



# Bhaktivedanta Manor

Founder Acharya – His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
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## KEY POLICIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering at the International Society for Krishna Consciousness Bhaktivedanta Manor (ISKCON BM). Our greatest resource is you, our volunteers and employees. We strive to provide an environment where volunteers and employees have the opportunity to engage enthusiastically in the process of devotional service as prescribed by our Founder Acharya, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

ISKCON BM specifically retains the right to amend any of the policies contained in and referred to in this document. Any updates or amendments will automatically supersede all older information contained within that policy and you will receive notifications from time to time about these changes

The information contained in this document is a summary of the detailed information contained in the ISKCON UK National Employee Handbook. You will be able to access the Handbook by contacting ISKCON BM's Human Resources Department.

Please ensure you are familiar with and act according to the guidelines set out in the following policies:

#### 1. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The right to privacy is essential to ensure that there is trust and confidence and that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. ISKCON BM recognises that the principle of confidentiality should extend to any information about the internal affairs of the Charity and should be adhered to by trustees, staff and volunteers.

Any volunteer or employee has the right to expect that any information disclosed by them to ISKCON BM will be used for the purpose for which it was given and will not be released without their consent. In certain circumstances it may be necessary or appropriate to divulge information and so breach confidentiality. In such an emergency prior permission is not necessary, but the Managing Director must be informed as soon as possible.

The confidentiality policy will apply to all personnel records for staff, donors and volunteers including information obtained through recruitment procedures.

Breach of confidence is likely to result in disciplinary action. Trustees, staff and volunteers should also be aware that, regardless of any action taken by ISKCON BM, a breach of confidence could result in a civil action for damages under the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

ISKCON BM is committed to promoting equality and diversity, to pursuing non-discriminatory policies and practice and eliminating unfair discrimination on grounds of age, gender, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, class, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, political belief or disability including special needs.

ISKCON BM undertakes and promotes equality and diversity in interviews and in employment, ensuring all staff have rights and responsibilities in relation to the promotion of equality. These rights and responsibilities come from ISKCON BM's legal duties in promoting equality.

No employee, volunteer of ISKCON BM will be treated less favourably on the grounds of age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, class, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, political belief or disability including special needs.

## **3. BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

All volunteers and employees have a personal responsibility to promote equality by not discriminating against any person; and must treat people with respect. Harassment on grounds of gender, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age or because a person has undergone or is undergoing gender reassignment is unlawful. They are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

ISKCON BM regards harassment and bullying as unacceptable. ISKCON BM believes that all staff and volunteers have a right to be treated with dignity and respect. Acts of harassment or bullying may be dealt with under ISKCON BM's disciplinary procedures, and may be classified as gross misconduct should a case prove to be sufficiently serious.

The aim of this policy is to eliminate all forms of offensive behaviour, to raise awareness of the effects of such behaviour on individuals and the working environment and to promote a climate in which staff and volunteers feel able to raise complaints of harassment or bullying without fear of victimisation.

### **Formal Procedures**

Members of staff who wish to refer their complaint to the formal stage should do so through the Grievance Procedure. This is contained in the ISKCON UK National Employee Handbook.

## **4. DATA PROTECTION POLICY**

ISKCON BM processes personal data regarding staff, donors and volunteers strictly in accordance with its Data Protection Policy (available on request), the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018. We respect the privacy of every individual and will only use your personal data as stated in our privacy notice available at [http://www.bhaktivedantamanor.co.uk/home/?page\\_id=12783](http://www.bhaktivedantamanor.co.uk/home/?page_id=12783)

ISKCON BM's privacy notice sets out the types of data we process about you, the reasons for processing your data, the lawful basis that permits us to process it, how long we keep your data for and your rights regarding your data.

We may use photographic images of staff, clients and volunteers in ISKCON BM's publications and on the ISKCON BM website for fundraising, marketing or promotional purposes. Please let us know if you object to the use of your photographic images or video footages you may appear in. The videoing and photography of children is set out in '*ISKCON's Policy for the Safe Use of Children's Photographs and Filming Footage*'. Please ensure the child's parent/ ward completes the consent form before you use the child's photograph or film footage in any ISKCON BM publications or post to any social media sites.

