



# **Touch Our Pets - Therapy Dogs**

## **Constitution**

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# Touch Our Pets Therapy Dogs

## Constitution

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# Touch Our Pets Therapy Dogs Constitution

## 1. Name:

The name of the association is 'Touch Our Pets, Therapy Dogs' abbreviated as TOP Dogs.

## 2. Definitions:

The following words shall have the meanings as defined below and words describing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa and all reference to gender shall include both masculine and feminine gender.

<b>'AGM'</b>	means the Annual General Meeting of the Organisation as provided for in clause 7.1.
<b>'Asset Register'</b>	means a list of the assets owned by the Organisation maintained in sufficient detail to track each asset its value and its physical location.
<b>'Accounting Officer'</b>	means a person who is a member of a recognised South African professional body permitted to practice as an accountant, provided that person is not an Executive Committee Member.
<b>'Chairperson'</b>	means a member of the Executive Committee elected by the Members in terms of clause 6 of the Constitution, to chair meetings of the Organisation and to guide the Executive Committee in running the affairs of the Organisation.
<b>'Code of Practice'</b>	means the Code of Practice contained in the Policies and Procedures annexure that outline the behaviour standards expected of Members as well as potential sanctions that could be imposed should these standards be breached.
<b>'Constitution'</b>	means this document to be read in conjunction with the Policies and Procedures annexure.
<b>'Executive Committee Member'</b>	means a Member appointed in terms of clause 6 of the Constitution to manage the affairs of the Organisation. 'Executive Committee' shall have a similar meaning.

<b>‘Financial Year’</b>	means 12 months starting on the 1st August and ending on the 31st July of the following year.
<b>‘Member’</b>	means a person or legal person who has been accepted for Membership in accordance with the provision of clause 5 and who remains in good standing. 'Membership' shall have a similar meaning.
<b>‘Membership Fees’</b>	means the annual fees payable by the various forms of Membership as described in the Policies and Procedures annexure as determined by the Executive Committee on an annual basis and approved at the AGM.
<b>‘Office Bearers’</b>	means a person holding an executive position, The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.
<b>‘Ombud Committee’</b>	means the special committee of a minimum of one (1) to a maximum of three (3) members elected at a member’s meeting to deal with grievances of Members and transgressions.
<b>‘Organisation’</b>	means Touch Our Pets Therapy Dogs.
<b>‘Policies and Procedures’</b>	means the additional rules or regulations contained in the annexure to this Constitution.
<b>‘Portfolio’</b>	means a responsibility allocated to a member of the Executive Committee by the Executive Committee for the operation of a specific aspect of Organisation activities. It also means the responsibility allocated to an Executive Committee Member designated as such in clause 6.1. as required by section 30A (2) of the Income Tax Act No 58 of 1962. The Executive Committee Member who accepts fiduciary responsibility for the Organisation and who is not a connected person in relation to another Representative Person. Who will ensure that no single person will directly or indirectly control the decision-making powers relating to the Organisation.
<b>‘SARS’</b>	means the South African Revenue Service.
<b>‘Secretary’</b>	means an Executive Committee Member chosen by the Members in terms of clause 6 of the Constitution, to act as Secretary of the Organisation.
<b>‘SGM’</b>	means a Special General Meeting convened in accordance with clause 7.2.
<b>‘Sub-committee’</b>	means a group of Members who have been elected, appointed or have volunteered (subject to the provisions of clause 6.3.6.) to undertake specific tasks in the interests of therapy dogs and/or the Organisation.

<b>‘Treasurer’</b>	means an Executive Committee Member elected by the Members in terms of clause 6 of the Constitution, to act as Treasurer of the Organisation.
<b>‘Virtual meeting’</b>	means any meeting of TOP Dogs that is held with some or all Members joining the virtual meeting proceedings via electronic means.
<b>‘Vice-Chairperson’</b>	means an Executive Committee Member elected by the Members in terms of clause 6 of the Constitution, to act as Vice-Chairperson of the Organisation.

### **3. Notices and domicilium:**

The location of the Organisation is:

Physical Address: 2332 Karibbiese Road  
 Randpark Ridge  
 2169  
 Johannesburg

Email: [info@therapytopdogs.co.za](mailto:info@therapytopdogs.co.za)  
 Web Address: [www.therapytopdogs.co.za](http://www.therapytopdogs.co.za)

Postal Address: 2332 Karibbiese Road  
 Randpark Ridge  
 2156  
 Johannesburg

Correspondence, including electronic correspondence, will be received by the Secretary at any of the contact points listed above.

### **4. Objectives:**

The sole objective of the public benefit organisation is to carry on one or more public benefit activities as defined in section 30(1) of the Act in a non-profit manner and with altruistic or philanthropic intent.

- 4.1 To bring a temporary but regular animal companion to patients/residents in hospitals, schools, hospices, day-care centres, nursing homes and similar Executive Committee approved institutions/events by means of visits from volunteer members and their temperament-tested pet dogs.
- 4.2 To assist the medical, nursing and teaching professions in Animal Assisted Therapy programmes, under the supervision of appropriate professional staff.

