

## KRI Respectful Student-Teacher Relationships Policy

This policy refers to all Kundalini Yoga teachers, trainers, mentors and trainers-in-training collectively as “Teachers” and to all students, trainees or mentees collectively as “Students”.

Kundalini Yoga Teachers recognize that the Student-Teacher relationship has an inherent power imbalance within which the Student has an implicit trust in the Teacher. A Teacher consciously refrains from any relationship with a Student that may be exploitative of this power dynamic in any way.

For the purposes of this policy, a Kundalini Yoga Teacher is a teacher in relation to all Kundalini Yoga Students (this includes Students who do not attend the Teacher’s classes or relate to them as “their Teacher” or “their spiritual Teacher”) and other members of the community, wherever/whenever there is such a power imbalance. If by reputation or circumstance a person has the status of being a Kundalini Yoga Teacher, they must be aware of the inherent power imbalance and its potential harm within any kind of private or business relationship with a student.

**Employment, Work Exchange, and Seva Relationships:** Teachers must abide by the rules of all governing agencies, including but not limited to: local, state, provincial, national, and/or federal laws and regulations, when hiring, working with, or engaging students, employees, or other teachers.

*Keep it Professional.* The work or seva relationship must remain in the realm of professional transactions. For example, it would *not* be appropriate to request or require a student to provide laundry service for a Teacher as seva or work exchange. Helping to clean the yoga room after class or serving as receptionist/check-in for the class or studio *could* be an appropriate exchange for a yoga class pass or as a seva opportunity.

1. **Non-monetary work exchanges** - Teachers are strongly encouraged to commit the details of such agreements to writing, clearly defining the responsibilities in terms of required hours and type of work to be performed and in exchange for what benefit, to decrease possible tensions and misunderstandings.
2. **Non-compensated service**
  - a. The practice of *seva* may be a required element of Teacher Training and Academy advancement.
  - b. In the case of “voluntary” seva/non-compensated service no student should be pressured to participate or made to feel excluded in any way for declining to participate.
3. In either case (work exchange or seva) the work performed must not be for a Teacher’s personal gain or benefit.

**Consent to Record:** In respect for students' and others' privacy regarding use of their likeness (photo, video, etc.) or spoken words, Teachers will obtain the individuals' written or verbal consent prior to taking and/or publicizing any photographs or video/audio recordings.

### **Financial or Business Relationships**

All forms of financial involvement by Teachers with students (other than payment for teaching services or products for sale) are discouraged. Financial involvement includes but is not limited to loans, substantial gifts, and business partnerships.

Teachers should, in all business and marketing activities, maintain integrity and respect for the students' right to receive teachings and participate without pressure of any kind, including financial pressure or social pressure, e.g., expectation of inclusion (or exclusion) or promises of a special status (or lesser status), by participation (or not).

A common, potentially challenging area of business relationship exists between a teacher training organizer and the lead trainer. Given the potential conflicts in this area, it is recommended that a KRI representative or other third party be engaged to assist in their reaching mutual agreements that ensure fairness and empowerment to all parties involved in hosting, organizing and teaching at the teacher training.

#### Change in the Nature of the student-teacher relationship to a business one:

As per the teachings, Teachers are encouraged not to be solely financially dependent on teaching Kundalini Yoga (therefore, on their students) in order to maintain neutrality, integrity and the best interest of the students. Teachers are also encouraged to abide by the tenets expressed in the Financial or Business Relationships section above.

Should both parties mutually desire to enter into a more involved business relationship, the Teacher bears the sole responsibility of the decision. Professional relationships and transactions must not be experienced by the student as being pressured or coerced. The Teacher must exercise special care that the student-teacher relationship and its inherent power imbalance do not enter the business relationship. Teachers are strongly encouraged to seek mentor and/or counselor guidance before entering and during any such relationship.

In this area, there is no set of hard and fast rules, e.g., "this is always right, and this is always wrong," that can fully capture the complexities of each situation. As we cannot capture everything in a written code, financial or business relationships between a student and teacher, if reported as concerning, may be reviewed.

### **Romantic and/or Sexual Relationships:**

It is understood that a Teacher will never allow or participate in seductive or flirtatious behavior or any aspect of a sexual, romantic, or intimate relationship with a Student, even when the Student appears to invite or consent to such behavior or relationship. Immediate measures

should be taken by the Teacher to neutralize the situation should the Teacher sense themselves, and/or the Student, to be so inclined. It is the Teacher's responsibility to be the keeper of the neutrality and integrity in the relationship, independently and regardless of the Student's behavior.

If the Teacher realizes they cannot keep the neutrality in the relationship, it is their responsibility to:

- immediately and gracefully cease teaching the Student in classes, workshops, trainings, etc.
- allow the Student's smooth transition to another Teacher and assist if requested, and
- look for appropriate (KRI, EPS or other) counseling/mentoring or even therapy in order to regain the neutrality which is an integral part of their commitment as a Teacher.

***Also see: "Understanding Power and Vulnerability in the Student-Teacher Relationship"***

#### **Reporting, Investigation, and Determination**

Reporting, investigation, and determination of violations of this Policy will be in accordance with the [EPS Complaint Procedure](#).