



Buddhafield (Triratna Buddhafield) Child protection policy 2024

The legal structure of the central Buddhafield body is a private limited company that has applied for and been granted charitable status by the Charity Commission of England and Wales. Triratna Buddhafield is a company registered with Companies House, registration number 05157868.

The registered office of the company is:

Triratna Buddhafield
35 Milton Road
Nether Edge
Sheffield
S7 1HP
information@buddhafield.com
www.buddhafield.com
Registered charity no: 1108826

Companies own by Triratna Buddhafield

All policies also apply to these subsidiary companies.

- Samaya Project Ltd. (company number: 03984058) Incorporated 2nd May 2000 - trades as Buddhafield Events and runs the Buddhafield Festival.
- Buddhafield Trading Ltd. (company number: 03535723) Incorporated 26th March 1998 - runs the Buddhafield Cafe

Chair of trustees

Name: Amaragita, Gabriela Pearse
Email address: amaragita@gmail.com

Safeguarding officer

Kamalanandi, Jack Lyus
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BuddhafieldSafeguarding@protonmail.com

Safeguarding trustee

Dr Utpaladhi Boak
Email address: utpaladhi108@gmail.com

Insurance details

Company/policy name: Buddhafield
Policy Number: 18226293



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Our values

Buddhafield is a collaboration of Buddhists involved with the Triratna Buddhist Community: some of us are members of the Triratna Buddhist Order. It is a broad community of friends with a wide range of involvement. This network of friendships is, for many of us, a source of great richness, support and strength. However, it also carries a risk that we may fail to notice, question or act on behaviours of concern out of naivety, loyalty to friends or lack of awareness, or an assumption that "it couldn't happen here" or "they would never do a thing like that."

This policy is an expression of the first ethical precept taught by the Buddha: to protect living beings from harm. It is based on law and good practice in England and Wales. Triratna bodies in other countries are requested to draw up similar documents in line with local requirements.

The purpose of this policy

This document is for anyone involved in Buddhafield activities or businesses as employees, volunteers, workshop leaders, vendors, spiritual teachers, healers, bodyworkers or parents.

It aims to provide:

- protection for children (anyone under 18) who attend Buddhafield events or take part in its activities
- protection for anyone involved in Buddhafield activities or businesses as employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, sub-contractors, workshop leaders, vendors, spiritual teachers, healers, bodyworkers or parents who may have contact with children in the course of Buddhafield activities.

It sets out:

- practices and procedures contributing to the prevention of abuse of children.
- what to do if abuse is suspected.

Our responsibilities and those responsible for carrying them out

We run land-based retreats in various locations in the South of England. Some are adult-only, but we have a couple of family-friendly weekend retreats run by the Buddhafield South East Mandate and two seven-day family-friendly retreats in the South West of England run by the Village Mandate. In addition to this, Buddhafield Festival, Green Earth Awakening and Buddhafield in the City events all welcome children and, to varying degrees, cater for them in terms of activities.



Our Trustees recognise their responsibility to Safeguard those aged under 18 visiting or involved in Buddhafield activities, as set out by the Charity Commission in its latest guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

Kamalanandi (Jack Lyus) is our Safeguarding officer. He is responsible for coordinating the protection of all children and adults who may be at risk at Buddhafield events and within the Buddhafield community (See also our Safeguarding Adults policy.)

Kamalanandi is the Mandate Holder for Safeguarding within the Buddhafield system of organisation. Safeguarding has its own "circle" composed of a number of others who also have roles relating to safeguarding and ethical conduct.

Dr Utpaladhi Boake is our Safeguarding trustee. She is responsible for making sure Safeguarding is taken seriously by the trustees and that it is a standing item on the agenda at every trustee meeting. She ensures the trustees comply with their Safeguarding obligations as required by the Charity Commission.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm.
- partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

This policy applies to all mandate holders, bundle holders and trustees, paid staff, volunteers, parents and anyone else working on behalf of Buddhafield, whether as a contractor, sub-contractor, vendor, workshop leader, healer, spiritual teacher or consultant.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- adopting child protection guidelines and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring checks are made where necessary.
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.



Who is a “child”?

For the purposes of this policy, a child is a person who is not yet 18, regardless of the age of majority or consent in any particular jurisdiction.

