

Member Code of Ethics and Conduct

Introduction:

At the Alberta Equestrian Federation Society (AEF), we are committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and safety in all aspects of our work. The AEF consists of members, volunteers, staff, and the board of directors – we all share ownership and represent the organization. This Code of Ethics and Conduct serves as a guide for us, collectively, to ensure that our actions align with our mission and values. By adhering to this Code, we can maintain the trust and confidence of the communities we serve.

Application:

This Code of Conduct applies to all AEF Members, including staff, volunteers, and board members. It applies during all AEF-sanctioned events including competitions, training sessions, workshops, and other events organized or overseen by AEF, including social events, and any time AEF business is conducted, including online and virtual spaces.

Values:

This Code of Conduct is informed by the following values which AEF is committed to upholding.

- 1. Integrity and Honesty:** Always acting with transparency and accountability in all dealings and providing accurate and true information.
- 2. Mission-Driven Focus:** Always prioritizing AEF's mission and the safety and wellbeing of the communities we serve.
- 3. Safe Sport and Child Protection:** Always ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for all participants, especially children and vulnerable individuals.
- 4. Accountability and Stewardship:** Always using and managing AEF resources responsibly and efficiently.
- 5. Respect and Inclusivity:** Always treating others with respect, fairness, and dignity, and creating inclusive and welcoming environments that celebrate diversity.

6. Confidentiality: Always maintaining confidentiality and appropriate use of sensitive information and respecting the privacy rights of individuals and organizations.

7. Legal Compliance: Always complying with applicable laws, regulations, and industry standards, and immediately reporting illegal, inappropriate, or unethical behaviour.

8. Conflict of Interest: Always making decisions in the best interests of the organization and participants' safety and well-being and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest.

9. Social Responsibility: Always striving to make a positive impact and engage with the communities we serve.

Code of Conduct Requirements:

All AEF Members shall comply with the following:

1. Respectful Behavior:

- AEF Members must treat all individuals with respect and courtesy at all times.
- AEF Members are prohibited from engaging in any form of discrimination, harassment, violence, or disrespectful behavior.

2. Compliance with Laws and Policies:

- AEF Members must adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and organizational policies. Any violations of applicable laws, regulations, and policies are prohibited.

3. Conflict Resolution:

- AEF Members must resolve conflicts constructively and respectfully. Hostile, aggressive, or confrontational behavior are prohibited.

4. Confidentiality and Data Privacy:

- AEF Members must respect the confidentiality of all sensitive information, including personal and financial data. Disclosure or misuse of such information is prohibited, except as required by law.

5. Responsible Use of Resources:

- AEF Members must use organizational resources, including time, equipment, and materials, responsibly and efficiently, and avoid waste or misuse.

6. Conflict of Interest

- AEF Members will disclose any situation where their personal interests, or the interests of family or close friends, might affect their decisions or work done on behalf of AEF.
- AEF Members are prohibited from taking part in any decisions or activities which could benefit them, or their family or close friends, beyond what is available to all AEF Members.

7. Horse Welfare

- AEF Members must adhere to the humane treatment of horses in all AEF activities and comply with the AEF's [Equine Welfare Position Statement](#).

Complaints:

If any AEF Member believes that there has been a breach of this Code of Conduct by an AEF Member, they may submit a formal complaint as follows:

1. Complaints shall be made in writing to the AEF Executive Director using the Code of Conduct Complaint Form. The Complaint Form is available online at www.albertaequestrian.com.
2. The Complaint Form must be completed with detailed information about the alleged breach, including the parties involved, the nature of the breach, where and when it occurred. Failure to provide all necessary information may prevent complaints from being investigated or otherwise resolved.
3. A complaint submission fee of \$100 must be paid with each submission of the Complaint Form. This fee may be waived at the sole discretion of the Executive Director if deemed appropriate.

AEF may initiate a complaint or investigation if it becomes aware of conduct that may breach this Code in the absence of a written complaint. AEF will follow the same procedures and standards applied to AEF Member-submitted complaints, ensuring due process and confidentiality.

Resolution:

Upon receiving a complaint, the Executive Director or their designate shall evaluate the complaint to ensure it is within AEF's jurisdiction and contains sufficient information to allow it to be investigated or resolved. Complaints which do not fall within AEF's jurisdiction or lack sufficient information will not proceed.

Informal Resolution

After reviewing the complaint, the Executive Director or their designate, will determine whether informal resolution of the complaint is appropriate in the circumstances, including:

- **Direct resolution** between involved parties via respectful discussions to address and resolve the issue independently.
- **Facilitated** discussions between the parties to address and resolve the issue
- **Mediation** by engaging a neutral party to assist in finding a mutually agreeable resolution

If informal resolution is successful, no further action will be taken. If it is unsuccessful, the complaint will move forward to the formal investigation process.

Formal Resolution

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or deemed inappropriate by the Executive Director or their designate, the complaint will proceed to formal investigation by an impartial investigator. The investigator will:

1. Review all relevant documents, evidence, and submissions related to the complaint.
2. Interview the Complainant, Respondent, and any witnesses.
3. Prepare a confidential report outlining the information relevant to the complaint and the investigator's findings of whether the Code was breached.

Upon receiving the investigator's report, the Executive Director or their designate will determine appropriate actions, including potential disciplinary, restorative, or remedial actions. The Complainant and Respondent will be notified of the investigator's findings.

Confidentiality:

All complaints and investigations under this Code will be confidential. AEF will not disclose any details related to the complaint, investigation, or outcomes unless required by law or necessary for conducting the investigation.

All investigation participants must keep information about the complaint and investigation confidential. Failure to maintain confidentiality is considered a serious violation of this Code.

Retaliation:

AEF Members are prohibited from engaging in any form of retaliation against individuals who, in good faith, submit a complaint or participate in an investigation under this Code. Retaliation is a serious violation of this Code, and AEF is committed to ensuring that all members feel safe and supported when coming forward with concerns or participating in the investigative process.

This Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct is a living document and may be updated as needed to reflect changes in the nonprofit's operations, regulations, or ethical standards, particularly in the context of safe sport and child protection. All representatives, including board members, staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders, are expected to review and acknowledge their commitment to this code.