

## Ecumenical Buddhist Society Code of Conduct

The Ecumenical Buddhist Society (EBS) is a community of discrete Buddhist practice groups which have joined together to form a Buddhist Center. The mission of EBS is to provide safe and harmonious space for people to hear, practice, study, and teach the Dharma. This mission is carried out in many ways. The practice groups, representing various Buddhist lineages, including Zen, Tibetan, and Vipassana and also including several mindfulness-based groups meet weekly. Opportunities for silent meditation are offered daily. Introduction to Meditation classes are offered weekly and Introduction to Buddhism classes monthly. Community wide classes on selected subjects are offered as possible. The Board of Directors (the Board) meets monthly. Finally, EBS hosts retreats led by outside teachers several times a year. All offerings, except the retreats, are developed and led by EBS lay practitioners. All activities are supported and maintained by lay volunteers. EBS does not have any formally trained senior teachers in residence.

EBS' strength and resilience lies in having mindful and caring relationships among all who participate in the many offered activities. For this reason and because of the absence of trained senior teachers, there is a recognized need to have clear ethical guidelines for persons attending EBS. To fill this need, EBS has established the following Code of Ethics for all EBS members and active participants.

### **(1) Do no physical, mental, or emotional harm to others.**

With the realization that all people suffer and that all people wish to be happy and free from suffering, I will strive to treat all people with dignity, respect, and loving-kindness while affirming my own need for dignity, respect, and loving-kindness.

### **(2) Take nothing that is not freely given.**

To the best of my ability, I will take only what is freely offered and vow to practice gratitude, generosity, and sympathetic joy.

### **(3) Speak truthfully and helpfully.**

To the best of my ability I will say only what is true, useful, and timely and I will practice deep listening so that both my speaking and listening will reflect loving-kindness and compassion.

### **(4) Refrain from sexual misconduct\*.**

I vow to avoid causing harm through misuse of my sexuality and will avoid any and all sexual harassment and or exploitation of others and will strive to create a safe space for all persons attending EBS.

As a teacher, practice group leader, bell ringer, or EBS Board member I vow to use my position of authority to help create a safe environment, free from sexual misconduct.

### **(5) Keep a clear mind.**

To the best of my ability, moment to moment I will keep a clear and alert mind, allowing me to be aware of my motivations, emotions, thoughts, and feelings so I can act with discernment, and wisdom.

## Ecumenical Buddhist Society Ethics Committee

The Ecumenical Buddhist Society Ethic Committee's (the Committee) mission is to help resolve disputes that may arise between or among people attending EBS. Disputes may include misunderstandings between individuals as well as allegations of misconduct by one or more persons. The Committee is not intended to be some kind of moralistic body that seeks out and punishes "bad people". Instead, it is a recognition that we all jointly have a responsibility to create an environment of integrity and an invitation to all persons who attend EBS to help create this environment.

The Committee consists of three members who are persons widely respected for their integrity. They are elected at the annual January Board meeting by the majority vote of all members present. Committee members serve three-year terms. Members names and contact information are posted on site and on EBS' website. Members will meet on an as needed basis.

### Process

When a difficulty arises, the committee will respond as follows

- First, the persons involved will be requested to try to work with each other to solve the difficulty. If this proves unsatisfactory, or if the issue is of major concern, the members are invited to bring their concerns to the Committee.
- The Committee will begin by meeting with the parties either separately or together to determine whether the issue can be resolved by mediation. If the issue is intractable, or if it involves more people than the persons initially identified, or if it addresses a concern integral to EBS' operations, the Committee will begin an investigation of the matter.
- Committee investigation may include bringing others into the discussions such as knowledgeable outsiders, the practice group leader, or the Board President.
- By unanimous consent, the Committee will make an independent, final recommendation of how to resolve the difficulty. If the Committee is unable to resolve the difficulty or reach a unanimous decision the matter will be referred to the Board President for further review. Also, if the parties do not agree with the Committee's decision one or all interested parties may appeal the matter to the Board President who will have final authority in any decision.

### Duty to Report

EBS leaders have a legal and ethical responsibility to warn people in situations where there is clear evidence of potential danger to other people. This "duty to warn" may require a breach of confidentiality in some cases. At all other times, Committee members, practice leaders, the Board President, and any other persons contacted during the investigation will maintain appropriate confidentiality.

### Sexual Misconduct Defined

\*Sexual misconduct includes behavior that is unwelcome to the other person, including (but not limited to) verbal comments, advances, or propositions of a sexual nature; display or mention of sexually suggestive or explicit materials; and /or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

*The five precepts of non-harming: Are a vehicle for our happiness, A vehicle for our good fortune, A vehicle for the liberation of all. And May our virtue shine forth. Jack Kornfield, A Path with Heart, p. 343*