



Policy Statement

Teaching Requirements at the BSV

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum requirements for anyone who wishes to teach at the Buddhist Society of Victoria premises at 71 Darling Road, Malvern East, Victoria.

LEGAL REQUIREMENT: Of overarching concern in 2015, because of recent Victorian Government legislation, is the requirement of a **Working With Children (WWC)** check. Any lay person proposing to teach at the BSV, whether appointed by the BSV or by any other organization must acquire a WWC check from the Victorian Police and present evidence of this check to the secretary of the BSV before they can be permitted to teach. It is noteworthy that visiting Sangha must also acquire a WWC check if they are staying at the BSV or Newbury Buddhist Monastery for a total of more than 28 days in any one calendar year.

Most other requirements for teaching at the BSV are based on the commitment of the applicant to Buddhist principles: These are expressed below in the form of a series of statements and are to be undertaken by each prospective teacher.

1. I agree to observe all the requirements of this policy during my teaching engagement(s) at the BSV.
2. I have taken refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and monastic Sangha.
3. I undertake the 5 training precepts to:
 - 1) avoid killing any sentient being (includes insects)
 - 2) avoid stealing (taking that which is not given)
 - 3) avoid sexual misconduct (not to cheat on a partner)
 - 4) avoid false speech (not to tell lies)
 - 5) avoid alcohol consumption (also any other non-prescription recreational drugs)

4. That the Buddha taught that there is a repeating cycle of birth and death (otherwise known as rebirth) for those who are not fully enlightened and that belief in rebirth is fundamental to the Buddha's teaching.

57. "Sāriputta, there are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification comes about through the round of rebirths.' But it is not easy to find a realm in the round that I have not already passed through in this long journey, except for the gods of the Pure Abodes; and had I passed through the round as a god in the Pure Abodes, I would never have returned to this world. [Sutta 12, *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta - The Greater Discourse on the Lion's Roar*, p.176 in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* by Wisdom Publications]

5. That I value and have respect for the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha:

There are, Kassapa, five detrimental things that lead to the decay and disappearance of the true Dhamma. What are the five Here the bhikkhus, the bhikkhunis, the male lay followers, and the female lay followers dwell without reverence and deference towards the Teacher; they dwell without reverence and deference towards the Dhamma; they dwell without reverence and deference towards the Sangha ; 22 they dwell without reverence and deference towards the training; they dwell without reverence and deference towards concentration. These, Kassapa, are the five detrimental things that lead to the decay and disappearance of the true Dhamma. [Sutta 13 *Saddhammapatirupaka sutta -The Counterfeit of the True Dhamma* in the *Kassapasamyutta*, p.680-681 in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha* by Wisdom Publications]

6. That the term "Sangha" is used by the Buddha when referring exclusively to fully ordained celibate Buddhist monastics (Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis):

16. 'Among all the teachers now existing in the world, Cunda, I see none who has attained to such a position of fame and following as I have. Of all the orders and groups in the world, I see none as famous and well-followed as my Sangha of monks. [DN.Sutta 29 *Pasadika Sutta: The Delightful Discourse, The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, p. 431, Wisdom Publications]

Apart from the above Sutta, the Spiritual Advisor of the BSV, Ajahn Brahm, explains this concept clearly in his article *The Meaning of Sangha*:

"In the Tipitaka, the recorded Teachings of the Lord Buddha, one finds two main focuses for the meaning of Sangha: the third part of the Threefold Refuge (in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) and the third factor of the to-be - worshipped Triple Gem (The Buddha, Dhamma and Savaka Sangha). On odd occasions in the Tipitaka, 'Sangha' is used to denote a 'herd' of animals (Patika Sutta, Digha Ni ka ya) or "flock" of birds (Jata ka Nidana), but groups of lay disciples, both men and women, are always described as 'parisa', an assembly.

So what is the meaning of Sangha in the first main context, in the Threefold Refuge? Certainly, only an exceedingly eccentric Buddhist would take as their third refuge a sangha of birds (only "one gone cuckoo", as they say!). In fact, the Tipitaka is precise in what is meant by the third refuge. In the Canon, on every occasion that an inspired person took the Threefold Refuge as an expression of their faith, it was either in the Buddha, Dhamma and Bhikkhu Sangha, or in the Buddha, Dhamma and Bhikkhuni Sangha. Thus, in original Buddhism, the meaning of Sangha in the context of the Threefold Refuge is unarguably the Monastic Sangha.

