

Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall Anand Karaj Guidelines & Policy

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Version 1.2

Last Updated: Jan 2024

Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall (SGSSS) Anand Karaj (Wedding) Guidelines

Version 1.2

Last Updated: Jan 2024

Acknowledgements: YourLaavan, Sikh Council UK, Sikh Education Council

Introduction:

Dear Couple,

Congratulations on your upcoming Anand Karaj ceremony at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall!

This document explains the significance of the Anand Karaj ceremony and the promise between you and Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It will help you understand the profound blessings of this sacred union. In addition, it will give you guidance on how the day will go.

It also lists what is required from you to secure your booking and a declaration that you must sign to confirm that you will abide by the booking conditions.

Please take time out to read this short guide so you feel well equipped on the day.

If you have any questions or need any help, please don't hesitate to reach out to our team email gensec@sgsss.org

CHECKLIST

1. Obtain and read this Anand Karaj Guideline []
2. Sign and return the Anand Karaj Guideline declaration on Page 18 []
3. Book your Anand Karaj Date (by visiting Guru Nanak Road or Park Ave Gurdwara) []
4. Book your Anand Karaj course by visiting our website and complete it []
5. Ensure all paperwork has been submitted to complete your booking []

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Anand Karaj Rules

Message from Guru Granth Sahib

Sikh Marriage - A Path of Spiritual Unity

Sikhi values marriage as a joint spiritual journey where husband and wife support each other to lead a positive, Guru-centred life. The unity of souls in marriage brings faithfulness, loyalty, forgiveness, and companionship. Guru Amar Das Ji beautifully expresses this union:

"They are not said to be husband and wife, who merely sit together, rather they alone are called husband and wife, who have one soul in two bodies."

Anand Karaj Course

All couples looking to complete their Anand Karaj at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall must undertake a free Anand Karaj Course. The course will be available throughout the year and can be booked by visiting: www.sgsss.org/anandkaraj

The course will cover:

- 1) The concept of marriage in Sikhi
- 2) Understanding the Anand Karaj ceremony

Wedding invitation - Guidelines:

PLEASE DO NOT PRINT GURBANI IN GURMUKHI FONT on wedding cards, posters, Akhand paath invitations, or any other event-related invites.

Gurbani is the divine Word of Waheguru (God), and we treat it with the utmost reverence. Printing Gurbani on wedding invitations may lead to disrespect, as it could end up discarded or in inappropriate places.

If you wish to include a Gurbani verse, we request an alternative approach: simply write it in English transliteration font and provide a translation. For example:

“Lakh khushee-aa paatshaahee-aa, je satgur nadar kare-i”

Hundreds of thousands of princely pleasures are enjoyed if the True Guru bestows His Glance of Grace.

Invitation details for the Gurdwara:

Please feel free to adjust your times accordingly, however, any time changes will need to be approved by the Gurdwara to save any confusion or disappointment on the day.

Address of the Gurdwara to add in your wedding invitations:

Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall, Guru Nanak Road, Southall, UB2 4NP

Or

Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall, 2-8 Park Avenue, Southall, UB1 3AG

Typical timings of the wedding ceremony to add in your wedding invitations:

- Arrival of Bharat: 9:00 am
- Milni: 9:30 am
- Chaa Pani: 10:00 am
- Laavan: 11:00 am

Catering:

The couple is responsible for coordinating with their caterers for cha pani, food, setting up tables in the langar hall, serving food, and cleaning up afterward.

Only approved caterers are permitted to cater on Gurdwara premises. Details of approved caterers will be provided to you at the time of booking. Gurdwara sevadaars are not involved in this process.

Please ensure your caterer knows that the langar hall is cleared of any food dropped on the floor. A vacuum cleaner can be requested from the Security Guard. The Gurdwara only permits strictly vegetarian and egg-free food.

