

ETHICS POLICY

LOUISVILLE ZEN CENTER

*Adopted by the Board of Directors on February 2, 2012;
Amended by the Board of Directors on February 2, 2026*

Table of Contents for Ethics Policy of Louisville Zen Center

- SECTION 1. CODE OF CONDUCT: THE 16 PRECEPTS.....3
 - I. PREFACE3
 - II. THE THREE REFUGES3
 - III. THE THREE GENERAL RESOLUTIONS3
 - IV. THE TEN CARDINAL PRECEPTS.....4
- SECTION 2: ETHICAL GUIDELINES7
 - I. PREFACE7
 - II. DEFINITIONS7
 - III. THE BUDDHIST PRECEPTS.....8
 - IV. DUAL RELATIONSHIPS.....8
 - A. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE8
 - B. APPROPRIATE DUAL RELATIONSHIPS8
 - C. SPIRITUAL COUNSELING.....9
 - D. LIMITATIONS ON CERTAIN DUAL RELATIONSHIPS9
 - V. SEXUAL HARASSMENT10
 - VI. NON-DISCRIMINATION11
 - VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....11
 - VII. REPENTANCE CEREMONY11
- SECTION 3: RESOLVING CONFLICTS.....11
 - I. INTRODUCTION11
 - II. INFORMAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION12
 - III. FORMAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION13
 - IV. ETHICS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EAC).....13
 - V. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.....13
 - VI. ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS14

SECTION 1. CODE OF CONDUCT: THE 16 PRECEPTS

I. PREFACE

There is much more to Buddhism than the cultivation of virtue. The Zen school, in fact, points to the Original Mind that precedes all moral constructs. But in order to realize this Mind that is beyond right and wrong, upright conduct is essential. It supports, strengthens and deepens our meditation, thus helping to liberate our innate wisdom. These ethical guidelines are meant to ensure the unimpeded functioning of the Way for all who participate in the life of the Sangha. In honoring them we bring benefit to ourselves as well as others.

—Roshi Bodhin Kjolhede, Abbot Emeritus, Louisville Zen Center

II. THE THREE REFUGES

The Three Refuges form the foundation and orientation of our lives as followers of the Buddha Way.

1. I take refuge in Buddha.

In taking refuge in Buddha, we recognize the Buddha Nature in all beings. While roles and responsibilities may differ within the Center, we are all equal expressions of this same Buddha Nature.

2. I take refuge in Dharma.

In taking refuge in Dharma, we honor the wisdom and compassion of the Buddhist path. Often translated as “law,” the Dharma also serves as a guide for ethical conduct in every aspect of our lives.

3. I take refuge in Sangha.

In taking refuge in Sangha, we affirm the central role of community in our practice. To make the Sangha a true refuge, we cultivate inclusivity, understanding, and awareness of our shared interconnection. Open, respectful communication is vital, and any ethical concerns or conflicts must be heard and addressed with care.

III. THE THREE GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

The Three General Resolutions are central to the Buddhist practice taught at the Center and express the aspiration of all who follow the Buddha Way.

1. I resolve to do no harm.

To do no harm means to refrain from causing injury or suffering—to oneself, others, animals, plants, or the Earth—through thought, speech, or action.

2. I resolve to do good.

To do good means to act from the compassion and equanimity of our awakened nature. In living ethically, we embrace the Mahayana practices of confession, repentance, atonement, and reconciliation.

3. I resolve to liberate all living beings.

To liberate all living beings means to embody our Buddha Nature for the benefit of all. By expressing our awakened nature, we help others discover their own True Mind.

IV. THE TEN CARDINAL PRECEPTS

The Ten Cardinal Precepts are inseparable from Buddha Nature and our relations with each other.

1. I resolve not to kill, but to cherish all life.

This precept calls us to live with compassion and non-violence, recognizing the inherent unity of all existence. In its broadest sense, “not killing” means refraining from all forms of harm—physical, emotional, or psychological. Acts of violence, threats, or malicious anger are all forms of killing.

In this spirit, firearms and other weapons intended to take life have no place within the Center’s meeting places, and flesh foods are not to be consumed there except by permission of the Spiritual Director under special circumstances. We also acknowledge our shared responsibility in the taking of life. As a Sangha, when faced with questions involving harm to animals or plants, we strive to discern our true needs and act for the benefit of all beings.

