

Dharma Rain Zen Center

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy

(Revised for Oregon and Federal Compliance – 2025)

Statement

Dharma Rain Zen Center (DRZC) is committed to providing an environment free from sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and discrimination. As a Buddhist community, we root our conduct in the Precepts, including the Third Precept: *“Do not misuse sexuality.”*

Our intention is to foster a community and workplace where everyone—staff, teachers, practice leaders, volunteers, residents, and community members—feels safe, respected, and able to practice wholeheartedly.

Sexual harassment is unlawful under both Oregon law (ORS 659A.030) and federal law (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).

Any form of harassment or misconduct that insults the dignity of others or interferes with spiritual practice or employment will not be tolerated.

Definitions

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual conduct—verbal, physical, or visual—that affects an individual’s ability to participate fully in spiritual practice, community life, or employment at DRZC. Behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors
- Verbal comments or jokes of a sexual nature
- Displaying sexually suggestive images or materials
- Any employment decision conditioned on submission to or rejection of such conduct (quid pro quo harassment)
- Unwelcome continued romantic interest after being told it is not reciprocated

Any form of coercion or abuse of authority—especially in teacher-student, supervisor-staff, or practice leaders-practitioner relationships—is taken particularly seriously.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct includes any non-consensual, coerced, or exploitative sexual behavior, including:

- Non-consensual sexual contact
- Sexual assault or rape
- Sexual exploitation or manipulation, including misuse of spiritual authority
- Relationships where true consent cannot be given due to imbalance of power, vulnerability, or formal spiritual roles
- Sexual activity with minors or vulnerable individuals

Prohibited Conduct in Community Context

Consistent with DRZC tradition and ethical boundaries:

Sexual or romantic relationships between teachers and their students are prohibited.

Consensual romantic or sexual relationships between practice leaders, officers, residents, or teachers and new members (within their first six months) are prohibited due to vulnerability and power differences.

Anyone in a position of spiritual or institutional authority must maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.

If someone feels at risk of violating or blurring boundaries, both parties are encouraged to pause the teacher-student relationship and seek counsel with a senior teacher.

Who Is Covered by This Policy

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Practice leaders, teachers, officers, and residents
- Volunteers and Dharma School staff
- Contractors
- Sangha members participating in programs, classes, or activities

This broad inclusion reflects the interconnected nature of our community.

Reporting Sexual Harassment or Misconduct

Everyone at Dharma Rain has the right to voice concerns or report harmful behavior without fear.

Reports may be made to:

- The Abbot
- Any transmitted teacher
- Any member of the Ethics Council

At least one option must always be available outside the chain of authority of the alleged harasser or misconduct.

Reports may also be made anonymously or informally.

Retaliation for reporting or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited under Oregon law and Title VII.

Individuals may also contact the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for external support.

Mandatory Reporting for Employees

For this policy, an “employee” means anyone receiving compensation from DRZC (including teachers, administrative staff, maintenance, and contractors).

All employees must report any witnessed or reported sexual harassment or misconduct within 24 hours to one of the designated contacts listed above.

Employees must also clearly inform community members of their reporting obligation before hearing sensitive information.

Employees who report in good faith are legally protected from retaliation.

Employees unsure about how to proceed may confidentially consult the Ethics Council Chair or an external HR support contact before making a formal report.

Investigation Process

All reports of sexual harassment or misconduct will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. Investigations will follow these principles:

- Information is shared only with those who need to know

- Interim safety measures may be put in place, such as schedule adjustments or no-contact directives
- Efforts will be made to conduct investigations in a trauma-informed, compassionate manner
- If misconduct is found, corrective action will be taken, up to and including termination, removal from teaching or leadership roles, or exclusion from community activities

When minors or vulnerable adults are involved, this process will align closely with DRZC's Safe Environment Policy.

Confidentiality

DRZC will make every effort to maintain confidentiality during the reporting and investigatory process.

Information will be shared only when necessary for safety, legal compliance, or a fair investigation.

All investigation records, reports, and related documentation will be retained for at least five (5) years in compliance with Oregon law.

Limits on Nondisclosure Agreements (Oregon Workplace Fairness Act)

DRZC will not require confidentiality, nondisparagement, or no-rehire clauses in any agreement involving sexual harassment or discrimination unless the employee specifically requests such terms in writing.

Employees always retain the right to discuss the conduct they experienced or witnessed.

Distribution of This Policy

A copy of this policy will be provided to all employees at hire and made available upon request.

It will also be included in the Employee Handbook and posted in an accessible location or online resource area.

Support for Complainants and Community Members

DRZC will offer pastoral care, referrals to counseling, and supportive resources to anyone affected by harassment or misconduct. Trauma-informed principles will guide our responses.

Glossary of Roles

- Practice Leaders: Priests and Lay Teachers who have received Denkai transmission
 - Teacher: Any transmitted teacher authorized to give private interviews
 - Employee: Anyone receiving compensation from DRZC
 - Volunteer: Any person serving without pay
 - Community Member: Any individual participating in DRZC programs
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Policy Oversight and Review

The Board will review this policy every three years to ensure alignment with legal requirements and best practices.