

Cambridge Insight Meditation Center

Formal Grievance Process

A Formal Grievance Process has been established to address allegations of serious ethical misconduct by persons at CIMC. The Center's intention that this process be respectful, attentive, and compassionate with both the person making the allegation and the person against whom the allegation is made. Below we outline the steps in filing a Formal Grievance at CIMC.

Step 1. Contact the Ethics and Reconciliation (EAR) Council for an Initial Consultation

EAR Council members will support an individual in assessing their situation and will provide information about the steps involved in the Formal Grievance Process. Sangha members may send an email to office@cambridgeinsight.org requesting they be contacted by an EAR member. Their name and phone number should be included. All phone calls and emails are confidential.

Step 2. File a Formal Grievance in Writing

When a decision is made to file a grievance, a letter should be sent to CIMC, Attn: Ethics Committee Chairperson, 331 Broadway, Cambridge MA 02139. The letter must include:

- A clear statement that the Formal Grievance Process is requested
- A detailed description of the alleged incident/s
- The names of all the people involved in the grievance
- A history of attempts, if any, to resolve the concern through other means (directly or through CIMC's Reconciliation Process)
- A general statement detailing the desired resolution or outcome, if applicable

Step 3. Review and Investigation of the Grievance

The Chairperson of the Ethics Committee will inform the Guiding Teacher(s) and the President of CIMC's Board of Directors and together they will review the letter and determine what further information should be gathered, if any, and when parties named in the grievance should be notified.

Within two (2) weeks of receipt of the letter, the Board President will convene a meeting of a quorum of Directors of the Board and at least two members of the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee Chairperson will present the formal grievance and facilitate a discussion regarding the nature and content of the grievance. Next steps will be developed, including but not limited to:

- Creation of an *ad hoc* team to investigate the grievance
- When and how best to notify all parties named in the grievance
- Dismissal of the grievance based on the lack of merits of the charge
- Determine if the grievance should be referred to other authorities

A formal vote on the next steps will be taken at the meeting. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will convey in writing to the involved parties – the person(s) raising the grievance and the persons(s) alleged to have committed the serious ethical breach -- the Board's decision and outline next steps.

Where an *ad hoc* team is created, it will include at least two members of the Board of Directors and two members of the Ethics Committee. The Board will designate one of the team as the facilitator. People with special expertise or resources relevant to the grievance may be invited to join the team, such as, but not limited to, a dharma teacher outside of CIMC, an attorney, a professional mediator or clinical consultant.

The *ad hoc* team is responsible for:

- Full investigation of the matter including interviewing the person initiating the grievance, others involved in the grievance, and additional people who may provide pertinent information to the matter
- Summarizing the findings
- Presenting findings to the CIMC Board of Directors
- Making recommendations to the CIMC Board of Directors

4. Review and Outcome

The CIMC Board of Directors will review any findings and recommendations and assess each situation fully. The Board may elect to accept or reject all or some of the recommendations and will act to preserve and/or restore the health and safety of the community and its members. Board decisions and recommendations may include but are not limited to:

- A reconciliation process for those involved
- Corrective action designed to protect the community
- Healing processes and preventative measures for recurrence of similar problems

Within two (2) weeks of the completion of this review, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will convey the Board's decisions and recommendations in writing to all parties mentioned in the grievance -- the person(s) raising the grievance and the persons(s) alleged to have committed the serious ethical breach. Under certain circumstances, the Board or the Ethics Committee as requested by the Board, may communicate to the CIMC community the outcome of the Formal Grievance Process.

Privacy & Confidentiality

In cases of a Formal Grievance Process, the Guiding Teacher(s), the Ethics Committee, the *ad hoc* investigation team, and the Board of Directors will have access to the information (unless allegations of ethical misconduct have been raised against any of these individuals). All efforts will be made to be discreet and respect privacy to the extent possible.

Record Keeping

The Ethics Committee and the Board of Directors will keep written records of all grievances, investigations, and outcomes, filed in the Board's and Ethics Committee's formal records. Every person who makes a statement at any stage in the investigation should understand that his or her statement may become part of a written record. The record may be reviewed by the members of the Board and the Ethics Committee, and, in some instances, during legal proceedings. For the safety and the well-being of the community, the Board may choose to disclose parts of the formal record but will always endeavor to keep the identities of those involved in the grievance confidential.

Conflict of Interest Policy

As a relatively small organization, many CIMC sangha members and leaders have multiple roles and relationships within the community. When addressing any matters related to allegations of serious ethical breaches or ethical concerns, we aspire to maintain the highest standards of objectivity, impartiality, and integrity throughout the processes. Any involved parties concerned about potential conflict of interest or bias should inform an EAR Council member or the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Conflict of interest charges or concerns will be addressed at the joint meeting of the Ethics Committee and the Board of Directors. Throughout the informal consultations and formal grievance proceedings, any member of the EAR Council, Ethics Committee, *ad hoc* team, or Board of Directors who feels that they cannot be objective and impartial for any reason is expected to excuse themselves from the proceedings.