



# The Shirdi Sai Mandir and Cultural Centre

2721 Markham Road, Unit 8, Toronto ON M1X 1L5 Canada  
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## Code of Conduct & Ethical Governance Policy Version 2.1 – Effective Date: Jun 01, 2026

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### 1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct establishes binding standards of ethical behaviour, governance and operational conduct, which are to be in compliance with applicable laws, duties and not for profit requirements, to:

- Preserve, implement and enforce the sanctity and values of the Mandir
- Safeguard its reputation, unity, and long-term sustainability
- Ensure the safety and dignity of devotees, volunteers, employees, and directors
- Uphold the principles of *Shraddha* (Faith) and *Saburi* (Patience)
- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including safe workplace requirements and responses
- Promote transparency, accountability, and fairness in all activities

### 2. Scope

This Code applies to:

- Directors, past, current and future
- Employees
- Volunteers (including student volunteers)
- Committee Members
- Life Members
- Devotees and visitors while on Mandir premises
- Contractors acting on behalf of the Mandir

It applies to:

- On-site conduct, and off-site conduct that does or may be regarded as compromising the sanctity and values of the Mandir
- Mandir associated events, on and off site
- Digital platforms where individuals represent or reference the Mandir or persons associated with the Mandir

### 3. Core Principles

All persons associated with the Mandir shall conduct themselves in accordance with:

- Dharma (righteous conduct)
- Integrity and honesty
- Respect and non-violence
- Accountability
- Requirements of law, including the Articles, By-Law and safe workplace

### 4. Duty to Act

Directors and Officers have a fiduciary obligation to act in the interests of the Mandir at all times.

Action for conduct inconsistent with this Code may be initiated based on credible information from any of the following sources:

- Written complaints
- Direct observation
- Reliable third-party reports



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- Publicly available information

Failure to act at all or effectively upon known, reported or suspected misconduct may itself constitute a breach of duty, and violation of this Code. All investigations shall be conducted in accordance with principles of procedural fairness and natural justice; however, the process shall be determined by the Board of directors or committee convened for the purpose and is to be proportionate to the nature of the conduct and complaint, and decisions in relation hereto shall be final. The applicable process standard of establishing conduct inconsistent with this Code shall be the **balance of probabilities**.

## 5. Standards of Conduct

All individuals must:

- Treat others with dignity, respect, and fairness
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, discrimination, or intimidation of any kind, including physical, verbal and written
- Refrain from physical touching at or in relation to any persons associated with the Mandir
- Maintain confidentiality of board, personal and private information, and prevent unauthorized use or disclosure
- Not allow real or perceived conflicts of interest, and immediately fully disclose any conflicts or potential conflicts
- Refrain from political activity within Mandir premises or associated with the Mandir or persons related to it as such
- Avoid statements or actions that may harm the Mandir's reputation
- Use Mandir resources responsibly and only for authorized purposes
- Not engage in direct or indirect solicitation without express prior written board approval which shall only be available in relation to causes that further the objectives of the Mandir. For example, if a member wanted to organize a lottery to benefit the Mandir and solicit ticket sales.

All individuals are strictly prohibited from:

- Physical or Verbal aggression
- Inappropriate language or gesture
- Harassment or discriminatory behaviour or that would reasonably be regarded as such financial misconduct
- Other breach of the provisions of this Code.

## 6. Volunteer Standards

### 6.1 General Expectations

Volunteers must:

- Follow instructions of coordinators
- Maintain respectful conduct and communication
- Avoid gossip, factional conduct, or disruption
- Represent the Mandir with dignity, integrity and respect and conduct themselves consistent with the requirements of this Code

### 6.2 Personal Hygiene & Presentation

Volunteers represent the sanctity and public image of the Mandir and are expected to always maintain appropriate standards of hygiene and appearance.

Volunteers must:

- Wear clean and modest attire appropriate to the setting
- Maintain proper personal hygiene
- Keep nails clean and trimmed



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- Avoid strong body odour or excessive fragrance
- Keep hair clean and properly secured

Individuals who are visibly unwell must refrain from participating in volunteer activities.

## 6.3 Illness Protocol

Volunteers shall not serve if experiencing:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea within 48 hours
- Respiratory infection with active symptoms
- Open wounds not properly covered

Mandir committee coordinators may restrict duties for public safety.

## 6.4 Sacred Space Conduct

- Maintain decorum in prayer areas
- No loud talking, no disagreements (take them off premises if at all) no arguments
- Mobile devices on silent or device on low volume

## 7. Kitchen Operations & Food Safety Policy

Applies to all individuals handling food or prasad.

