



Land of Joy

Buddhist Retreat Community

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Land of Joy respects the right to privacy and confidentiality of those who come to the centre for teachings, guidance, meditation or socially. This policy gives guidance for ensuring confidentiality and outlines the circumstances where disclosures may be necessary.

Confidential information includes all personal, sensitive and identifying information about people.

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

Land of Joy exercises care towards those who are part of our community. This may involve talking with people about their lives and the lives of their friends and families. In the normal course of a conversation, confidential information may be shared. The general rule is that all such information should be kept between the person seeking support and the person offering care. Permission should be sought before any information is passed on.

This includes information shared between participants in courses or retreats or in small group discussions and forums. Such information should not be discussed outside the group.

This means that:

- ❖ 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.

- ❖ Personal information shared between participants in courses or retreats or in small group discussions and forums should not be discussed outside the group.
- ❖ Personal conversations with teachers and retreat leaders 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.

- ❖ No conversation about a student or guest should take place with anyone who does not work for Land of Joy either as a team member or as a trustee.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Team members will not discuss personal information regarding a student or guest in a public place and effort should be made to ensure that confidential conversations cannot be overheard.
- ❖ Information will only be passed to another agency with the consent of the participant or guest. If a team member 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.
- ❖ Student or guests who are under 16 will always be encouraged to discuss issues of concern with their parents or carers.

Exceptions: In certain circumstances Land of Joy reserves the right to break confidentiality should this be deemed necessary to protect an individual's or a group's wellbeing or is a legal or statutory requirement.

Please also refer to LOJ Safeguarding Policy and other relevant policies.

These circumstances include:

- If a team member is made aware of or believes that a student or guest or another team member 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.
- If a reference is required for a volunteer wishing to offer service in another FPMT centre or linked organisation or project.

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 or seek medical advice.

In all of these cases, if a decision has to be taken to break confidentiality, where possible this will be with the permission of the person involved. However, in some circumstances and for the safety and wellbeing of those concerned or others, in the absence of consent, information may be shared as necessary, following consultation with the SPC, Director or a Trustee. In the case of an emergency, assistance may need to be called immediately and followed up with the people named above subsequently. It will only be shared with those for whom it is essential to be informed.

We appreciate that making informed decisions in potentially difficult circumstances can be challenging for Land of Joy team members so we will therefore do what we can to ensure

that they have the support they need to help make decisions and to support them afterwards.

Making the Confidentiality policy known

- All team members will have access to a copy of this policy.
- The policy will be made available to guests and visitors on request and will be displayed on our website.
- We will ensure that all team members are able to pass on information about the Confidentiality Policy if asked. All new team members will be made aware of the policy in their induction, and we will take steps to ensure that existing team members understand its application.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was last reviewed and agreed on 7th November 2023.