

PRISTINE AWARENESS: FOUNDATION FOR BUDDHIST PRACTICE

Health and Safety Policy

As a Buddhist organisation operating in Australia, we follow the ethical teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha. Therefore we expect all leaders, members and attendees at all of our events and activities to act in accordance with the Buddhist Precepts.

This Health & Safety policy is a direct outflowing of the first precept:

- To abstain from causing harm or killing.

The Buddha also required his followers to comply with local laws. Accordingly the expectations of Pristine Awareness with regard to health and safety, as a fully inclusive organisation based on contemporary Australian standards and best practice law, are set out in detail on the following pages.

As Buddhists, we commit to abstain from intentionally causing harm or indirectly causing harm through a lack of care, caution, or concern. This means that we must take a proactive approach and apply a range of harm-prevention strategies.

Required Actions

The following harm-prevention strategies are **required** of all leaders, members and attendees at all of our events and activities.

Abstaining from Prohibited Activities

For the wellbeing of all leaders, members and attendees the following activities are prohibited at all of our events and activities:

- Smoking
- Vaping
- Drinking alcohol
- Illicit drug use
- Reckless or dangerous behaviour

Reducing Viral Infection Risk

Our main harm prevention strategy is preventing the spread of potentially fatal viruses.

Viruses such as COVID-19, Influenza, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), and others cause thousands of deaths each year. Vulnerable people, such as those with disabilities or those aged over 60, are at a much higher risk of serious illness or death due to viral infection.

These viruses can be transmitted through respiratory droplets, smaller airborne particles (aerosols), direct physical contact with an infected individual, and indirectly through contaminated objects and surfaces. Aerosols containing virus can remain airborne for several hours.

Given the risks associated with viral infection and the fact that more than 60% of the Pristine Awareness Sangha are in a high-risk category due to age, disability, or chronic illness, we **require** all leaders, members and attendees at all of our events and activities to practice:

Staying home when sick: Those who have flu-like symptoms of any kind or suspect that they have been exposed to a virus in the previous seven days should not attend in-person events.

Physical distancing: Also referred to as ‘social distancing’, this refers to the requirement that people distance themselves from others. Keeping a physical distance of at least 1.5 meters between people, wherever possible, is one of the ways to reduce the risk of viral infection. The more space between people, the harder it is for the viruses to spread.

Hand washing: Good hygiene requires everyone to wash their hands regularly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds and dry them completely, preferably with clean, single-use paper towels. If paper towels are unavailable, other methods such as electric hand dryers can be used, however, hands will still need to be dried completely.

Everyone must wash and dry their hands:

- before and after eating
- after coughing or sneezing
- after going to the toilet, and
- after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.

An alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient must be used as per the manufacturer’s instructions when it is not possible to wash and dry hands.

Good hygiene also requires everyone at the workplace to, at all times:

- cover their coughs and sneezes with their elbow or a clean tissue
- avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth
- dispose of tissues hygienically, e.g. in closed bins
- regularly wash and dry their hands completely
- wash body, hair (including facial hair), and clothes thoroughly every day, and
- have no intentional physical contact, for example, shaking hands and patting backs.

Encouraged Actions

The following harm-prevention strategies are **encouraged** for all leaders, members and attendees at all of our events and activities.

Mask-Wearing: Given the risks associated with viral infection and the fact that more than 60% of the Pristine Awareness Sangha are in a high-risk category due to age, disability, or chronic illness, we **encourage** all leaders, members, and attendees at all of our events and activities to wear masks. Mask-wearing is proven to significantly reduce viral spread. Masks can protect people from inhaling infectious viruses. Masks are a critical part of protecting against COVID-19, Influenza, and RSV infection. If the person wearing the mask is unaware that they are infected with a virus, wearing a mask will reduce the chances of passing the virus on to others. Wearing masks helps prevent infectious people from spreading viruses, such as the COVID-19 virus and Influenza, to others and thus causing them significant harm (including the risk of death).

Please note that mask-wearing is not expected but is encouraged mainly for those in high-risk categories.