

# **Integral Yoga Institute of San Francisco**

## **Code of Conduct**

### **Preamble**

The Integral Yoga Institute of San Francisco (the “Institute”) is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that fosters spiritual growth. The Institute strives to embody the classical teachings of Yoga as expressed in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and other spiritual teachers. Toward that end, the Institute has adopted a Code of Conduct that reflects its spiritual values and creates a positive environment for all members of our community.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is the protection of all students, staff, teachers and residents associated with the Institute. The standards and procedures embodied in the Code will serve to protect our community by: (1) preventing sexual harassment and other forms of misconduct; (2) providing procedures for the full and thorough investigation of misconduct claims; and (3) ensuring that a violation is remedied promptly, fully and fairly.

In adopting this Code, the Institute is mindful of past allegations of sexual misconduct within our community. The Code of Conduct ensures that future allegations will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and that the perpetrators of such conduct will be appropriately disciplined.

### **Principle 1. Duty to Keep Private Information Confidential**

*All teachers and staff shall maintain the confidentiality of all private information disclosed by students and clients.*

### **Principle 2. Duty of Non-Discrimination**

*Neither the Institute nor its teachers shall discriminate against or refuse to provide teaching or professional help to any student, client or employee based on any protected class such as age, gender (including pregnancy), race, ethnicity, culture,*

*national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status or genetic information. The Institute shall follow all federal, state and local employment laws and is committed to equal employment opportunity.*

### **Principle 3. Duty of Non-Harassment**

*The Institute is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of all forms of harassment, including harassment of employees in the workplace. The Institute shall not permit staff, teachers, employees, independent contractors, students or others within the Institute to harass any other person because of age, gender (including pregnancy), race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, genetic information or any other basis proscribed by law.*

### **Principle 4. Prohibition Against Sexual Misconduct**

*The Institute prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct.*

### **Principle 5. Duty of Ethical Romantic Relationships**

*Teachers shall avoid entering into personal or sexual relationships with students that may result in the impairment of their professional judgment or that may compromise the integrity of their teaching. If a relationship begins to develop, the teacher should bring it to the attention of the Ethics Committee for guidance.*

### **Principle 6. Duty to Use Right Touch**

*Teachers who use touch or hands-on adjustments as a teaching tool shall obtain the express consent from students who may be adjusted to protect their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Teachers shall not touch in sensitive, intimate, or sexually-charged areas of the body and shall initiate touch from a clear, non-sexual intention.*

### **Principle 7. Duty to Organize an Ethics Committee**

*The Institute has organized an Ethics Committee. Its purpose is to receive all complaints regarding violations of the Code of Conduct and to determine whether a violation has, in fact, occurred and the appropriate sanctions. The Ethics Committee also provides guidance to the Institute and teachers regarding ethics*

*questions and compliance with the Code of Conduct.*

### **Principle 8. Duty of Teachers and Victims to Report Sexual or Unethical Misconduct**

*All teachers and staff have a duty to report sexual or unethical misconduct to the Ethics Committee.*

### **Principle 9. Prohibition Against Unauthorized Practice of Medicine**

*Teachers shall not engage in the unauthorized practice of medicine. Teachers shall not recommend treatment, diagnose a condition or suggest that a student should disregard a physician's advice. Teachers shall refer their students to medical doctors or complimentary licensed professionals when appropriate.*

### **Principle 10. Duty to Promote Yoga Equity**

*The Institute and its teachers are committed to a shared responsibility for awareness of and commitment to change the inequities that exist within yoga that result in many people feeling excluded and underrepresented. These may be people who feel excluded from yoga because they are in a Protected Class or due to their body composition and/or physical ability.*

*The Institute and its teachers are committed to taking proactive steps to promote inclusion in yoga to: (1) promote equity; (2) reduce harm to students; (3) honor and leverage cultural differences; and (4) expand diversity and accessibility in all areas of yoga while honoring the integrity of yoga's cultural and historical roots.*

*Teachers shall show sensitive regard for the moral, social and religious standards of all students. Teachers shall avoid imposing their beliefs on others, although they may express their beliefs in a sensitive and appropriate way in teaching a class.*

