



# MAHAMEVNĀWA

Buddhist Monastery - Toronto

Mahamevna Bhavana Asapuwa Toronto | Charity Registration # 854079563 RR 0001

## MAHAMEVNA BHAVANA ASAPUWA TORONTO (The Buddha Meditation Centre of Greater Toronto)

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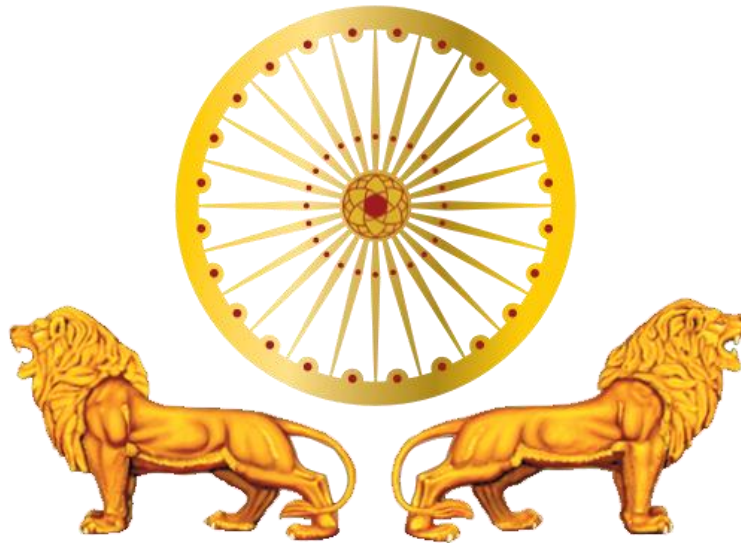
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## ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

**Providing Programs, Goods, and Services to People with  
Disabilities**



**2024**

*Revised May 18th, 2024*

# Accessibility Policy

## Providing Programs, Goods, and Services to People with Disabilities

### A. Introduction

This policy reflects the desire by the Meditation Centre of Gr (“the Meditation Centre”) to promote an inclusive community that embraces the gifts of all who come through its doors. It is intended to meet the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, contained in Regulation 429/07 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. It applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

This policy is not only a declaration of our obligation to meet provincial requirements, but outlines the importance of hospitality and how our commitment to be inclusive and respectful of the dignity of all individuals within our community will be met. It is the responsibility of both the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees to review this policy regularly and to ensure that the Monastery complies with current legislation. All programs and services provided by the Monastery are to reflect the principles of dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

### B. Definitions

In this policy:

**“Assistive Device”** means a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

**“Disability”** means:

(a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness, and includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or

speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

(b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;

(c) a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;

(d) a mental disorder; or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*.

**“Guide Dog”** means a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act to provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people who are blind.

**“Individuals”** refers to staff, volunteers, parishioners, visitors, and anyone who enters the monastery building, inclusive of persons with disabilities. The language used in this policy endeavors to be inclusive and to acknowledge the various abilities that all individuals bring to this community. However, in order to meet provincial standards, and for the sake of clarity, the term “disability” is used in various sections of this document.

**“Service Animal”** is an animal for a person with a disability if:

(a) it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or

(b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**“Service Dog”** is a dog other than a guide dog where,

(a) it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or

(b) the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

**“Support Person”** means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to services.

## **C. Our Mission**

The Mahamevna Bhavana Asapuwa, also known as The Buddha Meditation Centre of Greater Toronto is a place for people to learn and practice the teachings of the Buddha as preserved faithfully in the scriptures of Theravada Buddhism. The lay community is led by fully ordained monks (Bhikkhus).

We offer a variety of regular activities such as Dhamma Talks (sermons), Day long meditation retreats, and children's and teens classes in Sinhala and English language.

We join with WeCareForYou Charity to perform community events such as Blood Drives, Food & Clothes Drives, Tree planting events, Community Clean up events, Helping the Sick events, Mental Health Programs etc.

## **D. Our Commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, the Meditation Centre makes every effort to plan and deliver its programs in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with different abilities. We are also committed to providing all people the same opportunities to access services and programs and to enabling them to contribute to, and benefit from, such access in the same places and in similar ways as other individuals.

## **E. Providing Programs and Services**

The Meditation Centre is committed to working with and serving all people, regardless of ability, and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities with that in mind in all ministry areas, including the following:

### **(i) Communication**

Communications should be affected in ways that take into account individual requirements and particular needs. We will inform potential visitors and visitors through the Meditation Centre website, WhatsApp groups, emails, social media, posters of the

Meditation Centre notice board as well as make known to the Meditation Centre community and those who enter our doors, that alternative formats for publications such as the Meditation Centre bulletins are available, and how those publications may be obtained.

**(ii) Telephone Services**

Staff and volunteers are expected to be sensitive in their telephone communications, using plain language and speaking clearly and slowly.

**(iii) Assistive Devices**

The Meditation Centre is committed to working with individuals who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs and services. We will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices and mobility aids such as walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters to access our services and programs to the greatest extent possible. We will familiarize greeters and other front-line volunteers and staff with the various assistive devices that may be used by individuals.

**(iv) Accessibility Advocate**

An Accessibility Advocate, designated by the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees, will liaise with the two Directors to oversee all issues related to accessibility at the Meditation Centre. The Accessibility Advocate will link with ministry areas to communicate the need to assess accessibility requirements and identify potential training needs.

**F. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

We welcome people who are accompanied by a service animal on those parts of our premises that are open to the public. It is our expectation that all staff and volunteers are trained to interact with individuals who are accompanied by a service animal. We also welcome people who are accompanied by a support person. Those individuals who are allergic to dogs will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible.

**G. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

The Meditation Centre will provide individuals with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services commonly used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its

anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice may be delivered to individuals in written form (i.e. through social media, emails, WhatsApp groups or the Meditation Centre website) or verbally.

#### **H. Training for Staff and Volunteers**

Staff and volunteers will be trained in how to properly assist people with varying abilities. That training will include how to assist people to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency. The Accessibility Advocate will be responsible for working with ministry areas to identify training needs and a suitable approach to meeting such needs. The Chief monk will designate staff to do the same with third parties such as rental groups. All resident monks, staff, and members of both the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees are expected to participate in accessibility training programs in order to demonstrate their commitment to accessibility.

#### **I. Feedback Process**

Specific feedback on issues directly related to accessibility is welcomed by the Meditation Centre, and is appreciated. Feedback can be provided by contacting the Accessibility Advocate. Alternatively, the resident monks, staff, or volunteers can be approached. Concerns will be addressed and documented in a confidential manner to the extent possible and within the parameters of the law.

Those who provide feedback and raise issues will receive a response. Communication needs to be a two-way exchange so that issues are brought forward and received by staff, volunteers and the Boards. If anyone has a question about the policy or its purpose, an explanation or reply will be provided by the Chief monk or the Accessibility Advocate. The Accessibility Advocate will submit an annual report to Vestry.

#### **J. Modifications to This or Other Policies**

All policies maintained by the Meditation Centre will be continually assessed, reassessed, and modified when necessary, having regard to their impact upon people with different abilities and their families.

*Revised May 18th, 2024*