Although the UK age of consent is 16, it is a criminal offence to have sex with a person under 18, where the older person is in a teaching or mentoring role in relation to the younger person. This 'Position of trust' law is likely to apply to Order members and Mitras in teaching roles in Triratna.

What is child abuse?

Please see appendix.

Recognising signs of abuse

Please see appendix.

Engaging safely with children in person

Outside of our own personal and family relationships, we will not arrange to meet any child under 15 individually *anywhere* if unaccompanied by a parent/ guardian.

It is good Safeguarding practice to make contact with a parent/guardian before meeting those aged 15-17, and we will take care to meet in public spaces where others are present, such as an open area, open-sided structure where you are visible to others from the outside or a room with the door open.

Where it is agreed that, in connection with any of our charity's activities, one of our employees or volunteers may give a lift to a person under 18 (with or without anyone else in the car), then the following applies:

- Our Safeguarding officer must ensure that the driver is well known to us, has read our Child Protection Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy and signed to confirm they will abide by them.
- Our Safeguarding officer must have the written agreement of the child's parent/carer for the child to travel in the car of this named driver.
- The driver must be over 18, have a full driving licence, adequate insurance and a vehicle which is roadworthy.
- The child must sit in the back seat.

If we do not feel able to implement these criteria, we will require that no employee or volunteer offers lifts to those under 18 in connection with our charity's activities.

See also the guidance document 'Caring for teenagers in Triratna 2023'.

Engaging safely with children online and on social media

We are aware that individual contact with under 18s online, by email or using social



media carries the risk of accusations of “grooming”; relationships established with a view to sexual contact.

We will not engage by email, text or social media with anyone under 15, except where they are seeking information about Buddhism as part of school work or personal study, when we may engage by email only, from the charity’s email account only. Having answered their questions, we will not engage in further personal correspondence.

We will engage with those 15-17 only with the written permission of a parent/guardian, by email or letter, which our Safeguarding officer will store.

For more detail on this, see the guidance document ‘Caring for teenagers in Triratna 2023’.

DBS checks /Background security checks

The rules about eligibility for DBS checks are complex. Before running any activity involving anyone under 18, our Safeguarding officer will consult external Safeguarding experts such as Thirtyone:eight (www.thirtyoneeight.org) to ensure that anyone required to have a DBS check has been checked and to the correct level. Thirtyone:eight provide an advice line and online DBS service.

However, we note that DBS certificates:

- apply to roles rather than persons and are not transferable from another role elsewhere.
- should be less than three years old.
- are not required in relation to irregular or one-off non-residential activities involving those under 18, or to general non-residential activities which someone under 18 may happen to attend.

This is because children are most at risk when it is known in advance that children are likely to be attending; those who wish to gain access to children look for opportunities to become a familiar and trusted figure to children, for example, seeking to join the team running regular children’s activities.

Safer recruitment more generally

DBS/security checks are only one aspect of safer recruitment.

We will seek references for anyone, volunteer or employee, seeking to work with those under 18 in the course of our activities, including short-term volunteers, even if they have been DBS-checked or will be supervised by people who have been DBS-checked.



Any volunteer or employee seeking to work with those under 18 in the course of our activities must read and sign our Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, even if only helping on a one-off occasion.

Where parents are not present

We understand that where under 18s attend a Buddhafield event if parents are not on site, the Safeguarding officer must make contact with their parent/guardian to ensure they know this is happening and to record in writing:

- that contact has been made
- who will be their responsible adult on site along
- contact details
- any medical conditions we need to know about.

These children are identified via the booking system or volunteer application process. No child under 18 is allowed on site without a named responsible adult that has been approved by their parent/guardians listed on an In Loco Parentis form stored by the Safeguarding Officer.

In some cases, a child who is on-site at a Buddhafield event without their parent/guardian may also have a Behaviour Contract drawn up between them, their parent/guardian, the named responsible adult listed on the In Loco Parentis form and the Safeguarding Officer.

Managing those who pose a risk to children

We will not allow someone who may pose a risk to children to have contact with anyone under 18 (for example, a person who is known to have a previous criminal conviction for sexual or other violent offences, someone who is under investigation for possible sexual or other violent offences or someone who has disclosed a sexual interest in children).

