordinator liaises closely with the Centre Manager, is supported by the Centre teacher and is a member of the Kitchen Committee.
  - 10.3.1. In addition to receiving training from a suitably qualified old student, Kitchen Coordinators receive food hygiene certificates, and may refer to the detailed 'Kitchen Manual' for procedures.
  - 10.3.2. This role can be allocated to an experienced long-term server (see point 10.2). Or it may be allocated to an experienced, non-residential old student.
- 10.4. **The Household Coordinator** is responsible for overseeing household matters between courses. This includes stock-taking and organisation of cleaning supplies, linen, soft furnishings, and bedroom furniture. The role includes organising regular cleaning between courses and implementing systems for the clean-up of accommodation and meditation halls and cells by students immediately after courses. Kitchen Coordinators liaise closely with Centre Managers, are supported by the teachers and are members of the Household Committee.
  - 10.4.1. Household Coordinators will receive an induction from a suitably qualified old student and may refer to the detailed 'Household Manual'.
  - 10.4.2. This role can be allocated to an experienced long-term servers (see point 10.2). Or it may be allocated to an experienced, non-residential old student.
- 10.5. **The Maintenance Coordinator** is responsible for managing the buildings and grounds. This role ensure that the buildings, paths, and grounds are safe to use.
  - 10.5.1. The Maintenance Coordinator liaises closely with the Centre Manager and is supported by the centre teacher. The Maintenance

Coordinator is also a member of the Maintenance Committee and liaises closely with members of the Gardening Committee.

- 10.5.2. Maintenance Coordinators often have a background in construction or gardening but will also receive an induction from a suitably qualified old student and may refer to the detailed 'Maintenance Manual'. This training ensures that health and safety precautions are in place.
- 10.5.3. This role can be allocated to an experienced long-term servers (see point 10.2). Or it may be allocated to an experienced, non-residential old student.
- 10.6. **'General Service Period' servers** are old students who volunteer between courses, during 'General Service Periods'. These periods constitute an essential aspect for the smooth running of the centre, dedicating time for maintenance and improvements. Volunteers may engage in various tasks, derived from task-lists generated by the Centre Manager, Kitchen Coordinator, Household Coordinator, Maintenance Coordinator, or Gardening Committee.
  - 10.6.1. General Service Period Servers may apply for part or whole of the General Work Period. To be eligible to serve, old students must have served at least 3 x days of a 10-day course, or a 3-day course and attended at least one 10-day course as a student within the last 2 years. As with all servers, they must also not be practising other techniques since their last course and are encouraged to maintain their daily practice of meditation at home.
  - 10.6.2. General Service Period Servers follow the '[Code of Discipline](#)' whilst at the centre, meditate for three one-hour group sessions per day, receive three cooked meals and warm accommodation with all the usual facilities.
  - 10.6.3. General Service Period Servers follow the guidance of the Centre Manager, who discusses their roles and tasks at a daily morning meeting.
  - 10.6.4. During the General Work Period, there are opportunities for an interview with the teachers.
  - 10.6.5. Overall, this system supports the smooth, safe running of the centre and ensures volunteers have a comfortable and beneficial period of service.

## 11. Donations

- 11.1. [Donations](#) may only be accepted by old students who have successfully completed at least one course.
- 11.2. Donations are not accepted from students who leave the course early because donations should only be given by people who have experienced the benefits of Vipassana by completing one course and have the volition to help others to learn the technique.
- 11.3. The Trust does not anywhere communicate a 'suggested donation'; the sum an old student offers purely reflects their own volition and means.

- 11.4. Under no circumstances may any person be pressured into giving a donation. That is totally prohibited. It is acceptable to inform old students about the financial needs of the centre in a balanced way, but all donations must be freely given.

## 12. Activities between courses

- 12.1. When courses are not happening at the centre, there are normally some servers who stay on site. There is normally work to prepare for the next course. This is also a time suitable for building and maintenance projects, gardening, and other related activities. There is an annual or biennial 'Open Day' for the general public. (see point 13.3.).
- 12.2. Applicants for service during these periods, whether or not it is officially designated a 'General Service Period', are old students who must have served at least 3 days of a 10-day course, or a 3-day course and attended at least one 10-day course as a student within the last 2 years. These criteria support the overall smooth running and safety of the centre between courses.
- 12.3. Servers and old students on-site between courses follow an adapted timetable and continue to follow the 'Code of Conduct' and all the other procedures, policies and rules governing the centre and referred to in this document. The Centre Management Committee meets as needed, normally every few weeks, in a hybrid meeting. The Centre Managers are always on site along with the long-term servers. The centre teacher, or other local teachers, are in regular contact with the Centre Managers and attend the centre when they can to meet with the servers.

