



## **Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club (SOTSDC) – Code of Ethics**

**Preamble:** The Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club is a Texas non-profit organization dedicated to promoting responsible dog ownership, advancing the training and health of sporting dogs, fostering fair and ethical competition in dog sports, and educating the public on dog care and training. As a 501(c)(3) organization, we are committed to operating exclusively for these exempt purposes, serving the public interest, and maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability. This Code of Ethics outlines the principles and standards of conduct expected of all members, officers, directors, and volunteers of the Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club.

### **I. Adherence to Mission and Purpose:**

All activities of the Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club shall be conducted in furtherance of its stated exempt purpose(s) as defined in its organizing documents and recognized by the IRS. Members, officers, directors, and volunteers shall:

- Act in good faith and with due diligence in all Club matters, always prioritizing the Club's mission over personal interests.
- Support and promote responsible dog ownership, ethical training practices, and the well-being of all dogs.
- Contribute to an environment of sportsmanship, respect, and learning within the sporting dog community.

### **II. Standard of Conduct:**

As a member of the Hill Country Sporting Dog Club, I agree to uphold the highest standards of integrity, sportsmanship, and responsibility in all matters related to the welfare and advancement of purebred sporting dogs.

#### **Members agree to:**

1. Raise my dogs to be well-mannered representatives of their breed and ensure their health and well-being are always prioritized.
2. Breed only to improve the breed, using mature, healthy, high-quality dogs that meet the official breed standard and possess all appropriate health clearances.
3. Refrain from breeding dogs with serious defects or disqualifying faults as outlined in the official breed standards.
4. Avoid misleading or untruthful advertising, and provide all buyers with an honest evaluation of each dog and a realistic understanding of the breed.

5. Comply with all applicable rules and regulations of the American Kennel Club (AKC) and relevant national kennel clubs.
6. Offer ongoing support, guidance, and education to puppy buyers for the life of the dog, and generously share knowledge with newcomers to the sport.
7. Refrain from disparaging other owners, breeders, exhibitors, judges, or dogs.
8. Exhibit good sportsmanship at all times and actively promote the positive aspects of the sport and the human-canine bond.

### **III. Compliance with Laws and Regulations:**

The Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club and its representatives shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including, but not limited to:

- All IRS regulations pertaining to 501(c)(3) organizations, including those concerning private inurement, political campaign intervention, and substantial lobbying activities.
- Animal welfare laws and regulations.
- Health and safety standards for all Club activities and events.

### **IV. Financial Integrity and Accountability:**

The Club is committed to responsible stewardship of its financial resources. All financial transactions shall be conducted with transparency, accuracy, and in accordance with sound accounting principles. Members, officers, directors, and volunteers shall:

- Handle Club funds and assets responsibly and for the exclusive benefit of the Club's exempt purposes.
- Avoid any personal use or misappropriation of Club funds or assets.
- Ensure accurate and timely financial reporting.
- Prohibit any part of the net earnings of the organization from inuring to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual. This means no officer, director, or substantial contributor can receive undue personal financial gain from the Club's activities.

### **V. Conflict of Interest:**

To prevent any appearance or actual conflict of interest, members, officers, and directors shall:

- Disclose any potential or actual conflicts of interest that may arise between their personal interests and the interests of the Club.
- Recuse themselves from discussions and decisions where a conflict of interest exists.

### **VI. Non-Discrimination and Inclusivity:**

The Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. The Club shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

## **VII. Prohibition of Political Activities:**

As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club is strictly prohibited from participating in, or intervening in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. Members, officers, and directors shall not use Club resources or their positions within the Club for such purposes.

## **VIII. Limitation on Lobbying Activities:**

While the Club may engage in insubstantial lobbying activities related to its exempt purpose, a substantial part of its activities shall not be attempting to influence legislation. Any lobbying efforts will be carefully monitored to ensure compliance with IRS guidelines.

## **IX. Respectful Conduct:**

All individuals involved with the Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club shall conduct themselves with courtesy, respect, and professionalism at all times. This includes interactions with other members, the public, and during Club events and online communications. Harassment, bullying, or any form of disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

## **X. Confidentiality:**

Confidential information pertaining to the Club, its members, or its operations shall be treated with discretion and not disclosed without proper authorization.

## **XI. Enforcement:**

Any alleged violations of this Code of Ethics will be reviewed by the Club's Board of Directors. Appropriate action, which may include warnings, suspension of membership privileges, or termination of membership, will be taken to ensure adherence to these principles.

## **XII. Review and Amendment:**

This Code of Ethics shall be reviewed periodically by the Board of Directors to ensure its continued relevance and compliance with applicable laws and best practices.

## **Acknowledgement:**

By becoming a member, officer, director, or volunteer of the Spirit of Texas Sporting Dog Club, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by this Code of Ethics.