### **Principle 11. Commitment to Practicing the Teachings of Yoga**

*Teachers and staff members shall strive to follow practices that embody the basic teachings of yogic life and serve as guidance on the spiritual path.*

### **Principle 12. General Guidance for Teachers For Interacting With Students**

*Teachers should consider the following general principles with regard to their interactions with students and their personal practice: committing to the well-being of the students, respecting the diversity of beliefs and opinions of the students, creating collegial relationships with members of the yoga community and maintaining appropriate boundaries with students.*

### **Principle 13. Duty to Avoid Deceptive Marketing**

*In any marketing materials, teachers shall clearly and honestly represent their training, credentials, services, fees or the results from classes, workshops or teacher trainings. Marketing materials shall not contain sensationalistic or exaggerated claim, exploit a student's fears, anxieties or emotions, or create an unjustified claim of results.*

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## **Interpretation of the Principles of the Integral Yoga Institute of San Francisco Code of Conduct**

The interpretation of the Principles of the Code of Conduct set forth below is intended to provide background information and additional guidance about the Principles.

### **Principle 1. Duty to Keep Private Information Confidential**

*All teachers and staff shall maintain the confidentiality of all private information disclosed by students and clients.*

#### **Interpretation of Principle 1**

##### **(a) Introduction**

All teachers and staff shall keep confidential any private information that may be disclosed to them by their students and clients. All private information must be stored or disposed of in a manner that protects its confidential treatment.

Private information means any nonpublic or personal information that a student or client designates as private or that, under the circumstances, should be treated as private. Private information includes personal contact and account information (i.e., name, physical address, credit card information, passwords, and email address), medical and health information, and attendance records. Private information includes personal information that is disclosed by a student or client.

One common way that private information is exposed is by third parties inadvertently overhearing a discussion among teachers or staff about a student. This can be embarrassing or damaging to the individuals who are involved. Teachers and staff must be mindful about discussing private information with anyone. Private information should not be discussed unless it is in a secure and private environment.

A teacher or staff member who receives private information from a student or client may not disclose such information to a third person unless they obtain the written consent of the student or client. However, a teacher or staff member may disclose private information about a student or client without obtaining their consent in the following situations: (a) to comply with the law or the order of a court; (b) to prevent assault, abuse, harm or other danger to the student, client or others; or (c) where the information has already been disclosed to the public.

#### (b) Solicitation of Medical Information About Students-Yoga Practice

It is a common practice in the yoga community to solicit medical information from students in a new student questionnaire. This is a legacy practice that raises many practical and legal problems around protecting medical information, keeping it current, and giving it to teachers so that they can properly use it.

For example, are teachers prepared to keep the students' medical information strictly confidential and implement robust security procedures? Are teachers prepared to require the students to update their condition when it changes? Do teachers actually review the information about their students before class and then use the information to guide them in class? Are teachers trained and able to give individual attention to each student's medical needs within a dynamic class setting?

If a teacher has knowledge of a student's medical condition that was obtained from a questionnaire, it may trigger a higher duty of care to protect the student from harm within an asana class. This may require the students to update their information so that it is current and require the school to create a process through which it provides the information to the teachers before class. The teachers would then use this information to guide the students in class. There are very few schools and teachers who are in a position to do this.

There are statutes, such as HIPAA and HITECH, that require written medical information to be strictly protected and kept confidential, with liability in the event of a breach of these duties. Compliance with these statutes is complex. Solicitation of medical information may provide little benefit to the students and may weaken the legal position of the teachers and the school.

Teachers should not solicit medical information from yoga students unless they are able to properly protect and use such information and to fulfill all legal requirements.

#### (c) Solicitation of Medical Information About Students-Yoga Therapy Practice

The yoga therapists who serve in the Institute's clinic solicit medical information from clients through an assessment process. Any such medical information will be kept strictly confidential and it is protected by HIPPA and HITECH. Should the therapist learn of a client's intention to harm themselves or someone else, they are required by law to report the matter to local authorities. All of such information is protected by HIPPA and HITECH as described above.