2. I resolve not to take what is not given, but to respect the things of others.

This precept reflects a commitment to live with generosity rather than grasping, recognizing that, as we are, nothing is lacking. Covetous behavior harms both the taker and the one taken from, while within a community, stealing undermines the trust essential to Zen practice. Those entrusted with Sangha funds or assets bear a special duty to use them responsibly and avoid any misuse or misappropriation.

Misuse of authority or status is also a form of taking what is not given. Within the Sangha’s structure, those in positions of trust must not use their roles to gain privileges or exert undue influence over others.

3. I resolve not to misuse sexuality, but to be caring and responsible.

Sexuality, like all aspects of life, is part of our practice. Honoring it with mindfulness and compassion helps create healthy, conscious relationships within the Sangha.

Special care is required when relationships involve differences in age, status, or authority. Two kinds of relationships are clear violations of this precept:

- a. Sexual relations with a minor** — Any sexual behavior with someone below the legal age of consent is prohibited. Full responsibility rests with the adult.

- b. Sexual relations involving authority or teaching roles** — It is a misuse of power and sexuality for a Teacher to engage sexually with a student. Similar risks exist for Instructors, Priests, Heads of Zendo, residents, or staff in relationships with those under their supervision or influence.

In addition, all who come to the Center have the right to be free from sexual harassment. Continuing sexual attention after being told it is unwelcome constitutes misuse of sexuality.

4. I resolve not to lie, but to speak the truth.

This precept is vital to the integrity of Sangha life. Deceit—whether through omission, half-truths, misrepresentation, or silence—obscures reality and hinders our practice.

Open and honest communication is essential. All members are entitled to clear, compassionate feedback about their conduct or standing within the community.

Students must be able to practice in an atmosphere of trust. Teachers and practice leaders shall keep confidential any information shared in dokusan, daisan, or private discussions when confidentiality is requested and agreed upon, except when nondisclosure could cause serious harm to individuals or the Sangha. Even without an explicit request, such information should never be shared casually. Within the teaching process, limited consultation among teachers may occur when appropriate, and should always be handled with sensitivity, fairness, and respect.

5. I resolve not to cause others to abuse alcohol or drugs, nor to do so myself, but to keep the mind clear.

Mindfulness depends on clarity, which intoxicants obscure. When the mind is clouded, it becomes easier to violate other precepts. The Center is intended to support those choosing a life free from intoxicants; therefore, alcohol or drug intoxication at the Center's meeting places is inappropriate and may warrant concern or intervention.

When a member struggles with substance abuse, they are encouraged to seek help within and/or beyond the Sangha. Because denial often accompanies addiction, the community is urged to respond with compassion and support to help those in need recognize and accept assistance.

6. I resolve not to speak of the faults of others, but to be understanding and sympathetic.

This precept supports harmony and mutual respect within the Sangha. False or malicious speech creates division and suffering, arising from the mistaken view of self and other as separate. Even truthful but unnecessary criticism can harm both speaker and community. When the urge to slander arises, turning inward to understand its roots is itself the practice of this precept.

7. I resolve not to praise myself and disparage others, but to overcome my own shortcomings.

Rejoicing in wholesome qualities is part of Buddhist practice, but self-praise or personal gain at others' expense misunderstands the interdependent nature of self. When criticism is necessary within the Center, attention must be given to motives, content, audience, and potential consequences.

8. I resolve not to withhold spiritual or material aid, but to give them freely when needed.

All positions and resources at the Center exist to support everyone's practice and awakening, not the interests of any individual. No one—especially a teacher—should use their role for personal gain at the expense of the Sangha.

In the spirit of non-possessiveness, decision-making should be cooperative, considering all perspectives. Center finances, governance, and minutes of major decisions should be accessible and understandable to all.

9. I resolve not to indulge in anger, but to practice forbearance.

Harboring ill-will or thoughts of revenge harms both the individual and the community. Conflicts with others or with Center decision-making groups should be addressed directly with honesty, humility, and loving-kindness. If informal resolution fails, mediation should be sought to clarify and resolve the issue.

10. I resolve not to revile the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), but to cherish and uphold them.

The Three Treasures are inseparable: awakening, practice, and community mutually inform and support one another. Abusing any one harms the others. Acknowledging transgressions, seeking reconciliation, and renewing commitment to the precepts expresses Buddha Nature and strengthens the Sangha. When the Sangha's integrity is protected, the Three Treasures are fully manifest.

SECTION 2: ETHICAL GUIDELINES

I. PREFACE

As members of the Louisville Zen Center, we are inextricably bound to each other, and the ways in which we interact can have a profound effect on our well-being and practice. For this reason, the Zen Center's Board of Directors has adopted these ethical guidelines for the Sangha – guidelines that we hope will help create a supportive, harmonious, and safe environment. These guidelines are adapted from those of the Rochester Zen Center and Auckland Zen Centre.