## 13. Centre Visitors

- 13.1. Everyone is welcome to visit the centre by prior appointment, and subject to the availability of servers to show them around, whether they have completed a Vipassana course or not. Visitors are not normally shown around the centre while a course is on-going in order to minimise any disturbance for the students.
- 13.2. Old students may attend group sittings at the centre, whether there is a course on-going or not, but are asked to inform the Centre Managers before attending to ensure that the Centre Managers know who is on site. They maintain silence within the course boundary, do not enter any student rooms, and sit in the meditation hall in a place allocated to visitors.
- 13.3. The 'Open Days' are organised by an ad hoc committee and it is common for trustees, teachers and other old students to meet with the visitors, answer questions, provide tours around the site, and to show films.

## 14. Complaints and Whistleblowing

- 14.1. Anyone can raise a complaint by contacting the Centre Managers at [info@sukhakari.dhamma.org](mailto:info@sukhakari.dhamma.org).
- 14.2. Alternatively they may submit a complaint via the online form on the website.
- 14.3. The Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission which may be contacted in the event of any serious incident. The government guidance is available [online](#).
- 14.4. All complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Trust's Complaints policy.
- 14.5. The Trust is obligated to report all serious incidents, including serious complaints to the Charity Commission.

**15. Health and Safety** is the responsibility of the Vipassana Trust. Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Centre Management Committee and teachers. The Centre Management Committee has a 'Health and Safety Sub-Committee', which comprises one member from all other committees to ensure health and safety informs policy and is implemented. All categories of health and safety policies and checklists are stored on an online facility, accessible to the teachers, trustees, and committee members. Communication is thus strong, with frequent reviews and effective implementation.

15.1. **Policy summary:**

- To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health/accidents and to provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from work activities, with the aid of implementing actions from risk assessments.
- To provide all servers receive adequate training to ensure they are competent to perform their work.
- To engage and consult with servers on day-to-day health and safety conditions and provide advice and supervision on occupational health. This is achieved through the Centre Management Committee's regular consultations with long-term servers, in addition to the Centre Manager and the teachers routinely consulting short-term servers on health and safety.
- To implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or another significant incident. Processes are strengthened through regular evacuation tests and information sharing via orientation talks and notices.
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain plant, equipment, and machinery, and ensure safe storage/use of substances. This is achieved through the regular completion of detailed checklists which each committee draws-up. The Centre Management Committee offers advice and support.

15.2. **Fire Safety** rules and regulations are met by the Trust. Checks and procedures are overseen by the Centre Management

Committee's Fire & Safety Sub-Committee. All professional safety checks are carried out, such as alarm and fire door checks, and relevant certificates are obtained, include gas and electricity safety certificates. Proper signage and fire safety equipment is installed throughout the site.

15.3. **Health Procedures** are carried out by the Centre Management Team. These relate to accidents, and physical and mental health emergency procedures, with dedicated COVID procedures, details of which can be found in appendix 17.6. and 17.7.

15.4. **Data Protection** responsibilities are maintained by the Trust, which takes great care when dealing with data and rights relating to data, in compliance with national and international rules and regulations, especially the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

15.4.1. The data privacy policy can be viewed in full on the Trust's [website](#). Summarised aspects of this policy:

- Application form data goes through CALM (see 6.1.). The CALM foundation has a Data Protection Officer (DPO). The Trust has appointed a Privacy Contact Person (PCP) to oversee data protection procedure, liaise with the DPO, and report to the Trust.
- The Trust is responsible for the further processing of this data. The Trust uses application data (see points 6.2. - 6.6.) to process requests, allocate accommodation, meditation places, and if necessary, to meet special dietary or other needs. With the information given, the teachers also assess if a student is mentally and physically capable of participating in a course.
- Further information is collected on arrival to the course (see points 6.14. & 6.15.).
- If an application is refused or there are special restrictions, concerns, or requirements, this background information may be collected. Such decisions are based on data provided by the students, but also on events or the observations made by the teachers. Only the teachers involved with the assessment have access to such information.
- Data storage:
  - The Trust stores information in compliance with national rules and regulations.
  - In CALM, all but contact and course attendance details is deleted after three months after a course is completed.
  - In cases where further notes are required, the Trust may store this information for up to 10 years, which can be extended upon review.
  - Hardcopies of data, such as Day-0 forms, are destroyed within seven years by a contracted data-destruction company.