- 4.3 To promote and participate in any activity related to the betterment and or training and/or care for pet dogs.
- 4.4 To utilise every opportunity to promote the proper care and feeding of animals and emphasize the benefits that people can derive from good relationships with well trained and disciplined pet dogs.
- 4.5 To create awareness of the value of pets to people, families and society.
- 4.6 The Organisation's activities as stated in clause 4 shall be carried out in accordance with and as defined in section 30(1) of the Income Tax Act No. 58 of 1962 in a non-profit manner and solely for philanthropic purposes.
- 4.7 To promote social and recreational amenities and facilities for the Members/Handlers in a not for profit manner which include:
  - 4.7.1 Promoting, encouraging and protecting the interests and use of therapy dogs in South Africa, abroad and world-wide, and deal with each and every such matter as may affect the common interests of Members and the Organisation.
  - 4.7.2 Co-operation with other therapy dog organisations and similar bodies/and organisations.
- 4.8 To act as a resource and contact point for:
  - 4.8.1 Therapy dog knowledge and information.
  - 4.8.2 The promotion of and interest for therapy dog handlers, their families, friends and other interested parties.
  - 4.8.3 In cooperation with other therapy dog organisations, to promote or oppose any legislation or other measures affecting the interests of therapy dog handlers, the Organisation and to represent to any government, local government, minister, public authority, municipality, local or otherwise the necessity for the retention of enactment or amendment of such legislation.
- 4.9 To enter into any arrangement with any organisation, government or authority, municipal, local or otherwise that may seem conducive to the Organisation's objectives and to obtain from any such organisation, government or authority any rights, privileges and concessions which the Organisation may think it desirable to obtain, and to carry out, exercise and comply with any such arrangements, rights, privileges and concessions.
- 4.10 To accept and utilise any gift, donation or bequest, whether subject to a special trust or not, to meet one or more of the objectives of the Organisation.

- 4.11 To secure contributions to the funds of the Organisation by such means as may be proposed by any Member and agreed upon by the Executive Committee.
- 4.12 To print or publish or to assist financially, or to subsidise any media that the Organisation may think desirable for the promotion of any of its goals and to establish and maintain a reference library consisting of media of interest to therapy dog handlers.
- 4.13 To collaborate with any companies, institutions, societies or associations having goals altogether or in part similar to this Organisation.
- 4.14 To do or perform all such other lawful acts, deeds, things or functions as may be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

## **5 Membership matters:**

### **5.1 Application for membership:**

- 5.1.1 Any interested person or legal person shall be eligible for Membership of the Organisation in accordance with the Policies and Procedures annexure.
- 5.1.2 Application for Membership shall be made on the form prescribed by the Organisation.

### **5.2 Membership:**

- 5.2.1 All natural or legal persons may be accepted into membership by the Organisation provided that such persons shall have paid the membership fee as laid down from time to time by the Organisation and provided that at the sole and absolute discretion of the Organisation such membership is in the best interest of the Organisation.
- 5.2.2 Any person who is refused Membership by the Executive Committee shall have the right of appeal and shall be entitled to bring such appeal to the Ombud Committee for a decision.
- 5.2.3 The only appeal against a decision of the Ombud Committee will be to appeal to be heard at a Special General Meeting. (SGM)
- 5.2.4 Should the Ombud Committee or Members (SGM) reject the applicant's appeal, Membership Fees that have been provisionally paid by the applicant shall be refunded to the said applicant.
- 5.2.5 Members shall at all times abide by the provisions of the Code of Practice contained in the Policies and Procedures.

### **5.3 Resignations:**

Membership ceases immediately upon notice being received by the Secretary of a Member's resignation. Any Member resigning may not claim a refund of membership fees. Non-renewal of membership will be treated as a resignation.

### **5.4 Membership Fees:**

- 5.4.1 Membership Fees shall be due in advance on the 1st of August each year, notwithstanding the date of the AGM at which such Membership Fees shall be fixed.
- 5.4.2 Membership Fees for new Members joining on or after 1st January shall be 50% (fifty per cent) of the annual Membership Fees.
- 5.4.3 A special levy may be raised from Members by a decision of an AGM or SGM convened for the purpose after prior notice has been given, and such an AGM or SGM may fix the maximum payable by Members should it be deemed necessary.
- 5.4.4 The amount of the Membership Fees shall be determined by the Executive Committee and voted upon at the following AGM and communicated to all Members at least one month before 1st August each year.
- 5.4.5 No Member shall be regarded as being in good standing or have the right to vote, nor be entitled to any of the benefits of Membership as long as any Membership Fees remain unpaid.
- 5.4.6 Membership is not transferable to any other person nor may Membership rights be sold or any entitlement arising therefrom.