Things to let your guests and suppliers know:

- Upon entering the Gurdwara, remove your shoes and wash your hands in the designated area.
- Ensure your head is properly covered. Headscarves (chunnis) and bandanas (ramaals) are available at the entrance if needed. Please ensure your whole head is covered.
- Wear appropriate and respectful clothing, and kindly inform non-Sikh guests about the dress code to avoid any embarrassment, this includes ensuring this means ensuring the midriff and chest is covered.
- Enter Darbar Sahib calmly and maintain focus on Guru Granth Sahib Ji throughout the ceremony- being focussed on the Lavaan, Kirtan and Guru will help settle nerves and allow you to feel present.

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- Intoxication is strictly prohibited; anyone found with intoxicants (including alcohol, tobacco or drugs) will be asked to leave the Gurdwara premises.
- Silence your mobile phones to maintain the sanctity of the wedding ceremony. Inform your guests to not talk whilst the ceremony is going on, they should be present and enjoying the Anand Karaj along with you.
- Fold your hands and walk slowly down the aisle towards Guru Granth Sahib Ji.
- Bow humbly, touching your forehead to the ground as a sign of respect for Guru Granth Sahib Ji.
- Place offerings in front of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, such as money in the golak (charity box) and the rumalla sahib (clothing gift) on top of the golak (do not place the rumalla sahib on the floor).
- Male guests sit on one side, and female guests sit on the opposite side.
- Maintain silence and avoid chewing gum inside Darbar Sahib, as it is disrespectful to Guru Granth Sahib Ji.
- Sit comfortably, preferably in a cross-legged position, but never point your feet in the direction of Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Parking Information:

We have a limited number of car park spaces available at both Gurdwara premises.

There are some public car parks in the area:

1. Featherstone Terrace Car Park, Southall UB2 4AX
2. Norwood Road, Southall, UB2 4EA

The following items are prohibited:

You are here to seek the blessings of Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

(This includes on the street when arriving to the Gurdwara)

- NO DANCING
- NO DHOL
- NO MUSIC
- NO BHANGRA
- NO SMOKE
- NO CIGARETTES IN POCKETS

We kindly ask everyone to honour this request, as it comes from the members of this Gurdwara and ensures a respectful and peaceful environment for the Sangat.

Guidance for the bride and groom:

- Dress comfortably: Naturally you want to dress your best at your wedding, however you will be in the Darbar of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and we need you to respect this sacred space.
- During the Anand Karaj you will be sitting and walking, hence you will want to do this with ease and comfortably. Many shops, particularly overseas, have been overcharging brides for extravagant and impractical outfits (Lengas). With hindsight, brides often regret their choice of outfit for the following reasons: The weight being too heavy, The top lifting when doing matha tekna, Not being able to sit properly because the skirt was too tight or too many underlays. Dupatta/chunni being too heavy/uncomfortable.
- We often see couples struggling to maintain their outfits which distracts from the Anand Karaj. As such both the bride and groom **must wear modest clothing, this means ensuring the midriff and chest is covered.** Please ensure clothing is secure and comfortable, and avoid outfits which are not practical to sit or move in.
- If you have any questions, please get in touch with us by emailing info@sgsss.org.
- Brothers 'guiding' the bride during the Lavaan: The bride has a choice not to have her brothers 'guide' her during the Lavaan. Historically, brothers had to protect the bride from being kidnapped or robbed during the ceremony, or ensure the bride didn't run away, as she was being forced to marry. These issues are not so common nowadays, so why not keep the focus of the Anand Karaj to the couple and Guru Granth Sahib Ji?
- Listen to Lavaan di Bani - the shabads that will be recited at your wedding. Read the translations that are in this pack and take time to reflect on this- individually and as a couple
- Familiarise yourself with when to get up (when you hear Guru Nanak Dev Ji's name), & when to Matha Tek (every time you stand up and every time you sit down). Start going around Guru Granth Sahib Ji when you go to the Gurdwara, get familiar with the space you will be walking around

Order of the day:

- Arrival of Bride:

Upon the bride's arrival, one of our staff will introduce themselves and provide a brief tour of the Gurdwara. The tour will include the location of essential areas, such as the ladies' room, jora ghar (shoe rack), langar hall, and bridal waiting area.