## **5. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

ISKCON BM is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs in a responsible manner taking into account the requirements of the Charities Commission.

Normally any concern about a workplace situation should be raised with the employee's or volunteer's immediate manager. However, it is recognised that because of the seriousness and sensitivity of some issues, together with the knowledge of who the employee or volunteer thinks may be involved in wrongdoing, this may be difficult or even impossible.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives legal protection to employees again being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns provided that they are disclosed under procedures identified in the Act. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. However, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows malpractice/wrongdoing within the Charity then there should be identified procedures to enable the individual to disclose the information without fear or reprisal, and it may be necessary for the disclosures to be made independently of line management.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy is designed to enable employees or other members of ISKCON BM to raise concerns or disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice.

A number of policies and procedures are already in place including grievance, discipline, complaints and guidelines for dealing with harassment. This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest and may (at least initially) be investigated separately but might then lead to the using of such procedures. These might include:

- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Dangers to health and safety of the environment
- Criminal activity
- Miscarriage of justice
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal any of the above.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive list and any matters raised under this policy will be considered seriously.

## 5. SAFEGUARDING

ISKCON BM is involved in working with or supporting children, young people and vulnerable adults in a wide variety of ways. Please refer to the 'Festival Safeguarding Policy Statement' for important guidance on procedures to adopt in the event that you suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm; and how ISKCON BM provides protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in our festivals. If your role involves working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, we will carry out an eligibility check to determine whether you will be required to undergo a DBS check as part of our policy on safeguarding.

### Under 18-year-old Volunteers

**Under 15:** Must at all times remain with their parents or guardians when volunteering at ISKCON BM. Alongside their parents, they may be engaged in the following services (in the following low hazard areas):

- The Welcome area
- Krishnaland
- Prasadam area (handing out plates, water but not handling hot foodstuffs)
- Bazaar
- Goshalla Farm Stall
- Japa Tent

If a parent or guardian arranges for their child to be with another person (over 18 years of age), the parent will still remain responsible for their child.

Consent from a parent or a guardian must be obtained before a person under the age of 18 starts volunteering. Consent is obtained once the parent or guardian signs the Volunteer Agreement on behalf of the under 18-year-old volunteer.

The following applies, depending on the age of the Volunteer:

### Aged 15 and over

Children aged 15 and over, but under school leaving age, are allowed to volunteer after attending the mandatory Volunteer Training (in the low hazard areas listed above including additional areas such as the Main Tent, Temple Queuing Team, Bakery and Information Area) for 2 hours per day on a school day or 12 hours per week during school term. They are allowed to volunteer 8 hours per day on a non-school day and 35 hours per week during school holidays. They are allowed to volunteer 2 hours on Sundays. In addition, these hours must be between 7am and 7pm and must be generally in school hours. They need to be given an hour break if volunteering for more than 4 hours. Also, a child under the school leaving age must have at least a two-week break from any form of activities a year. Volunteering cannot be a reason for being absent from school. The above will not apply if individuals falling within this age group have obtained parental or guardian consent to volunteer after 7pm; and the parent or guardian is present on the premises.

### Note:

- Under 16s cannot have a DBS check carried out on them and are prohibited from making house to house collection.
- 16-17 years old have no restriction on the number of hours they volunteer, as long as they remain in part time training or education until they are 17

## 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Never do anything that could endanger yourself or any other person.
- Be aware of your own limits and please explain to your team leader or manager if you cannot undertake a task.
- Ensure that you are aware of and follow all the health and safety procedures.
- Protective clothing and other equipment, which may be issued for your protection and because of the nature of your job, must be worn and used at all appropriate times. Failure to do so could be a contravention of your health and safety responsibilities. Once issued, it is your responsibility to maintain and carefully handle all protective wear and/or equipment.
- You should record all accidents and injuries, no matter how minor, in the accident book. Please ask your team leader for details of the location of the accident book.
- You must ensure that you are aware of our fire and evacuation procedures and the action you should take in the event of such an emergency. You will be informed about the various assembly points during the Volunteer's Training.

