

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SIKH SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA

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PREAMBLE.

The Sikh tradition teaches a message based on the principles of love, oneness, service, and spirituality. Our congregations' capacity to engage with these teachings is dependent on the capacity of our people to work together in unity and act with integrity as ambassadors of the Sikh faith and tradition. Therefore, it is critical that all members and community leaders have an understanding and expectation regarding appropriate standards of behavior in how they interact with each other, with members of the congregation and with community leaders.

Accordingly, the Sikh Society of Minnesota ("SSM") has adopted the following Code of Conduct to protect the interests and safety of members and the SSM. All members of the congregation must agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct while on SSM premises and in any interaction with SSM congregants or personnel. The Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list and does not foresee every set of circumstances that may arise. Rather, it provides guidance about actions that will **not be condoned** by SSM.

The Board of Directors are responsible for maintaining and enforcing this Code of Conduct.

KEY PRINCIPLES.

The following principles underlie this Code.

1. **Integrity.** Community leaders are expected to be persons of integrity and must conduct themselves in an honest and open manner, free from deception or corruption. They shall handle the responsibilities of their office in a conscientious fashion.
2. **Respect for Others.** All members shall respect the rights, dignity and worth of each member of SSM and the larger community. As in every religion, there are people at different levels of observance and commitment to their faith. Members must strive to be sensitive to differences among people and appreciate the opportunities that diversity brings.
3. **Spirituality.** The Gurdwara is a place of community learning, worship, and gathering, and the Sikh scripture—the Guru Granth Sahib—is at the center of Sikh life. The essential message of Sikhism is spiritual devotion and reverence for the divine—Waheguru—while practicing the ideals of Sikhism.
4. **Community.** Everyone is welcome at the Gurdwara regardless of their race, religion, color, or class. From the time of Guru Nanak, visitors of all backgrounds

have been welcomed in these spaces, and, to this day, may come to seek shelter, comfort, and food.

ACTIONS THAT VIOLATE THE CODE OF CONDUCT.

The SSM Board of Directors is responsible for providing a safe and secure place of congregation and worship, and strives to ensure that all individuals associated with the SSM are treated in a respectful and fair manner. Though it is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are unacceptable in the Gurdwara and surrounding grounds, the following are examples of behavior that would be considered infractions of SSM's Code of Conduct. Any conduct that threatens the safety of congregants, creates a hostile environment, interrupts services at the Gurdwara, or impedes the work of SSM is actionable under the Code of Conduct. Members who exhibit inappropriate or violent behavior, such as the acts described below may be subject to disciplinary action. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Fighting or threatening physical violence at another person (*e.g.*, fighting, striking, slapping, shoving, shaking, throwing objects, or intimidating behavior)
- Using abusive, threatening or obscene language.
- Encouraging or provoking others to engage in disruptive, disrespectful or violent behavior within the premises.
- Discriminating against another based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, familial status, and age.
- Making malicious, false, and/or harmful statements about other members may cause reputational harm.
- Destroying SSM property or the property of a fellow member.
- Possessing or using alcohol, tobacco, or firearms on SSM grounds.
- Engaging in or instigating disruptive behavior during the congregation worship service, during the Langar preparation or distribution or at any time (*e.g.*, unauthorized announcements).
- Persistently disregarding Gurdwara etiquette and protocols (*e.g.*, modest dress, removing shoes, covering head, standing during Ardaas).
- Harassing SSM personnel, directors, or congregants.
- Acting, speaking, or attempting to act or speak, in an official capacity, *i.e.*, any matter within the purview of the Board, on behalf of SSM without the express

authorization of the Board of Directors.

- Publicly disclosing another's private or personal information.
- The distribution of any printed material or organizing any event for any cause on the SSM premises without express authorization by the Board of Directors.

ENFORCEMENT.

