

Code of Conduct & Professional Standards of a Kundalini Yoga Teacher

Last Updated: 29 June 2021

This Code of Conduct & Professional Standards of a Kundalini Yoga Teacher is established to advance the evolving profession of yoga teaching and the broader connected community of students, individuals, and businesses through supporting the professional growth and development of Kundalini Yoga schools and teachers. The purpose of this Code is to help Kundalini Yoga teachers to serve in their purest consciousness and to protect our students, communities, and organizations. KRI Certified Teachers of Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan® must be committed to applying strong ethical principles in their professional and personal lives, and this must be understood as intrinsic to their practice and teaching of yoga. This document is an important part of maintaining a safe practice environment for all students. Understanding the ethics and values of a Kundalini Yoga teacher, including the yogic *yams* and *niyams*, will help a teacher to understand the Code more deeply.

Code Principle 1 — Adhere to Applicable Law

Code Principle 1 requires **adherence to applicable law**. Kundalini Yoga teachers, trainers, and trainees (hereafter collectively referred to as “Teachers” or “Kundalini Yoga Teachers”) must abide by all local, state, provincial, national, and federal laws and regulations applicable in their location(s). A Teacher charged with a criminal offense may be placed on Suspension pending the outcome of the criminal proceeding.

Code Principle 2 — Follow the KRI Scope of Practice

Under Code Principle 2, Kundalini Yoga Teachers must **follow the KRI Scope of Practice (SOP)**. The SOP sets out standards of acceptable, recommended, required, and prohibited practices within a Kundalini Yoga teaching environment or event. Teachers must attest that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the SOP.

Code Principle 3 — Follow the KRI Anti-Harassment Policy

Under Code Principle 3, Kundalini Yoga Teachers must **follow the KRI Anti-Harassment Policy**. The policy prohibits harassment (such as trolling, stalking, using hate speech, threatening, intimidating, reporting of false grievances, manipulating, or otherwise harassing in any form or manner) by a Teacher of any person, in person, through online activities, or by any other means. Teachers must attest that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the KRI Anti-Harassment Policy.

Code Principle 4 — Follow the KRI Sexual Misconduct Policy

Under Code Principle 4, Kundalini Yoga Teachers must **follow the KRI Sexual Misconduct Policy**. Teachers must NOT intentionally or negligently cause sexual harm—verbally, physically, or otherwise—to students, employees, peers, other Teachers, or members of the public through any action, including but not limited to actions prohibited by local, state, provincial, national, and federal laws and regulations. Teachers must attest that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the KRI Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Code Principle 5 — Do No Harm

Under Code Principle 5, Kundalini Yoga Teachers must **do no harm**. Teachers must attest that they will take reasonable steps to do no harm and will not intentionally or negligently cause harm to students, employees, peers, other Teachers, or members of the public through any action or inaction.

Code Principle 5 also prohibits, for the purposes of safety, the Teacher from teaching yoga while under the influence of alcohol, drugs (prescription or over the counter), or other intoxicants (e.g. any psychoactive substance that impacts judgment or cognitive function), whether medically prescribed or not. This prohibition applies irrespective of jurisdictional legality or acceptance within other yogic practices and lineages, styles, and methodologies.

Code Principle 6 — Follow the KRI Inclusion Policy

Under Code Principle 6, Kundalini Yoga teachers must not discriminate against *anyone*, and should **actively include all individuals**. Teachers are expected to go beyond basic legal prohibitions against discrimination and, within their scope of practice, actively include, accommodate, and welcome all who wish to be included in the practice of Kundalini Yoga. Teachers must attest that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the KRI Inclusion Policy.

Code Principle 7 — Respect Student-Teacher Relationships

Under Code Principle 7, Kundalini Yoga Teachers must **respect student-teacher relationships**. A Teacher recognizes that the student-teacher relationship has an inherent power imbalance within which the student has an implicit trust in the teacher. A Teacher consciously avoids any relationship with a student that may be exploitative of this power dynamic in any way, i.e., the Teacher will never use such a relationship for personal gain or benefit.

