

Barking Buds Safeguarding Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is designed to guide staff and volunteers in carrying out their roles in a manner that ensures a safe, respectful, and professional environment for everyone involved in our work.

Staff and Volunteers Must:

- Act in accordance with this Code of Conduct and all relevant policies and procedures.
- Work in an open, honest, and transparent manner at all times.
- Comply with the Privacy Policy, treating all personal information with confidentiality, discretion, and security.
- Adhere to the Social Media Policy, maintaining clear professional boundaries at all times.
- Only take and use images with the written, informed, and specific consent of the individual, and in accordance with Barking Buds Limited's guidelines and authorisation.
- Show respect and consideration for all individuals, regardless of age, gender, culture, disability, ethnicity, language, background, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Follow safeguarding procedures for reporting concerns. Never promise confidentiality if it involves risk of harm to any individual.
- Ensure physical contact or support during training or assessments is only provided when necessary, with the individual's informed consent. Explain the nature and purpose of any contact beforehand, such as preventing injury or assisting with minor, non-intrusive clothing adjustments (e.g., repositioning a shoe removed by a dog during training).
- Inform clients in advance about home visits for training or assessments, and where possible, encourage them to have a family member, caregiver, or neighbour present. Preferably, sessions should take place in public settings.
- Report any concerns or allegations promptly, including those involving yourself.
- Maintain professional, appropriate relationships with clients and colleagues. Avoid language or behaviour that could be misinterpreted or raise concern.
- Be mindful that adults at risk may develop infatuations. If this occurs, inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and address the situation respectfully, reaffirming professional boundaries.
- Keep all client relationships work-focused. Avoid developing personal relationships or friendships with adults at risk outside of the professional context. Do not invite clients to your home or initiate contact outside of work, unless a prior personal relationship existed.

- Encourage clients to share any concerns or grievances through the appropriate channels. Clients can contact Barking Buds Limited via our feedback forms.
- Reach out to the office or the Designated Safeguarding Lead with any concerns or uncertainties.

Staff and Volunteers Must Not:

- Engage in any form of discrimination, prejudice, or bias.
- Ask anyone to keep secrets or offer to keep secrets on behalf of others.
- Make assumptions about who may or may not be a victim of abuse.
- Minimise or dismiss incidents or disclosures of abuse.
- Use suggestive, discriminatory, or offensive language, including sexist, racist, or homophobic comments or jokes.
- Use sarcasm, demeaning, or inappropriate comments toward any individual.
- Behave in a way that could be perceived as threatening, intimidating, or intrusive.
- Participate in or tolerate inappropriate physical behaviour or bullying.
- Transport clients in your personal vehicle except in cases of emergency where safety is at risk.
- Perform any intimate or personal care for clients unless failure to assist would result in neglect. If absolutely necessary, ensure informed consent is obtained, and the situation is clearly documented. Where clients have care needs, they should be supported by a personal assistant or carer.
- Share personal contact information (e.g., personal phone numbers or email addresses) with adults at risk, or communicate with them through personal social media accounts. If contact is required for training purposes, use designated Barking Buds Limited communication channels or work email/phone.
- Give or accept personal gifts, money, or items outside the scope of your role. Volunteers may lend equipment related to dog training if it supports the training process. If in doubt, consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

All staff and volunteers must understand the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries at all times. As representatives of Barking Buds Limited, you may be seen as role models and must conduct yourselves accordingly.

When acting on behalf of Barking Buds Limited, you are in a position of trust. This trust arises from the influence or authority your role may carry. It is essential to be aware of the power dynamics that may exist and to act responsibly and ethically at all times.

Breach of Conduct

Any breach of this Code of Conduct or any behaviour deemed unprofessional may lead to disciplinary action in line with Barking Buds Limited's Disciplinary Procedures.

Signed by Staff/Volunteer:

Date:

Policy Reviewed: October 2025

Due for Review: October 2027