### 7.1 Personal Hygiene Requirements

Mandatory:

- Wash hands thoroughly before food handling
- Wash after washroom use
- Wear gloves where required
- Tie back hair; use hair nets if preparing or packing food
- Remove rings/bracelets
- Cover cuts with waterproof bandage

Prohibited:

- Handling food while sick
- Sneezing/coughing over food
- Tasting with fingers
- Eating in prep areas

### 7.2 Illness Restrictions

No food handling if:

- Vomiting/diarrhea within last 48 hours
- Fever
- Contagious illness

### 7.3 Kitchen Cleanliness

Volunteers are required to always maintain a clean and hygienic kitchen environment. This includes:

- Sanitizing all work surfaces before and after use
- Verifying expiry dates prior to food preparation or distribution
- Storing all food items in accordance with proper food safety standards
- Cleaning any spills immediately to prevent contamination or hazards
- Ensuring refrigerators and storage areas are kept clean, organized, and at appropriate conditions



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Failure to comply with these requirements may result in immediate removal from kitchen duties.

## **8. Classification of Misconduct**

Misconduct is classified by Severity, Repetition, Risk, and Impact.  
The examples provided are illustrative only and not exhaustive.

### **LEVEL 1 – Minor Misconduct**

Examples:

- First-time hygiene lapse
- Minor disruption
- Inadvertent policy breach
- Being repeatedly late
- Minor disrespectful tone

Typical Response:

- Verbal warning
- Coaching
- Written reminder if repeated

### **LEVEL 2 – Moderate Misconduct**

Examples:

- Repeated L1 Minor misconduct
- Bullying or inappropriate conduct (non-physical)
- Social media activity that harms the Mandir's reputation
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest
- Unauthorized fundraising or solicitation
- Verbal aggression or confrontational behaviour
- Repeated violations of hygiene or safety standards
- Failure to disclose criminal charges

Typical Response:

- Written reprimand
- Suspension (time limited, subject to conditions, or indefinite)
- Removal from committee/leadership role
- Probationary reinstatement

### **LEVEL 3 – Serious Misconduct**

Examples:

- Repeated L1, L2 Minor & Moderate misconduct
- Physical contact
- Threats of reputational harm or violence
- Conduct that is or may constitute sexual harassment or misconduct, including without limitation physical contact and inappropriate language or communications, for which there is zero tolerance
- Financial misappropriation
- Fraud
- Theft
- Breach of fiduciary duty
- Severe food safety violation
- Criminal conviction affecting trust
- Public defamatory campaign



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Typical Response, note that conduct may be disqualifying from roles or positions at law or pursuant to the Mandir Articles or By-Law, and in addition:

- Immediate suspension
- Removal from volunteer/leadership position
- Termination of employment
- Ban from premises (if required)
- Reporting to authorities

Progressive discipline may be bypassed for serious misconduct.

## 9. Privilege of Service and Board Discretion

### 9.1 Volunteering is a Privilege

Volunteer service at the Mandir is an act of *Seva* and is considered a privilege, not a right or entitlement.

### 9.2 No Obligation to Reinstatement

Individuals who have been suspended, removed, or denied reinstatement do not have an automatic right to return.

The Board retains full discretion over reinstatement decisions, which, if granted, require a two-thirds majority vote.

### 9.3 Devotee Access vs Volunteer Role

Removal from volunteer service does not automatically bar attendance as a devotee, unless safety, workplace or similar concerns make appropriate otherwise.

Spiritual access is distinct from operational responsibility; however safety is a paramount consideration.

### 9.4 Protection of Mandir Interests

The Board may, as to any conduct or conditions that are not disqualifying, restrict or deny volunteer participation where it reasonably determines that:

- Trust has been compromised
- Harmony or operations may be disrupted
- Legal, reputational, or safety risks exist

Volunteer service does not create employment, contractual, or legal rights.

## 10. Investigation Process

The Mandir will follow a structured process when addressing allegations of misconduct, recognizing that some misconduct or conditions may be disqualifying from positions or activities:

1. Preliminary review of facts
2. Risk and impact assessment
3. Interim measures, if considered appropriate
4. Opportunity for the individual(s) to respond
5. Review by the Board or designated committee
6. Issuance of a written decision

All records will be confidential and securely maintained.



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## **11. Appeals**

Appeal must be submitted in writing within 14 days.  
The Board's final determination is binding.

## **12. Non-Retaliation**

Retaliation against any individual who reports concerns in good faith is strictly prohibited and may result in serious disciplinary action, including Level 3 consequences.

## **13. Annual Acknowledgment**

All Directors, Employees, Volunteers, and Life Members must sign annual acknowledgment of this Code as amended from time to time. In the event of a failure to sign this Code annually, the individual shall continue to be bound notwithstanding, and be regarded as in default subject to suspension, until the default is remedied.



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## **Certification Form**

I acknowledge that I have read and understood:

- The Code of Conduct
- The Volunteer Standards
- The Kitchen Operations & Food Safety Policy

I agree to comply fully and understand that volunteer service is a privilege and may be withdrawn at the discretion of the Board.

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_