Those of us who are given the responsibilities of teaching and leadership within our Sangha acknowledge that we are first of all continuing students of the Great Way. We also acknowledge there are power differentials in our relationships and how with leadership our words and actions carry greater weight than might be the case in other circumstances. As such we agree to consciously commit to a code of conduct that nurtures our community as well as our own continuing practice.

We have already committed to walk the way of the Four Bodhisattvic Vows and Sixteen Precepts. From these vows and precepts, we find an outline for our lives. Through these vows and the guidelines listed below we seek to cultivate a community of openness, generosity, compassion and wisdom.

All Members and active participants are assumed to be willing to abide by these codes in general when interacting with other Sangha members. All who are regularly and actively involved in the Center may avail themselves of the informal and formal complaint procedures set out in this document.

Everyone who is invited to leadership as a director, manager, instructor, priest, novice priest or teacher at the Louisville Zen Center agrees to conduct himself or herself in accordance with these Ethical Guidelines.

II. DEFINITIONS

Spiritual Director: The Guiding Teacher or Teacher of the Center. These terms are used interchangeably.

Board of Directors: Governs non-spiritual matters, sets administrative policy, and ensures fiscal responsibility in support of the Center's mission.

Directors: Voting member of the Board of Directors.

Officers: Elected by the Board, attend meetings to provide information and advice. Non-voting member of the Board of Directors.

Head of the Zendo: Appointed by the Guiding Teacher as principal assistant for spiritual affairs; directs spiritual activities in the Teacher's absence unless otherwise instructed.

Instructors: Appointed by the Guiding Teacher with duties in teaching and other spiritual matters as assigned.

Teachers: Instructors sanctioned by their own Teacher to accept students, give *dokusan* and *teisho*, lead sesshin, and guide Zen centers. Ordained Priests may also be Teachers. Dharma Transmission (*inka*) grants the authority to sanction new Teachers.

Priests: Ordained clerics committed to a lifetime of supporting the Buddhadharma, often as Center staff. Priests may also be Instructors or Teachers and are ordained only by Priests.

III. THE BUDDHIST PRECEPTS

The sixteen precepts are so intimate a part of Zen practice that they have been called the “blood vein” of the ancestral lineage. The precepts can be understood on many levels: as supports for the practice of awakening, as the environment for that practice, and as the expression of awakening itself. Although the precepts can be understood from different points of view, we do not believe that Zen practice can exist in their absence. While the precepts have stood the tests of many generations, both the social context and the way they are explained and practiced may change and evolve. As Directors of the Zen Center at a specific moment in time, we realize that our interpretations are subject to change. The interpretations of the precepts in this document (see Section 1) are not intended to limit anyone’s understanding or to be a definitive reading. Rather they attempt to cover some questions of conduct that might arise in the context of the Zen Center Sangha.

IV. DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

A. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

A dual relationship occurs when the Guiding Teacher, an Instructor, or Head of the Zendo engages with a student in an additional role—such as employer/employee (outside the Center), therapist/client, counselor/counselee, or sexual partner.

While some dual relationships may be appropriate, they generally involve a power imbalance and carry significant risks, including boundary violations, emotional vulnerability, exploitation, loss of autonomy, and role confusion. They can also undermine the teacher/student relationship and the student’s Zen training.

Such relationships should be avoided whenever possible or carefully managed with the student’s best interests in mind. The teacher or authority figure, as the more powerful party, bears primary responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries.

B. APPROPRIATE DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Some dual relationships are appropriate or unavoidable. For example, the Guiding Teacher and Head of the Zendo supervise staff, creating an employer/employee relationship. Casual social

interactions and friendships with students or non-student members are generally healthy and not discouraged.

However, close personal friendships with students can interfere with the teacher/student relationship and should be approached with caution, always considering the student's best interests. Teachers should avoid behavior that could reasonably suggest an exclusive or special relationship.

C. SPIRITUAL COUNSELING

The Guiding Teacher, an Instructor, or the Head of the Zendo may provide spiritual counseling to students. While it may address emotional or psychological issues, spiritual counseling differs from psychotherapy: it is usually short-term, focuses on immediate concerns, does not explore issues as deeply, the counselor may not be professionally trained, and no fee is charged.

If long-term counseling or psychotherapy is needed, or if a student is in immediate danger, the spiritual counselor should promptly recommend professional help and, when possible, assist with a referral.

