

# Policy on Integrity

Formulated by the Belgian Kundalini Yoga Federation and the Hotline Integrity  
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PREFACE .....	1
WHY HAVE A POLICY ON INTEGRITY? .....	2
A. THE HOTLINE INTEGRITY .....	2
B. INTEGRITY CHARTER FOR YOGA TEACHERS .....	4
C. INTEGRITY GUIDE FOR YOGA PARTICIPANTS .....	5
D. INTEGRITY TRAINING FOR YOGA TEACHERS .....	5
IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION .....	6

## Preface

The lines of force of this *Policy on Integrity* and our motivation for drafting it, can be found in our [Vision Text on Respect for Integrity in the Yoga Context](#).

In this policy we indicate how we intend to deal with transgressive behaviour in our yoga organisation. The instruments we use for this are explained here. You can also find this information on [www.Integrity-in-Yoga.one](http://www.Integrity-in-Yoga.one).

**The more this policy is known and supported, the more likely it is that Integrity in the Yoga Experience will receive the attention it needs to combat abuse. We count on the help of all who read this document to help us achieve this goal.**

[Sensoa](#), the Flemish centre of expertise in the field of sexual health, advised us in the process of developing this policy. We used their '*Raamwerk Lichamelijke en Seksuele Integriteit en Beleid in de Sport*' (*Framework for Physical and Sexual Integrity and Policy in Sports*) as a guideline.

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## Why have a Policy on Integrity?

Everyone is entitled to a quality yoga experience offered in a safe environment where the wellbeing of all participants is guaranteed.

We want to avoid transgressive behaviour in the yoga context, bring the issue more into the open and act professionally when problems do arise.

We use the following instruments to support our policy:

- A. The **Hotline Integrity**
- B. The [Integrity Charter](#) for Yoga Teachers
- C. The [Integrity Guide](#) for Yoga Participants
- D. The **Integrity Training** for Yoga Teachers

Below we explain how the various instruments work.

We are committed to regularly **evaluating** the policy in place and **adjusting** it according to emerging needs - making use of feedback, experiences, knowledge gained, new insights and changing situations.

**After each incident** we will ask the question: *How could we have prevented this incident?*

If necessary, additional preventive measures will be foreseen or instruments will be adapted.

## A. The Hotline Integrity

### Overview of how it works

The hotline is **easily accessible**. It is always available by phone or email.

Anyone can contact the hotline to ask questions, communicate comments or complaints regarding transgressive behaviour in the context of yoga activities.

This may include physical or sexual abuse, bullying, racism, discrimination, gender-based violence, and other violations against the integrity of individuals.

The details of **how the hotline works** are described in a [ROADMAP](#).

The hotline works **carefully, discretely, objectively** and with **respect** for everyone. It provides a safe environment where people are listened to in **confidence** and where next steps are considered, **to aid recovery and prevent further damage**.

The hotline is staffed by three (or more) volunteers. They fulfil the role of **Integrity Contact Person** or **ICP**. The roadmap is their guide, a guideline they can follow but which should never get in the way of **common sense and warm-heartedness**.

The ICPs work both **reactively** and **preventively**. They develop and provide the Integrity Training for yoga teachers and provide information and advice to those who request it.

## Instruments used by the Hotline

### **FLAG SYSTEM**

The ICPs from the Hotline use a [flag system](#) inspired by the [Sensoa model](#).

This system allows us to assess each incident according to seven criteria: consent, voluntariness, equality, competence, context, impact and intensity. A colour is assigned to each criterion: green, yellow, red or black. An action will be provided for each non-green rating. More details about this can be found in the [roadmap](#).

The flag system helps to estimate the seriousness of the situation in a consistent and objective manner. If useful or necessary, this tool is also used in communication with the people involved.

### **SIGNPOST**

This is a list of addresses and contact details used by the hotline to refer reporters of harm or perpetrators of transgressive behaviour to professional assistance, or to report the matter to the police or judicial authorities.

### **INTEGRITY TRAINING**

The hotline develops and provides an Integrity Training for yoga teachers. More details in section D.

### **SKILLS CHECKLIST FOR INTEGRITY**

This checklist is used during the Integrity Training as a self-test and as an instrument to identify gaps in the personal skills of yoga teachers. The list can also be used in teacher training or by the Integrity hotline in counselling yoga teachers who request advice or support.

### **VISIT TO THE TEACHER TRAINING**

The trainers of the *Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhanan* teacher training course, are invited to call the Integrity Hotline team in during the Level I training to explain the Integrity Policy, the [Vision Text](#), the [Integrity Charter](#) for teachers, the [Integrity Guide](#) for students, the way the hotline operates, the Integrity Training for yoga teachers and the skills checklist for Integrity for yoga teachers.

## The Integrity Contact Person (ICP)

### **THE ICP TASKS**

- The ICP is the point of contact and provides initial follow-up.
- The ICP coordinates the internal follow-up of cases and, if necessary, the ICP refers people to professional support providers.
- The ICP leads the prevention activities: provides training and delivers advice.

## **The ICP is not a counsellor or researcher.**

If necessary, the ICP refers to professional assistance, the police or the judicial authorities.