The Safeguarding officer will ask such a person to negotiate a behaviour contract setting out the terms of their continued participation in Buddhafield activities within agreed boundaries and based on a formal risk assessment. This should be provided by the person's probation/police supervising officer or other external professional or an Order member with professional experience in risk assessment. If necessary, our Safeguarding officer will consult with Thirtyone:eight and/or ask the ECA Safeguarding officer to put us in touch with a professionally qualified Order member.

(See the document 'Managing those who pose a risk 2023'.)

Such a person cannot be asked to sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct 2024 as it would conflict with the terms of their behaviour contract, and in any case, it would



be very unwise to permit such a person to have any contact with those under 18 in the course of Triratna activities.

Where it is felt that the charity does not have the resources to manage this relationship safely, we reserve the right to ask the person not to attend our activities.

We will consult with Triratna's ECA Safeguarding officer if necessary: safeguarding@triratna.community or with external advisers such as Thirtyone:eight.

(See also the guidance document 'Caring for teenagers in Triratna 2023'.)

Reporting concerns or allegations

All reports or suspicions about abuse must be treated seriously. They may include:

- something we have seen
- something we have been told by someone else
- rumours about a person's previous behaviour
- behaviour we have observed in a child and
- disclosure from a child directly.

If a person under 18 alleges abuse

In these cases, we need to:

- be aware the child may have been threatened and may be very afraid.
- look directly at the child.
- keep calm and reassure the child that they are doing the right thing and are not to blame, even if they have broken some rules.
- accept what the child says without judgment, never suggesting that they may be wrong or mistaken. Our responsibility is to take them seriously and take action, not to decide whether what they are saying is true.
- avoid pushing for information or questioning the child but let them say as much as they are ready to say.
- make it clear we cannot promise total confidentiality and that we will need to tell another trusted adult if we believe the child is at immediate risk of harm.
- tell them we need to get help for them but that we will *try* to agree with them on what will happen next. This means we *will* need to share what they say with others - on a need-to-know basis only.

We will do our best to avoid:

- appearing shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry.



- pressing the child for details.making comments or judgments other than to show concern. Our responsibility is to take them seriously, not to decide whether what they are saying is true.
- promising to keep secrets.
- confronting any alleged perpetrator.
- risking contaminating the evidence by investigating matters ourselves.

What we will do next

We understand that our first concern must be the safety and well-being of the child and that we must not be distracted from this by loyalty to the person accused or a desire to maintain the good name of Triratna or of Buddhafield.

If the person receiving the disclosure is not our Safeguarding officer, they must tell the Safeguarding officer *only*, who will co-ordinate the handling of the matter on behalf of the charity's trustees. However, if the Safeguarding officer is not immediately available, the matter should be communicated to the Chair of the charity or the Safeguarding trustee. If the child may be in immediate danger, the Safeguarding officer, Chair, Safeguarding trustee or person receiving the disclosure will phone the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at our local social services straight away. A telephone referral will be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

If necessary, our Safeguarding officer will contact Triratna's ECA Safeguarding team for advice: safeguarding@triratna.community

We understand that every person has a legal right to privacy under the International Convention on Human Rights and data protection legislation; therefore, having taken any urgent actions necessary, if possible, we should get the consent of the child's parent or guardian to share the information they have disclosed.

However, it may be necessary, and therefore legally 'reasonable', to report without parental consent if we believe that the child is suffering or at risk of significant harm and that informing parents/guardians would not be in the child's interest.

Meanwhile, the person receiving the disclosure will make detailed factual notes about the conversation/concern/incident as soon as possible, including time, date and location, and pass them to the charity's Safeguarding officer. (See 'Secure, confidential record-keeping' below.) As far as possible, what a child has said should be recorded in their own words, as these could be used in court.

In England and Wales, we understand that we may need to make a Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>. If



necessary, we will consult the ECA Safeguarding team for guidance on this: safeguarding@triratna.community. The Charity Commission has stated that it is always better to report than not.

UK charities insured by the Buddhist Insurance Scheme should report to the broker, Clive Adams (See page 1)

NB These last two reports describe briefly the type of incident/concern and what is being done to address it. They do not need to include any personal details about those involved.

