



CODE OF CONDUCT AND POLICY ON ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Spiritual Accompaniment

The WCCM in the UK currently provides spiritual accompaniment in a variety of settings including 1) the School of Meditation 7 Day silent retreat; 2) Meditation Companions and 3) Regional Retreats. This code of conduct applies to these and any other events where the community offers one to one spiritual accompaniment.

Definition of Spiritual Accompaniment

Spiritual accompaniment is a private conversation between a Spiritual Accompanier, who is an experienced meditator, and an Accompanee. Spiritual accompaniment is primarily a listening role.

The person being accompanied is free to talk about whatever they feel would be useful in helping to deepen their relationship with God. They may wish to talk about their meditation practice, general prayer life, emotional or practical aspects of life.

The Spiritual Accompanier provides a safe and sacred listening space that enables the Accompanee to feel comfortable sharing personal information and talking openly about their spiritual life. It is not a directive or advisory relationship. The Spiritual Accompanier may ask questions to help the Accompanee form their own insights; they may offer a suggestion or information based on their own experience or knowledge; they may simply offer reassurance.

Responsibilities of the Spiritual Accompanier

The Spiritual Accompanier honours the dignity of the Accompanee by

- a) respecting their values, beliefs, theology, culture.
- b) only inquiring about motives /reasons/experiences as relevant.
- c) being aware of and not exploiting any imbalance of power.
- d) maintaining appropriate physical and psychological boundaries.
- e) refraining from sexualised behaviour, including abusive or coercive words.
- d) complying with the policy on anonymity and confidentiality below.

Policy on Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity refers to the identity of a person. Anonymity is provided when the person remains unidentifiable. For the smooth running of a retreat and benefit of all retreatants

there are situations when it may be necessary to discuss concerns with co-retreat leaders but the person remains unidentified.

Confidentiality refers to the content of what is discussed between two (or more) people. Confidentiality means that the content will not be disclosed to another person without the consent of all parties. All conversations with a Spiritual Accompanier are treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to other people without consent unless there are concerns as outlined below.

The exception and limit to confidentiality occurs when the Spiritual Accompanier has serious concerns that the Accompanee may be a risk to themselves or to other people. Or where the Accompanee reveals abuse by another person, and where the person is still alive and may still represent a risk of abuse to others. The Spiritual Accompanier will discuss this with their co-retreat leaders or Meditation Companion Coordinator and, if necessary, in line with the WCCM in the UK safeguarding policy, inform others. In this situation, all parties will be kept informed of any actions taken.

Appointment of Spiritual Accompaniers

Spiritual Accompaniers are volunteers who have been invited by WCCM in the UK to this role and are not required to hold accredited Spiritual Direction, Counselling, or any specific professional qualifications, however they will

- a) be an experienced meditator with a regular practice
- b) be known to the community for at least 3 years
- c) have completed a certificated basic Safeguarding course
- d) if working with an Accompanee over a period of 4 days or more consecutive days or an extended period have been DBS checked.
- e) be able to name an individual from whom they could seek advice/support in this role.
- f) have confirmed that they understand this code of conduct and will abide by it.

Any questions about the code of conduct can be discussed as appropriate with the Spiritual Accompanier, the Meditation Companions Coordinator, or with the School of Meditation Coordinator.

Prepared by The UK School of Meditation and Approved by the Trustees October 2021

Next Review Date	Changes made	Approval Date
Sept 2024		