- Groom's Arrival:

The Groom, along with his family and guests, will wait in the foyer for the milni

- Milni

The milni ceremony is a formal greeting between the two sets of extended families. It typically occurs in the main Foyer. The ceremony includes an Ardas led by the Granthi Ji. After the milni, families should proceed to the downstairs hall for cha pani (breakfast).

- Cha Pani (Breakfast):

We request the bride to make her breakfast arrangements amongst the family to ensure you have food for yourself and please remember to clean up behind you and treat Gurdwara premises with respect.

Once breakfast is complete, all guests and the Groom should proceed to the Darbar Sahib.

- Entering Darbar Sahib:

The Groom will enter Darbar Sahib with his family and guests, Matha Tek (bow humbly), place the Rumalla Sahib on the golak, and sit on the male's side towards the front. The bride will remain in the bride's room until called.

The Kurmai ceremony will be conducted by either the Groom, if already completed, or the bride's male family members as guided by the Granthi (Priest).

Throughout the Anand Karaj ceremony, the Groom should not place his kirpan on the floor at any time; it should be kept in his lap.

- Kurmai Ceremony:

If the Kurmai has not been conducted before, it will take place just before the Anand Karaj Laavan, before the bride enters the Darbar Sahib.

The Granthi (priest) will announce for the bride's family to come forward and conduct the Kurmai ceremony.

The Groom will remain seated on the men's side of the Darbar and open his hazoori/palla (material worn around the neck) to create a space for placing items.

The bride's father and other male family members will present Pyaar (money and gifts) to the Groom and place nuts and sweet items into the Groom's open palla in his lap.

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- Bride's Entrance:

After the Kurmai ceremony, the Groom sits in front of Guru Granth Sahib Ji to the right side, preparing for the Anand Karaj.

The Granthi announces the bride's entrance into the Darbar Sahib.

The bride follows the protocol outlined earlier, showing respect to Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

The bride bows to Guru Granth Sahib Ji, places the Ramalla Sahib inside the Palki or on top of the golak, and sits to the left of the Groom.

- Registrar:

Remember to submit your Notice of Marriage to the Local Authority within the required timeframe. Hand both Groom and Bride's documents to the Gurdwara's Main Office at least four weeks before the wedding day.

Before the ceremony, meet the registrar individually for final checks and have one witness each for signing the registration documents.

- Pre-Anand Karaj Shabads:

Before the Anand Karaj, the Kirtan Jatha recites a shabad, seeking blessings from Waheguru for the wedding ceremony, whilst the couple remains seated:

“Keetaa lorreeai kamm su har pehi aakheeai, kaaraj de-é savaar sat(i)gur sach saakheeai”
Whatever work you wish to accomplish-tell it to the Lord. He will resolve your affairs; the True Guru gives His Guarantee of Truth.

- Palle Dee Rasam:

A parental figure of the bride takes one end of the groom's Palla and places it in the hands of the bride, symbolising the union of both souls, spiritually and in a worldly sense. It also signifies the parental figure officially giving their daughter for marriage.

- Laavan Di Ardas:

Both bride and groom will stand for the Ardas along with their parents (whilst the rest of the congregation remain seated), This is seeking God's blessings through the reading of the Ardas. Following on from this, the Hukamnama (order) is recited for the congregation to contemplate on.

- Hukamnama:

A Hukamnama is Guru Granth Sahib Ji's reply to our humble request in the Ardas. The Granthi reads a random verse, granting permission and blessings for the Laavan to begin.

- What is the Lavaan:

The Lavaan is neither an exchange of vows nor a symbolic act of commitment to one another; rather the Anand Karaj connects both individuals on a journey together, spiritually, and worldly, through the Guru's teachings.

When partaking in the Anand Karaj, two Sikhs come to the Guru for guidance on how they should lead their lives. The Guru responds by explaining how their life can unfold if they live according to the wisdom of the Shabad, through Lavaan Di Bani (the Anand Karaj prayer).

