

Karmê Chöling

Code of Conduct Staff, Volunteers, and Residents

View

Karmê Chöling exists to **inspire** people in discovering their own Basic Goodness. By manifesting basic goodness in community and the world, Enlightened Society is created.

- We actively **engage** in meditation, kindness, devotion to service and responsiveness to the changing dynamics of society.
- Karmê Chöling **models** community living in the Shambhala tradition. We offer individual and group meditation retreats, and other contemplative programs.
- We **succeed** by nurturing a sane, caring and well-trained community. This creates a safe and uplifted environment for all to experience.
- We **care** for, grow, and skillfully utilize our resources in a fiscally responsible way.

The Karmê Chöling's Code of Conduct is based on the profound view of basic goodness, manifesting as respect for each person regardless of age, race, gender, ethnic background, national origin, color, appearance, sexual orientation, physical/mental/perceptual capabilities, political beliefs, religious beliefs, social class, immigration status, or occupation. Furthermore, it is each person's right to be free from harassment, intimidation, and discrimination. We aspire to create relationships that are characterized by appropriate action; relationships based on trust, cooperation, openness to differences, good communication, fairness, kindness, and respect.

Enlightened Society is created at Karmê Chöling through each individual's commitment to fostering self-care, care for each other and care for the land. Honoring this Code of Conduct is one of the ways we actively engage with these principles.

Abiding by this code is a requirement for staying at Karmê Chöling.

The Community at Karmê Chöling consists of:

- **Household Community Members consisting of Staff, Residents, and Volunteers:** This is an ongoing group of people who reside at Karmê Chöling as their primary residence while they are here. They constitute a kind of backdrop or container for the Participants who come in for Programs.
- **Participants:** Participants come to Karmê Chöling on a temporary basis, to take part in a Program of specific duration. They are not part of the ongoing household at KCL but are here to focus on the Program, returning to their home after it has finished.

While at Karmê Chöling all staff, residents, participants and volunteers, will adhere to the following:

- **Refrain from unlawful actions (which will be reported to law enforcement officials):**
 - Sexual assault, stalking, or harassment.
 - Physical violence.
 - Financial malfeasance.
 - Theft.
 - Damaging property.
 - Possession of illegal drugs, including prescription medication not prescribed to you.
 - Abuse of children and vulnerable adults.
 - Sexual relationship with an underaged minor.
 - Providing alcohol to anyone under the legal drinking age of 21.
 - Possession or consumption of alcohol by individuals under the age of 21.
 - Violating any other state and federal laws.

- **Refrain from the following actions (which will result in automatically being asked to leave Karmê Chöling):**
 - Possession of firearms.
 - Verbal or emotional abuse including screaming, name-calling, shaming, intimidation, threats, and bullying.
 - Possession of recreational marijuana.

- **Refrain from sexual misconduct, such as:**
 - Sexualizing gestures, verbal innuendo, or invasive personal questioning.
 - Inappropriate touching including touching or grabbing any part of a person's body when that person has indicated that such physical contact is unwanted
 - Continuing to ask a person to socialize when that person has indicated they are not interested
 - Telling sexual jokes or using sexually vulgar or explicit language in the presence of a person known not to welcome such behavior
 - Use of the dharma or other spiritual principles to obtain sexual favors.
 - Sexual relations between a Participant who is at KCL to attend a specific program, and a Household Community Member. (An exception would be if two people were already in a relationship when they entered KCL.)
 - Sexual relationships between staff, residents, or volunteers where there is an imbalance of power. For example:
 - Supervisor and subordinate in a work situation
 - Meditation instructor and the student they are instructing
 - Teacher and student who are involved in a program

(An exception is where two people are already in a relationship when they enter KCL.)

- If Household Community Members wish to enter into relationships with each other, it is recommended that they give themselves at least 1-3 months to settle into their new life at Karmê Chöling and its meditation environment before becoming involved in an intimate relationship with a Housemate.

All sexual misconduct allegations will be reviewed by the Code-of-Conduct Team.

- **Refrain from harmful speech, such as:**
 - False or deceptive speech, including denial of responsibility.
 - Demeaning language with regard to race, gender, class, sexual identity, nationality, age, ethnicity, language, physical ability, and other differences.
- **Refrain from other behaviors that splinter the community, such as:**
 - Discrimination or exclusion with regard to race, gender, class, sexual identity, national origin, age, ethnicity, language, physical ability, or other characteristics.
 - Shunning or otherwise retaliating against those who report harm.
 - Behavior that causes a level of disturbance within the community—such as the effects of unconscious racism or insensitivity to the experiences of others – requiring a formal response.
 - Abuse of privileges or requiring unreasonable special treatment.
 - Distorting and using teachings for personal advantage.
 - Non-disclosure of a conflict of interest.

Process for complaints:

1. Actions that violate this Code of Conduct, should be reported immediately to a member of the Code-of-Conduct Team which is the KCL Dorje Kasung Representative (Kasung Liaison or Rusung), Head of Personnel and Executive Director. This team will review the complaint. If one of the Code-of-Conduct team is the accused, that person will be recused.
2. The complaint will be investigated by information being gathered through:
 - Speaking with the accused
 - Speaking with the complainant
 - Speaking with others who were present when the behavior was said to have occurred
 - Review of written communications that are relevant
 - Investigation and review of any other material or matter that is relevant

3. From the information gathered the Code-of-Conduct Team will determine if a violation to the Code of Conduct occurred.
Whether or not a violation was found to have occurred, a written response will be given to the complainant with findings from the investigation and actions to be taken.
4. If a violation is found to have occurred, one or more of the following actions will be taken:
 - The person who made the violation will be notified through an interview and/or in writing that they violated the Code of Conduct. They will be informed of the consequences of that violation.
 - They will be provided in writing, any remedial steps that need to be taken and/or steps that need to be taken in order to avoid further violations.
 - When possible we work communally to resolve issues amongst community members using conflict resolution methods such as:
 - Face-to-face communication between the parties involved
 - Community meetings involving broader issues that affect the group
 - Mediation
 - Serious violations of this agreement may result in notation to the personnel/resident/participant/volunteer file and/or dismissal.
 - It may be necessary to report the incidence to the Shambhala International Code of Conduct office depending on the severity of the occurrence.
 - Violations of the law will be reported to law enforcement.

This document will be reviewed annually by the Executive Director and HR Director, or if changes in the law or other circumstances warrant earlier review.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Karmê Chöling Code of Conduct while at Karmê Chöling (including all its properties).

Print Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____