

Oregon Buddhist Temple Safe Temple Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention

Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation & Harassment

The Oregon Buddhist Temple (hereafter OBT), as a community of followers of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities, and a community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can learn the Dharma and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with OBT should be aware that the temple is strongly opposed to Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by temple policy. It is the intention of OBT to take action to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to remove those persons who violate this policy from any temple leadership position.

Ministerial and Leadership Conduct

Consistent with our understanding of the clergy and temple leadership in the Jodo Shinshu tradition, all authorized Ministers, Minister Assistants, employees, elected or appointed lay leaders, teachers, authorized volunteers, and anybody else working on behalf of OBT are responsible for their actions in teaching the Dharma and/or participating in temple activities.

It is important that every member of OBT in a position of apparent, implied, or express authority be prepared for the position in which they serve others and understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of OBT to encourage Ministers and all members of the Sangha to nurture safety within the activities of the Sangha. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining appropriate personal boundaries, educating leaders on appropriate conduct, and referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources as appropriate.

Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment of Sangha members or others by anyone engaged in activity on behalf of OBT is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated within this Sangha.

Requirements for Commencing & Continuing Positions of Ministry, Teaching, or Lay Leadership (Board)

Before beginning their duties, all Ministers, Minister Assistants, Dharma School Teachers, and elected members of the OBT Board will submit a disclosure form similar to the sample attached hereto as Appendix A. OBT will conduct a registered sex offender review for each participant of the above listed activities by searching their name through the applicable state law enforcement agency for the state of Oregon. This registered sex offender review will be repeated on an annual basis for all participants in the listed activities.

Additional requirements for Dharma School Teachers, and Assistants

OBT is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people are able to learn the Dharma and participate in the activities of OBT. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for those in the temple in positions of authority.

We expect that those who volunteer to work with minors will have been members of OBT for at least three (3) months or, if not members, regularly & frequently associated with OBT for at least six (6) months, or have a well known community association with the temple or a temple member or family.

Before beginning their duties, all Dharma School Teachers and Assistants will undergo a background check limited to inquiries of references and a criminal history verification by a third party vendor.

Definitions

Sexual Exploitation: Sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person of apparent authority within the temple takes advantage of the vulnerability of an OBT member or guest being served by causing or allowing that member to engage in sexual behavior with the person of authority.

Sexual Harassment: Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any OBT activity.
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or OBT-related decisions affecting an individual

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in OBT activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or temple environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes: Unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, or invitation;

- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines, or other sexually suggestive media.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or temple environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, temple leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the temple. It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment

The person or person's representative (e.g. Parent) should report the harassment, exploitation, or other unwanted behavior to the OBT Minister immediately. If the temple minister is somehow involved, it should be reported to the OBT Board President or, as a last recourse, an OBT Board Member.

All parties will be considered innocent of any wrongdoing until an investigation has been made and all sides of the issue heard. Law enforcement and/or legal considerations may be made at the behest of the OBT Board Executive Committee. The OBT Board may also create a committee for this investigation and decision.

Decisions implemented by the OBT Board may include loss of position, temple membership, or dismissal from employment and may include law enforcement or legal action.

END