The four-part Shabad that is the focus of the ceremony depicts the coming together of the souls (the bride) and Divinity (the groom); but these words have a secondary meaning which is interpreted as the coming together of the bride and groom on a life journey towards the Guru.

- What happens during the Lavaan:

1. The Granthi reads each Laav from Guru Granth Sahib Ji, followed by Kirtan (singing) of the Laav.
2. Bride and Groom bow down in front of Guru Granth Sahib Ji before standing up.
3. Groom leads the way for the parkarma (walking around Guru Granth Sahib Ji) in a clockwise direction, starting from the left side of the Palki.
4. Bride firmly holds the palla and walks behind the Groom at a slow pace.
5. It takes approximately 2-3 minutes to complete one round.
6. Bride and Groom go all the way around Guru Granth Sahib Ji, keeping their focus on Guru Ji, and return to the front where they started.
7. After completing the parkarma, Bride and Groom stand side by side until the Kirtan ends.

8. The Granthi reads the second Laav, and the process repeats for a total of four rounds.

- What does each Laav mean:

1. The Guru begins by setting out the blueprint of the journey you are both embarking on, together. You are leaving behind all past discretions, actions, and beliefs to come together before the Guru, who you both accept as being your teacher above all others. Doing this together, you draw strength from one another, enhancing the way you interact and grow with each other.
2. Together, you come to realise that all things are bound by a divine light, what we call 'God' and that this light exists everywhere and in everything. Your fears in life are removed one by one. If you can put into practice what you learn from the Guru, you will gain a profound understanding for all creation. You will only see One and begin to see as One, thinking and acting alike.
3. Your love and desire to be content is clear. Contemplate the Guru together whilst in the presence of other great souls. When that happens, your contemplation leads you to realise what the Guru's teachings are. In doing this, you free yourselves from everyday norms and you come to realise the deeper meaning of life.
4. You have come together to achieve enlightenment and marital bliss. Your mind and body find steadiness - you are now both One. This marriage is blessed and having set out together, before the Guru, your journey to find bliss is now complete.

- Shabad recited after the Lavaan:

After the completion of the Laavan, the Granthi (Priest) typically sings the following Shabad, expressing the joy of marriage and spiritual realization. It speaks of finding God through the guidance of the Guru, dispelling ignorance, and embracing the divine knowledge. The Shabad celebrates the union with God as a priceless treasure, freeing the individual from ego and suffering. The marriage is seen as a sacred bond with the immortal form of God, and the entire ceremony is a testament to the spiritual journey guided by Guru's instruction.

“Viahu hoa mere babula, gurmukhe har paia. Agiaan andhera katia gur gian parchand balaia. Balia gur gian andhera binsia har ratan padarath ladha. Haumai rog gaia dukh latha aap apai gurmat khadha. Akaal moorat var paia abhinasi na kade marai na jaia. Viahu hoa mere babola gurmukhe har paia”

- This is followed by Anand Sahib:

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After completing the Laavan, 6 verses of Anand Sahib, composed by Guru Amar Das Ji, will be sung, celebrating the state of blissfulness. The Sangat can offer a donation to the Kirtani Jatha before leaving the Darbar Sahib to avoid disruption.

Communal Ardas: The Ardas is a formal prayer for everyone in the Darbar Sahib to seek blessings for the newly wedded couple. After bowing to Guru Granth Sahib Ji and standing, the Ardas concludes with the Jaikara, "Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal," signifying fulfilment and reverence to the Timeless Master. This is followed by another Hukamnama:

- Hukamnama:

It is Guru Granth Sahib Ji's message to the couple in response to their Ardas. The couple should focus on it as the foundation of their marriage, trying to understand and remember it. Regularly contemplating on the message will strengthen their relationship with each other and with Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

- Saggan:

After the Hukamnama, the Bride's parents will give sweet food (Mitiyayee/ladoo) and money to the Bride and Groom. While the Sangat also wants to give Saggan. You will be informed of the location of the saggan. The Gurdwara reserves the right to prohibit saggan within the Darbar itself.

