



**Land of Joy**  
Buddhist Retreat Community

## **LAND OF JOY CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

Land of Joy is committed at every level, and in all aspects of the service it offers, to providing a confidential service to all those who come to the centre for teachings, guidance, meditation or socially.

Confidentiality must be understood to be between the individual and the organisation not between the individual and the advisor/teacher/session leader/volunteer or trustee (for the purposes of this document known as 'volunteers').

This means that:

1. Information will be treated in the utmost confidence and will not be divulged to anyone outside the organisation except where extenuating circumstances exist (see below). However, in order that we can provide the best possible help to our participants or guests it may be necessary to share information with the Director, Spiritual Programme Co-ordinator, or a specific member of the team within Land of Joy.

We will take care to only share within the organisation those who have a reason to know particular information and the decision making will be based on the safety and wellbeing of the person concerned and others who may be affected.

2. In accordance with the wishes and availability of a teacher or retreat leader, volunteers and guests may wish to have personal conversations with teachers and retreat leaders. These will take place in private but within a public space such as the conservatory or another area such as a room with the door ajar and with a sign indicating a private conversation is underway and asking others to respect this. These discussions and consultations will not take place in bedrooms or other areas completely removed from other people.

3. No conversation about a student or guest should take place with anyone who does not work for Land of Joy either as a volunteer or as a trustee.

4. No personal information about a student or guest will be given to any third party even

if the person is a member of their family.

5. Volunteers will not discuss personal information regarding a student or guest will not be discussed in a public place and effort should be made to ensure that confidential conversations cannot be overheard.

6. Information will only be passed to another agency with the consent of the participant or guest. If a volunteer intends to seek information from another agency to help the student or guest or to refer them elsewhere then this must be explained to the student or guest and their permission given.

7. Student or guests who are under 16 will always be encouraged to discuss issues with their parents. (NB. See exceptions below)

**Exceptions:** In certain circumstances Land of Joy reserves the right to break confidentiality should this be deemed necessary or is a legal or statutory requirement. Please also refer to LOJ Safeguarding Policy and other relevant policy.

These circumstances include:

- If a volunteer is made aware or believes that a student or guest or another volunteer could cause danger to themselves or to others.
- If information is shared that indicates a risk to a young person.
- If the student or guest gives information which indicates that a crime has been committed

We acknowledge that students or guests remain responsible for their own lives. We will therefore encourage them to get support and professional help and as required. Where there are serious concerns regarding their wellbeing LOJ, will seek appropriate external professional support and if urgent or necessary call an ambulance.

In all of these cases, if a decision has to be taken to break confidentiality, it will be done with the permission of the person involved but in some circumstances for the safety and wellbeing of those concerned or others, where consent is not given, it may be shared as necessary following consultation with the SPC, Director or a Trustee. It will only be shared with those for whom it is essential to be informed.

We appreciate that this type of information can be stressful for Land of Joy volunteers so we will therefore ensure that all volunteers have the support they need to help make decisions and to support them afterwards.

### **Use of student or user of the centre information for publicity purposes:**

Land of Joy does wish to be able to publicise general information regarding the centre. If a non-confidential situation arises that is deemed to be worthy of publicity, then wherever possible the permission of the student or guest will be sought in writing before the story is told to anyone else.

### **Use of student or guest information for training purposes:**

Examples of situations may be used for training purposes but any details which enable identification to be made will be changed.

#### **1. Letters or emails**

- Any letters or printed emails will be kept securely.
- Any correspondence will be usually be destroyed after 2 years. However, if a letter or email is received which gives thanks or encouragement then it may be kept.
- If a letter or email is received which we would like to use in publicity, we will seek the permission of the writer to ensure that they are happy for us to do this. Information about a student or guest will never be used for publicity purposes unless consent has been obtained.

#### **2. Data Analysis**

- Data will be collected to assist in planning, marketing and supervision.
- Data collected will have the sole purpose of enabling us to evaluate and monitor the service we are offering and will not, under any circumstances, contain personal information.
- In some instances, Land of Joy may wish to make information available to public bodies and the media.

#### **3. Making the Confidentiality policy known**

- All volunteers will have access to a copy of this policy.
- We will ensure that all volunteers are able to give information about the Confidentiality Policy if asked.

This policy applies to all volunteers of Land of Joy. All new volunteers will be given training in its application and we will take steps to ensure that existing volunteers understand its application.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was last reviewed on:

10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (date)

Signed: .....

[Chair of Land of Joy board of trustees]

Date: .....