### **Principle 2. Duty of Non-Discrimination**

*Neither the Institute nor its teachers shall discriminate against or refuse to provide teaching or professional help to any student, client or employee based on any protected class such as age, gender (including pregnancy), race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status or genetic information. The Institute shall follow all federal, state and local employment laws and is committed to equal employment opportunity.*

### **Interpretation of Principle 2**

#### (a) No Discrimination Based on a Protected Class

Neither the Institute nor its teachers shall discriminate against or refuse to provide professional services to anyone on the basis of any “Protected Class.” A Protected Class is defined by law as age, gender, pregnancy, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, ability or disability, body size, socioeconomic status, genetic information or any other basis proscribed by law.

The Institute is committed to instructing and supporting all students regardless of being in any Protected Class. If the Institute is unable or unwilling (for appropriate reasons) to provide appropriate teaching or other support to a student, the Institute shall make a reasonable effort to find alternate support for the student.

#### (b) No Employment Discrimination

The Institute shall follow all federal, state and local employment laws and is committed to equal employment opportunity. This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship.

Discrimination includes making any employment decision or action on the basis of the person being within a Protected Class. The Institute does not discriminate in its hiring practices and treatment of anyone who is in a Protected Class. The Institute will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities to the extent required by law.

### **Principle 3. Duty of Non-Harassment**

*The Institute is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of all forms of harassment, including harassment of employees in the workplace. The Institute shall not permit staff, teachers, employees, independent contractors, students or others within the Institute to harass any other person because of age, gender (including pregnancy), race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, genetic information or any other basis proscribed by law.*

### **Interpretation of Principle 3**

#### (a) Definition of Harassment

Harassment is a form of employment discrimination that is illegal under federal and state law. The Institute is committed to complying with these laws in the workplace as well as prohibiting any form of harassment that may arise within the Institute.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome verbal or non-verbal conduct, based upon a person's protected characteristic, that (i) denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward the person because of the characteristic and which affects their employment opportunities or their yoga practice, studies or other activities at the Institute; or (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with their work performance, or their yoga practice, studies or other activities at the Institute; or (iii) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment at the Institute; or (iv) has the purpose or effect of creating an environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile or abusive.

Harassment includes epithets, slurs, name calling, negative stereotyping, insults, intimidation, ridicule, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts, denigrating jokes, and display in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group based on their protected characteristic. Harassment may also include online activity such as trolling, stalking, using hate speech or exposing someone's confidential information. It may also include sexual harassment as described below.

Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated minor incidents may not rise to the level of harassment. To be unlawful, the conduct must create an environment or a situation that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people. The prohibition against harassment protects all persons, including students, teachers, staff, interns, volunteers, employees and independent contractors who may be subjected to harassing conduct.

#### (b) Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Sexual harassment is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. An employer may be liable for sexual harassment by its employees where the employer has knowledge of the sexual harassment but fails to take remedial action.



Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (i) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- (ii) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
- (iii) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- (iv) such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include unwanted and unnecessary physical contact; offensive remarks (including unwelcome comments about appearance); obscene jokes or other inappropriate use of sexually offensive language; the display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and unwelcome sexual advances by teachers, students, customers, clients or other visitors to a school when such advances are condoned, either explicitly or implicitly, by the school.

#### (c) Responsibility to Prevent Harassment

The Institute is committed to taking appropriate steps to prevent and stop unlawful harassment. By implementing this Code of Conduct and establishing the Ethics Committee, the Institute is committing to its staff, teachers, employees and independent contractors that harassing conduct will not be tolerated.

The Institute is striving to create an environment in which all persons may feel free to raise ethical concerns and to feel confident that those concerns will be addressed in a confidential and appropriate manner. To that end, the Institute has established an Ethics Committee that will manage the grievance process, provide anti-harassment training to its teachers, employees and staff, and take immediate and appropriate action when a person complains of harassment.

Anyone who has been harassed is encouraged to report the matter to the Ethics Committee. Information about contacting the Ethics Committee may be found here:\_\_\_\_\_.

#### (d) No Retaliation for Reporting Violations of the Code of Conduct

The Institute will not retaliate against any person for having reported or threatened to report harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or violations of our Code of Conduct or for participating in an investigation into any of the foregoing. Anyone who retaliates against a person will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The Institute encourages any person-including employees, non-employees and students-who believe they have been subject to retaliation to inform the Ethics Committee.