D. LIMITATIONS ON CERTAIN DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. Employment

Guiding Teachers and Instructors should generally avoid employing, being employed by, providing paid services to, or receiving paid services from any student while the student is receiving formal instruction (dokusan or daisan).

Exceptions may be made for voluntary expressions of gratitude, such as *dana* (gifts) from students. In any situation where a deviation from this guideline seems appropriate, the teacher or instructor must act in the student's best interests and, if in doubt, consult the Ethics and Advisory Committee (or, for Instructors, the Guiding Teacher). The Committee may also proactively offer guidance on such dual relationships.

2. Psychotherapy

A Guiding Teacher or Instructor who is also a professional psychotherapist shall not provide psychotherapy to anyone who is currently their student or receiving formal instruction (dokusan or daisan) from them.

3. Sexual Relationships

Our practice is one of intimacy. It can be warmhearted and close. Relationships between teachers and students, as with therapeutic relationships, usually involve powerful psycho-dynamic conditions including projection, transference and countertransference, among others. In addition, there are the complexities found within the power differential that exists between a teacher and a student. With these various circumstances it may be tempting to cross a line from spiritual intimacy to sexual intimacy. This type of relationship tends to confuse the other aspects of intimate relationship necessary for a successful teacher and student relationship. Sexuality is a

natural part of life and as a non-celibate Sangha, sexual intimacy is going to be a cherished part of our shared lives. However, those who teach have additional responsibilities.

- No priest, Head of Zendo, instructor or teacher who is married or in a committed relationship should engage in sexual activities with any person outside of their stated commitment.
- Any priest, Head of Zendo, instructor or teacher who finds a romantic relationship beginning with a member of the Sangha should inform the Ethics and Advisory Committee (EAC) of this relationship and seek guidance as to the most healthful way to proceed.
- If the people involved are in a teacher-student relationship, a choice must be made between either pursuing that personal relationship or continuing the teacher-student relationship, but not both. The EAC should help in this decision-making process. A resolution should be achieved with as little delay and as much openness and transparency as humanly possible.
- Because sexual relationships between two persons, both of whom are residents or staff members, have the potential to disrupt staff harmony and interfere with a suitable practice environment, such relationships need to be pursued with sensitivity to others and discussed with the Spiritual Director at the earliest possible opportunity.

If the appropriateness of an existing or potential dual relationship involving an Instructor, Priest, Head of Zendo, or Zen Centre staff member or resident might reasonably be questioned, that person is encouraged to consult with and seek the formal or informal advice of a member of the EAC or the Spiritual Director, as may be appropriate. In addition, if the Spiritual Director has any concerns regarding the appropriateness of a dual relationship that involves themselves, another Center Teacher, an Instructor, Priest, Head of Zendo, or a Zen Center staff member or resident, the Spiritual Director is likewise encouraged to consult the EAC.

V. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Third Precept—“I resolve not to misuse sexuality, but to be caring and responsible”—guides the Zen Center’s commitment to an environment free from intolerance, coercion, or harassment, including discrimination based on sex or sexual orientation. Sexual harassment—verbal, physical, or coercive behavior, especially by those in authority—is a serious breach of trust and an obstacle to spiritual growth.

Sexual harassment usually occurs when one person has some kind of authority over another. It includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. If someone’s inappropriate sexual conduct is accompanied by a threat to one’s continued involvement with the Center (e.g., maintaining one’s membership, going to dokusan or daisan, or attending sesshin), we encourage them to bring a grievance against that person. One may also make a complaint if someone’s behavior substantially interferes with their spiritual practice, creates an offensive environment, or intimidates them in any way.

Sexual harassment of a student by a teacher is a flagrant violation of the basic trust on which the relationship is founded. Harassment can also involve other authority figures such as Directors, Instructors, Priests, the Head of Zendo, the Center’s Officers, or any staff member. Teachers and

others in positions of authority must be especially careful to avoid comments that discriminate on the basis of sex or sexual orientation; however, we acknowledge that sometimes they need to discuss matters of sexuality with Sangha members and each other.

An allegation of sexual harassment can be handled either directly by the individuals involved, or through the Guiding Teacher or the complaint procedure set forth in these guidelines.

VI. NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin, marital status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Center's Conflict of Interest and Compensation Approval Policy, no director, officer, or committee member shall derive any personal profit or gain, either directly or indirectly, by reason of their office. Each director, officer, and committee member shall disclose to the board any financial or other interest that they may have in a matter pending before the board, and shall refrain from participating in any decision regarding such matter, unless the board – acting without the participation of the director, officer, or committee member in question – determines that the interest is sufficiently minimal that their participation would not constitute a conflict of interest.