### **5.5 Code of Practice and Dispute Resolution:**

A Code of Practice contained in the Policies and Procedures for Members as well as a procedure to deal with transgressions of that Code is part of the Policies and Procedures annexure. This Code of Conduct, as well as the procedure, is in adherence with legislation as well as the tenets of natural justice.

### **5.6 Indemnification and Liability of Members:**

The liability of Members is limited to the amount unpaid on their Membership Fees only. Every Member, office bearer, any Committee Member, Sub-committee Member and Executive Committee Member, shall be indemnified by the Organisation against all costs, losses and expenses he/she may incur as a result of his/her carrying out the instructions of the Organisation or in the performance of his/her legitimate official duty in the Organisation.

## **6 Executive Committee:**

The management of the affairs of the Organisation shall, between AGMs, be vested in an Executive Committee.



### **6.1 Composition:**

The Executive Committee shall be comprised as follows (elected from the ranks of the Membership in good standing at the AGM of the Organisation in accordance with clause 7.1.2

- Chairperson,
- Vice-Chairperson,
- Secretary,
- Treasurer,

- All Area Coordinators and up to seven (7) other Members, gets appointed by the executive committee.

The Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer are designated as Representative Persons.

### **6.2. Terms of Office:**

Excepting the office of the Chairperson, which shall run for 2 terms and be elected at every second AGM, the Office Bearers as well as the Ombud Committee, shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting and shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting. Any member of the Executive Committee or Ombud Committee shall be eligible for re-election.

### **6.3. Vacancies:**

Vacancies occurring on the Executive Committee shall be filled by the Executive Committee from the Membership. A Member so appointed to fill a vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired portion of the period of office of his/her predecessor.

The office of a Member of the Executive Committee shall *ipso facto* be vacated:

- 6.3.1 On expulsion from Membership in accordance with a decision made by the Ombud Committee.
- 6.3.2 On being absent from three (3) consecutive Executive Committee meetings without permission.
- 6.3.3 On resigning from Membership.
- 6.3.4 On ceasing to be in good standing.

### **6.4 Powers:**

The Executive Committee shall have the power:

- 6.4.1 To hire or secure suitable service providers or premises for the purpose of the Organisation, and to provide all necessary furniture, books, papers, fittings and requisites.

6.4.2 From time to time to establish Portfolios, under the supervision of an Executive Committee Member. The particular Executive Committee Member selected will have the power to:

- Co-opt Members who express an interest in the issue at hand,
- Set the procedure to be followed at meetings including, but not limited to, the agenda, times and dates of meetings.

No binding resolutions may be taken by Members participating in the work of the Portfolio, but recommendations may be put to the Executive Committee.

6.4.3 To enforce the Constitution and the contents of the Policies and Procedures annexure. To make any changes to the Policies and Procedures.

6.4.4 To regulate the form of procedure in the Executive Committee.

6.4.5 To call meetings of all or any group of Members.

6.4.6 As an alternative to the Portfolios referred to in 6.4.2, from time to time to establish a Sub-committee(s) for the purpose of investigating, making recommendations and/or to assist the Executive Committee with any matters which the Executive Committee deems of such major importance to the Organisation that a more formal approach to resolution is necessary, and:

6.4.6.1 To appoint, add to or remove any Member or Members from any Sub-committee so formed.

6.4.6.2 To define in writing any or all of the rules and procedures governing the operation of the Sub-committee including, but not limited to;

- The number of serving Members required,
- The quorum requirement,
- The reporting structure,
- The voting requirements,
- The scope or purpose of the Sub-committee,
- To delegate any authority; if so required; to the Sub-committee which is consistent with any authority delegated to the Executive Committee in the Constitution,
- To revoke any authority granted to any Sub-committee,
- To dissolve any Sub-committee,
- To appoint any additional Members to a Sub-committee for any specific period of time as the Executive Committee may deem necessary.

6.4.7 Subject to the provisions of clause 5.2 to accept or refuse applications for Membership.

- 6.4.8 To acquire, either by purchase, lease or otherwise, any movable or immovable property. To sell, let, mortgage, or otherwise deal with or dispose of movable or immovable property belonging to the Organisation. Provided that no immovable property shall be alienated, mortgaged or leased for longer periods than five (5) years with the sanction of a resolution of the Organisation at a general meeting, convened for the purpose of authorising such alienation, mortgage or lease. If the cost implication of the acquisition exceeds 75% of the previous year's Membership Fees or income by value, then this cost will need the approval of the Members, which expenditure must be justified by the Executive Committee and presented at an AGM or SGM for approval.
- 6.4.9 To open and operate on a banking account with a registered South African Bank in the name of the Organisation.
- 6.4.10 To further the objectives of the Organisation generally and to do and carry out all its purposes, aims and objectives with the exception of those that this Constitution is expressed to be carried out by the Organisation at an AGM or SGM.