## 16. Support for old students

- 16.1. **Meditation advice** is freely available to all those who have attended a course (see point 7.2.8.).
- 16.2. **Old student e-letter** is sent to all old students after they complete their first course. This contains information about all the types of support and resources available to old students.
- 16.3. **'Group sits'** are one-hour group meditation sessions for old students. These sessions are available at the centre (see point 13.2.) and are offered privately in homes or rented sites across the UK. Lists of hosts are posted after the courses and on the website. These sessions are an opportunity to practise meditation and socialise with other old students.
- 16.4. **Further courses** can support an old student's practice of meditation. Old students are welcome to apply for different types of courses at any centre or rented site, including shorter one-day and three-day courses, as well as longer courses (provided they meet the requirements).
- 16.5. **Volunteering** ('serving') is an opportunity for old students to help others to learn Vipassana, to meet other old students, and to support their own practice of meditation. All old students are welcome to apply to volunteer on courses at centres or rented sites. Old students are also welcome to volunteer on committees, attend Trust meetings, and get involved with events associated with the centre.
- 16.6. **Vipassana meditation app** this is a freely available resource, containing recorded meditation instructions to support practice at home, as well as other teaching materials.
- 16.7. **The website** features password protected 'old student' pages. All old students are provided with details to access these pages. This part of the website contains a 'contact a teacher' webpage (see point 7.2.8.), local group sit information (see point 16.3.), virtual sittings details (see point 16.3.), information about giving service (volunteering), advice about daily practice at home, links to events, books and other resources.
- 16.8. **Vipassana News UK** is open to old students, who may sign-up for fortnightly announcements of events, articles, and service opportunities.

## 17. Appendix

- 17.1. **Data Protection Information** detailed in course online applications forms for new students, old students, and servers:

[About Privacy](#)

### *How we process your personal data*

- *The personal data that you provide in this online application form will be processed by the CALM Foundation (registered in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, with Chamber of Commerce number 69501440). CALM is responsible for the development, maintenance and safety of the registration software that you are using. The purpose of processing your data is to provide you with a place on the course you applied for. We also need the information for internal organisational purposes and to comply with some legal requirements. We gather information related to your personal identity, such as your name, address and date of birth. We also enquire about your physical and mental fitness to attend a course and, if applicable, about your course history and current meditation practice.*
- *We ask all students to complete a paper registration form when they arrive at the course site. These paper forms are stored separately.*

*One of the purposes for which your data may be used is to send you a newsletter. If you accept, there will be an option for you to unsubscribe in the future.*

*Your personal data will not be stored longer than necessary nor shared with third parties.*

### *Your rights concerning your data*

*You have the right to:*

- *access your personal file, to rectify any incorrect information, to erase your file, to restrict processing and to object to processing.*
- *lodge a complaint. For this you should contact the CALM Data Protection Officer via [contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org](mailto:contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org).*
- *withdraw your consent for us to process your data and/or to have your file erased at any point prior to the start of the course. However, without the information we ask for we cannot offer you a place on the course because we will be unable to take the organisational actions we need to perform or to assess your application to attend the course.*

*For more information:*

- *see the CALM Privacy Policy, relating to your online application, [here](#);*
- *see the Privacy Policy of the meditation centre to which you applied or contact the Data Protection Officer via [contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org](mailto:contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org).*

17.2. **Server Application Form - extracts** (spellings are American in the online version due to the American origin of the website).

Only those students who have completed at least one 10-Day course in Vipassana meditation as taught by S.N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin are eligible to volunteer to serve a course. If you have come here in error, please return to the first page of this application and change your selection.

To volunteer to serve this course, please complete the following three steps:

1. **Read this page attentively. It contains the *Code of Conduct for Dhamma Servers* which you will be asked to follow during your course.**
2. **Please fill out the application on the following pages with full and honest answers;**
3. **Verify that your contact information is correct, and change it if necessary; then click the *Submit* button.**

#### ***Code of Conduct for Dhamma Servers***

*May Dhamma service prove most beneficial to you. With best wishes for success we offer the following information. Please read it carefully before coming to serve.*

#### ***Selfless Service***

Selfless service is an essential part of the path of Dhamma, an important step in the direction of liberation. The practice of Vipassana gradually eradicates mental impurities until inner peace and happiness are attained. At first, this liberation from misery may be only partial, but still it brings a deep sense of gratitude for having been given the wonderful teaching of Dhamma. With these feelings of love and compassion, the wish naturally arises to help others come out of their misery. Serving on courses provides an opportunity to express this gratitude by helping people as they learn Dhamma, without expecting anything in return. In selflessly serving others we also serve ourselves by developing the ten parami and dissolving the habit of egotism.

#### ***Who is Qualified for Dhamma Service***

Students who have completed a ten-day Vipassana course with Goenkaji or one of his assistant teachers, and who have not practised any other meditation technique since their last Vipassana course, may serve. Servers are also encouraged to be trying to maintain their daily practice at home.

