

Cambridge Buddhist Centre Equalities Policy

This policy sets out the steps taken by the Cambridge Buddhist Centre to prevent discrimination in the classes and courses it provides and in employment and is informed by the Equality Act 2010.

This policy and the way in which it operates will be reviewed every 2 years.

The policy was reviewed in December 2025. Next review date: December 2027

Signature:  (Keturaja)

Chair of Board of Trustees

Date: 21 December 2025

Introduction

The Cambridge Buddhist Centre recognises the existence of discrimination against people because of particular characteristics or beliefs. This policy sets out the steps taken by the centre to prevent discrimination in the classes and courses it provides and in employment.

Definitions

The Cambridge Buddhist Centre Equalities Policy aims to prevent direct, indirect, associative and perceptive discrimination.

Direct Discrimination is treating a person less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of age, disability, race (including colour, ethnic origin or nationality), gender identity, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependents (including pregnancy and maternity), religion/belief, marital status, or HIV/AIDS status. (All these will be described as protected characteristics in this document from this point onwards).

Indirect Discrimination is an unjustifiable requirement or condition which appears to apply equally to everyone, but which has a discriminatory effect on people from a particular group.

Associative Discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic.

This policy also covers harassment, third-party harassment and victimisation.

Harassment is defined as any uninvited, unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour which is offensive to a person (even if it is not directed at them) and causes that person to feel threatened, intimidated, humiliated or embarrassed or creates an environment which is hostile or offensive to that person.

Third-party harassment is defined as harassment by people other than workers at the centre (e.g. members of the public, suppliers, centre users).

Victimisation is defined as harassment that occurs as a result of a worker making or supporting a complaint, or raising a grievance, or because they are suspected of having done so.

Scope

It is a condition of employment that every member of staff understands, complies with and implements this policy.

All staff are responsible for making every effort to prevent all types of discrimination at the centre, and for ensuring that the centre is equally accessible to groups and individuals from all communities.

Staff must not:

- discriminate against other staff or users of the centre
- encourage others to practise discrimination
- harass, abuse or victimise other staff or members of the public.

Providing an equal service

Respect for diversity

The centre provides classes and courses in Meditation, Buddhism, Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. Service users are therefore drawn from a wide variety of communities present in Cambridge and the surrounding area. Staff will ensure that they treat all service users with respect. Where service users have particular needs, we will do everything possible to meet these needs.

We hold Open Days that are open to the public. We also regularly host school visits. From time to time, we have meetings with Buddhists from other traditions at the centre.

We also run retreats regularly at Vajrasana Retreat Centre in Suffolk and other venues in the region.

Publicity and written materials

The centre's publicity is distributed widely in Cambridge and surrounding areas. Special mailings are sent to particular groups.

Our publicity materials are written in plain English and are designed to be easy to read.

Access to services

Our premises are fully accessible to people in wheelchairs with a ramped entrance, wide doorways and passages throughout, and an accessible toilet. Because this is a Grade 2* listed building there are some areas which cannot be made accessible due to conservation restrictions.

We have an induction loop for use at meetings or training sessions where people are using hearing aids.

Our publications are written in plain English. We are committed to offering services in a manner appropriate to the needs and abilities of each individual user.

Our meditation and Buddhism courses, events and retreats are run on a donation basis. Where we do charge for other courses, we offer a concessionary rate for those who cannot afford the full rate. We are committed to making the content of our website as accessible to as many people as possible.

Equality in employment

We intend to ensure equality in employment. No job applicant or member of staff will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic that they might have.

Recruitment

Vacancies are advertised through The Buddhist Centre Online and other Triratna channels, such as Shabda. Job applicants are given information about the access details of the building and are offered any assistance necessary in attending an interview, if shortlisted.

Employment

Staff employed at the centre receive either support or a wage. Those who receive a wage are all paid at an equal rate. Rates of pay and employment benefits available to staff are limited by the level of funding received by the centre.

Staff training is planned and implemented with the aim of achieving equal levels of skill and knowledge among centre staff.

The centre's sickness policy states that staff will receive their full rate of pay for up to six weeks of sickness in any one tax year. Arrangements for additional paid sick leave, unpaid leave, accumulated annual leave, maternity/paternity leave, dependent care leave and carer's non-standard work patterns are made on a case-by-case basis, within an overall framework of aiming for equality for all staff while accepting the need to keep the centre running.

Harassment

Harassment

Any member of staff who harasses another member or any user of the centre or behaves in a way which creates an offensive and hostile environment for a member or user of the centre, will be dealt with in accordance with our Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure.

Harassment includes (but is not limited to)

- abusive language, including sexist, racist, homophobic, or other bigoted jokes
- unwanted physical contact
- displaying sexist, racist, homophobic, or other bigoted material, including graffiti
- requests for sexual favours.

Third-party harassment

The centre will take steps to ensure that members of staff are protected from harassment from third parties (such as suppliers, members of the public, centre users), as soon as such behaviour is reported to another member of staff, or if it is witnessed by another member of staff.

Victimisation

The centre will ensure that members of staff do not treat another member of staff badly because they have made a complaint or raised a grievance, or supported another member of staff who has.