- Karah Parshaad (Degh) Distribution:

Giani Ji will distribute the sacred sweet pudding, Karah Parshaad, by placing it in your cupped hands. It is made of flour, ghee, sugar, and water and is considered holy communion and a gift from Guru Ji for the congregation.

- Leaving Darbar Sahib:

Please leave quietly and responsibly, disposing of any used tissues in the bins outside. If the Bride & Groom stay for a photoshoot, remember to take your personal belongings and kirpan. Avoid taking photos with your back towards Guru Granth Sahib Ji, as it is disrespectful.

If you need more information please contact

Gurunanakroad@sgsss.org , Parkavenue@sgsss.org , gensec@sgsss.org

Thank you for reading through the Anand Karaj pack. We hope you will find this information useful.

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE SECTION

This guidance has been prepared in line with guidance from Sri Akaal Takht Sahib and from the Sikh Council on mixed faith marriages in a Gurdwara.

Background

The guidelines below have been developed through a comprehensive consultation. In developing the guidelines, Sikh Council UK consulted with Gurdwara Committees, Sikh Organisations, and individuals. Consultation methods included: emails, mailshots to Gurdwaras across UK, regional meetings, workshops, telephone conversations, and face to face discussions. Below is the 5th and final version of the guidelines as approved by the General Assembly of Sikh Council UK on 11th October 2014, adapted by Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to progress towards agreeing a consistent approach to Anand Karaj (Sikh marriage) ceremonies across Gurdwaras in adherence to the Panth Parvaan Sikh Rehat Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct & conventions) for circumstances where one partner is not of Sikh origin.
- 1.2. There are many communities that have a historical tradition of following many tenets of the Sikh Faith and regularly engage in religious ceremonies and contribute to the Gurdwaras. This document does not address any issues relating to their practices as it is a subject of separate discussion as to how they can be supported to better understand and follow the Sikh Rehat Maryada.

2. Background

- 2.1. This policy has been prepared to set out a process to ensure that marriages take place in accordance with Sikh Rehat Maryada and the supporting Sandesh (edict) of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib (as attached).
- 2.2. The Sikh Rehat Maryada Article XVIII Clause K states that “ਅਨਮਤ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਆਹ ਅਨੰਦ ਰੀਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਸਕਦਾ |” meaning persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the Anand Karaj ceremony. Also at XVIII clause B, “ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਪੁਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਵਆਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਹੋਵੇ |” meaning a Sikh’s daughter must be married to a Sikh.

In the Sikh spirit of gender equality, it is implied that a Sikh's son must also be married to a Sikh.

2.3. On 16 August 2007 Sri Akal Takhat Sahib issued a Sandesh clarifying that the Anand Karaj ceremony can only be conducted for Sikhs and that any person of non-Sikh origin wishing to take part in an Anand Karaj must adopt the Sikh faith and have Singh or Kaur added to his or her name on relevant identity documents.

2.3.1. In spite of this clear guidance, marriages have taken place in Gurdwaras where one partner is not a Sikh.

2.3.2. There are examples where the partner claims to have accepted Sikhi and undertakes a false wedding in a Gurdwara to appease the parents of the Sikh partner. In other examples, two religious ceremonies take place, one in the Gurdwara and the other at the religious place of worship of the non-Sikh partner.

2.3.3. Some examples have emerged where the Anand Karaj has taken place without the non-Sikh partner accepting the Sikh faith. Then the Sikh partner is converted for the second religious ceremony.

2.3.4. Due to this non adherence to the Sikh Rehat Maryada, examples have emerged of local tensions and there continue to be risks of breach of the peace and litigation.