#### **6.5 Sub-committees and Ombud Committee:**

All Sub-committees will function in the manner specified in clause 6.4.6. except for the Ombud Committee that will be elected at a member's meeting. The Ombud Committee will have a full mandate to investigate any grievances of Members or transgressions of the Code of Practice, to appoint an independent adjudicator to ensure fairness where a Member's transgression can lead to expulsion. The decision and findings of the Ombud Committee are final and can only be appealed at an AGM or SGM.

#### **6.6 Execution of documents:**

- 6.6.1 All powers of attorney, Bonds, Deeds and other documents, the execution of which has been authorised by the Executive Committee, shall be signed by the Chairperson, Secretary and the Treasurer, or two persons lawfully acting in their stead and appointed for that purpose by the Executive Committee.
- 6.6.2 The funds of the Organisation shall be applied to the payment of expenses, the acquisition of property and for the objectives specified in clause 4 as may be approved by the Executive Committee or for such other purposes as may be decided upon by Members at an AGM or SGM.

#### **6.7 Duties of office bearers:**

- 6.7.1 **Chairperson:**  
The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings at which he/she is present, may require any unruly or abusive Member to retire from the meeting, shall enforce observance of the Constitution, generally exercise supervision over the affairs of the

Organisation, fix dates of meetings, and perform such other duties as by usage and custom pertain to the office.

**6.7.2 Vice-Chairperson:**

The Vice-Chairperson shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of Chairperson in his/her absence.

**6.7.3 Secretary:**

The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence; attend all meetings of the Organisation, take minutes of the meetings of the proceedings and all internal communications and papers that the Secretary may be instructed to read.

In addition, the Secretary shall perform the duties imposed on the Secretary relating to the retention of records and the supply of information to the Members.

**6.7.4 Treasurer:**

6.7.4.1 The Treasurer shall keep a register of Members and a record of the Membership Fees paid by each Member and the period to which these payments relate, the address of each Member, the date on which he/she became a Member in terms of the Constitution and in the event of the cessation of Membership the date thereof and the reason, therefore, prepare annual and other financial reports and publications as directed by the Organisation. When so directed, take charge of the property and papers of the Organisation, collect all Membership Fees and prepare accounts of income and expenditure of such funds as the Treasurer is authorised to deal with, and generally carry out such duties and functions as may be assigned to the Treasurer from time to time. The Treasurer shall keep proper books of account in such form as shall be prescribed.

6.7.4.2 In addition to the duties laid down in clause 6.7.4.1. The Treasurer shall perform the duties imposed on the Treasurer relating to the retention of records and the supply of information to the Members, SARS and the Department of Social Development.

6.7.4.3 The Treasurer shall also take the necessary steps to ensure that the requirements relating to the maintenance of a register of Members, the keeping of proper books of accounts, the review of such books and the preparation of a balance sheet and a statement of income and expenditure and the submission or making available thereof to Members are complied with.

- 6.7.4.4 Maintain the Asset Register of the Organisation as described in clause 8.3.

## **7 Meetings and Types:**

### **7.1 Annual General Meeting:**

The AGM of the Organisation shall be held as soon as possible after the close of the Financial Year, 31st of July but not later than a period of 6 (SIX) months after the end of each financial year, at a time and place determined by the Executive Committee. The accounting records and reports will be delivered annually to the Director of Non-Profit Organisations within a period of 6 (SIX) months after the end of each financial year.

Written notice and the Agenda will be given by the Secretary to the Members, at least ten (10) calendar days prior to each AGM including the time and the place at which it shall be held.

#### **The business of the AGM shall be:**

##### 7.1.1 To receive and consider:

- 7.1.1.1 The Chairperson's report,
- 7.1.1.2 The Organisation's balance sheet and income and expenditure statements,
- 7.1.1.3 The Accounting Officer's report,
- 7.1.1.4 The Organisation's Income Tax return to SARS,
- 7.1.1.5 Reports from Sub-committees regarding operations or activities of the Organisation.
- 7.1.1.6 The Ombud Committee's report

##### 7.1.2 To elect the Office Bearers

- 7.1.3 To elect a Ombud Committee in accordance with clause 7.4.2. It is specifically provided that Members elected to serve on the Executive Committee in accordance with clause 7.1.2. may not serve as members of the Ombud Committee.

In the event of the AGM having to be postponed, written notice of the proposed new date, time and place for the AGM will be sent out to the Members by the Secretary, at least ten (10) calendar days before the event.

### **7.2 Special General Meeting:**

- 7.2.1 Upon receipt of a written requisition from no fewer than three (3) Members, the Executive Committee shall call a SGM to take place within three (3) weeks from the date of receipt of such a requisition. Such requisition shall clearly state the objectives of such meeting and this shall be the only business that may be conducted at that SGM.
- 7.2.2 Should the reason for the written requisition arise from a decision made by the Ombud Committee against a particular Member, or be an appeal against refusal by the Executive Committee to grant Membership to a particular prospective Member, then the requirement for three (3) Members to sign and support the

written requisition will not apply and the affected person alone can submit the written requisition.

- 7.2.3 Seven (7) calendar days of written notice of the intention to call a SGM shall be given to all Members by the Secretary and shall state the items to be discussed thereat.