The Institute has a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment or sexual misconduct. The Institute encourages anyone who has been victimized by this behavior to report it to the Ethics Committee. The Institute will do everything possible to ensure that no person will suffer retaliation for having reported misconduct.

#### **Principle 4. Prohibition Against Sexual Misconduct.**

*The Institute prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct.*

#### **Interpretation of Principle 4**

##### (a) Definition of Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct is any unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advance including requests for sexual favors, sexual touching, and verbal, visual, or physical conduct that creates a sexually hostile environment. Sexual misconduct is not gender specific. Abusers and their victims may be of the opposite gender or of the same gender. In addition to the foregoing, sexual misconduct may also arise if a teacher engages in conduct that requires or manipulates a student to submit to such conduct to obtain any benefit or privilege relating to the study or teaching of yoga or participating in any activities at the Institute.

## (b) Examples of Sexual Misconduct

Although this list is long, it is not exhaustive. Below are examples of some of the many types of conduct that may constitute sexual misconduct:

### *Verbal Misconduct*

- Unwanted sexual teasing, stories, jokes, remarks, or questions
- Sexual comments, stories or innuendo
- Turning work discussions to sexual topics
- Asking about sexual fantasies, preferences, or history
- Asking personal questions about sexual life
- Sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or looks
- Telling lies or spreading rumors about a person's personal sex life.
- Referring to a person as a doll, babe, sweetheart, honey or similar term
- Repeatedly asking a person out on dates who is not interested
- Unwanted letters, telephone calls, or sending materials of a sexual nature
- Stalking on social media
- Unwanted pressure for sexual favors

### *Non-Verbal Misconduct*

- Blocking a person's path or following
- Giving unwelcome personal gifts
- Displaying sexually suggestive materials
- Making sexual gestures with hands or through body movements

### *Physical Misconduct*

- Hanging around a person

- Hugging, kissing, patting, or stroking
- Touching or rubbing oneself sexually around another person
- Unwanted deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching
- Giving an un-wanted massage
- Touch made with sexual intention
- Promising enlightenment or special teachings or status in exchange for sexual favors
- Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault

(c) No Retaliation for Filing Complaints of Sexual Misconduct.

The Institute shall not retaliate against an employee or anyone else for filing a complaint of sexual misconduct or for cooperating with any investigation of a complaint.

**Principle 5. Duty of Ethical Romantic Relationships**

*Teachers shall avoid entering into personal or sexual relationships with students that may result in the impairment of their professional judgment or that may compromise the integrity of their teaching. If a relationship begins to develop, the teacher should bring it to the attention of the Ethics Committee for guidance.*

**Interpretation of Principle 5**

Romantic relationships between teachers and students are a common source of ethical dilemmas. Because of the innate imbalance of power between a teacher and a student, the question arises as to whether the relationship was founded on consent or on an abuse of power. The conflicts of interest inherent in these relationships may cause other problems. For example, they may damage the integrity of the teaching relationship, may exploit the vulnerability of the student, may confuse the teacher's judgment concerning the student, may be detrimental to the student's well-being, may be the source of toxic gossip, and may damage the reputation of the school. The couple may break-up which could lead to awkwardness or hostility in the community.

Teachers are committed to maintaining impeccable standards of professional integrity and to promoting the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of their students. Teachers recognize the inherent imbalance of power in the teacher-student relationship and recognize that romantic relationships with students have the potential of exploiting the trust of students, creating dependent relationships, and compromising the integrity of the teacher.

Teachers must always maintain professional boundaries in their relationships with students so that the best interests of the students are served. The behavior of all teachers should be focused on serving the spiritual needs and well-being of their students. The teacher-student relationship involves an imbalance of power and any appearance that this imbalance has been exploited for the sexual purposes of the teacher is unethical. Even if the relationship is initiated by the student, it must still be avoided by the teacher.

Teachers should avoid inviting, acting on, responding to or allowing sexual contact or romantic attraction with a student even if the student initiates the relationship. Teachers should ensure that their relationships with students are professional at all times and not open to misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

However, if a romantic attraction does begin to develop with a student, teachers should seek guidance from the Ethic Committee before acting on the attraction. The Ethics Committee will then decide how it wishes to handle the relationship. For example, it may bless the relationship but establish boundaries to prevent conflicts of interest and other problems.

