

Code of Conduct Policy for Staff, Volunteers, and Speakers

1. Purpose and Foundational Principles

This Code of Conduct is rooted in the fundamental Sikh principles of Seva (selfless service), equality, respect for all individuals, protection of the vulnerable, and promoting social justice and community welfare. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) focused on advancing the teaching and understanding of the Sikh religion, and providing relief, education, training, recreation, leisure activities, advocacy, and advice, particularly for socially or economically disadvantaged people, Khalsa Foundation is committed to upholding these values in all its operations.

The purpose of this Code is to:

- Ensure that all activities contribute to the advancement of the Sikh religion and benefit the public within England and Wales, as well as serve those in need.
- Protect participants, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults, from harm.
- Uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct and promote a culture of kindness, understanding, and mutual respect.
- Ensure a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment for all community members, consistent with Sikh teachings.
- Maintain the financial integrity and reputation of Khalsa Foundation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals associated with Khalsa Foundation, including:

- **Charity Trustees:** Those who manage the affairs of the CIO.
- **Staff:** Individuals employed and remunerated by the CIO.
- **Volunteers and Sevadars:** All persons providing voluntary service to the charity.
- **Speakers and other participants:** Individuals leading or participating in the charity's events and programs.

3. Expectations of Conduct

All staff, volunteers, and speakers of Khalsa Foundation are expected to:

- **Embody the principles of Sikhi:** Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values of compassion, integrity, and mutual respect. Trustees, in particular, are expected to be Amritdhari and complete Amritvela daily, reciting Nitnem and meditating on Naam. They must also exercise their powers in good faith to further the purposes of the CIO.
- **Maintain high standards of personal and professional behaviour:** Act as positive role models within the community. This includes acting with transparency and prioritising the charity and community's interests above personal gain.
- **Protect dignity and well-being:** Ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, particularly children and vulnerable adults.

- **Cultural sensitivity:** Respect diverse backgrounds within the Sikh community and avoid discrimination based on caste, gender, economic status, or any other factor. Promote an inclusive environment that reflects the Sikh principle of equality.
- **Communication:** Use respectful, appropriate, and transparent language. Ensure all communication is age-appropriate and culturally sensitive.
- **Physical and digital interactions:** Maintain appropriate boundaries in all interactions. Never share personal contact details with children or vulnerable participants. Use official communication channels for all charity-related communications and be cautious and professional in all digital interactions. All social media posts must be consistent with the charity's mission and values, accurate, truthful, and ethical.
- **Safeguarding practices:** Always work in sight of other adults and avoid one-to-one situations with children or vulnerable adults. Ensure at least two responsible adults are present during activities where children or vulnerable adults are involved. Any concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult must be reported immediately.
- **Financial integrity and due diligence:** Ensure funds are used solely for charitable objectives and not for criminal activities. All financial transactions must be transparent, and individuals involved in financial decisions must declare and manage any conflicts of interest. Promptly report any suspicious financial activity or large donations from unverifiable sources.

4. Prohibited Conduct

Staff, volunteers, and speakers must **NOT**:

- Develop inappropriate personal relationships with participants.
- Engage in any form of physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct or abuse.
- Use language or behaviour that could be considered offensive, discriminatory, or bullying and harassment.
- Share inappropriate or unapproved materials, including through social media.
- Breach the trust placed in them by the community.
- Engage in any activities that constitute fraud, theft, cybercrime, or money laundering.
- Seek or receive personal financial benefits from the CIO unless explicitly permitted by the CIO's constitution and authorised by the Charity Commission.
- Post content on social media that is defamatory, libellous, slanderous, illegal, or promotes hate speech or discrimination.
- Act in a way that brings disrepute to the Sikh ethos or Khalsa Foundation.

5. Reporting and Accountability

- **Reporting procedures:** Concerns must be reported immediately to a designated contact within Khalsa Foundation. Reports will be handled confidentially and professionally, with the charity committed to thorough and fair investigation of all concerns. Protection and support will be provided to those reporting concerns in good faith.
- **Investigation and resolution:** Khalsa Foundation will investigate reported incidents, aiming for a prompt, fair, and effective resolution. Outcomes will be communicated to the reporting individual.
- **Consequences of misconduct:** Breaches of this Code may result in immediate suspension from Khalsa Foundation activities, disciplinary action, potential referral to statutory agencies (police, social services), or removal from staff, volunteer, or trustee

positions. For trustees, specific grounds for ceasing office include being disqualified, prolonged absence from meetings, or loss of respect/standing in the community.

- **Policy review:** This Code of Conduct will be reviewed regularly by Khalsa Foundation to ensure it remains up-to-date and effective, reflecting legal requirements and best practices.
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