### **7.3 Executive Committee meetings:**

- 7.3.1 Members of the Executive Committee shall be given not less than seven (7) calendar days' notice in writing of the time and place of meetings by the Secretary, provided that shorter notice of not less than twenty-four (24) hours may, at the discretion of the Chairperson be given, where, in the opinion of the Chairperson, a matter has arisen which requires urgent and immediate attention by the Executive Committee. To every notice of a meeting an agenda shall be attached whenever practical or sent to the Members at not less than twenty-four (24) hours before the time of the meeting.

#### **7.3.2 Virtual meetings**

Any of the types of meetings mentioned in this clause may be conducted in part or in full as a Virtual Meeting. Any Member who participates in a Virtual Meeting via telephonic or electronic means will be considered as being physically present at the meeting. All notice requirements will remain the same and will show the link, telephone number, electronic programme or application as applicable to the meeting as the place where the meeting will be held. Quorum requirements, motions, nominations, voting procedures and minutes requirements will remain the same as for the particular type of meeting. The Executive Committee may decide to do motions, nominations, and voting via electronic means during or before meetings as circumstances and electronic means allow.

### **7.4 Sub-committee and Ombud Committee meetings:**

- 7.4.1 The business of Sub-committees is limited to the items and authority delegated to the Sub-committee. The Sub-committee will have to make recommendations to the Executive Committee or the AGM or SGM that called them into existence.
- 7.4.2 The Ombud Committee will consist of a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of three (3) Members (who may not be Executive Committee Members) elected at the AGM who will have a full mandate to investigate transgressions of the Code of Practice and hand down decisions according to the procedures and guidelines in the Policies and Procedures annexure.

## **7.5 Organisation meetings:**

All meetings at the Organisation other than those described earlier are deemed to be of an informal nature at which no binding resolutions may be taken by a vote of the Membership present. Recommendations may, however, be passed on a show of hands by those Members present, for consideration by the Executive Committee.

## **7.6 Notices:**

Every Member shall register with the Treasurer/Secretary, their contact details and except where otherwise provided herein notices may be served upon any Member either personally or by sending them through the post, in a prepaid letter addressed to such Member at his/her registered address, or by electronic means.

Should a Member fail to register their contact details such Member shall be deemed to have waived the right to receive notices.

## **7.7 Quorums:**

7.7.1 For any committee meeting (Executive Committee or Sub-committee) a quorum will be 50% (fifty per cent) plus one committee member.

7.7.2 For an AGM or SGM, a quorum will be 20% (twenty per cent) of Members in good standing, including all written proxies.

7.7.3 For the Ombud Committee all appointed members must be present for all meetings in regards to a specific case.

## **7.8 Voting and meeting procedures:**

7.8.1 The Chairperson or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside at an AGM, SGM or Executive Committee meeting. In the event of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson not being present within thirty (30) minutes after the time for which the meeting is called, in the case of an electronic meeting it will be seven (7) minutes, the Members shall proceed to elect an acting Chairperson.

These provisions apply mutatis mutandis to the circumstances of the respective Sub-committees but not to the Ombud Committee where all appointed members must be present.

7.8.2 The proceedings of any meeting shall not be invalidated by reason of the non-receipt of notice of any meeting by a Member.

7.8.3 No Member shall be regarded as "in good standing" nor have the right to vote, nor be entitled to any of the benefits of Membership in as long as any Membership Fees due by him/her remains unpaid.

7.8.4 Every Member of the Organisation present at the meeting who is in good standing shall be entitled to exercise one (1) vote per

motion at all meetings of the Organisation. In addition, each duly accredited proxy (who shall be a Member and whose name shall be notified for that meeting to the Secretary) held by another Member actually present at the meeting will be entitled to an additional one (1) vote per proxy held per motion.

- 7.8.5 All matters shall be decided on motion and, if the presiding officer so decides, any motion shall be reduced to writing and shall be delivered to the presiding officer to be read at the meeting. No motion shall be considered unless seconded.
- 7.8.6 All nominations for office bearers must be in writing and accepted by the one nominated for office before the start of the AGM/SGM or before voting takes place.  
Decisions/motions at any such electronic meetings, shall, unless otherwise provided herein, be decided by a majority vote via any electronic voting or a show of hands or motion duly seconded, should the meeting so decide, provided in the case of elections, the candidates up to the required number receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.  
In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote in addition to his/her deliberative vote except in the case where the vote is for the position of Chairperson where the deliberative vote will pass to the elected Vice-Chairperson solely for the purpose of deadlock breaking.
- 7.8.7 If within fifteen (15) minutes from the time appointed for any meeting, a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved, but in any other case it shall stand to the same day in the week following, or in the event that such a day, is a public holiday, to the succeeding working day at the same time and place, and notice of such adjourned meeting shall be given by the Secretary to the Members.
- 7.8.8 The Chairperson shall have the power, with the consent of the meeting, to adjourn a meeting from time to time and from place to place, but no business already discussed shall be transacted at the next meeting other than the business unfinished at the meeting at which the adjournment took place.
- 7.8.9 If at the following meeting after the adjournment of the previous meeting, a quorum is still not present at the start of the meeting, a further 30 minutes grace period after the time for which the meeting was called, shall be given, thereafter the Members present shall constitute a quorum.
- 7.8.10 The wording of all resolutions taken along with the result of the voting must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and reflect the total of "for", "against" and "abstentions" votes cast received. Any member may ask for their name to be mentioned for how they voted.