The Sangha as the third factor of the Triple Gem worshipped by Buddhists seems to have a different meaning. It is called the Savaka Sangha (or Ariya Sangha) and is defined as those attained to any of the Eight Stages of Enlightenment (the 4 usual stages divided into Path and Fruit) who are “worthy of gifts, hospitality, offerings and reverential salutations, and who are the unsurpassed field of merit in the world”. So, in the original texts, who are the “unsurpassed field of merit and worthy of offerings and salutations”

In the *Dakkhinaṅgī Sutta* (Majjhima 14), the Buddha said that, “an offering made to the monastic Sangha is incalculable, immeasurable. And, I say, that in no way does a gift to a person individually ever have a greater fruit than an offering made to the monastic Sangha”. Consistency proves that the Savaka Sangha, the unsurpassed field of merit in the world, must be a part, a subset of the monastic Sangha -- there is no greater fruit than an offering to the monastic Sangha.

Furthermore, in the world of the Tipitaka, offerings and reverential salutations would always be given by the laity to the monastic and never the other way around. Even the highly attained lay disciple Uggasena who was a Non-Returner is seen to be giving reverential salutations to ordinary bhikkhus and serving their needs with his own hands (Anguttara Nikaya, Eights, Suttas 21 & 22). Thus, those “worthy of gifts, hospitality, offerings and reverential salutations”, the Savaka Sangha, are again shown to be a part of the monastic Sangha of both genders.

This proves that the meaning of ‘Sangha’ in the context of the to-be-worshipped Triple Gem is that part of the monastic Sangha who have attained to a Stage of Enlightenment. This Savaka Sangha, or Ariya Sangha, is in no way outside of the monastic Sangha but within it, as a subset. To say otherwise is inconsistent with the Suttas.

I have carefully argued these points because today, many young lay Buddhist groups in Australia, Europe and the Americas are calling themselves Sangha, going for refuge to themselves, even worshipping themselves, and presuming this is Buddhism! This is sad, misleading and produces no progress on the Path.”

Source: <http://www.dhammadownload.com/au/articles/item/1200-the-meaning-of-sangha.html>

7. That the Buddha taught that there is Kamma, being cause and effect, or the law of causality. That there are effects to be experienced in this and future lives (for those not fully enlightened) that are wholesome, neutral and unwholesome on the basis of actions performed in the past or the present as per the following suttas:

2.1 . ‘This, monks, the Tathāgata understands: These viewpoints thus grasped and adhered to will lead to such-and-such destinations in another world. [Sutta 1, *rah a ā a Sutta: The Supreme Net - What the Teaching Is Not, The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, p. 78, Wisdom Publications]

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“Bhikkhus, there are three kinds of persons found existing in the world. What three?

(1) “Here, bhikkhus, some person generates afflictive bodily activities, afflictive verbal activities, and afflictive mental activities. In consequence, he is reborn in an afflictive world. When he is reborn in an afflictive world, afflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by afflictive contacts, he feels afflictive feelings, exclusively painful, as in the case of hell-beings.

2) “Someone else generates unafflictive bodily activities, unafflictive verbal activities, and unafflictive mental activities. In consequence, he is reborn in an unafflictive world. When he is reborn in an unafflictive world, unafflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by unafflictive contacts, he feels unafflictive feelings, exclusively pleasant, as in the case of the devas of refulgent glory.

(3) “Still another generates bodily activities that are both afflictive and unafflictive, verbal activities that are both afflictive and unafflictive, and mental activities that are both afflictive and unafflictive. In consequence, [123] he is reborn in a world that is both afflictive and unafflictive. When he is reborn in a world that is both afflictive and unafflictive, both afflictive and unafflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by both afflictive and unafflictive contacts, he feels both afflictive and unafflictive feelings, mingled pleasure and pain, as in the case of human beings, some devas, and some beings in the lower worlds.

“These, bhikkhus, are the three kinds of persons found existing in the world.”
[Sutta 23 (3) *Volitional Activities, Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, The Book of Threes, pp. 218-219, Wisdom Publications]

8. That I do not allow myself to become romantically involved with any students who come to the BSV centre. Such involvement can represent an abuse of trust in the teacher-student relationship.

Should such a situation develop where there is romantic interest, either the student, or the teacher, is to cease coming to the centre (as agreed between them). Both are to avoid being seen together at the centre at the same time as it can be distracting to other students, and possibly derail the teaching with conflicts of interest or perceived favouritism. Romantic behaviour is also inappropriate for a place where monastics dwell from time to time, and is unnecessary at this centre of Buddhist education.

9. That I understand if I should break with any of the principles in this document that I may be asked not to teach at the BSV at any time.

I understand that any teacher who is asked to leave has a right of reply in order to clarify any possible misunderstandings. Any request to leave (in non-urgent scenarios) will be in writing and delivered to the teacher personally, or to the organisation they operate under (whichever is more convenient for the BSV).

As a guest of the BSV, I understand that no reason needs to be given for an expulsion of any person (teacher or otherwise) should the BSV committee or their representative prefer not to provide one.

I agree to the principles outlined above, and vow to uphold them during any teaching engagement at the BSV.

Signed.....

Date:____/____/____