

I Teaching Iyengar Yoga in the UK 2: General Teaching and Ethical Guidelines – “The Teachers’ Handbook”

15 Ethical Guidelines for Iyengar Yoga Teachers

The Executive Council of the IY(UK) hereby announce, pursuant to Association’s Bylaws, the Ethical GUIDELINES for Iyengar Yoga Teachers. The formulation of these guidelines took into consideration the unique position of Iyengar Yoga Teachers. A position unique in that it was at the request of our teacher B.K.S. IYENGAR that the Yamas and Niyamas (in particular Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Bramacharya, Aparigraha and Sauca), along with current U.K. Law and social climate, be blended into a set of ethical GUIDELINES that are reasonable and yet set high standards for individual, social and professional conduct binding on all member teachers of the IY(UK).

1. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF IYENGAR YOGA TEACHERS

Iyengar Yoga Teachers are dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of professional competence and integrity.

- a. Iyengar Yoga Teachers dedicate themselves to studying, teaching, disseminating and promoting the art, science and philosophy of Yoga according to the teachings and philosophy of Yogacharya Sri B.K.S.IYENGAR (Tapas)
- b. Iyengar Yoga Teachers seek to continue their studies of Yoga put forth by Yogacharya Sri B.K.S.IYENGAR and family directly by attending classes at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute or indirectly by attending workshops, classes or conventions organised by members of IY(UK). Study should be with Iyengar Yoga Teachers certified at a higher level, i.e. the teacher in training should be at least one level below the teacher (Svadyaya).
- c. Iyengar Yoga Teachers endeavour to accurately represent their education, training and experience relevant to their teaching of Iyengar Yoga (Satya).
- d. When in an Iyengar classroom situation, Iyengar Yoga Teachers will not mix the teachings of Iyengar Yoga with any other disciplines. (Aparigraha).
- e. Iyengar Yoga Teachers strive not to be publicly critical of other Iyengar Yoga Teachers in their absence or of other systems of Yoga (Ahimsa).
- f. Iyengar Yoga Teachers refrain from using the figure Hanumanasana and temple trademark design registered with the United States Patent and Trade Mark Department in Mr. Iyengar’s name. The use of this Service Mark is reserved for use by non-profit organizations composed of students and friends of Yogacharya Sri B.K.S.IYENGAR who meet the criteria of 1(a) and are approved for such usage by the Service Mark Committee (Asteya) of the B.K.S.Iyengar Yoga National Association Of The United States.
- g. The Service Mark is owned by and licensed from BKS Iyengar, Pune, and administered by Ms. G. Goldberg in the USA.

2. RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY - SOCIAL ETHICS

Iyengar Yoga Teachers are committed to enhancing the general health and welfare of their students and the community in which they live. This includes respecting the rights and opinions of their students and obeying local laws.

- a. Iyengar Yoga Teachers embrace truthfulness in all dealings with their students and the community (Satya).
- b. Iyengar Yoga Teachers welcome all students regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, financial status, national origin, or physical disability (skill level of teacher permitting) (Asteya).
- c. Iyengar Yoga Teachers avoid all forms of sexual harassment of students and Iyengar Yoga Teachers recognize the responsibility inherent in the relationship between student and teacher and will avoid exploiting the trust and potential dependency of such students (Ahimsa and Aparigraha). Iyengar Yoga Teachers recognise that they are in a position of power in the classroom and do not exploit the trust or acquiescence of students. Having regard to the power differential, Iyengar Yoga Teachers are aware of the possibility of relationships between teachers and students outside the classroom complicating or compromising the student-teacher relationship.
- d. When possible, Iyengar yoga Teachers generously assist students in finding another Iyengar teacher when requested. (Aparigraha).
- e. Iyengar Yoga Teachers espouse the importance of being earnest and sincere in their efforts to avoid casual or careless teaching (Tapas).

3. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF IYENGAR YOGA TEACHERS - INDIVIDUAL ETHICS

Iyengar Yoga Teachers sincerely cultivate a level of purity in matters of personal habits and lifestyle (Sauca).

- a. Iyengar Yoga Teachers maintain a clean and well-groomed appearance (Sauca).
- b. When teaching or participating in an Iyengar Yoga Class teachers dress in a modest manner, including covering the torso with a shirt or vest to ensure the shared space of the classroom remains equitable and safe for all participants. (Ahimsa, Sauca and Bramacharya).
- c. Iyengar Yoga Teachers avoid abuse of substances such as drugs and alcohol (Sauca).

4. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE IY(UK) ETHICAL GUIDELINES

These Ethical Guidelines are to be held as binding by Iyengar Yoga Teachers as a condition of their membership of IY(UK).

- a. The IY(UK) Ethical Guidelines are not exhaustive. The fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by the IY(UK) Ethical Guidelines does not mean that the conduct is necessarily ethical or unethical. Classical codes of conduct should be honoured and observed as well as UK Law.
- b. Lack of familiarity with or misinterpretation of these Ethical Guidelines is not justification for unethical conduct.

- c. Failure to cooperate in an ethics investigation or disciplinary proceedings is a violation of the IY(UK) Ethical Guidelines.
- d. Iyengar Yoga Teachers who are uncertain as to the meaning or content of the IY(UK) Ethical Guidelines as it relates to a particular situation shall contact the IY(UK) Ethics & Certification Committee for clarification before acting.