### ***The Code of Discipline***

Unless otherwise stated here, Dhamma servers should, as far as possible, follow the rules in the Code of Discipline for Meditation Courses. Those rules also apply to servers. In certain instances, however, relaxation of them is necessary and permitted.

### ***The Five Precepts***

The Five Precepts are the foundation of the Code of Discipline: To abstain from killing any being, to abstain from stealing, to abstain from sexual misconduct (meaning, at the meditation center, to abstain from all sexual activity whatsoever), to abstain from wrong speech, to abstain from all intoxicants.

These Five Precepts are mandatory for everyone at the center and must be observed scrupulously at all times. It is expected that those serving are also seriously trying to maintain the Five Precepts in their daily lives.

### ***Accepting Guidance***

Dhamma servers should follow the instructions of the teachers, the assistant teachers, and the center administration and management committees, being amenable to the advice and guidance of those who are elder in meditation or in service. Changing established practices or initiating projects without authorization or against the directions of those responsible will cause confusion, duplication of efforts and be a waste of time and material. Insisting on working independently of any direction is inconsistent with the spirit of cooperation and congeniality which pervades the Dhamma atmosphere. By following instructions servers learn to set aside personal preferences and prejudices and do what is needed for the good of the meditators and the efficient and harmonious running of courses and the center. Problems should be resolved openly and with humility. Positive suggestions are always welcome.

### ***Relations with Meditators***

In every situation Dhamma servers should defer to the welfare of the students who are sitting a course. Courses and centers are for meditators; they are the most important people, doing the most essential work. The job of a Dhamma server is simply to assist the meditators in whatever way possible. Students should therefore be given preference for accommodation and food. Unless they have pressing duties, Dhamma servers should not take their food until after the students have been served, and they should not sit with students in the dining hall. Dhamma servers should use the

bathrooms for bathing and laundry at times other than the students, and they should go to bed only after the students have done so, in case a problem should arise at that time. For all other facilities as well, students must be given preference, and servers should avoid disturbing them as much as possible.

### ***Dealing with Students***

Only course managers should interact directly with the students--female managers with female students, male managers with male students. They need to be aware whether the students are following the discipline and timetable, and may have to speak with those who are not doing so. This task should always be done in a friendly and compassionate manner, with the volition of encouraging the meditators to overcome their difficulties. Words should be phrased mindfully, in a positive way--never harshly. If one is unable to do so, a co-worker should deal with the situation. Managers must always take care to inquire about rather than assume the cause of some apparent misconduct.

All Dhamma servers should be respectful and polite, and available to help when approached. It is usually helpful to ask the student's name. Servers should try to refer students to the proper person with a minimum of talking or distraction--either the assistant teacher or the course manager--depending on the nature of the problem. Dhamma servers should not attempt to answer students' questions pertaining to meditation, but should suggest that such questions be asked of the assistant teachers. Assistant teachers should be kept informed of any contact the management has with students. The private affairs of students should never be unnecessarily discussed with others serving in the kitchen or elsewhere.

### ***Meditation Practice for Servers***

Dhamma servers should serve conscientiously, without wasting time, giving full attention to their work; this is their training. At the same time, they must also maintain their meditation practice. Every server must meditate at least three hours daily; if possible, this should be during the group sittings at 8:00 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. In addition, every evening that an assistant teacher is present, there is a short meditation session for servers in the Dhamma hall at 9:00 p.m. These meditation periods are essential for the well-being of the Dhamma servers. Servers on a course should practice Vipassana, using Anapana when needed. Dhamma servers may change their positions during group sittings if they wish.

At all times Dhamma servers have a responsibility to observe themselves. They should try to be equanimous in all circumstances and aware of their mental volition. If unable to do so because of tiredness or any other reason, they should meditate or rest more, no matter how pressing their work seems. Servers should not imagine themselves to be indispensable. One can only give proper Dhamma service when there is peace and harmony within. If the base is not positive, the work that is done will not be truly beneficial. Servers staying at the center for longer times must periodically sit a 10-day course, completely laying aside all work, and not expecting any special preference or privilege as a result of having given Dhamma service.

### ***Meeting the Assistant teachers***

Servers should discuss any problems or difficulties with the teachers or the assistant teachers. The proper time to raise questions about serving or general matters is after the 9:00 p.m. evening meditation session for servers. Private interviews can also be arranged. In the absence of assistant teachers, servers should bring questions or difficulties to the center management.

### ***Separation of Men and Women***

This separation is always in effect, both during and between courses. While absolute separation of the sexes is not practical for the servers due to the close working conditions, this situation should not be misunderstood as an opportunity for men and women to socialize beyond what is necessary to perform their Dhamma service. This rule is all the more important for couples.

