

SEXUAL AND OTHER HARASSMENT POLICY

INTEGRAL YOGA MINISTRY 11.18.25

Objective:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a positive environment for ministers, seminarians, staff, volunteers, and guests, one that reflects the spiritual values of the Integral Yoga Satchidananda VA organizations. Ministers and seminarians are expected to create and maintain a safe and sacred environment free of any type of harassment. Furthermore, our Harassment/Sexual Harassment Policy educates in how to prevent harassment, and it provides procedures for the prompt and thorough investigation of harassment claims in order to ensure that violations are remedied immediately and fully.

Scope:

This policy applies to all ministers and seminarians and their interactions with employees, independent contractors, volunteers, staff, presenters, students, and guests. The Harassment/Sexual Harassment Policy as it pertains to ministers and seminarians will be administered by the Ministry Board.

Policy Statement:

With the goal of creating and maintaining an environment that fosters healing and personal growth, it is the policy of Integral Yoga Ministry that no one should be harassed on the basis of race, religious creed, ethnic background, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Such conduct is unacceptable, as is retaliation against anyone who has made a complaint regarding such conduct or who has cooperated with an investigation into allegations of harassment. We take complaints of harassment seriously. Our zero-tolerance policy for violations means that in every instance of harassment all parties involved will be responded to within 30 days, recognizing that investigations may take longer.

Violation of this policy will involve appropriate consequences.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination and is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances or coercion for sexual favors, unwanted touching, or any conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to requests is made as a condition of employment or pre-requisite for ministerial services, either explicitly or implicitly, or when rejection of such advances is used negatively as a basis for any decision. This applies to paid employees or volunteers.
- Such advances or coercion has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or feelings of safety or participation in Ministry programs, by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive work environment

While sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include but are not limited to:

- a. unwanted sexual advances whether or not they involve physical touching;
- b. sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding an individual's sex life, comments on an individual's body, or comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- c. sexual or discriminatory displays or publications linked to any minister or seminarian activity, including but not limited to sexually suggestive objects, pictures, videos or cartoons;
- d. unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments;
- e. unsolicited inquiries into an individual's sexual experiences;
- f. unwelcome discussion of an individual's sexual activities.

Discipline

Any individual within the scope of this policy who violates this policy is subject to appropriate discipline. If an investigation leads to a finding that this policy has been violated, the individual who has violated the policy will face disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Persons who violate this policy may also be subject to civil damages or criminal penalties.

Procedures

Employees, Volunteers, Students, and Guests

Anyone, including ministers, seminarians, those who participate in ministerial services and activities, employees, volunteers, students, or guests who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual or any form of harassment or any unwanted sexual attention from a minister or seminarian should:

- keep a written record of the date, time, and nature of the incident(s) and include the names of any witnesses;
- report the incident to the Ministry Board.

Please note:

- All incidents of sexual or any form of harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct should be reported to the Ministry Board.
- All Integral Yoga organizations, including the ministry, must create an environment in which all persons feel safe and comfortable in reporting such an incident.
- Board members, ministers and seminarians who knowingly allow or tolerate sexual harassment are in violation of this policy and will be subjected to disciplinary actions and/or potential removal.
- Publicizing information about alleged harassment or filing a reckless or frivolous complaint will be considered misconduct, and the individual committing such acts will be subject to disciplinary or corrective action.

Ministry Board

The board is responsible for:

- Providing the complainant with the necessary forms to file a complaint with the Standards and Disciplinary Committee (SDC) and return the form within 14 days.

- After receiving the complaint, the SDC will pursue an investigation within 30 days.
- Recommendations for resolution will be provided to the complainant and the accused.
- Potential actions may include mediation and exploring other means of resolving sexual harassment complaints.
- The SDC will provide a thorough report of the investigation to the board for advisory input.
- The accused can request an appeal as long as they have additional information to support the appeal.

Filing a Complaint

Anyone who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment may file a complaint with the Ministry Board. Complaints should be filed as soon as possible following the incident of alleged harassment/sexual harassment. Any question regarding this policy or about a specific situation should be brought to the Ministry Board.