## **7.9 Minutes:**

The Secretary of the meeting shall at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the meeting circulate to all Members, who are eligible to attend that meeting the minutes of the preceding meeting. At every meeting, after confirmation of correctness, the minutes shall be signed by the presiding officer. Optionally, the Members present shall decide whether or not the minutes shall be read out by the Secretary.

## **8. Financial matters:**

### **8.1. Independent Review:**

The accounts of the Organisation shall be reviewed annually by the Accounting Officer as appointed at the AGM from time to time. The report of the Accounting Officer on the accounts of the Organisation's financial statements prepared by the Accounting Officer shall be submitted at the AGM of the Organisation in accordance with clause 7.1.1.3.

### **8.2. Inspection of books:**

Every Member shall have free access during meetings to the minute book(s) and Asset Register of the Organisation and to all financial accounts and reports. No documents may be removed without the consent of the Executive Committee but Members shall be permitted to make copies of or take extracts from the financial accounts and reports thereon and for this purpose, true copies of such documents shall be made available to them without charge.

### **8.3. Asset register:**

8.3.1. The Treasurer shall maintain the Asset Register of the Organisation. Items brought onto or removed from the Asset Register must be approved by the Executive Committee as provided for in the Policies and Procedures annexure and duly reported at the AGM, as well as documented in the minutes of the at which the decision was taken.

8.3.2. The Asset Register is to be kept up to date and confirmed at the end of each Financial Year by the Treasurer.

### **8.4. Remuneration:**

No remuneration will be paid to any Member for services rendered to the Organisation or any amount paid as a percentage of any amounts received or accrued to the Organisation.

However reasonable out of pocket expenses may be reimbursed to a Member as approved and recorded by the Treasurer.

## **9. Winding up:**

The Organisation shall be wound-up if a special general meeting convened for that purpose not less than 50% (fifty per cent) plus one (1) of the total number of Members of the Organisation in good standing vote in favour of a resolution

that the Organisation be wound up or, if for any reason the Organisation is unable to continue to function.

If a resolution for the winding of the Organisation has been passed as provided for the following provisions shall apply:

- 9.1. The last appointed Chairperson of the Organisation or if he/she is not available, then available Members of the last appointed Executive Committee of the Organisation shall forthwith communicate to the Members, a statement signed by him/her or them setting forth the resolution adopted or the reasons for the Organisation's inability to continue to function as the case may be, and the available Members of the Organisation's last appointed Executive Committee who were in good standing at the Date of Dissolution shall appoint an Accounting Officer to carry out the winding up.
- 9.2. An Accounting Officer shall be appointed who shall not be a Member of the Organisation and shall be paid such fees as may be agreed upon between him/her and the said Members of the Organisation last appointed Executive Committee. Should the parties fail to agree upon the fees to be paid, the Accounting Officer shall fix the basis on which he/she shall be paid provided such fees are reasonable and consistent with ordinary practice by licensed auditing firms in South Africa.
- 9.3. The Accounting Officer so appointed shall call upon the last appointed office bearers of the Organisation to deliver to him/her the Organisation's books of account showing the Organisation's assets and liabilities together with the register of Members for the twelve(12) months prior to the date on which the resolution for winding up was passed or the date as from which the Organisation was unable to continue to function, as the case may be, (herein referred to as the 'Date of Dissolution'), the Membership Fees paid by each Member and his/her address at the said date. The Accounting Officer shall also call upon the said office-bearers to hand over to him/her all unexpended funds of the Organisation and to deliver to him/her the Organisation's assets and the documents necessary in order to liquidate the assets.
- 9.4. The Accounting Officer shall take the necessary steps to liquidate the debts of the Organisation from its unexpended funds and any other monies realised from any sale of assets of the Organisation by advertised auction and if the said funds and monies are insufficient to pay all creditors after the liquidator's fees and the expenses of winding up have been met, the order in which creditors shall be paid shall, subject to the provisions of clause 9.5. be the same as that prescribed in any law for the time being in force relating to the distribution of assets of an insolvent estate and the liquidator's fees and the expenses of winding up shall rank in order of preference as though he/she were a liquidator of an insolvent estate and as though the expenses were the cost of sequestration of an insolvent estate.
- 9.5. No proceeds from winding up or liquidation are to directly benefit any Member whatsoever.