### ***Physical Contact***

In order to maintain the pure meditative atmosphere and the introspective nature of the practice, and to set a good example for the students, all Dhamma servers must avoid any physical contact with meditators and other servers of either sex. Both during and between courses, this rule is always to be followed.

### ***Noble Speech***

The Noble Silence of the meditators should be respected by the Dhamma servers. They should try to be silent within the meditation compound and speak only when necessary. Even if students are not within earshot or there is no course in progress, it is important not to disturb the silence needlessly.

When speaking, servers must practice Right Speech, refraining from:

- Speaking lies or anything less than the truth.
- Harsh language or rude words. Someone practicing Dhamma should always be polite and soft-spoken.
- Slander or backbiting. There should be no criticism of others arising from one's own negative feelings. A problem should be brought to the attention of the person concerned or to the assistant teachers or center management.
- Idle gossip, singing, whistling or humming.

Noble Speech is, without a doubt, much more difficult than silence. It is therefore a very important training for anyone following the path of Dhamma.

### ***Personal Appearance***

In the eyes of others, Dhamma servers are representatives of the Teaching and the center. For this reason, the appearance of the servers should always be neat and clean, and nothing should be worn which is tight, transparent, gaudy or revealing, or that might attract undue attention (such as shorts, short skirts, tights and leggings, sleeveless or skimpy tops). Jewelry should be kept to a minimum or not worn at all. This attitude of modesty prevails at all times.

### ***Smoking***

It is assumed that one who has accepted Dhamma is no longer involved in the use of intoxicants such as alcohol, hashish, marijuana, and so forth. The use of tobacco in any form is also totally forbidden, indoors or outdoors, either within or outside of the meditation compound. Neither should Dhamma servers leave the property to smoke.

### ***Food***

The center provides simple, wholesome, vegetarian meals, without subscribing to any particular food philosophy. The Dhamma servers, like all students, are expected to accept what is offered in a spirit of renunciation.

Because meals prepared and served at courses are completely vegetarian, food containing alcohol or liqueur, eggs or food containing eggs (some baked goods, mayonnaise, etc.), or cheese with animal rennet, may not be brought to the center. In general, any food from outside should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Servers observe Five Precepts and may therefore have a meal in the evening if they wish. Fasting is not permitted.

***Reading***

Servers who would like to keep abreast of current events may read newspapers or news magazines, but only in the rest areas set aside for Dhamma servers and out of sight of the students. Anyone wishing to read more than the daily news is invited to choose books from those that appear on the recommended reading list or from the Dhamma library at the center. Novels or other books read for entertainment are not permitted.

***Outside Contacts***

Servers are not required to divorce themselves entirely from the outside world. While serving on a course, however, they should leave the site only on urgent business and with the permission of the assistant teachers. Telephone calls should be kept to a necessary minimum. Private visitors may come to the center only with the prior permission of the management.

***Keeping the Center Clean***

It is the duty of the Dhamma servers to help keep the center neat and clean. Besides the kitchen and dining hall, the residences, meditation hall, bathrooms, offices and other areas may need attention. Servers should also be prepared, if necessary, to do occasional chores unrelated to food preparation and cleaning.

***Use of Center Property***

Every student of Vipassana undertakes to abstain from taking what is not given. Dhamma servers must therefore be careful not to appropriate center property by taking anything for their quarters or personal use without first obtaining permission from the management.

***Staying at the Center for Extended Periods***

With the agreement of an assistant teacher, serious students may stay at the center for longer periods in order to become more established in the theory and practice of Dhamma. During this time they will be able to meditate on some courses and serve on others, as decided in consultation with the teachers and management.

***Dana***

The Code of Discipline for meditators states that there are no charges at courses or centers, either for the Teaching, or for board, lodging, or other facilities provided to students. This applies to Dhamma servers as well.

The teaching of pure Dhamma is always given freely. Food, accommodation and other facilities are offered as gifts made possible by the donations of students of the past. Dhamma servers should recognize this and give their service making best use of the gifts received, so that the donors may receive maximum benefit from their dana. Servers in turn can develop their own dana parami by giving donations according to their means, for the benefit of others. Courses and centers are able to operate only by the donations of grateful students.

No one may pay for him- or herself, either by giving money or in any other way. Every donation is for the benefit of others. Nor can Dhamma service be a form of payment for room and board. On the contrary, service is of benefit to the servers themselves, since it affords them further valuable Dhamma training. A course or center provides an opportunity to practice meditation and also to practice applying Dhamma by learning to serve and deal with others with compassion and humility.