## **PROFILE**

The ICPs

- preferably have a Level I yoga teacher training certificate in *Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan*,
- are accessible, discrete, empathic, can listen and observe well,
- radiate calm, strength and thoughtfulness,
- are held in respect and trust by the board and in the wider yoga community,
- are independent and neutral towards all parties involved,
- can operate with confidentiality and resistance,
- can manage their own emotions and deal with those of others,
- work as much as possible in accordance with the detailed roadmap also using their common sense and warm hearts,
- call upon their fellow ICPs in difficult situations, especially for red or black flag cases,
- do not allow themselves to be pressured into disclosing what has been told in confidence when it is not necessary,
- take into account the reporting obligation imposed on every citizen to inform the police if they have witnessed a crime or are aware of a situation that could endanger others,
- are appointed by the board through a clear mandate,
- can count on support and training,
- keep themselves informed of important developments around the theme,
- take good care of themselves and their colleagues.

## **Becoming an ICP**

Anyone can apply to become an ICP by sending their CV with a letter of motivation to *the Board of the Belgian Kundalini Yoga Federation* via email to [info@kundaliniyoga.be](mailto:info@kundaliniyoga.be).

To function properly, **at least three** ICPs are active on the hotline.

Preferably, ICPs from different genders are represented in the hotline.

The ICPs are **trained** within the organisation.

When an ICP wishes to leave the hotline, a notice period of three months is requested so that there is sufficient time to attract a new candidate.

## **B. Integrity Charter for Yoga Teachers**

### **Why Have an Integrity Charter?**

Sexuality is an integral part of being human.  
Yoga teachers and students are sexual beings.

They can expect from each other that:

- there is a correct, respectful and supportive way of engaging with one another,
- transgressive behaviour is not tolerated and can always be discussed when it occurs, or is suspected,
- even slightly transgressive behaviour is taken seriously because it can be a signal for a more serious underlying problem.

What is it?

The [Integrity Charter](#)

- is an instrument to clarify what can and cannot be done,
- is a concrete expression of our vision regarding respect for integrity in the yoga context,
- contains the basic principles and framework for wholesome relationships between yoga teachers and yoga students and all other persons involved in yoga activities,
- aims to safeguard everyone's physical and sexual integrity,
- is a tool for strengthening everyone's resilience in the face of risk,
- is part of the abuse prevention policy of the organisation,
- does not guarantee that transgressive behaviour will no longer occur,
- is an evolving tool that is evaluated at least once a year by the Integrity hotline and the board. It is refreshed or updated as needed.

## C. Integrity Guide for Yoga Participants

The [Integrity Guide](#) is a list of guidelines that the *Board of the Belgian Kundalini Yoga Federation* and the *Integrity hotline* offer to Yoga participants.

It is a list of eight guidelines that can help participants get the most out of their yoga practice whilst safeguarding their integrity and wellbeing.

This guide invites yoga students to help develop a yoga culture in which transgressive behaviour has no place.

## D. Integrity Training for Yoga Teachers

### **"Physical and Sexual Integrity and Diversity in the Yoga Experience."**

All yoga teachers who have obtained their Level I certificate in *Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan* at a school recognised by the Belgian Federation are informed about the Integrity Training via their trainers or via the board.

The training is available in an in-person workshop format.

The training covers the following **topics**:

- How to deal with cultural diversity, gender-related reality, physical and sexual integrity in the yoga context?
- A self-test based on the *Skills Checklist for Integrity for Yoga Teachers who know how to deal Professionally with Diversity and Physical and Sexual Integrity*.
- How to coach yoga students in resilient behaviour and how to be self-resilient?
- The Integrity Charter for Yoga Teachers.
- The Integrity Guide for Yoga Participants.
- The way of working of the Integrity Hotline.
- How this Belgian approach to a policy on Integrity relates to the approach used by the International Kundalini Yoga Organisation.

## Implementation and Communication

This policy and its instruments can only achieve their goal if they are known.

As we stated in the [vision text](#), we assume that transgressive behaviour occurs only sporadically in our yoga community. Luckily, most yoga participants never needed to have concerns in this area. Our goal is not to worry them, but rather to invite them to stay alert and to maintain and guard the respect for Integrity in Yoga at all times.

In Belgium there have been a number of cases of sexual abuse in the context of yoga. Because the people involved knew someone on the board and had the courage to talk about it, we are now aware of it. Back then, we took care and helped the people involved as best we could, but it was improvisation. Transgressive behavior needs to be dealt with in a more thorough and professional manner. This is why we launched the Integrity Hotline in the summer of 2020 and developed this Integrity policy. From March 2021 onwards we will deploy it in the Belgian community of Kundalini Yoga.

**Through a well-planned and well-thought-out implementation of this Integrity Policy and a broad and crystal-clear communication, we want to ensure that every yoga participant in Belgium knows that the Integrity Hotline exists and is familiar with the Integrity Guide. We also want every yoga teacher in Belgium to know and promote the Integrity Hotline, endorse the Integrity Charter and to know there is an Integrity Training.**

A workgroup will be launched to set up the implementation plan and communication. At the general meeting in March 2021, they will present their plan and the rollout will start from there.