- 9.6. After payment of all debts in accordance with clause 9.4. the remaining funds if any, shall be given or transferred by the liquidator to some other Organisation, society or charities having similar objectives to the Organisation as may be determined by not less than 50% (fifty per cent) plus one (1) of the Members in good standing as at the Date of Dissolution and provided such entity is a tax-exempt organisation approved as such by SARS.
- 9.7. Should it not prove possible to transfer to another organisation as contemplated in clause 9.6 then the remaining funds will be distributed in the following order in accordance with the following provisions of the Income Tax Act 1962 as amended:
- 9.7.1. A public benefit organisation contemplated in paragraph (a)(i) of the definition of a "public benefit organisation" in section 30(1) which has been approved in terms of section 30(3); or
- 9.7.2. Any institution, board or body which is exempt from tax under the provisions of section 10(1) (cA)(i), which has as its sole or principal object the carrying on of any public benefit activity; or
- 9.7.3. The government of the Republic in the national, provincial or local sphere, contemplated in section 10(1)(a).
- 9.8. The liability of Members shall for the purpose of this clause be limited to the amount of Membership Fees due by them to the Organisation in terms of this Constitution as at the date of Dissolution.

## **10. Constitution:**

### **10.1. Interpretation:**

In cases of doubt as to the meaning or interpretation of any of the provisions of this Constitution or the contents of the Policies and Procedures annexure, the interpretation of the Chairperson shall be final and binding upon all Members, provided that any ruling given by the Chairperson may be subsequently amended by an AGM or SGM.

### **10.2. Amendments:**

This Constitution may be amended, altered, added to, repealed or substituted adopted by resolution passed by a majority of not less than 30% (thirty per cent) plus one (1) of the Members in good standing, either present at the AGM or SGM including all written proxies received for such meeting. The Policies and Procedures annexure may be amended, altered, added to, repealed or substituted adopted by resolution passed by a simple majority of the Executive Committee.

Upon such amendment, alteration, repeal of, or addition to any of the previous wording thereof, or substitution of this Constitution being made as aforesaid, or changes to the Policies and Procedures annexure being adopted. The same shall be binding upon all Members of the Organisation provided that no such amendment, alteration, repeal of or addition to the provisions of this

Constitution or the substitution thereof, shall have any force or effect until ratified at an AGM or SGM.


A copy of all amendments to this Constitution will be submitted to SARS.

**10.3. Policies and Procedures:**


The Policies and Procedures annexure appended to this Constitution is hereby incorporated and forms part of this Constitution. The purpose of the Policies and Procedures is to regulate the processes and controls implemented by the Organisation and may be changed with a simple majority at an Executive Committee meeting, and shall not be inconsistent with the intentions of this Constitution nor any South African law.


**Acceptance of changes and date of implementation of changes to the Constitution.**


Signed at Randburg, Gauteng, on 29 January 2023

Chairperson	
Name	Professor Andreas Lemmerer
Signature	

Secretary	
Name	Francesca Lobetti
Signature	<i>FLobetti</i>

Treasurer	
Name	Cheryl Williams
Signature	

Vice-Chairperson	
Name	Denise Naudé
Signature	

Member 1	
Name	Corrie Niemann
Signature	

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ANNEXURE**

*(It should be noted that these Policies and Procedures form an integral part of the Constitution)*

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MEMBERSHIP CLASSES**

*(Refer to clause 5.1.1. of the Constitution)*

<b>MEMBERSHIP CLASS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Individual Member	Shall mean a person who falls into any class of membership below and excludes any legal person.
Legal Person	Shall mean a legal person of any kind.
Student	Shall mean a person under the age of 25 and older than 16 and who is enrolled at any government approved school, tertiary institute or college or where the Executive Committee agrees to accept a person as a student who may be enrolled at a school, tertiary institute or college that is NOT government approved.
Honorary Life Member	Shall mean a lifetime membership which has been bestowed upon any person by the Executive Committee for:  having rendered outstanding service to the Organisation  Honorary Life Members shall have full membership but without voting rights and shall be exempt from paying Membership Fees.
Founder members	Shall mean the Founder Members who were given life membership, with full voting rights, unless they resign and shall be exempt from paying Membership Fees.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION**  
*(Refer clause 5.5. of the Constitution)*

We live in a country that is multicultural and very diverse in nature. Normally any negative behaviour that would occur would only originate with one or two disenchanting individuals. But as most of us know from the old wise saying, "It only takes one bad apple to spoil the whole bushel" and the same could be true for any organisation or Organisation of people trying to work together.

TOP Dogs is an organisation of individuals that strongly and most firmly embraces a warm, friendly and family-orientated atmosphere by which its Members can peacefully engage themselves in an enjoyable manner through the various Organisation activities that are for the betterment of their community, their fellow Members and for themselves.

TOP Dogs believes that if any individual Member's conduct or behaviour is contrary to the promotion of this atmosphere– it will absolutely not be tolerated in any of its forms and will be dealt with immediately by the Ombud Committee elected to deal with dispute resolution and may result in the removal of the offender's Membership.