### **Conclusion**

Dhamma servers should serve following the guidance of the assistant teachers and management. They should do all they can to assist the meditators without disturbing them in any way. The conduct of the servers should inspire confidence in Dhamma in those who are doubtful and greater faith where it already exists. They should always bear in mind that the purpose of their service is to help others, and in so doing help themselves to grow in Dhamma.

If these rules present any difficulties for you, please seek clarification immediately from the assistant teachers or the management.

May your service help you to advance on the path of Dhamma, of liberation, of freedom from all suffering, of real happiness.

May all Beings be Happy!

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### ***A Message From Goenkaji on the Value of Dhamma Service***

*While serving, you are learning how to apply Dhamma in day-to-day life. After all, Dhamma is not an escape from daily responsibilities. By learning to act according to Dhamma in dealing with students and situations here in the little world of a meditation course or center, you train yourself to act in the same way in the world outside. Despite the fact that*

*unwanted things keep happening, you practice trying to maintain the balance of your mind, and to generate love and compassion in response. This is the lesson that you are trying to master here. You are a student as much as those who are sitting in the course.*

*Keep on learning while humbly serving others. Keep thinking, "I am here in training, to practice serving without expecting anything in return. I am working so that others may benefit from the Dhamma. Let me help them by setting a good example, and in so doing, help myself as well."*

*May all of you who give Dhamma service become strengthened in Dhamma. May you learn to develop your goodwill, love and compassion for others. May all of you progress in Dhamma, and enjoy real peace, real harmony, real happiness.*

### 17.3. **Initial health questions included in application forms**

#### HEALTH DETAILS

- Are you pregnant? Yes/No
- Do you have any physical health problems, medical conditions, diseases or a hearing/visual impairment? Yes/No
- Do you have, or have you ever had, any mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, panic attacks, eating disorder, bipolar disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, psychotic episode, etc.)? Yes/No
- Are you now taking, or have you taken within the past two years, any prescribed medication? Yes/No
- Are you now taking, or have you taken within the past two years, any alcohol or other mind-altering substances (such as: cannabis, amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, ayahuasca, LSD, etc.)? Yes/No

### 17.4 **Applicant declarations (online application forms)**

I am aware that the provided information will be used as mentioned in the privacy notification. I have chosen to provide my personal information and agree to the processing of this information in order to follow a course, take organisational measures and assess my capacity to follow a course. Yes / No

I am also aware that I may provide information that relates to my mental and physical health, my beliefs or other sensitive data. I have taken notice of the privacy information and agree to the processing of this personal information. Yes / No

By completing the spaces set forth below with my name, the date and submitting this application, I hereby acknowledge that I have carefully read and understood the *Code of Discipline* for the Vipassana Meditation course for which I am applying.

I agree to stay on the course site and to abide by all the rules and regulations for the duration of the course. I realize that a Vipassana Meditation course is a serious undertaking that will require my full mental and physical health and I affirm that I am fit to participate in it. I hereby certify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

By checking the box below, I further acknowledge and agree that any and all information provided in this application for acceptance into a Vipassana Meditation course, or otherwise provided by me to the vipassana organizations, may be used by the vipassana organizations for their purposes consistent with their *Privacy Policies*, as amended from time to time. Our online and general privacy policies are currently available at [https://myvipassana.calm.dhamma.org/en/privacy\\_policy\\_gdpr](https://myvipassana.calm.dhamma.org/en/privacy_policy_gdpr); however, a hard copy of these privacy policies is available upon request to us at: [contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org](mailto:contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org).

Yes, I have read, agree with and accept the terms of the Privacy Policy and the other terms of submission of this application form. Name / Date

## 17.5 Applicant Declarations ('Day-0' paper application form)

### Day 0 Form back page declarations:

Please read the following carefully. If you have difficulty answering 'yes' to any of these questions, please see the management before handing in your form.

Have you carefully read and understood the Code of Discipline in "Vipassana Meditation, Introduction to the Technique and Code of Discipline for Meditation Courses"?

Yes  No

For the duration of the course, will you set aside all other techniques, prayers, rituals, mantras etc.?

Yes  No

For the duration of the course, will you abstain from the use of all

alcohol, drugs and other intoxicants? Yes  No

Do you agree to follow all the rules and keep to the timetable? Yes  No

Do you agree to remain until the end of the course? Yes  No

Will you observe complete silence for the first nine days of the course? Yes  No

Realising that a Vipassana course is a serious undertaking, can you confirm that you are in a reasonably good state of mental and physical health? Yes  No

### Consent

- I understand that personal data, including information on health, is securely stored and used by the organisers of the course.
- I read and understood the privacy statement while submitting my course application, and agree to the data storage and processing described.

