



Code of Conduct for Child Safe Standards and Wellbeing

The German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria (GSDCV) is committed to providing a safe environment for all members including children, where child abuse and harm are not tolerated.

The GSDCV's primary function is a Dog Club intended to foster and promote responsible ownership of the German Shepherd Dog.

The GSDCV recognises that the Membership of the GSDCV includes junior members, and that child safety should be a priority for all members. The prevention and reporting of abuse is compulsory. All members are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children. The GSDCV recognises that discrimination can harm children and we treat all children with dignity and respect.

This Code of Conduct sets expectations for how members should behave around children. This helps children participate safely in our Branch and Club activities.

This Code of Conduct identifies positive child safe behaviours that we ask ALL GSDCV members to demonstrate. It also identifies behaviours that we consider unacceptable and not permitted at our Branch or Club events. It acknowledges the responsibilities of parents and will work in partnership with them to ensure children are safe.

Not following standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action. Breaches of the Code of Conduct will be assessed individually and managed according to the Policy and outlined expectations in this code. Our disciplinary policy (The GSDCV Regulations section 4 - Grievance Procedure) provides further information on processes that will be followed if breaches are identified.

All members must follow these standards of behaviour when at Club or Branch activities, while engaging with junior members at any time:

I WILL:

- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- take disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child seriously
- raise concerns with GSDCV Club or Branch Management if risks to child safety are identified
- report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct
- take any opportunity offered to become educated on child safety and wellbeing
- treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability or other characteristics
- help the GSDCV to be a place where people of all cultures feel safe and included
- listen to children and respond to them if they feel unsafe
- value children and young people's ideas and opinions
- promote friendships and encourage children and young people to support their peers
- involve children and young people in decisions about the activities they participate in at GSDCV

Club or Branch activities where possible, and welcome the participation of parents and carers in these decisions

- report any conflicts of interest I have (such as an outside relationship with a child) that may affect my ability to perform my role
- respect the privacy of children and their families, including keeping all personal information confidential unless required by law to share it
- inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct (such as driving a child to a competition or undertaking one-on-one training sessions)
- ensure breaches of this Code are reported to our Child Safety Officer immediately
- comply with all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and our child safe policies and procedures
- uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.

I WILL NOT:

- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour towards children – this includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect or sexual misconduct
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- use hurtful or offensive behaviour or language with children
- fail to report information to police if I know a child has been abused
- touch children in a way that is unnecessary or unsuitable and falls outside what is reasonable to teach or otherwise engage in the activities of the GSDCV
- persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child
- deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
- verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs
- show children pornographic images
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves such as changing clothes
- develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or unnecessary or unsuitable attention
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media or by phone
- take photographs, screenshots or share images of children involved in activities that are not authorised by the GSDCV
- be alone with a child when there is no professional (Club related) reason for doing so

If I suspect that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in the organisation:

I WILL:

- act to prioritise the best interests of the child or children
- report the situation to the relevant authorities as per the GSDCV Child Safety and Wellbeing

Policy

- promptly take actions to ensure the child or children are safe
- as soon as possible report the incident or concerns using the GSDCV Incident Reporting Form (attachment 2) of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. If I believe a child has been abused, I will follow the Club's reporting process
- maintain the privacy of those involved, following Child Safety Standards record keeping, privacy and information sharing guidelines

Reporting

Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to the GSDCV Child Safety Officer or if necessary, the President or Secretary of the GSDCV.

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to Victoria Police or to the Commission for Children and Young People. The GSDCV Grievance Procedure provides more information about reporting obligations to external authorities as well as describing protections and confidentiality provisions for anyone making a report.

Committee, Instructors, volunteers and members who breach our Code of Conduct may also be subject to disciplinary action. This can include increased supervision, appointment to an alternative role, suspension or termination of membership from the GSDCV. Detailed descriptions of breaches are found in our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. This Policy can be viewed on the GSDCV website www.gsdcv.org.au

PLEASE NOTE:

If any person becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child may become, or is the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (for example, a Committee member, Instructor, general member or volunteer), and they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, then they must take all reasonable steps to do so. A person who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk may be charged with the criminal offence of 'failing to protect' and may face a term of imprisonment.

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence.

The GSDCV acknowledges the importance of this Code of Conduct and that members agree to abide by its terms. Accordingly, the Code of Conduct forms part of the member acknowledgement signed at time of joining the GSDCV and on yearly membership renewal. The GSDCV also acknowledges that some members may have a legal requirement to report, under their profession (Police, Ambulance, Nurses, Teachers etc).

Date last reviewed: 4 September 2023

Next review date: 2 September 2024

Responsible officer: GSDCV Child Safety Officer (Club Secretary) (0413 278 042) or email Secretary@gsdcv.org.au