

Teachers' Code of Conduct



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PO Box 7

Semaphore SA 5019

ABN 56 101 826 779

Table of Content

1.	Professional Ethics of an Iyengar Yoga Teacher	3
2.	Responsibility to Students and Community	4
3.	Personal Responsibilities of an Iyengar Yoga Teacher	5
4.	Teachers Code of Conduct and the IYA's Complaint Handling Procedure	6



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This Teachers' Code of Conduct has been endorsed by the Board of Directors of Iyengar Yoga Australia (IYA).

It is applicable to certified Iyengar Yoga teachers and trainee Iyengar Yoga teachers in Australia.

All Iyengar Yoga teachers have an obligation to be familiar with:

- a. this Teachers' Code of Conduct;
- b. the IYA Complaints Handling Procedure;
- c. the IYA Statement of ideals; and
- d. the IYA policy on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination.

This Teachers' Code of Conduct is based on the *yamas* and *niyamas* of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali at the request of BKS Iyengar.

The *yamas* and *niyamas* and their English translations are shown in parentheses where appropriate.

1. Professional Ethics of an Iyengar Yoga Teacher

Iyengar yoga teachers and trainees are required to:

- 1.1 Dedicate themselves to studying, teaching, disseminating and promoting the art, science and philosophy of yoga according to the teachings and philosophy of BKS Iyengar, and to maintaining high standards of professional competence and integrity. (*Tapas*, ardour)
- 1.2 Study and stay current with the teaching and practice of yoga as taught by BKS Iyengar and the Iyengar family. This can be done by studying directly with the Iyengar family. This can also be done by participation in Association activities and



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studying with certified Iyengar Yoga teachers of at least one higher level of certification.
(*Svadhyaya*, study of the self)

- 1.3 Accurately represent their education, training, and experience. (*Satya*, truthfulness)
- 1.4 While teaching, not to mix the techniques of Iyengar Yoga with any other systems of yoga, or with any other discipline. (*Aparigraha*, non-coveting)
- 1.5 Refrain from being publicly critical of other Iyengar yoga teachers' character. (*Ahimsa*, non-violence)

2. Responsibility to Students and Community

Iyengar Yoga teachers are required to:

- 2.1 Be truthful. (*Satya*, truthfulness)
- 2.2 Welcome and treat equally and to the best of one's ability any student regardless of race, gender, religion, national origin, sexual preference, or physical disability. (*Ahimsa*, non-violence). It is nevertheless the right of a teacher to decline to teach a student if the reasons are appropriate and just.
- 2.3 Teach responsibly and with compassion having regard to their own limitations and those of their students. It is a breach of the Teachers' Code of Conduct to teach in a poor or dangerous manner. (*Ahimsa*, non-violence)
- 2.4 Treat students with respect, and honour the trust placed in them as a teacher. This is especially important when providing physical adjustments to students. Teachers need to consider the necessity and intention of performing any adjustment, as articulated in "Basic Guidelines for Teachers of



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Yoga". (*Svadhyaya*, study of the self, *Ahimsa* non-violence)

- 2.5 Abide by the IYA policy on harassment, bullying and discrimination. (*Ahimsa*, non-violence, *Bramacharya*, continence, *Aparigraha*, non-coveting)
- 2.6 Abstain from a relationship with a student which the teacher is aware would not accord with the *yamas* and *niyamas* of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

3. Personal Responsibilities of an Iyengar Yoga Teacher

Iyengar yoga teachers are required to:

- 3.1 Maintain a clean and well-groomed appearance. (*Sauca*, purity)
- 3.2 Dress in a modest manner whilst teaching yoga. (*Sauca*, purity, *Bramacharya*, continence).
- 3.3 Refrain from the misuse of drugs and alcohol. (*Sauca*, purity).
- 3.4 Abide by classical and legal codes of conduct, particularly (but not limited to) Australian laws concerning crimes of violence, crimes of dishonesty, and laws concerning the respectful behaviour towards others. (*Ahimsa*, non-violence, *Satya*, truthfulness)
- 3.5 Abide by any current guideline issued by the Association or the RIMYI in Pune.
- 3.6 Abstain from any act or omission which might bring discredit on the teaching method of BKS Iyengar, the IYA, or its members.



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4. Teachers Code of Conduct and the IYA's Complaint Handling Procedure

- 4.1 Iyengar yoga teachers who are members of the IYA are required by the IYA to adhere to the Teachers' Code of Conduct.

This Teachers' Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. Its failure to address any particular conduct does not mean that the conduct is necessarily ethical or unethical. Teachers should adhere to and honour classical and legal codes of conduct particularly (but not limited to) Australian laws concerning crimes of violence, crimes of dishonesty, and laws concerning the respectful behaviour towards others. (*Ahimsa*, non-violence, *Satya* truthfulness).

In order to be registered as a trainee teacher and certified as a teacher a member is required to disclose to Ethics and Certification Mark Committee the following:

- a. A copy of any criminal history;
- b. A copy of any Family Violence order, Restraint order or like order; and
- c. Information about the existence and outcome of any complaint against the member if it relates to any allegation detailed in 10.2 of the Complaints Handling Procedure. A failure of a teacher to notify the ECMC about matters mentioned in paragraph 10.2 of the CHP is a breach by the teacher of the Teachers Code of Conduct.

In this regard teachers should particularly refer to their obligations under the IYA ethical guidelines, and in particular the Teachers Code of Conduct, the Complaints Handling Procedure and the Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy.

This requirement has now also been included in application to become a teacher member and/or a teacher trainee member of IYA. It will also appear



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as a condition of the annual Certification Mark Licence renewal.

- 4.2 A teacher who fails to abide by the Teachers' Code of Conduct may be investigated, and, if necessary, sanctioned by the IYA's Ethics & Certification Mark Committee (ECMC) in accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure.
- 4.3 An Iyengar Yoga teacher who is uncertain of how the Teachers' Code of Practice should be applied in a particular situation should seek the advice of the ECMC before acting. Lack of familiarity with, or misinterpretation of, this Teachers' Code of Conduct does not justify unethical conduct.
- 4.4 Failure by a teacher to co-operate with the ECMC in the investigation of a complaint is a breach of this Code of Conduct.
- 4.5 Acts of bullying, harassment, intimidation, retribution or other improper behaviour of any sort towards a complainant by a teacher (or done at the request or approval of a teacher) during or after the Complaints Handling Process is a breach by the teacher of the Teachers Code of Conduct.
- 4.6 Where the ECMC is satisfied a complaint discloses evidence that a criminal offence has been committed by a teacher that complaint will, unless exceptional circumstances exist, be referred to police for investigation.

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