
Members of the European Satyananda Yoga Family

Guidelines for ESYF members

We, the ESYF members, are committed to the Yogavidya as presented through Satyananda Yoga – Bihar Yoga. The authentic teachings of the Satyananda system of Yoga are based on yogic attitudes and lifestyle principles (Yamas and Niyamas) that have existed for thousands of years. The practical guidelines for ESYF members derive from these yogic attitudes. As ESYF members we aim to impart yogic teachings and live according to yogic principles. We take all necessary steps to ensure the wellbeing and safety of those we teach and interact within our yoga community.

Practical guidelines

- We respect the different yoga traditions. The yoga we teach, is in strict alignment with the integral yoga system and tradition of Swami Sivananda Saraswati, Swami Satyananda Saraswati and Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, known as Satyananda Yoga – Bihar Yoga.
- In order to support our personal and professional development, we regularly educate ourselves in regards to yoga sadhana and teaching practice by attending seminars and trainings with Satyananda Yoga Acharyas and Local ESYF Representatives (please refer to the list of *Local ESYF Representatives* on our website).
- To the best of our abilities we regularly connect to the source of Satyananda Yoga – Bihar Yoga by attending courses/events at Yoga Peeth, Ganga Darshan in Munger (India), thus ensuring our participation in the overall development of the living Satyananda Yoga – Bihar Yoga tradition.
- As yoga teachers, we know and respect our abilities and limitations. We teach on the basis of the knowledge and experience gained through our own studies and practice.
- To the best of our knowledge and belief, we focus our efforts to impart traditional yogic teachings in a manner that allows the students to benefit in the best possible way for their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development.
- In all teaching settings we emphasize the great importance of development of awareness. The practices and methods address all levels of the personality and our students are encouraged to become aware of their experiences and the effects the practices have.
- We foster the student's inner awareness by providing primarily verbal instructions and creating a natural, quiet and relaxed atmosphere, free from pressure to perform.
- In our teaching, a key element is the development of independence of our students. We aim at teaching our students how to practise safely on their own and how to take responsibility for their own development and self-determination.
- The yoga we offer is designed in a way that everyone is able to participate and benefit from the practices, regardless of age, abilities and health conditions. In all teaching situations, we encourage student's independence and self-responsibility. At the same time we do our best to ensure the safety of our students and take all reasonable steps to establish a safe practice environment.
- We seek information about the level of students experience, physical capacity and health and teach according to the level of experience and physical capacity of our students.
- We encourage students to contact experienced specialists if we notice they need professional healing treatment. We are willing to communicate and cooperate with the student's attending specialist in order to support in a safe and positive way the best possible health progress.
- We conduct our financial affairs (accounts, wages, taxes, etc.) in line with the legal requirements of the country we teach/work in.

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- It is our personal responsibility to ensure, that the necessary requirements in regards to insurance are met in alignment with the local standards.

Ethical guidelines

- We recognize the equal worth of all human beings, regardless of gender, ethnic origin and political or religious conviction. As yoga teachers, we respect the intellectual and religious freedom of other individuals.
- We use our yogic knowledge and skills for the benefit of all people with whom we are connected through yoga and not to gain personal advantages.
- As yoga teachers, we act in an honest, respectful, tolerant and responsible manner. We abstain from any mental, physical, social and material exploitation of the students and encourage independent thinking and the development of individual responsibility. We respect the different motives for course attendance and handle personal information in a confidential manner.
- We promote our teaching ability truthfully and do not use unrealistic promises of healing.
- We display our affiliation with an organisation in an appropriate manner and use only those titles accredited to us by the Satyananda Yoga Tradition.
- We clarify with students at the outset (and where appropriate with their parents) exactly what is expected of them and what they are entitled to expect from the teacher. We give students every opportunity to decline any aspect of practice they feel may be unhelpful.
- We recognize that the teacher-student relationship may involve an imbalance of power. As teachers, we are responsible for setting and monitoring boundaries in keeping professional relationships with our students.
- We also recognize that a power imbalance may exist between yoga associates within the wider yoga community. We do not use this influence for our own personal gain, or the gain of any institution or organisation with which we are associated.
- We avoid and fight all forms of sexual exploitation, harassment and assault and any forms of bullying. Any form of sexual behaviour between teacher and student is unacceptable in all situations, either in or out of the classroom, including when a student invites or consents to such behaviour. The only exception is an on-going sexual relationship that predates the teacher-student relationship.

Child Protection/ 'Safeguarding' Children

ESYF members accept the moral and legal responsibility to provide a duty of care for young people and implement procedures to safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse.

ESYF members teaching yoga or organizing yoga programmes for children (a child in this context refers to any young person under the age of 18) need specialized knowledge and training beyond that contained in the usual Satyananda Yoga Teacher Training Courses. This training should include:

- Child Protection: How to recognise, record and report child abuse and how to support a child who has made a disclosure without interfering with a child protection investigation.
- Stages in children's development and how teaching yoga is effective and safe according to a child's physical and emotional maturity.
- Ethical considerations in teaching children.

If you have a concern or complaint about an apparent breach of the Guidelines for ESYF Members, please consult the *ESYF Grievance Procedure* for further guidance.