

Code of Conduct

Introduction

This Code of Conduct outlines the ethical standards and professional behaviours expected of all individuals associated with Vets Beyond Borders (VBB), including volunteers, staff members, partners, and beneficiaries. It serves as a guide to uphold the organisation's mission, values, and commitment to animal welfare and global veterinary healthcare.

Commitments

1. **Professionalism:**
 - 1.1. We conduct ourselves with professionalism and respect in all interactions with clients, colleagues, volunteers, and community members.
 - 1.2. We adhere to the highest standards of veterinary practice, prioritising the health and welfare of animals in our care.
 - 1.3. We continuously seek opportunities for professional development and education to enhance our skills and knowledge.
2. **Compassion:**
 - 2.1. We approach our work with empathy, kindness, and understanding towards both animals and people.
 - 2.2. We prioritize the well-being and comfort of animals under our care, striving to minimize stress and pain whenever possible.
 - 2.3. We recognise and respect the cultural, social, and economic factors that influence the lives of the communities we serve.
3. **Integrity:**
 - 3.1. We act with honesty, transparency, and accountability in all our dealings.
 - 3.2. We respect the confidentiality of sensitive information and maintain the trust placed in us by clients and partners.
 - 3.3. We avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from engaging in any form of exploitation or discrimination.
4. **Collaboration:**
 - 4.1. We believe in the power of collaboration and cooperation to achieve our goals.
 - 4.2. We work closely with local communities, organisations, and authorities to develop sustainable solutions and empower local capacity.
 - 4.3. We value diversity and inclusivity, fostering an environment where everyone's contributions are respected and valued.

5. **Continuous Improvement:**

- 5.1. We are committed to ongoing evaluation and improvement of our programs, practices, and policies.
- 5.2. We welcome feedback from all stakeholders and use it to adapt and evolve our approach.
- 5.3. We remain open-minded and adaptable, embracing innovation and best practices to maximize our impact.

6. **Safety:**

- 6.1. We prioritise the safety and well-being of all individuals involved in our activities, including volunteers, staff, and community members.
- 6.2. We adhere to relevant health and safety protocols to minimize risks and ensure a safe working environment.
- 6.3. We take proactive measures to mitigate potential hazards and respond promptly to any emergencies or incidents.

7. **Ethical fundraising:**

- 7.1. We are committed to ethical fundraising practices and uphold the [Fundraising Institute of Australia Code](#) and the [ACFID Fundraising Charter](#).

8. **Inclusion:**

- 8.1. We believe in fostering an environment where every individual, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or background, feels valued, respected, and empowered. We recognise that diversity enriches our organisation, bringing together unique perspectives and talents to drive innovation and positive change.
- 8.2. We are committed to creating a culture of inclusivity, where all voices are heard, and all contributions are appreciated. Discrimination, harassment, and exclusion have no place in our community. By embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity, we strengthen our collective impact and fulfill our mission to make a difference in the lives of animals and communities.

9. **Safeguarding:**

- 9.1. We are unwavering in our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals, including animals, volunteers, staff, and community members, with whom we interact.
- 9.2. We prioritise the prevention of harm, exploitation, abuse, and neglect in all our endeavours. Our organisation operates under strict protocols and guidelines designed to uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity.
- 9.3. We proactively identify and mitigate risks, provide appropriate training and support, and maintain clear channels for reporting concerns or incidents. By upholding rigorous safeguarding measures, we uphold the trust placed in us by our stakeholders and uphold our duty of care to the communities we serve.

- 9.4. All communications, whether verbal or written, must be respectful, professional, and culturally sensitive. Offensive, discriminatory, harassing, inappropriate, or inflammatory language is strictly prohibited.
 - 9.5. The use of alcohol and illegal drugs during work hours, program activities, or while representing Vets Beyond Borders is prohibited. This includes any behaviour that impairs judgment or compromises safety.
 - 9.6. Giving gifts, money, or other incentives directly to children is discouraged, as it can create dependency and unequal relationships. Any gifts or donations must be approved by Vets Beyond Borders and distributed through proper channels.
 - 9.7. Physical contact with children should be appropriate, minimal, and always respectful of cultural norms. Any physical contact should only occur when necessary for the child's welfare or safety and should be done with consent or parental/guardian permission.
 - 9.8. Engaging in sexual relations or inappropriate behaviour with children is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate termination and legal action.
 - 9.9. We oppose all forms of child labour and ensure that our programs do not exploit or endanger children in any way.
 - 9.10. Prior consent must be obtained from a parent or guardian before taking photos or videos of children or vulnerable individuals. These images must be used responsibly and with respect for privacy.
 - 9.11. All staff and volunteers have a duty to report any concerns or suspicions of child abuse, exploitation, or violations of this Code of Conduct to the designated [safeguarding officer](#) or local authorities promptly.
10. **Environmental Responsibility:**
- 10.1. We recognise the interconnectedness of animal health, human health, and environmental sustainability.
 - 10.2. We strive to minimise our environmental footprint and promote responsible stewardship of natural resources.
 - 10.3. We advocate for sustainable practices in veterinary medicine and support initiatives that protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change.

Conclusion:

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, we uphold the values and principles that define Vets Beyond Borders. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of animals and their communities.

Approved By	Board of Directors
Policy Owner	VBB Chair
Last Reviewed	17 June 2024