### Hygiene

- You must shower and wear clean clothes.
- You must wash your hands immediately before handling food and after using the toilet.
- Any cut or burn on the hand or arm must be covered with an approved visible dressing.
- Head coverings, overalls and uniforms where provided, must be worn at all times.
- If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness, or have a bowel disorder, boils, skin or mouth infection you will have to inform your team leader if you are scheduled for kitchen service.

## 7. DRIVERS POLICY

### Guidelines for volunteer drivers

These are to ensure the safety of you and your passenger. In most cases, drivers will be required to have an advanced DBS clearance (Criminal Records check) which we will arrange in certain cases. We will require you to adhere to the following if you drive for ISKCON BM:

- a) Licence** - A full driving licence is required (not provisional). You will need to submit your licence for inspection in order to ensure it is up to date. Certain endorsements may mean that you will not be able to carry ISKCON BM clients.
- b) Vision** - If you are required to wear glasses or contact lenses while driving, You must do so.
- c) Fitness to drive** - Please remember that many factors can affect your ability to drive, medication, tiredness, illness. If you do not feel able/ well enough to drive; don't drive.
- d) Checks on your vehicle** - Ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy. The Highway Code sets out the regular checks that drivers must carry out on the roadworthiness of their vehicle: brakes, lights, steering, tyres etc.
- e) MOT** - You must hold a valid MOT certificate
- f) Seat Belts** - You must wear seat belts, unless you are exempt (see Highway Code)
- g) Insurance** - Ensure that you have informed your Insurance Company of what you are doing. See letter to insurers.
- h)** All accidents and incidents must be reported to ISKCON BM.

- i) In the case of a medical emergency, call an ambulance immediately and do not move passenger. First Aid should only be applied if you have the relevant training and only if there is a risk to life.
- j) If you are involved in an accident with another vehicle, you will need to obtain details of the other driver –registration, insurance details, name address etc. You also have a duty to provide these details to the other party.

## **8. GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

### **The Bribery Act 2010**

In accordance with the provisions of the legislation, no member of ISKCON BM's staff, consultants or advisers, nor its Board of Trustees, must offer or accept any gift, hospitality or other inducement which could be construed as being offered or accepted in the belief that some financial or other material advantage could be gained.

Any queries on how the policy will operate or any doubt about whether hospitality or a gift be accepted or offered should be raised with the volunteer coordinator.

## **9. USEFUL INFORMATION**

### **Timekeeping**

Inform your team leader or manager as soon as you are able if you cannot come in at a scheduled time. Your contribution is of great value to us and we may need to make alternative arrangements when you are not able to do so.

### **Use of telephone and computers**

- Volunteers are permitted to use ISKCON BM's telephones and computers to undertake the Charity's work; however premium rate or overseas calls is not permitted, though your team leader may grant special permission if the situation is of extreme emergency and other viable arrangements cannot be made.
- If you use the internet you must not do so in a manner that could expose ISKCON BM to expense, criminal liability or be in conflict with our policies and principles.

## **10.INSURANCE**

- While undertaking any **agreed** tasks as a volunteer for ISKCON BM you will be covered by ISKCON BM's insurance policy in respect of public liability and personal accident.
- It is also in your interest to check with your insurance company that you will be covered for any damage to your own vehicle while undertaking driving tasks for ISKCON BM.

## **11.TRAINING**

- All volunteers are required to undertake mandatory Volunteer Training.
- Some volunteer tasks have a specific training requirement which must be completed within a specified time frame. If the training requirement is not met then the volunteer may have to be reallocated until it is completed.

## **12.CONDUCT DETRIMENTAL TO ISKCON BM'S INTERESTS**

- When you undertake work on behalf of ISKCON BM you must not say or do anything that is contrary to ISKCON BM's principles, ethos and policies.
- Volunteers should not act in any way that is detrimental to the interests of ISKCON BM, its' donors, other volunteers, employees or which is damaging to the charity's public

image. This includes conduct away from the temple premises when you are representing ISKCON BM and also at functions arranged by ISKCON BM.

- ISKCON BM strictly operates a no smoking policy. This means that smoking is against Vaishanava principles and is prohibited on ISKCON BM property or when staff and volunteers are involved with ISKCON BM activities.

#### **14. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

If a volunteer has a grievance, they should report this in the first instance to their team leader. If the matter is not resolved they should report it to a more senior member.

All grievances must be recorded in writing.