If a teacher has a pre-existing relationship with a student that did not arise from the teacher-student relationship, it should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee so that it can guide the couple in maintaining high ethical standards.

Information about contacting the Ethics Committee may be found here: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Principle 6. Duty to Use Right Touch**

*Teachers who use touch or hands-on adjustments as a teaching tool shall obtain the express consent from students who may be adjusted to protect their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Teachers shall not touch in sensitive, intimate, or sexually-charged areas of the body and shall initiate touch from a clear, non-sexual intention.*

## **Interpretation of Principle 6**

### **(a) Introduction and Right Touch**

Even though touch has been an integral part of teaching protocols in Western postural yoga for a long time, teachers must re-evaluate their approach to the use of touch. Inappropriate touch has become a problem in yoga schools and is often the first step to sexual misconduct. Since we are committed to creating communities of safe spaces and the highest ethical standards, teachers must ensure that all touch is “right touch.” Some students may perceive touch and physical adjustments as violations of their bodily integrity and privacy due to their personal space requirements, cultural background, or other reasons. Teachers must protect the autonomy and dignity of these students.

Teachers should be cautious, purposeful, and respectful when using touch as a teaching tool, recognizing the power for both positive and negative reactions to physical contact. Teachers should initiate touch from a clear, non-sexual intention. Touch must not be used to start a relationship with a student. Teachers must not touch sensitive, intimate, or sexually charged areas of the body,

This is “right touch.”

### **(b) Consent to the Use of Touch**

Students shall be given notice that they have the right to decline touch. Students may (i) decline to receive touch on a particular part of the body, (ii) decline touch or adjustments in a particular pose, and (iii) decline touch altogether.

At the beginning of class, teachers may announce that they intend to use touch as a teaching tool but that any student may decline being touched. Teachers may ask students who may not wish to be touched to raise their hands. A good time to do this is at the beginning of class when a student’s eyes are likely to be down or

closed such as during child's pose or meditation. Some teachers prefer to use "no touch" cards that students can pick up at the front desk and place on their mats. Teachers may also ask each student individually before using touch.

As described above, there are many ways to obtain consent but consent must be affirmative and informed. Students must also be provided with a way to withdraw consent if they wish.

Teachers should keep in mind that they must ask before they touch, even if they know the student and they have received consent in the past. Teachers should understand that a student who has given consent may not wish to be touched in the future for any number of reasons, including they may have had an unpleasant adjustment, felt pain or discomfort, been emotionally triggered or had an intervening medical issue between when he or she last gave consent and the current class or for other reasons that may have caused them to change their mind.

Teachers should be sensitive to the fact that some students have difficulty saying "no." Even if a student said "yes" to the adjustment, their verbal tone or body language may indicate the opposite when the adjustment is being made. The student may recoil or resist the adjustment. If there is a verbal "yes" but if the teacher sees, hears or intuitively cues that indicate "no," the teacher should not adjust the student. Teachers should develop sensitivity to perceiving nonverbal and verbal cues from their students.

Teachers may touch students when necessary to prevent imminent injury. For example, it may be necessary to modify or restrict inversions, back extensions or other asanas where there is significant potential for harm even though the student has rejected touch.

### **Principle 7. Duty to Organize and Administer an Ethics Committee**

*The Institute has organized an Ethics Committee. Its purpose is to receive all complaints regarding violations of the Code of Conduct and to determine whether a violation has, in fact, occurred and the appropriate sanctions. The Ethics Committee also provides guidance to the Institute and teachers regarding ethics questions and compliance with the Code of Conduct.*

### **Interpretation of Principle 7**

The role of the Ethics Committee is to administer the Code of Conduct. The Ethics Committee is comprised of three people who reflect the diversity of the yoga community and who are respected teachers and practitioners. Representatives from the Teacher's Council and the greater sangha will serve on the Committee. If the Institute or a teacher receives an ethical complaint, it must refer the complaint to the Ethics Committee. The Committee's role is to gather the facts and determine if there was a violation of the Code of Conduct. The Ethics Committee will strive to treat the school, teacher and the student fairly and to make an objective, fair and reasonable decision based upon the facts. If there was a violation of the Code of Conduct, the Ethics Committee will then determine the appropriate remedy and communicate its decision to the relevant parties. All of the Ethics Committee's proceedings shall be kept strictly confidential.