VII. REPENTANCE CEREMONY

These Ethical Guidelines provide procedures for resolving conflicts and responding to ethical complaints. The Repentance Ceremony complements these procedures by offering a way for individuals to atone and restore bonds with the community.

The act of repentance can be extremely purifying and cleansing. If a Center member feels a need to repent before the Sangha, they may request the scheduling of a Repentance Ceremony.

SECTION 3: RESOLVING CONFLICTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Life in the Sangha is an expression of the Buddha Way. Avoiding suffering through silence, blame, or neglect only deepens it. When conflicts or ethical concerns arise, we address them with honesty and awareness—reflecting on our own role and engaging others with respect and openness.

The following guidelines support understanding, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Whenever possible, conflicts should be resolved informally and directly. When that is not possible, formal grievance procedures are available to address serious concerns or misconduct.

II. INFORMAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The suggestions that follow are intended to give all persons involved in a dispute a chance to be fully heard in an environment of respect and kindness – one that flows from knowing that there is no fundamental difference between us.

- A. Stating the Actual.** A key to resolving conflict, as in Buddhist practice, is distinguishing between our opinions about an event and our direct experience of it. Focus on specific facts and feelings rather than generalizations or interpretations, as true understanding cannot arise from abstraction.
- B. Being Heard.** It is important that everyone involved be given an opportunity to be fully heard. This means that all participants be given a chance to recount how they remember the history of a conflict, to state their feelings regarding the conflict, and to explain the goals they have for its resolution. Such statements should be neither defensive nor critical, since both stances tend to preclude deeper mutual understanding. Much conflict arises and is perpetuated through a lack of mutual understanding. Taking calm, deliberate, and adequate time to listen to each other is often all that is needed for the process of reconciliation to begin.
- C. Restating what was Heard.** To ensure that everyone understands one another, it is useful for each party to briefly restate what the other has said, highlighting the main points. The other party then says whether they believe the restatement is complete and accurate, and makes any appropriate corrections.
- D. Acknowledgment.** Resolution and reconciliation are greatly facilitated if each party involved reflects on how he or she may have contributed to the conflict and then describes this to the other party. Even when one person is primarily responsible, self-reflection, acknowledgment, and apology on everyone's part can provide a safer, more trusting, and more understanding environment for everyone to be truthful. (Please see Section VII, Repentance Ceremony, above.)
- E. Facilitation.** It is often useful to invite one or more neutral witnesses or mediators to take part in a session of conflict resolution. Such a person may simply be a silent witness providing a sense of calm and presence or may be an active mediator who helps ensure that each person is given uninterrupted opportunities to speak. This person may also point out the difference between statements of opinion and interpretation and direct statements of how an event or feeling was or is actually experienced. Invited facilitators can be anyone whom both parties respect; e.g., friends, neutral acquaintances, Center teachers or other members, members of the Center's Ethics and Advisory Committee, or people from within or outside the Center who are trained in mediation.
- F. Seeking Advice.** In addition to or instead of inviting a facilitator to participate, it can be useful to seek advice from others for working informally to resolve a conflict. Such advice can come from friends, teachers, Ethics and Advisory Committee members and others.

III. FORMAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Whenever possible, disputes should be resolved directly and informally. A Member with a concern or complaint is encouraged to first speak with the appropriate person or authority—such as the Guiding Teacher, Head of Zendo, Chair of the Board, or a Corporate Officer—before approaching the Ethics and Advisory Committee or the Board of Directors. For example, concerns about a Priest would normally go to the Guiding Teacher or Head of Zendo; financial concerns to the Treasurer; and concerns about a Director or Officer to the Chair of the Board. Members may also seek informal advice from a Director or a member of the Ethics and Advisory Committee.

If informal resolution is not possible or appropriate, a formal concern or complaint may be submitted to the Ethics and Advisory Committee or, if preferred, directly to the Board, which may address the matter itself or refer it to the Committee for review.

IV. ETHICS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EAC)

The Ethics and Advisory Committee supports the integrity and well-being of the Sangha by upholding ethical standards and providing guidance in matters of conduct, relationships, and community responsibility. The Committee serves as a confidential resource for members, residents, teachers, staff, and volunteers seeking advice or resolution of ethical concerns. The Committee also advises the Board of Directors and Guiding Teacher on policies that promote accountability, safety, and harmony within the community.