### Using your personal information

The information which you supply to us will be used to organise the course and for the teacher to assess if you are capable to undergo the course. This will be done in accordance with the local privacy policy.

For further information on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold on you, please write to [contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org](mailto:contact@privacy-eu.dhamma.org)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 17.6 Emergency Procedures

### Guidelines for centre managers in case of medical emergency at Dhamma Sukhakāri

#### Severe physical illness - Accidents – Mental episodes

Centre Managers (CMs) are not expected to, nor should they attempt to diagnose or treat physical or mental illness.

A Centre Manager holding a valid First Aid qualification will ideally take the lead in any emergency situation relating to physical illness or injury.

In all other situations, the CM on duty should follow the guidelines detailed in this document.

If in any doubt, the following individuals may be called upon for support and guidance:

- The conducting AT

- A fellow Centre Manager

*[other emergency contacts redacted]*

### **Severe physical illness and accident**

In case of severe illness or accident, the Centre Manager may become aware of the situation before the Course Managers or the AT.

#### 1. Contact the First Aider on duty to assess the situation

- Remain at hand to offer assistance
- Follow the directions of the First Aider

#### 2. In the absence of a First Aider:

- Assess the situation (see the points in italics below)
- Do not move the individual unnecessarily
- Ask someone (e.g. Course Manager or Long-Term Dhamma Serviers) to stay with the individual and to

inform you if the person's condition changes

- Call emergency services

### **Emergency Services will require the following information: Be prepared!**

- Location address and postcode: Walnut Tree Manor, Haughley Green, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 3RQ
- Phone number: 01449 833080
- Summary of situation
- The patient's age and gender. Give any known medical history if you have the information.
- Is the patient conscious?
- Is the patient breathing / struggling to breathe?
- Is the patient bleeding seriously?
- Is the patient experiencing chest pain?

#### 3. Once Emergency Services are en-route:

- Ensure the AT is aware of the situation
- AT will call the emergency contact person or may ask you to do it
- Be ready to receive the paramedics upon arrival to offer directions and answer their questions
- Some occasions may call for a Centre Manager or long-term server to accompany the person to hospital – it's a judgement call, but usually unnecessary if emergency contact person has been informed.
- In case of accident only, complete the Accident Book Report (when person has received care)
- Document the events as witnessed as soon as possible - noting times and detailing interactions as accurately as possible. Send the report to Centre Teacher and the conducting AT.

### **Episodes due to mental illness**

In case of episodes related to mental illness, where there is gradual onset of symptoms, the AT will usually be aware of the situation before the Centre Managers and therefore provide an overview of the situation and guidance on how to proceed.

Rapid onset of symptoms or sudden deterioration of a student's condition could give rise to emergency situations.

#### **SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT...**

Safety of the individual and those in close contact with them is the priority.

If there is any indication of violent behaviour or self-harm, call Emergency Services immediately. Call the police if violent or threatening behaviour is demonstrated; call the ambulance if the safety of the individual is at risk.

### **Emergency Services will require the following information. Be prepared!**

- Location address and postcode: Walnut Tree Manor, Haughley Green, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 3RQ
- Phone number: 01449 833080
- Summary of situation
- The patient's name, age and gender

- Give any known medical history if you have the information
- Is the patient conscious?
- Is the patient breathing / struggling to breathe?
- Is the patient bleeding seriously?
- Is the patient experiencing chest pain?
  
- Be available to receive the paramedics / police upon arrival to offer directions and answer their questions
  
- Take guidance from the AT regarding calling the emergency contact person
  
- If there is also an accident, complete the Accident Book Report (when patient has received care)
  
- Document the events as witnessed as soon as possible - noting times and detailing interactions as accurately as possible. Send the report to the Centre Teacher and the conducting AT.

Episodes can vary widely in scope and severity, but those with highly irrational behaviours need to be closely monitored. They may act suddenly and cause harm to themselves and to others around them. The Centre Manager will then need to be fully involved and work in close liaison with the AT.

These students should leave the centre as soon as possible. The AT or the Centre Manager should call the emergency contact person as a matter of urgency. This is usually a family member and occasionally a friend. It needs to be made clear that they need to come as soon as possible to take over the student from our care. Meanwhile:

- if you know that the family will arrive soon enough and it is safe to keep the student under supervision at the centre, you may do so.
  
- if the student's condition is unmanageable and cannot wait for the family to arrive, call emergency services or take the student to A&E.

You do not need the permission of the emergency contact person to take whatever action is necessary.

It is highly unlikely that the ambulance staff would take the student to hospital if the student does not show serious agitation or any risk-taking behaviour at the time of their assessment. This does not mean that the student will not require medical attention.