Information about contacting the Ethics Committee may be found here: \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Principle 8. Duty of Teachers and Victims to Report Sexual Misconduct**

*All teachers and staff have a duty to report sexual misconduct to the Ethics Committee.*

#### **Principle 8(a). Duty of Teachers and Staff to Report Sexual Misconduct-Grievance Process**

*All teachers and staff shall report to the Ethics Committee if they become aware of credible evidence that another teacher or staff member has violated the Code of Conduct relating to sexual misconduct.*

#### **Interpretation of Principle 8(a)**

Because the yoga profession is a self-regulating body, all teachers and staff have a duty to report incidents of sexual misconduct that violate the Code of Conduct to the Ethics Committee.

We encourage anyone who has been the subject of sexual misconduct or of any other conduct that violates our Code of Conduct to report the incident to our Ethics Committee.



The report should contain the following information:

- Your full name;
- Your email and phone number;
- The name of the person who violated the Code of Conduct;
- A description of the violation of the Code of Conduct;
- The date and location of the violation of the Code of Conduct;
- Names and contact information of any witnesses with first-hand knowledge of the situation; and,
- Any other credible evidence that is available to support the grievance.

In the interest of fairness, all reports must be made by the person who has personally experienced the misconduct as defined in the Code of Conduct. The Ethics Committee will not investigate a matter based upon a third-party report of misconduct.

All reports must be made in good faith based on information the person reporting the incident reasonably believes to be accurate.

The Ethics Committee may request additional information from the person reporting the incident during the course of review of the report.

The Ethics Committee will take appropriate action to ensure compliance with its Code of Conduct. The Ethics Committee will impose any sanctions that it feels are fair, just and reasonable under all of the circumstances.

We will not allow anyone to retaliate against any person for making a report in good faith or providing information in connection with an investigation into an alleged violation.

Any information that a person provides to the Ethics Committee will be treated on a confidential basis. Similarly, any actions that the Ethics Committee may take in response to the report will also be confidential.

## **Principle 8(b). Victims Encouraged to Report Sexual or Unethical Misconduct**

*All victims of sexual or unethical misconduct are encouraged to report any of such incidents to the Ethics Committee.*

### **Interpretation of Principle 8(b)**

Any person who has experienced sexual or ethical misconduct is encouraged to report the incident to the Ethics Committee.

## **Principle 9. Prohibition Against Unauthorized Practice of Medicine**

*Teachers shall not engage in the unauthorized practice of medicine. Teachers shall not recommend treatment, diagnose a condition or suggest that a student should disregard a physician's advice. Teachers shall refer their students to medical doctors or complimentary licensed professionals when appropriate.*

### **Interpretation of Principle 9**

If a teacher is engaged in the unauthorized practice of medicine, he or she may be subject to investigation by state medical boards, and criminal and civil liabilities. Accordingly, all teachers must know whether their teachings may fall within the definition of the unauthorized “practice of medicine” in the state in which they are teaching. Even though a teacher may believe that he or she is not practicing medicine, the teacher cannot be sure without knowing the laws of their home state.

Teachers must have a clear idea of the boundaries that define teaching yoga, alternative modalities, and the practice of medicine. Teachers should recognize that they have a duty to refer students to competent and appropriate practitioners if they do not have sufficient expertise to support the student.

## **Principle 10. Duty to Promote Yoga Equity**

*The Institute and its teachers are committed to a shared responsibility for awareness of and commitment to change the inequities that exist within yoga that result in many people feeling excluded and underrepresented. These may be people who feel excluded from yoga because they are in a Protected Class or due to their body composition and/or physical ability or disability.*

*The Institute and its teachers are committed to promoting equity in yoga. This includes taking proactive steps to promote inclusion in yoga to: (1) promote diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in yoga; (2) reduce harm to students; (3) honor and respect cultural differences; and (4) expand diversity and accessibility in all areas of yoga while honoring the integrity of yoga's cultural and historical roots. This also includes emphasizing the importance of learning, teaching, and practicing yoga with these principles in mind.*

*Teachers shall show sensitive regard for the moral, social and religious beliefs and perspectives of all students. Teachers shall avoid imposing their beliefs on others, while acting in the role of teacher or at the Institute, although they may express their beliefs in a sensitive and appropriate way in teaching a class.*

### **Principle 11. Commitment to Practicing the Teachings of Yoga**

*Teachers and staff members shall strive to follow practices that embody the basic teachings of yogic life and serve as guidance on the spiritual path.*

#### **Interpretation of Principle 11**

The Institute, its staff and its teachers strive to live in harmony with the teachings of yoga in each of our personal and business endeavors, and to provide an environment for ourselves and others that is conducive to the attainment of the goal of Integral Yoga which is the realization of the true Self.