The Ethics and Advisory Committee shall meet as requested by the Guiding Teacher, the Board, or any of its own members in response to matters within its jurisdiction. The Ethics and Advisory Committee shall:

- Consider complaints against a Guiding Teacher or Acting Guiding Teacher, an Instructor, a Priest, a Novice preparing for ordination as a Priest, a Director or Alternate Director, an Officer or Assistant Officer, or a Head of Zendo;
- Consider concerns and complaints regarding ethical or other material issues involving the operation of the Center;
- Give advice and make determinations regarding dual relationships; and
- From time-to-time review and, to the extent it deems appropriate, propose to the Board changes to these Ethical Guidelines.

V. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Any formal complaint must be submitted in writing. The complaint should include:

- A description of the alleged behavior or incident,
- A summary of any prior attempts to resolve the issue informally, and
- A general statement of the desired resolution.

If needed, a member of the Ethics and Advisory Committee (EAC) may assist the complainant in preparing the written statement. The complaint and related documents will be retained by the EAC for as long as it deems appropriate.

Upon receiving a formal complaint, the EAC will provide the complainant with a copy of the Center's Ethics Policy and a written acknowledgment of receipt.

VI. ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS

- A. Matters involving potential legal liability.** The Ethics and Advisory Committee, any of its members, any Trustee, Officer, resident, staff member, or Center Member must promptly notify the Guiding Teacher, Head of Zendo, and Board of Directors of any allegation that could create legal liability for the Center. This includes reports of unlawful activity, sexual harassment, financial misconduct, or discrimination based on race, gender, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
- B. Matters involving potential conflicts of interest.** No one may serve on the Ethics and Advisory Committee or Board if they are the complainant or the person complained about, have a personal relationship that could bias their judgment, or cannot be impartial for any reason. Individuals must recuse themselves in such cases, though the Board (excluding the person in question if they are a Director) may decide if they may participate. This rule does not apply if it would leave too few Directors qualified to act.
- C. Matters involving the Ethics and Advisory Committee.** For concerns or complaints within its jurisdiction, the Ethics and Advisory Committee may investigate as needed, including meeting with both the complainant and the person complained about, and gathering additional evidence.

The EAC will promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint. The EAC will respond to the complainant in writing within one to three months of receiving the complaint, providing its recommendations to the Board of Directors and the reasons for those recommendations. All recommendations are made by consensus and in consultation with the Spiritual Director. All members of the EAC will hear the complaint collectively, including its Director member.

If the complaint concerns the Spiritual Director, the EAC will consult with the Board of Directors. If the Committee cannot reach consensus, it will continue dialogue with the parties involved until a resolution can be found.

The Committee may dismiss a complaint if there is insufficient evidence or if no sanction would be appropriate even if the allegations are true. Otherwise, it will refer the matter to the Board of Directors or another appropriate authority, with its findings and any recommendations, without ruling on the merits. Possible recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- A finding of no breach,
- A mediated resolution,
- A limited finding with referral to an appropriate party,

- Reversal of an administrative decision or action,
- A private or mediated apology,
- A private reprimand,
- Follow-up meetings with affected parties,
- A public apology or censure,
- Reparation when appropriate,
- A recommendation for counseling or similar support,
- A period of probation, or
- Suspension or dismissal from membership, leadership, or teaching.

If the complainant is unsatisfied or feels the Committee is not the right forum, they may go directly to the Board, which may act as it deems appropriate and may also choose to consider a matter directly, regardless of prior Committee review.

D. Matters involving the Board of Directors. When a complaint is referred to the Board or the Board chooses to consider a matter on its own, the Board shall review the complaint and may gather additional evidence or conduct further investigation as described for matters involving the Ethics and Advisory Committee.

The Board will determine the merits of the complaint. If it finds the complaint valid and sanctions are appropriate, it may impose:

- private reprimand;
- public apology, reprimand, or censure;
- reparation when appropriate;
- a recommendation for counseling or similar support;
- a period of probation, or
- suspension from duties or office for up to one year; or
- removal from office (or recommendation for removal) depending on the person's role:
 - for Officers, Instructors, Priests, Novices, or Trustees elected by the Guiding Teacher, removal or recommendation of removal;
 - for the Guiding Teacher, recommendation to Members to remove the Teacher and suspension pending a vote.

The Board of Directors must adhere to the voting procedures specified in the Center's bylaws when deciding to suspend or remove an individual, or when submitting a removal decision to the Members for a vote.