



## Code of Conduct & Ethics for Employees and Volunteers

As a founding organization in the field known for enriching the quality of life and enhancing the independence of children and families living with autism and special needs by providing them with specially trained dogs, National Service Dogs bears special responsibility to ensure the conduct of our employees and volunteers is exemplary.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct & Ethics for Employees and Volunteers is to provide written conduct guidelines designed to promote integrity and deter wrongdoing and protect National Service Dogs' business and reputation from financial loss and legal liability. The Code also addresses:

- compliance with applicable laws and regulations in all jurisdictions where NSD carries on business;
- conflicts of interest including transactions and agreements in which volunteers and employees have a material interest;
- protection and proper use of NSD assets and opportunities;
- confidentiality of the NSD information;
- fair dealing with stakeholders including: clients, suppliers, competitors and employees; and
- reporting of illegal and unethical behavior.

### Scope

The Code applies to all employees and volunteers of NSD and each individual is responsible to ensure his or her conduct is appropriate. Violation of NSD Code of Conduct & Ethics for Employees and Volunteers or applicable laws, rules and regulations can result in serious damage to NSD and our reputation and may result in termination of involvement with NSD.

### Compliance

All employees and volunteers are required, while performing their duties and while on or using the property of NSD (including custody of NSD dogs of any age), to comply with all laws, regulations, policies and procedures adopted by NSD in all of the jurisdictions where NSD carries on business and while they are carrying out duties on behalf of NSD. Employees and volunteers that do not adhere to NSD policies and procedures, especially in the area of dog custody, puppy raising, ambassador dogs and public appearances, may be asked to relinquish their role with NSD which may, or may not, be reinstated at a later date at the Executive Director's discretion.

### Applicable Situations

#### *Conflicts of Interest*

Each employee or volunteer who has a material interest of any kind in any existing or proposed transaction with NSD is required to abide by the following disclosure requirements by disclosing the nature and extent of his or her interest to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will decide an appropriate course of action based on each individual conflict of interest.

Employees and volunteers must not:

- use NSD property for their own personal benefit;
- influence NSD contractors or consultants for their personal gain;
- recommend decisions for NSD that materially benefit employees and volunteers, family members, friends, or other business interests; or
- personally act on business opportunities presented to NSD.

Prior to acknowledging compliance with the Code of Conduct & Ethics for Employees and Volunteers, and at any time when a conflict arises, all employees and volunteers are required to report in writing their existing or potential conflicts of interest to the Executive Director.

There are occasions when it may be determined by the Executive Director that a Volunteer has a conflict of interest with another role within NSD (employee or volunteer). When these situations arise, the Executive Director will advise the

Volunteer that a conflict of interest exists and ask the individual to determine whether they wish to continue as a Volunteer under the same job description, or relinquish these responsibilities within NSD for another role within NSD.

#### *Proprietary Information*

Information stored, processed and used by NSD, including and not limited to information regarding clients, suppliers, business contracts, employees and operations, is proprietary and must be kept confidential and may not be released or used for personal gain.

#### *Accounting and Financial Reporting*

Employees and volunteers must comply with NSD accounting, reporting and internal control procedures and are forbidden to forge, falsify or omit information which may mislead auditors or other internal or external reviewers of NSD documents, financial or otherwise.

#### *Electronic Communications*

NSD electronic communications (including email, social media and voicemail) are for use in pursuit and support of NSD business and while limited use for personal purposes is permitted, such use is not private or confidential and the contents of such information may be accessed by NSD and others without the prior consent of the individuals who have used the electronic communications.

#### *Document Retention*

Employees and volunteers are required to educate themselves and comply with NSD document retention requirements in compliance with applicable law. In the event of litigation or an investigation involving NSD, individuals are prohibited from modifying or destroying relevant documents or records, personal files and electronic records. Doing so may result in prosecution.

#### *Health, Safety and the Environment*

Employees and volunteers are responsible for working safely and complying with NSD health, safety and environment rules and protocols at all times while at the Training Center and acting on behalf of NSD. If employees or volunteers have concerns about the health and safety of the environment provided to employees, volunteers or animals in NSD care, these concerns are to be elevated to the Executive Director directly.

#### *Discrimination and Harassment*

NSD is committed to a healthy, harassment-free work environment for employees and volunteers. Harassment will not be tolerated. Harassment occurs when an employee or volunteer is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, religious beliefs, color, place of origin, gender, mental or physical disability, ancestry, marital status, family status, sexual orientation or source of income.

Once a decision is made about the future of a dog owned by NSD, employees and volunteers are welcome to express their opinions to the Executive Director as part of the NSD Advocacy process (in development), however, these opinions are not to be shared with other NSD stakeholders (clients, other volunteers, veterinarians etc).

Harassment of employees by volunteers will not be tolerated. Any volunteer that is deemed to be harassing NSD employees based on a decision made about a dog owned by NSD or speaking negatively about NSD as a result of a decision about a dog owned by NSD may be forced to relinquish their volunteer status with the organization, which may, or may not, be reinstated at a later date at the Executive Director's discretion.

#### *Gifts and Entertainment*

Employees and volunteers may give and receive reasonable gifts and participate as hosts and guests in entertainment provided there is no requirement or appearance of impropriety or obligation and the gift or entertainment does not violate the law, standards of business conduct or other provisions of this Code.

Employees and volunteers may not make payments, provide gifts or entertainment for the purpose of influencing any government or regulator personnel having jurisdiction or influence over the business of NSD.

#### *Fair Dealing*

Employees and volunteers are required to deal honestly and fairly with NSD clients, suppliers, competitors and other third parties, including governmental agencies, and shall not:

- make false or misleading statements to clients, suppliers or other third parties about competitors;
- solicit or accept from any person that does business with NSD, or offer to extend to any such person, cash of

- any amount, gifts, gratuities, meals or entertainment that could influence or give the appearance of influencing the business relationship;
- solicit or accept a fee, commission or other compensation for referring clients to third-party vendors; or take unfair advantage of clients, suppliers or third parties through manipulation, concealment, abuse of confidential information or any other unfair practice.

*Contractors and Suppliers*

NSD requires its employees evaluate contractors' and suppliers' products and services on the basis of its quality, reliability, service, price and delivery and prohibits purchases to be made on the basis of personal relationships or the opportunity for personal or financial gain. Employees must respect the terms of supplier and contractor contracts and safeguard confidential information received from suppliers and contractors.

*Competitors*

Information regarding competitors must be obtained legally and employees and volunteers are prohibited from obtaining competitor information through illegal means including information acquired during a prior employment relationship or through breaching the terms of confidentiality information.

*Communications*

Individuals who are not authorized by the Executive Director to represent NSD must decline to respond when contacted by other companies, government agencies, and members of the media or individuals regarding the business of NSD and are required to report such requests for information to the Board Chair.

*Responsibilities*

Employees and volunteers must become aware of the Code of Conduct & Ethics policy for Employees and Volunteers. Annually, all NSD employees and volunteers will acknowledge having received and read the Code of Conduct & Ethic for Employees and Volunteers and sign indicating their intention to comply with the policy. NSD reserves the right to cease involvement with any employee or volunteer that is deemed to be non-compliant with the Code of Conduct & Ethics for Employees and Volunteers.

**I acknowledge that I have read National Service Dogs' Code of Conduct & Ethics for Employees and Volunteers and I intend to comply with the guidelines contained herein. I understand that if I am found to be non-compliant with the Code of Conduct & Ethics for Employees and Volunteers at any time, my employment or volunteer role with NSD may be terminated.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer/ Employee Name (Print)

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Volunteer/ Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date