

**Building Good
Relations with People
of Different Faiths
and Beliefs**

*The
Inter Faith
Network
for the
United Kingdom*



The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between the faith communities of this country. This code is endorsed by all its member bodies.

Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs

In Britain today, people of many different faiths and beliefs live side by side. The opportunity lies before us to work together to build a society rooted in the values we treasure. But this society can only be built on a sure foundation of mutual respect, openness and trust. This means finding ways to live our lives of faith with integrity, and allowing others to do so too. Our different religious traditions offer us many resources for this and teach us the importance of good relationships characterised by honesty, compassion and generosity of spirit. The Inter Faith Network offers the following code of conduct for encouraging and strengthening these relationships.

As members of the human family, we should show each other respect and courtesy. In our dealings with people of other faiths and beliefs this means exercising good will and:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to express their beliefs and convictions
- Learning to understand what others actually believe and value, and letting them express this in their own terms
- Respecting the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behaving in ways which cause needless offence
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions and never comparing our own *ideals* with other people's *practices*
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict
- Always seeking to avoid violence in our relationships

When we talk about matters of faith with one another, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This means:

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for a genuine conversation
- Being honest about our beliefs and religious allegiances
- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices
- Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations not only of our own but also of other faiths whenever we come across them
- Being straightforward about our intentions
- Accepting that in formal inter faith meetings there is a particular responsibility to ensure that the religious commitment of all those who are present will be respected

All of us want others to understand and respect our views. Some people will also want to persuade others to join their faith. In a multi faith society where this is permitted, the attempt should always be characterised by self-restraint and a concern for the other's freedom and dignity. This means:

- Respecting another person's expressed wish to be left alone
- Avoiding imposing ourselves and our views on individuals or communities who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these
- Being sensitive and courteous
- Avoiding violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements, or the misuse of any kind of power
- Respecting the right of others to disagree with us

Living and working together is not always easy. Religion harnesses deep emotions which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of religion are healing and positive. We have a great deal to learn from one another which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

Member Organisations of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

Faith Community Representative Bodies

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (UK)
Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom
Board of Deputies of British Jews
Buddhist Society
Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland
Churches' Commission for Inter-Faith Relations
(Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)
Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)
Friends of the Western Buddhist Order
Hindu Council (UK)
Hindu Forum of Britain
Imams and Mosques Council (UK)
Islamic Cultural Centre, Regents Park, London
Jain Samaj Europe
Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)
Muslim Council of Britain
National Council of Hindu Temples
Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations
Roman Catholic Committee for Other Faiths,
Bishops Conference of England and Wales
Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB
Swaminarayan Hindu Mission
Unitarian and Free Christian Churches' Interfaith
Subcommittee
Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)
World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League
World Islamic Mission (UK)
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

Inter Faith Organisations

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum
Scottish Inter Faith Council
Inter Faith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Cyd-Ffydd Cymru
Alif Aleph UK
Christians Aware Interfaith Programme
Council of Christians and Jews
Interfaith Foundation
International Association for Religious Freedom (British
Chapter)
International Interfaith Centre
London Society of Jews and Christians
Maimonides Foundation
Minorities of Europe Inter Faith Action Programme
Religions for Peace (UK Chapter)
Three Faiths Forum
United Religions Initiative (Britain and Ireland)
Westminster Interfaith
World Congress of Faiths

Local Inter Faith Bodies

Altrincham Inter Faith Group
Bedford Council of Faiths
Birmingham Council of Faiths
Blackburn with Darwin
Interfaith Council
Bolton Interfaith Council
Bradford Concord Interfaith Society
Brent Inter Faith
Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group

Bristol Inter Faith Group
Burnley Building Bridges
Cambridge Inter-Faith Group
Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action
Cardiff Interfaith Association
Cleveland Interfaith Group
Coventry Inter Faith Group
Coventry Multi Faith Forum
Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group
Dudley Borough Interfaith Network
Gateshead Inter Faith Forum
Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action
Harrow Inter Faith Council
Hounslow Friends of Faith
Huddersfield Interfaith Council
Lancashire Forum of Faiths
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum
Leicester Council of Faiths
Loughborough Council of Faiths
Luton Council of Faiths
Manchester Interfaith Forum
Medway Inter Faith Action
Merseyside Council of Faiths
Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)
Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges
Newcastle Council of Faiths
Newham Faith Sector Forum
North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council
North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths
Northampton Faiths Forum
Nottingham Inter Faith Council
Oldham Inter Faith Forum
Oxford Round Table of Religions
Peterborough Inter-Faith Council
Reading Inter-Faith Group
Redbridge Council of Faiths
Rochdale Multifaith Partnership
Sheffield Interfaith
South London Inter Faith Group
Southampton Council of Faiths
Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource
Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group
Warrington Council of Faiths
Watford Inter Faith Association
Wellingborough Multi-Faith Group
Whalley Range (Manchester) Inter Faith Group
Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group
Wycombe Sharing of Faiths

Educational and Academic Bodies

Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations
Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim
Relations
Community Religions Project, University of Leeds
Institute of Jainology
Islamic Foundation
Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby
National Association of SACREs
Religious Education Council for England and Wales
Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education
Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter

This code is also available in the following languages: Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

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