

Toronto Humane Society

Member Code of Conduct

Membership in the Toronto Humane Society (“THS”) is a privilege open to every person who meets the criteria for membership and supports THS’ mission: to promote the humane care and protection of all animals and to prevent cruelty and suffering. Just as every animal should be treated with dignity and respect, members are expected to treat staff, volunteers, the organization and each other with respect, as outlined in this Member Code of Conduct.

Purpose and Application

This Code applies to all individuals who hold membership in the Toronto Humane Society, including (but not limited to) annual, senior, junior, honorary and lifetime members. The purpose of the Code is to promote compliance with applicable laws, by-laws and policies; establish standards of conduct and ensure orderly and tolerant behaviour; promote fair and honest dealings; encourage a commitment to achieving THS’ objectives; and promote a culture of integrity, honesty and accountability.

The provisions of the Code apply to actions on THS-owned or controlled property, including THS vehicles; use of communication and information technologies concerning or directed at THS and/or its community; and actions at events that are readily identifiable with THS.

Member Responsibilities

Responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- To treat animals with kindness and respect.
 - To comply with THS policies, procedures and processes.
 - To follow the directions of any member of THS personnel who is acting in the proper performance of his/her duties.
- To behave in an ethical manner and follow the Ontario Human Rights Code.
 - To behave in a manner that is consistent with an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment or hate and to refrain from any conduct which infringes on the rights of others.
 - To behave in a manner that supports a person’s physical or mental well-being and preserves the safety, health, life, dignity or freedom of any person.
 - To comply with this Code of Conduct.

- To use information and communication technologies in a respectful and responsible manner, with care for the potential impact on other individuals and the THS.
- To be honest in all THS-related matters, including not misrepresenting oneself; falsifying or fabricating information, either through omission or commission; or knowingly circulating false or misleading information.
- To behave in a courteous manner while on THS property and at THS events; to treat THS' and other members' property with care; and to use THS' property only for purposes related to THS, its programs and objectives, except as provided by this Code.
- To be thoughtful in raising concerns or complaints, to ensure they are well founded and solution-oriented and without malicious, frivolous, or vexatious intent.
- To participate in an investigation brought about under this Code when requested to do so, and to abide by decisions that result from these processes.

Ethical Behaviour

Members will act fairly at all times, adhere to ethical standards and be accountable for their actions. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, it is a violation of this Code for members to improperly influence other persons, whether intentionally or unintentionally, for private gain or preferential treatment, whether financial or otherwise. This includes offering or accepting an incentive (through agents or otherwise) for the purpose of influencing an official act, inducing a decision to obtain, retain or direct business from or to any person, securing any improper advantage or inappropriate use of this Code of Conduct.

Actions Contrary to THS' Wellbeing

To be able to help animals, THS depends on the goodwill of its donors; donations are critical to THS' continued success and existence. Members active in the fundraising effort shall ensure that all solicitations and communications are accurate and that they clearly and truthfully represent THS and its undertakings. Members shall avoid unethical fundraising practices such as double funding for one undertaking, diversion of funds to uses other than the undertaking for which funds were solicited (except in circumstances where surplus funds have been received), or overstatement of achievements.

Members owe a duty to THS to advance THS' legitimate interests when the opportunity to do so arises. Conversely, any deliberate action that damages, or has the potential to damage, THS financially may result in disciplinary action. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, it is a violation of this Code for members to improperly influence other persons, whether intentionally or unintentionally, regarding fundraising activities or donations.

If a member is responsible for THS' accounting and financial records, s/he must follow THS' policies, procedures and system of internal controls and must accurately convey information about THS' assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses. Any and all invoices and expense reports that members submit must be complete and accurate, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Confidentiality

Maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information, including (but not limited to) personal information, union negotiations and financial records, is essential to THS' successful operation.

Members who gain access to sensitive information, including (but not limited to) passwords, security codes, confidential financial matters or human resource files, must protect and not disclose, transfer or use that information. If a member acquires confidential information, that member has a duty to report acquisition of that information to the Board of Directors.