Code Principle 7 includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A. **Romantic and/or Sexual Relationships:** The Teacher will not enter into a new romantic and/or sexual relationship with a student or trainee, even when a student invites or consents to such a relationship.

- B. **Financial or Business Relationships:** All forms of financial involvement with students (other than payment for teaching services) are discouraged and may be subject to disciplinary review. Financial involvement includes but is not limited to loans, gifts, and business partnerships.

Note: If the Teacher and student/trainee/mentee mutually agree to move forward with a romantic/sexual relationship and/or a financial relationship as described in points A and B above, and if the student or trainee desires to continue their practice/study of Kundalini Yoga, the Teacher must assist them in finding an alternate teacher. The Teacher must then allow sufficient time wherein the student ceases classes with the Teacher and establishes studies with the new teacher, before pursuing the desired relationship. This transition period is essential to ensure the power imbalance is no longer at play within the relationship.

- C. **Work Status:** Teachers must abide by all local governing agencies, including but not limited to: Local, state, provincial, national, and/or federal laws and regulations when hiring, working with, or engaging students, employees, or other Teachers. In cases of non-monetary work exchanges, Teachers must commit the details of those agreements to writing to decrease possible tensions and misunderstandings. While *seva* (i.e., non-compensated service) can be a required element of Teacher Training and Aquarian Trainer Academy advancement, in the case of “voluntary” *seva*/non-compensated service no student should be made to feel excluded in any way for declining to participate.
- D. **Physical Corrections:** Adjusting or correcting students and trainees via physical touch is not allowed in the teaching and practice of Kundalini Yoga, whether student consent is obtained or not.
- E. **Consent to Record:** Teachers must not photograph, record video, or capture any other imagery in any other medium, nor use such imagery or such person’s likeness, without the express written consent of the students, trainees, or members of the public who are included in such photography, video, and imagery.

Code Principle 8 — Maintain Honesty and Integrity in Communications

Under Code Principle 8, Kundalini Yoga Teachers must **maintain honesty and integrity in communications**. This principle includes a duty to both refrain from certain activities and to proactively and affirmatively make certain disclosures including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. **Honesty in Communication:** Teachers must not falsely represent their professional yoga history, including but not limited to: education, training, experience, and credentials. Teachers must not plagiarize any copyrighted material and must accurately disclose the source of any teaching, writing, or resource that is not their own. Teachers must not make unsupported or exaggerated claims regarding the effects of yoga.
- B. **Integrity in Communication:** Teachers must have respectful communication with students and maintain appropriate confidentiality. Teachers respect the student’s right

to question. Teachers do not retaliate against a student who has expressed concerns, criticisms, doubts or complaints.

- C. **Cultural Responsibility:** Teachers should be sensitive to cultural differences. Teachers must also understand the existence of, and be sensitive in their actions with regard to, appropriation and commodification of elements from other cultures within contemporary yoga.
 - D. **Individual Responsibility:** Teachers should establish an individual and personalized structure for periodic and ongoing peer mentoring, support, and advice as well as self-reflection, especially around yoga and yoga teaching issues they find challenging.
 - E. **Ethical Responsibility:** A Teacher cultivates the ethical integrity of our culture as Kundalini Yoga teachers by seeking assistance through EPS regarding a teacher involved in what appears to be a breach of the Code of Ethics.
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Reporting, Investigation, and Determination

Reports of possible violations of the Code are made to the Office of Ethics & Professional Standards & Conscious Conflict Resolution (EPS). Investigation and determination of violations of the Code are made by EPS with reference to the KRI Scope of Practice, Anti-Harassment Policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy, Inclusion Policy and any other applicable policies of KRI, SDI, 3HO, and IKYTA. For more information about EPS or to file a complaint, go to epsweb.org.

Attestation

By signing this Code, I attest that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Code and all Policies referenced therein. I understand and agree that I am responsible for compliance with the most current Code and Policies found at epsweb.org. I further understand and agree that in the event of discipline, any final Decision involving Probation, Suspension, or Revocation or other status change may be made public and posted on the EPS website.