In keeping with these teachings and this goal, and in order to maintain a sacred space for spiritual practice, the Institute requires that all teachers and staff will:

- Commit to practicing yoga as a way of life, which includes adopting the ethical principles, or yamas and niyamas, of yoga.
- For teachers, dedicate themselves to studying, teaching, disseminating, and promoting the art, science and philosophy of yoga and to maintaining high standards of professional competence and integrity. Teachers shall study and stay current with the teaching and practice of yoga in accordance with their traditions.
- Use respectful language in all of our interactions with other people which is free from profanity, vulgarity, insults, prejudice, abusive or crude language, or verbal threats.

- Maintain the pure atmosphere of the Institute by refraining from smoking, using alcohol or recreational drugs, or eating meat, fish, or eggs while in the Institute.
- Dress modestly at all times, including when participating in an asana class or attending an event as a participant.
- Welcome all students regardless of difference of religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, nationality, political affiliation, or cultural background.
- Promote an atmosphere where everyone can discuss their differences and exchange ideas openly, honestly and respectfully.
- Encourage mutual respect, promote civil and congenial relationships.
- Teachers shall commit to practicing yoga as a way of life which includes adopting the ethical principles of yoga.
- Teachers should commit to the highest standards of professional and personal conduct. Teachers shall ensure that their behavior does not give even the appearance of professional impropriety. Any actions which may benefit the teacher to the detriment of the yoga community or an individual student must be avoided to not erode the public trust in the integrity and benefits of yoga.

**Principle 12. General Guidance For Teachers Interacting With Students and Other Teachers**

*Teachers should consider the following general principles with regard to their interactions with students and other teachers:*

Teachers shall treat their students with respect and with regard to their individuality, dignity and privacy.

Teachers shall commit to practicing ahimsa and strive to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of their students.

Teachers shall commit to promoting the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of their students.

Teachers shall create and maintain a safe, clean, comfortable, and conducive environment for the practice of yoga.

Teachers shall conduct themselves in an honorable manner in their relations with their fellow teachers and other wellness practitioners.

Teachers shall strive to collaborate and cooperate with other health care professionals to protect and enhance the well-being of the yoga community and the public.

Teachers shall practice tolerance and acceptance toward other teachers, schools and traditions.

Teachers shall not knowingly solicit another teacher's students.

Teachers must ensure that their behavior in dealing with their students is professional at all times and not open to misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Non-physical gestures, unnecessary physical contact, verbal suggestion or innuendo can easily be construed as abusive or harassing.

### **Principle 13. Duty to Avoid Deceptive Marketing**

*In any marketing materials, teachers shall clearly and honestly represent their training, credentials, services, fees or the results from classes, workshops or teacher trainings. Marketing materials shall not contain sensationalistic or exaggerated claim, exploit a student's fears, anxieties or emotions, or create an unjustified claim of results.*

#### **Interpretation of Principle 13**

Teachers shall provide students and colleagues with honest and clear information about their professional qualifications, their services, teaching arrangements and fees. Teachers shall do this in a way that preserves the student's trust and maintains the dignity and professionalism of the yoga community.

Teachers shall not knowingly advertise any benefits or results of yoga practice that are not supported by generally accepted knowledge within the yoga community or by credible or peer-reviewed research. Advertisements shall not make exaggerated claims about the results or benefits of yoga.

Teachers shall ensure that advertisements for trainings and workshops shall clearly and accurately describe the event, its audience and the cost. The education and experience of the presenter of the event shall be accurately disclosed.

Teacher's Affirmation

I hereby affirm that I have read and understood the Code of Conduct and that I will abide by its provisions.

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Signature

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Date