Pursuant to the Ontario *Corporations Act*, THS must make its list of members available to any member for a reasonable fee provided that member signs an affidavit that the list will only be used only as outlined in the *Corporations Act*. Such list of members may not be used for any other purpose. Wrongful use of that list may result in disciplinary action and liability under the *Corporations Act*, as well action pursuant to this Code of Conduct.

Members will continue to protect such confidential information even after their membership ceases (whether voluntarily, by termination or by any other means). Members will disclose confidential information only if required by law or if otherwise authorized by THS.

Breaches of confidentiality will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action and/or court proceedings.

Constructive Feedback

THS welcomes constructive criticism and encourages feedback. Members with concerns, compliments or helpful suggestions should email membership@torontohumanesociety.com. THS members must use respectful and measured language in both their in-person and electronic communications concerning THS.

When participating in THS events, members shall communicate dissenting opinions and/or criticisms respectfully and non-disruptively. Out of consideration for other participants, failure to behave appropriately may result in the member's removal from the event and/or may result in disciplinary action.

Use of THS Premises

THS welcomes and encourages members to visit the shelter during operating hours and, unless there in an official and sanctioned capacity, requires them to leave promptly once the shelter closes or if asked to leave the premises by a member of THS staff. THS also recognizes rights of public assembly, including demonstrations. To minimize the impact on the animals, any public assemblies may take place only on public property and not within the shelter.

Member Misconduct

To ensure members, staff and volunteers are treated with respect, THS has the right and obligation to enforce this Code in a fair and consistent manner.

Members with evidence of violations may report them in writing to the Board of Directors of THS. All reports must be signed by the complainant. Following receipt of such a report, the Board may convene a Disciplinary Panel.

The Disciplinary Panel has discretion in determining the appropriate disciplinary action and will take into consideration the severity of the alleged misconduct, the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident and other relevant factors. The Disciplinary Panel may recommend a variety of actions, including but not limited to:

- **Take no action.** A decision to take no action may not be appealed.
- **A Warning Notice** citing both a recommended remedy and a warning that more severe disciplinary actions may be taken if not remedied. A warning notice may not be appealed.
- **Suspension of Membership** a written notice of Suspension of Membership by which said member loses all rights of membership, up to a maximum of three (3) years. At the end of the suspension period, the individual may reapply for membership.
- **Termination of Membership** a written notice of Termination of Membership by which said member loses all rights of membership.

The Disciplinary Panel's recommendations may apply to the subject of the complaint and/or the complainant and must be approved, varied or dismissed by the Board of Directors.

A member who has had a membership suspended or terminated has five (5) days from delivery of the notice to file a written appeal to an Appeals Panel convened by the Board of Directors, listing the grounds for appealing the suspension or termination. Delivery of the notice may be by e-mail or registered mail and shall be considered as delivered on the day of transmission by

e-mail or receipt by registered mail. If, after reviewing the member's written notice, the Appeals Panel decides that there is an appealable issue, the Appeals Panel will schedule and hold a hearing in a timely manner. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final, once ratified by the Board of Directors.

Definitions

General

For the purposes of this Code, any reference to gender includes all genders and words importing the singular include the plural and *vice versa*.

Heading

Any headings used throughout this Code are for convenient reference only and are not to affect or be used in the construction or interpretation of this Code.

Appeals Panel

Refers to a panel comprised of members of THS selected by the Board of Directors. The Appeals Panel must not include members who sat on the Disciplinary Panel respecting a matter being appealed.

Board of Directors

Refers to the Board of Directors of THS.

Disciplinary Action

Refers to remedies that THS may employ when a member violates the Code, including but not limited to:

1. Warning Notice,
2. Suspension of Membership or
3. Termination of Membership.

Disciplinary Panel

Refers to a panel comprised of members of THS selected by the Board of Directors of THS. Any Directors who are members of the disciplinary panel must not participate in the decision of the Board to approve, dismiss or vary the recommendation of the disciplinary panel respecting the matter being decided.

Grounds

Refers to the three (3) only eligible reasons to appeal a disciplinary panel decision to suspend or terminate membership:

1. substantial procedural error,
2. discovery of significant new information that was previously unknown to the disciplinary panel when it rendered its initial decision, or
3. the disciplinary action taken was disproportionate to the violation.

Shelter

Refers to THS shelter located at 11 River Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 4C2.