2.3.5. The responsibility lies both with individuals and the Gurdwara to ensure that there has been a formal acceptance of the Sikh religion. The definition of a Sikh in the Rehat Maryada is: "Any human being [man or woman] who faithfully believes in: One Immortal Being; Ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh; the Guru Granth Sahib; the utterances and teachings of the ten Gurus and the baptism bequeathed by the tenth Guru and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion, is a Sikh."

2.3.6. From a practical point of view, it is important to ensure that there is a genuine acceptance of the Sikh faith, a commitment to live the life of a Sikh and to also raise any children as Sikhs.

3. Approach to ensure adherence to the Sikh Rehat Maryada

3.1. Any person wishing to exercise the choice to marry in a Gurdwara Sahib through the Anand Karaj ceremony must sign a declaration (Appendix 1) that confirms:

- He or she is a Sikh, believes in the tenets of the Sikh faith and owes no allegiance to another faith or ideology.
- He or she will adopt Singh (for males) or Kaur (for females) in his or her name as his or her middle name or surname.
- The Anand Karaj ceremony will be the only religious ceremony that the person will take part in for the purposes of marriage.
- He or she will endeavour to bring up any children from his or her marriage as Sikhs, to give them the middle name or surname Singh (for male) or Kaur (for female), to teach them Punjabi and the tenets of the Sikh faith.

4. Procedure for SGSSS

4.1. To implement the above proposals, SGSSS will follow the procedure below for meeting the couple prior to the Anand Karaj:

- Upon receiving a request for a booking for an Anand Karaj SGSSS will invite the couple to the Gurdwara (preferably together but individually where this is not possible).
- The Gurdwara will assign trained individuals who are fluent in English and Punjabi to meet the couple to discuss about the Anand Karaj and the declaration. The couple will be asked to reflect on the discussion and will be provided with literature on the Anand Karaj and the Sikh faith. Information for the couple is provided in this document.
- The couple will be required to undertake an approved Anand Karaj course.
- The couple will be invited back to the Gurdwara after conducting the course to discuss any issues or questions and satisfy themselves that they understand the meanings of what they are accepting and agreeing to.
- If the couple are in agreement and willing to sign the declaration and the Gurdwara is satisfied of this, the Gurdwara representative will ask the couple to sign the declaration and in the case of individuals of formerly non-Sikh origin to present the relevant identity documents. A Gurdwara representative will witness the declaration signatures.
- At the Anand Karaj the couple will be reminded of their commitment before the ceremony. An Ardas will also take place on the day of the Anand Karaj before the Anand Karaj ceremony itself in the presence of all the Sangat welcoming the individual into the Sikh Faith. An English/Gurmukhi Gutka will be given with a Kara.

4.2. The Gurdwara will ensure that the couple has awareness of the following basic Sikh tenets:

- Belief in only One God The ten Gurus from Guru Nanak through to Guru Gobind Singh Ji and their Teaching.
- That receiving the gift of Amrit (Khandey de Pahul) as the aspiration of every Sikh at some point in their life
- Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the embodiment of the Sikh doctrines and the eternal Guru
- Not to pay homage to or worship any other deity or person
- Renounce all superstitions and to go about daily life whilst connected to the one Akal Purakh (Timeless Lord)
- Learn and understand the Mool Mantar
- Understanding of the rehits (code of conduct) and kurehits (cardinal sins)

4.3. Where a couple chooses that they are unable to agree to the above requirements and have undertaken a civil marriage in a Registry Office, they will be offered the opportunity to hold an Ardas, Sukhmani Sahib Path, Akhand Path or other service to celebrate their union as husband and wife in the presence of their family, relatives, and friends.

5. Documents

5.1. A standard declaration (Appendix 1) is provided

5.2. Where SGSSS is unable to conduct the Anand Karaj Ceremony in any case due to non-compliance with the requirements set out in this policy, the Gurdwara will inform the couple clearly and without delay. The Gurdwara will confirm the same in writing to the couple for further clarity and to this end in a standard letter (Appendix 2).

