



NORTHERN SUBURBS DOG TRAINING CLUB INC.

## Northern Suburbs Dog Training Club Code of Conduct and Complaints Policy

### **Members code of conduct in person, via email and on social media**

- Treat everybody with respect, courtesy, fairness and honesty
- Promote a collaborative and harmonious environment
- Act with due care and diligence and follow club safety rules
- Follow Facebook protocols
- Compose and reply to emails respectfully
- Understand the guidelines and advice that underpin and support NSDTC's positive reinforcement training methods
- Uphold the values and good reputation of the club
- Avoid conflicts, report conflicts that cannot be avoided and cooperate in conflict management
- Only use official information for the club-related purpose for which it was intended
- Only use a position and / or resources for a proper purpose

### **Complaints Policy for members**

A member who is unhappy with the conduct of another member may report this to the secretary in writing to: NSDTC, PO Box 426, Turramurra, NSW 2074

The secretary will contact the member to acknowledge that the complaint has been received and inform the President who will discuss the complaint with a Chief Instructor or Discipline Coordinator as relevant. The President may call a meeting with the Vice-Presidents, the Office bearers or a whole committee meeting as necessary to discuss the complaint and decide on a response and/or resolution.

The secretary will keep a record of the process and resolution and communicate the response and/or resolution as needed.

In the event of persistent inappropriate conduct or a single incident of unlawful behaviour, unlawful discrimination or acting in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the club, the committee will meet and may, by majority, vote to impose a suspension of up to 3 months on a member. Suspensions longer than 3 months or expulsion will invoke the constitutional process.

If the complaint is between discipline coordinators, the Secretary will directly inform the President who will decide on appropriate action. If the complaint is about the President, the secretary will inform the Vice-Presidents who will decide on appropriate action.

A register of complaints, complainants and resolution/response processes will be kept by the Secretary and reviewed periodically by the President and Vice-Presidents.

## **Appendices for NSDTC Code of Conduct and Complaints Policy**

### **Appendix A Some examples of inappropriate conduct**

- bullying
- name calling and other negative comments
- negative comments about members work
- not recognising all members as equals
- deliberate exclusion of a member or members
- passing on emails unnecessarily, especially emails with negative comments about others
- using email addresses of members for non-official purposes
- deleting or controlling Facebook posts without following due process
- inappropriate or negative Facebook posts
- angry or rude outbursts
- verbal threats or swearing
- physical threats or physical contact
- aversive training methods with dogs

### **Appendix B Definition of bullying**

Bullying is behaviour deliberately repeated over time that causes physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can have immediate and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Bullying can happen in person or online.

### **Appendix C Register of complaints content**

- Complaint / report of inappropriate or unlawful conduct
- Name of complainant
- Brief description of process followed and resolution
- Relevant dates

### **Appendix D Defamation definition**

Defamation is broadly defined as a statement that tends to diminish an individual's reputation in the estimate of others. Defamation laws typically allow an individual or organisation to claim some redress for a statement found to be defamatory. Whilst NSDTC believes in the right of everyone to their opinion, when posting to the group, if you are dissatisfied with the work or dealings of an individual or organisation, please do not name them. Potentially defamatory statements are not permitted and will be removed by the administrators.

## Appendix E: Committee considerations for complaint resolution processes

Considerations for the committee include, but are not restricted to:

All communications regarding complaints (written or otherwise) are confidential to the committee and the sender of the communication/s.

Possible resolutions / actions in response to a complaint (aligned to the Associations Incorporation Regulations 2022):

- The president or president and vice-presidents meet with the complainant to discuss their complaint/s and attempt to reach a resolution. A resolution is reached.
- The Office bearers meet to consider a possible response to a complaint.
- The committee is asked to meet to discuss possible resolutions / responses if initial attempts to reach a resolution have not succeeded.
- The committee may refuse to deal with a complaint if the committee considers the complaint is trivial or vexatious. (This could be upon initial receipt of the complaint or at another stage of the resolution process).
- The committee may consider these actions:
  - Not proceeding with a complaint and informing the complainant as to why.
  - Deciding on a final resolution after considering all perspectives and informing the complainant of this and why.
  - Leaving a complaint unresolved in the complaints register and informing the complainant why.
  - Seeking legal support on how to inform the complainant of a resolution or that the complaint is considered closed.
  - A short suspension of up to 3 months as per the Code of Conduct referenced in the club's constitution. For a short suspension to occur, a full committee meeting needs to be held so the matter can be discussed and voted on. It requires a majority vote.
  - Where the complainant has also informed DOGS NSW of their complaint, a letter to DOGS NSW informing them of the complaint outcome may be considered.
  - The committee will consider making an application to the Community Justice Centre for mediation after 3 months of an internal dispute between 2 members or between a member and the club. Due to the length of time that an application takes, this will be considered only if the committee considers that:
    - the complaint is not considered vexatious and/or trivial
    - and the complainant/s have shown good faith in the club's complaint process by attending a meeting with the President and Vice-Presidents (or other members of the committee) as requested to discuss a complaint/s with the aim of reaching a resolution.
  - If one or both sides in a dispute have not shown any intent to reach a resolution as per processes listed above, the club will inform the members in the dispute of their rights to apply to the Community Justice Centre for mediation.
  - The committee may consider another form of mediation. This would need to be carefully considered as often mediation covers only one complaint and is therefore likely to be at great financial cost to the club. The committee would also need to consider the setting of a precedent.

NB In any subsequent Appendix E updates, reference must remain to the CJC for alignment with the Associations Incorporation Regulations Act 2022.