We will consult with Triratna's ECA Safeguarding officer if necessary: safeguarding@triratna.community or with external advisers such as Thirtyone:eight.

Who else needs to know?

We understand that confidentiality, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis, is very important. Under data protection legislation, nobody has a right to know about the matter – except, for Safeguarding purposes, those in a position to prevent further harm, and our Chair, who holds ultimate responsibility for the governance of the charity. For example, where there is a criminal allegation against a Mitra, it could be justifiable for the Safeguarding officer, Safeguarding trustee, Chair and Mitra convenor to know about it.

This is not a matter of concealment but is intended to protect all concerned from further harm. It will also protect our sangha from fear, rumour and disharmony, which will make it much harder to deal with the matter effectively without causing further harm.

Where a person is believed/has been found to pose a risk to children, it is often thought that parents have a right to know. However, this is not the case. Proper implementation of our Safeguarding policy and procedures will ensure that our sangha's children are as safe from such a person as they are from any others who pose a risk but have not been identified as such.

What to do if a sangha member discloses a criminal act against a child

We understand that the law does not protect confidentiality where criminal acts are disclosed in the context of Buddhist confession. If in the course of our charity's activities, or Triratna's ECA Safeguarding team of an activity which takes place on our premises, a Friend, Mitra or Order member discloses to any other sangha member (whether or not in a formal confession) that they have physically or sexually abused a child, or have viewed indecent images of children online, the person receiving this disclosure or confession must inform our Safeguarding officer immediately, who must report to our local police immediately. This applies whether the behaviour disclosed is



recent or historic.

If a child may be in immediate danger, the Safeguarding officer, Chair, Safeguarding trustee or person receiving the disclosure will phone the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at our local social services straight away. A telephone referral will be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

If necessary, our Safeguarding officer will contact Triratna's ECA Safeguarding officer for advice: safeguarding@triratna.community

Secure, confidential record-keeping

We understand our responsibility for secure and careful record-keeping. Our Safeguarding officer will keep a detailed log of all Safeguarding-related incidents as well as conversations, actions and the reasoning behind them. These should not be kept on any computer but on an external hard drive or memory stick. To guard against loss, in case the files, hard drive or memory stick become corrupted, these will be backed up to another hard drive or memory stick and/or printed off. Any memory sticks, hard drives and paper copies will be stored in a locked cabinet, box or drawer accessible only to the Safeguarding officer and one or two others approved by our trustees, e.g. the Chair and Safeguarding trustee.

We also understand that under data protection law, we need to word our records in a form we would be happy for the subjects to read if they ask to, as is their legal right. This means notes should be factual and respectful, free of interpretations and value judgments.

Keeping confidential records

We understand that because many abuse cases come to light 30 or more years later, we should keep our records for up to 50 years. This is important in order to address historical cases effectively but also for insurance purposes.

If our charity closes down, we will give our records to another Triratna Buddhist centre/charity to keep with their own confidential Safeguarding logs.

Reviewing our policies annually

This document was adopted by the trustees of Buddhafield as recorded in the minutes of the Trustee's meeting on 16th January 2024

This document will be reviewed and updated by our Safeguarding officer and trustees on or before January 2025.

This document will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding officer and Trustees of Buddhafield. Published 2024 by the Trustees of Buddhafield.



This Buddhafield Child Protection Policy 2024 is to be read in conjunction with:

- *Buddhafield Child Protection Code of Conduct 2024*
- *Buddhafield Adult Safeguarding policy 2024*
- *Triratna guidance document 'Caring for teenagers in Triratna 2023' and*
- *Triratna guidance document 'Managing those who pose a risk 2023'*
- *Online safety in Triratna 2023*
- *Safeguarding and Data Protection 2023*

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/search/node/safeguarding>

Appendix 1

What is child abuse?

The World Health Organisation defines "child abuse" as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

Appendix 2

Defining child abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The four definitions (and a few additional categories) of abuse below operate in England, based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example, via the Internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or



scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional



needs.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Appendix 3

Signs of abuse in children

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in the context of the child's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for or participate in games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc, which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Behaving in a sexually provocative or seductive manner with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia (These indicate the possibility that a



child or young person is self-harming.)

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Undernourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc

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