Appendix 1

Declaration for Anand Karaj

I (name)..... voluntarily declare and affirm that:

1. I am a Sikh, that I believe in the tenets of the Sikh faith and that I owe no allegiance to any other faith or ideology.
2. I have, or I will adopt Singh (for male) or Kaur (for female) in my name as my middle name or surname.
3. The Anand Karaj ceremony will be the only religious ceremony that I will take part in for the purposes of marriage.
4. I will endeavour to bring up any children from my marriage as Sikhs, to give them the middle name or surname Singh (for male) or Kaur (for female), to teach them Punjabi and the tenets of the Sikh faith.
5. I agree for an Ardas to be performed on the day of my Anand Karaj welcoming me into the Sikh faith in the presence of the Sangat.

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Address:

Witness Signature:

Date:

Witness Name:

Witness Address:

Appendix 2

[Date]

Dear [name] and [name],

With regret, we write to inform you that we are unable to conduct an Anand Karaj (Sikh wedding) ceremony for you.

The Sikh Rehat Maryada, Article XVIII, clearly states that "Persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the Anand Karaj ceremony".

The Sikh Rehat Maryada is the accepted Sikh code of conduct promulgated by the Akal Takhat, which is the supreme temporal authority of the Sikh faith.

The Akal Takhat has issued further clarification by way of a Sandesh (edict) dated 16 August 2007, that a person of non-Sikh origin who wishes to undertake the Anand Karaj ceremony must adopt the Sikh faith and have Singh (for males) and Kaur (for females) as his or her middle or surname (the 'August 2007 Sandesh').

If, on reflection, you feel that you are able to meet with the above requirements, please do contact us and we will be more than happy to assist you.

If you choose to be married in a civil ceremony elsewhere, we would be happy to discuss with you holding some other form of service at the Gurdwara, such as an Ardas, a Sukhmani Sahib paath, an Akhand paath, to celebrate and commemorate your union as husband and wife.

In any event, we would like to emphasise and reassure you that you are both welcome at the Gurdwara as members of the congregation, both individually and as a couple. The Sikh faith is open to all without distinction, and we very much encourage you to attend.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[position]

This guidance has been prepared in line with guidance from Sri Akaal Takht Sahib and from the Sikh Council on mixed faith marriages in a Gurdwara.