- if ambulance staff decide not to take the student to hospital and the student's condition continues to be a serious cause for concern or deteriorates, take the student to A&E.

In this case, keep the emergency contact informed so that they know where to collect the student from. Make it clear that even though you are taking the student to the hospital, they will still need to come as soon as possible.

When taking a mentally ill student to A&E, a second server must accompany the student in addition to the driver. One server needs to stay with the student until hospital staff have taken over and student can be left safely, or until handed over to the emergency contact.

Following assessment and tests, A&E may well discharge the patient but hopefully by then, the emergency contact will have arrived to take over.

No server should take a psychotic or unbalanced person home in the centre car or in their own car. If someone volunteers to do so, it should not be allowed. This is because of the difficult, dangerous and unpredictable behaviours of such students that could jeopardise their own safety as well as that of the others.

Only the emergency contact (family/friend) should take them home. If this is not an option for some reason, take advice from the centre teachers.

Less seriously affected students are usually able to leave the centre on their own; ensure that they are given a lift to the bus stop or train station. The emergency contact person must be informed.

If the student is driving, the decision needs to be made if it is really safe to allow this.

Ideally, the individual will not be left alone whilst still in our care. Provide a safe space away from the course students. On the female side, a student may be accommodated in with the long-term servers e.g. MH4 or MH10. On the male side, they might move into BH9 or BH10.

If there is no space within the course boundary or if they need to be outside the course boundary, we may need to take them to a local hotel. The decision should be made by the conducting AT in conjunction with the Centre Manager.

Limit the number of servers in direct interaction with the individual to 1 or 2 at any time to avoid overstimulation and overwhelming the student.

The role of those in direct contact will be to build trust, maintain a safe space and offer a befriending service only. Those present should listen and keep the responses to a minimum, offering friendly support and reassurance. In some cases, there may be relatively calm periods and some may remain pleasant and friendly despite being confused and out of touch with reality.

Remain in regular contact with the conducting AT. If at any time he/she is unavailable for consultation, be prepared to take the initiative and do what is necessary for the safety of the student and all others involved.

## 17.7 Covid Policy

### Cases of Covid on a course

#### Guidance for ATs and Centre Managers

##### 1. Symptoms to look out for

The main Covid symptoms to look out for are fever (high temperature), chills, fatigue, headache, muscle or body aches, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhoea. Symptoms can last between five to seven days but vary from person to person.

##### 2. What to do if someone has symptoms

If a student has possible symptoms of Covid, ask them to do a Lateral Flow Test as soon as possible. Ask the course manager to keep their distance until the result is known.

- If the student tests positive, they will need to leave the course to go home to recover.
- If they are sick with any symptoms and unable to continue on the course, then they should also go home to recover even if their Lateral Flow Test result is negative.
- The centre manager and the AT can use their discretion on a case by case basis, e.g. if a student has cold-like symptoms, is testing negative and has only recently recovered from Covid, they would not need to leave.

The accommodation and other facilities at DS are such that any sickness can spread quite quickly if we do not take swift action. We do not have facilities to isolate sick students so it is best they leave as soon as possible. Ask them to vacate their room at a suitable time and wait in the Manor House lobby with the door open, avoiding close contact with servers or other

students.

If it's not possible for them to be picked up straight away, try to isolate them in the emergency room or whatever best facilities may be available until they can be picked up.

### **3. Briefing the course manager**

Please brief the course manager to

- inform you or the centre manager immediately if a student reports Covid-like symptoms
- keep some distance from the student and speak to them outdoors whenever possible
- take the student to the Manor House lobby for a test, leave them there, with the door open if possible, and inform the centre manager who will organise a Lateral Flow Test.

If the student tests positive, the centre manager will take over from there. The course managers have close contact with everyone on the site, so they

have the potential to spread Covid between the student body and the servers, and to and from the AT. If there are cases, ask them to be mindful of the risk in their contact with the other servers and to keep a reasonable distance where possible.

### **4. What to do about the other students**

If someone is sent home for Covid reasons:

- There is no need to inform roommates or other students or to initiate other tests, unless someone else displays symptoms.
- If asked by any student, you can tell them what has happened.
- If you get general questions from an anxious student, reassure them that we are alert to the risk and testing students as needed.
- Be alert to others showing symptoms, particularly those from the same room, and test as early as possible in those cases.

In all situations, you have discretion to make sensible decisions. You can check with the centre teacher if you need additional support.

- Please keep the centre teacher informed if there are any Covid cases.
- If you or the other AT feel urgent action is required and the course should be closed, don't hesitate to contact the centre teacher for a final decision.