The SSM Board of Directors have the authority to enforce the Code of Conduct by taking the following remedial action against any SSM member or congregant that violates the Code of Conduct. A serious violation of the Code of Conduct by an SSM member or congregant is an act that threatens the safety of an SSM member or congregant, or prevents the continuation of an SSM service or meeting of the Board of Directors ("Serious Violation"). Repeated violations by an SSM member or congregant are two or more separate instances of violations of the Code of Conduct ("Repeated Violations").

1. **Removal from SSM's Premises.** If SSM personnel observe a violation of the Code of Conduct on SSM's premises, SSM personnel are authorized to order the immediate removal of the violator from SSM's premises. SSM personnel are further authorized to request assistance from law enforcement to effectuate the removal of a violator from SSM's premises and may present this Code of Conduct to establish the grounds for the violator's removal from the premises.
2. **Banishment from SSM's Premises.** If the Board of Directors receives evidence of a Serious Violation of the Code of Conduct by an SSM member or congregant, or receives evidence of Repeated Violations of the Code of Conduct by an SSM member or congregant, the Board of Directors may banish the violator from SSM's premises.
 - a. To ban an SSM member or congregant, the Board of Directors must pass a resolution ordering the banishment that states the grounds for banishment. The resolution shall require a majority vote of the Board of Directors to take effect.
 - b. Not less than 15 days prior to the vote on the banishment of an SSM member or congregant, the Board of Directors must provide written notice to the purported violator of the grounds for banishment.
 - c. The purported violator under consideration for banishment shall be afforded the opportunity in writing to object to the grounds for banishment. The purported violator must submit a written objection to the Board of Directors not less than 5 days prior to the vote on the resolution banishing an SSM member. The Board of Directors shall take the written objection into consideration prior to the vote on a resolution banning a purported violator from SSM's premises. The Board of Directors may at its discretion provide the purported violator the opportunity to be heard at a Board of Directors meeting prior to the vote on the banishment resolution.

- d. Six months following the Board of Director's passage of the resolution banning an SSM member or congregant, the banned SSM member or congregant may petition the Board of Directors for permission to return to SSM's premises. Upon receipt of the petition, the Board of Directors shall either (1) grant the petition in a resolution approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors; or (2) deny the petition and inform the petitioner of the reasons the Board of Directors has determined that the banishment shall continue.
 - e. Six months following the Board of Director's denial of a petition for permission to return to SSM's premises, the petitioner may re-petition the Board of Directors for permission to return to SSM's premises.
3. **Termination of SSM Membership.** If the Board of Directors receives evidence of a Serious Violation of the Code of Conduct by an SSM member, or receives evidence of Repeated Violations of the Code of Conduct by an SSM member, the Board of Directors may terminate the SSM membership of the violator.
- a. To terminate a member from SSM membership, the Board of Directors must pass a resolution ordering the termination of the violator's membership that states the grounds for termination. The resolution shall require a majority vote of the Board of Directors to take effect.
 - b. Not less than 15 days prior to the vote on the resolution terminating an SSM member, the Board of Directors must provide written notice to the purported violator of the grounds for termination.
 - c. The purported violator under consideration for termination shall be afforded the opportunity in writing to object to the grounds for termination. The purported violator must submit written objection to the Board of Directors not less than 5 days prior to the vote on the resolution terminating an SSM member. The Board of Directors shall take the written objection into consideration prior to the vote on a resolution terminating a purported violator from SSM membership. The Board of Directors may at its discretion provide the purported violator the opportunity to be heard at a Board of Directors meeting prior to the vote on the termination resolution.
 - d. Six months following the Board of Director's passage of the resolution terminating an SSM member, the terminated former SSM member may petition the Board of Directors to be re-admitted into SSM's membership. Upon receipt of the petition, the Board of Directors shall either (1) grant the petition in a resolution approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors; or (2) deny the petition and inform the petitioner of the reasons the Board of Directors has determined that the termination shall continue.
 - e. Six months following the Board of Director's denial of a petition to be readmitted into membership, the petitioner may re-petition the Board of Directors for permission to be re-admitted into the membership.