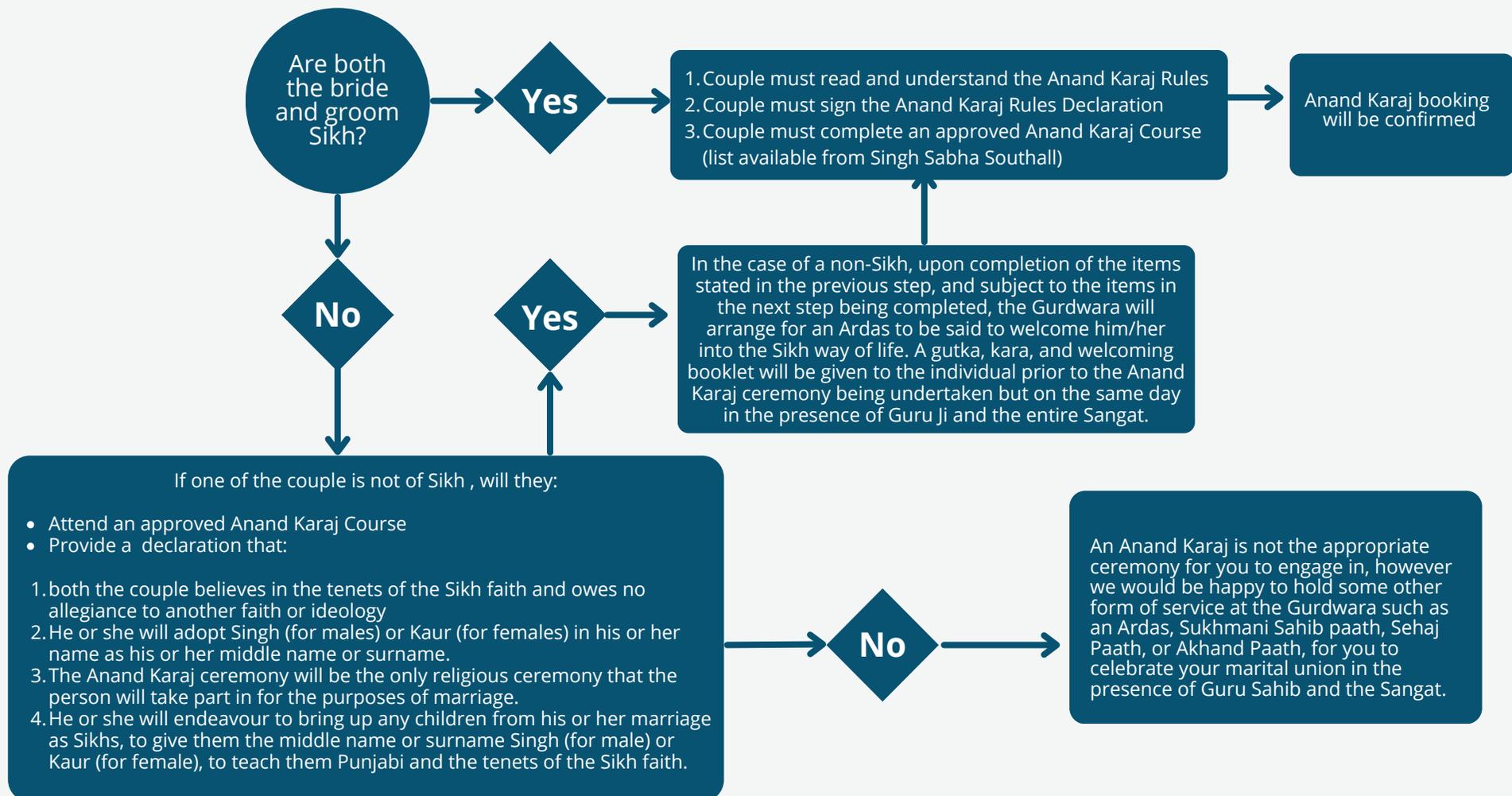
1.1. The Sikh Rehat Maryada Article XVIII Clause K states that “ਅਨਮਤ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਅਨੰਦ ਰੀਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਸਕਦਾ |” meaning persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the Anand Karaj ceremony. Also at XVIII clause B, “ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਪੁਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਹੋਵੇ |” meaning a Sikh's daughter must be married to a Sikh.

In the Sikh spirit of gender equality, it is implied that a Sikh's son must also be married to a Sikh.

1.2. On 16 August 2007 Sri Akal Takhat Sahib issued a Sandesh clarifying that the Anand Karaj ceremony can only be conducted for Sikhs and that any person of non-Sikh origin wishing to take part in an Anand Karaj must adopt the Sikh faith and have Singh or Kaur added to his or her name on relevant identity documents.

Our policy has been prepared to cater for those couples where one partner is not of Sikh Origin but there is a genuine acceptance of the Sikh faith, a commitment to live the life of a Sikh and to also raise any children as Sikhs.

ALL COUPLES HAVING AN ANAND KARAJ MUST COMPLETE AN APPROVED ANAND KARAJ COURSE



Anand Karaj Rules Declaration

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have thoroughly read and understood the guidelines provided. I agree to fully abide by all the rules and stipulations contained within these guidelines. I understand that adherence to these guidelines is mandatory and failure to comply may result in my Anand Karaj booking at Singh Sabha Southall being cancelled.

Signature(s):` _____

Signature Date: _____

Date of Anand Karaj:_____

Site of Anand Karaj: Park Avenue / Guru Nanak Road Gurdwara (delete as applicable)

A copy of the declaration must be signed separately by both the Bride & Groom and submitted as part of the booking process.

Guidance: The bride and groom can either sign the same copy of the deceleration or separate copies.