

BURMA EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP
CODE OF CONDUCT

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Burma Education Partnership: Code of Conduct

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations that the Burma Education Partnership (BEP) has of all Directors and Volunteers. It is based on the principal that the BEP is dedicated to providing a high quality service to our beneficiaries.
- 1.2** The Code of Conduct provides a general framework for the work of the BEP. It does not look at every area in detail but provides clear guidelines on the way the BEP should operate. It should be read in conjunction with all other current policies.
- 1.3** The Code of Conduct is a key policy and all Volunteers and Directors are expected to work within the guidelines and principles set out below. Any infringement of the Code of Conduct may result in a person ceasing to volunteer for the BEP.
- 1.4** For the purpose of this policy, the word ‘Volunteer’ is used to mean all people who carry out voluntary work for the charity such as teaching, undertaking presentations and attending meetings and carry out an activity which requires the interface with our beneficiaries, other organisations or the public rather than those members who take a non active role in the charity. Volunteers may be a Director of the charity or volunteer without Director status. The word ‘Director’ is used within the policy when the capacity of the role as a Director is relevant.

2.0 WORKING TOGETHER

2.1 Equality

The BEP is committed to ensuring equality for volunteers and people assisted by the charity regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation.

2.2 Support and relationships

All volunteers should work together in an open and accountable way. People should be polite and supportive in dealing with each another. Feedback is encouraged by Directors provided that it is done constructively. Everyone should feel free to ask questions, be listened to and receive an answer. Personal abuse of volunteers and Directors is not acceptable.

Any volunteer who has a concern about another volunteer should raise this concern in a constructive way. If the matter can not be resolved informally then it must be raised with a Director who will investigate the matter in accordance with the Grievance and Complaints procedure.

2.0 WORKING TOGETHER (continued)

2.2 Support and relationships (continued)

Should a Director have any concern about the conduct of a volunteer then this must be brought to the attention of the board of Directors immediately and the matter shall be investigated under the Grievance and Complaints Procedure.

2.3 Confidentiality

Personal information about volunteers with the BEP should generally remain confidential.

2.4 Attendance

If a Volunteer cannot attend a meeting or event, apologies should be sent in good time to a Director or a Chair of a group.

2.5 Resources

All resources required for volunteering should be provided by the volunteer apart for certain items provided for Health and Safety identified in the Health and Safety Policy as being provided by the BEP or otherwise stated.

2.6 Politics and Religion

The BEP is a non-party political and charitable company and not affiliated to any organised religion. No one should promote their particular religious belief or political views to volunteers or to the Burmese during working as a volunteer for the BEP and volunteers should respect the particular beliefs of our beneficiaries.

2.7 Finance

If any volunteer receives a gift in connection with volunteering with the BEP, this should be notified in writing to the Treasurer within 14 days of receipt who will make a record of the gift.

2.8 Bullying

Bullying of volunteers, our beneficiaries and any other charity partner by volunteers is totally unacceptable. Complaints shall be made to a Director and the matter shall be investigated in accordance with the company complaints procedure.

3.0 WORKING WITH OUR BENEFICIARIES

3.1 General issues

The BEP provides assistance and support to a number of Burmese ethnic groups. Volunteers and Directors should treat the Burmese with dignity and respect.

The BEP recognises that volunteers may find themselves in a privileged position and with influence. This position must always be used in the best interests of the Burmese people.

Our beneficiaries have a right to complain about our services and have their complaints treated seriously. Personal abuse by volunteers is not acceptable.

Volunteers should dress and behave discretely whilst working with our beneficiaries.

3.2 Confidentiality

All personal information about individual beneficiaries is confidential to the organisation. Such information must not be disclosed to any other individual or organisation outside the BEP except where the individual concerned gives his/her consent. For example, consent is required prior to using a testimony in the media, BEP or other publications and materials.

3.3 Relationships between Volunteers, Directors and our beneficiaries

The BEP recognises that staff may have contact with individual beneficiaries in a personal capacity as friends and as colleagues. Volunteers should take care to avoid any conflict of interest. Complete transparency about the nature of the relationship is expected of any volunteer in these circumstances.

Starting any form of sexual relationship except in conjunction with a genuine relationship is unacceptable.

3.4 Gifts and cash

No volunteer may accept money from our beneficiaries or ask them to carry out either unpaid or paid work for them.

The donation and receipt of small gifts is considered acceptable if given and received freely as a genuine gift and without obligation and they are of appropriate proportion.

3.0 WORKING WITH THE BURMESE

3.4 Gifts and cash (continued)

All gifts received and given shall be notified in writing to the Risk Manager who will record them.

The giving cash by volunteers to individuals is discouraged but making a donation through the BEP is encouraged.

3.5 Aggression, violence, drink and drugs

Any form of aggression or violence toward our beneficiaries will not be tolerated. It is inadvisable to consume alcohol whilst working in camps unless invited to do so by Burmese friends. In any circumstances, consumption should be modest and discrete. Drunkenness is unacceptable.

Any volunteer found to be involved with the use or distribution of drugs will be required to terminate their involvement with the charity immediately.

4.0 WORKING WITH EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

4.1 General issues

The BEP has a high profile in Thailand and the UK. The charity depends upon working in partnership with many other organisations and bodies to effectively deliver education support and communicate with the general public.

The area of work is extremely sensitive. It is therefore important that a volunteer with the BEP conducts themselves professionally when meeting with any external individual or organisation or when representing the BEP.

4.2 Working relationships

A volunteer with the BEP who has contact with people working in other organisations is expected to act professionally. Volunteers should not criticise the work of the BEP and are expected on all occasions to act in accordance with the BEP policies, aims and objectives and promote the work of the BEP.

4.3 Dealing with the media

All media enquires should be referred immediately to the Chair (Director).

5.0 GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINTS

5.1 The following procedures do not apply to issues relating to child abuse or neglect. All concerns relating to child abuse or neglect must only be reported to the Child Protection Manager and will be dealt with in accordance with procedures within the Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

5.2 Reporting

All grievance, complaints and concerns about volunteers, Directors, our beneficiaries, Partners and others shall be taken to a Company Director. Similarly, should a Director have any concern whatsoever about a volunteer, then this should be addressed in the same way.

The Director receiving the complaint or with a concern should prepare a written summary of the nature of the complaint / concern, the matters surrounding the issue and a suggested resolution and issue to the Chair.

5.3 Determining method of resolution

The Chair should decide whether the matter can be dealt with at the next tabled Directors meeting, whether an urgent additional meeting shall be called or whether the matter can be dealt with without a meeting. The Chair should circulate the complaint / concern summary to the Directors by email or in writing so that all Directors have an opportunity to comment.

5.4 Recording

All complaints and grievances shall be recorded in writing, together with the response of Directors and the process for resolution, and kept within Complaints File.

All complaints which are resolved out of a meeting should be reported at the following Director meeting.

5.5 Whether considered in or out of a meeting, Directors shall review each complaint and grievance in accordance with company policies. Should it be found that a Volunteer has acted not in accordance with policy or a general behaviour which the company believes to be unacceptable, showing disregard for or in a way which puts the company and our beneficiaries at risk, then the volunteer shall cease volunteering.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

6.1 Approval

A copy of the approved and current Code of Conduct will be sent to all existing and new volunteers.

6.2 Review

The Code of Conduct will be reviewed every other year by the Risk Manager (Director), issued to the Directors for consultation, approval and adoption and made available to Volunteers, members and our insurers.