**Member Conduct**

Normally Member conduct is governed by TOP Dogs' Constitution and the contents of the Policies and Procedures annexure but the Code of Practice acts to clarify specific behaviours that will not be tolerated and the consequences upon Members who choose to violate the Code.

**Members have a right to:**

1. Be treated fairly, equally and with respect by the TOP Dogs' Executive Committee and all other Members.
2. Socialise in an environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.
3. Privacy and confidentiality concerning records, documentation and any other communication containing a Member's personal information, unless consent is otherwise provided.
4. Be informed and actively involved in all Organisation events and offerings.
5. Voice their opinions, requirements and suggestions to the Executive Committee.

**Members must:**

1. Treat other Members, clients, guests, and other patrons fairly, equally and with respect and courtesy. No Member shall communicate with foul, profane, threatening words or other related language via any communications media.

2. Behave responsibly and ensure they conduct themselves in a manner which will not injure the reputation of the TOP Dogs, its events, clients, organisers, participants or sponsors.
3. Not physically or verbally harass others. No Member shall threaten or cause harm to another person either verbally or physically.
- 4 Report any inappropriate behaviour of a Member to the Executive Committee or any of the Ombud Committee members for action and follow up.
5. Abide by and uphold the Constitution, the contents of the Policies and Procedures annexure and this Code of Practice.
6. Not misappropriate TOP Dogs' physical or intellectual assets in any manner.
7. Not harass anyone or persist in an obnoxious activity. Examples of harassment include verbal threats or demands, intimidation, stalking, and unwanted photography or recording.
8. Be aware of the possibility that Membership may be forfeited due to repeated disregard of the Objectives stated in the Organisation's Constitution.

**Breaches of this Code of Conduct:**

1. Any Member not behaving in accordance with the terms of the Code of Practice at an event of TOP Dogs may be asked to leave the function and will not be entitled to a refund of any monies that might be paid.
2. The inappropriate behaviour of any Member will be investigated, discussed and an appropriate course of action will be taken by the Ombud Committee elected according to the Constitution, which may include a reprimand, suspension or revocation of membership.
3. In the appropriate circumstances, the Ombud Committee may refer a matter that can be considered a criminal offence, to the South African Police Service (SAPS) for investigation.

**Possible Sanctions:**

**Sanctions may constitute;**

1. Verbal warning,
2. Notification in writing of violation of the principles contained in this Policies and Procedures annexure or behaviour ethics.
3. Suspension reprimand or termination of Membership.



**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE OMBUD COMMITTEE**

(Refer clause 7.4. of the Constitution)

- All the members of the Ombud Committee must be present at all sittings of the Ombud Committee when dealing with an issue or case.
- The Ombud Committee must try and resolve an issue and come to a finding as soon as possible (maximum 2 weeks).
- The Ombud Committee must adhere to the general principals of common and administrative law. This will include for example the *audi alteram partem* rule.

**Dispute Resolution**

When receiving a complaint the Ombud Committee must meet and decide if it is something that can be resolved with facilitation between the Members involved (a grievance) and if so, they must call the Members involved to a meeting between the parties and help them to get to an acceptable resolution.

**Disciplinary action**

1. If however, the Ombud Committee decides that it is a transgression of the Code of Practice (that needs disciplinary action), the Ombud Committee will inform the Members in writing about the charge(s).
2. The Ombud Committee will give the Member the time, date and place where a hearing will take place and give the Member at least 4 days to prepare for the hearing.
3. No professional legal representation will be allowed. Another Member may, however, assist the Member who is the subject of the Ombud Committee proceedings by representing that Member in those proceedings. The member will have the right to call witnesses.
4. If the offence is of such a nature that the Member may be expelled, the Ombud Committee may use an outside party to be the chairperson and presiding officer.
5. The decision of the Ombud Committee is final and the decision will be communicated to the Member involved as well as the Executive Committee, who may decide to make it known to all Members.
6. Should the Member wish to appeal the decision of the Ombud Committee, notice to do so must be in writing, including the grounds for the appeal and must be delivered to the Secretary within 14 days of the decision being made known.
7. Any appeal against the decision of the Ombud Committee may only be taken to an AGM or SGM so that the Membership can decide if the appeal will be successful or not. No further avenues exist within the Organisation structures for any further consideration.

## THE HANDLER'S CODE

### The Therapy Dog Handler is

**CONSIDERATE**...never knowingly acts in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others and treat the dogs with the utmost care and respect. No ill treatment or abusive behaviour will be tolerated at any time.

**LOYAL**...offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other Handlers, local Organisations, members are expected to perform their duties diligently and in a manner that promotes both internal, as well as external, confidence in their abilities to not only appropriately handle their therapy dogs.

**PROGRESSIVE**...will conduct themselves in a manner that at all times supports other members, and is always acting in a way that is above reproach.

**FRIENDLY**... patient and friendly in giving advice and counsel to the beginner; kindly assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others.

**BALANCED**...volunteering is an avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

**INTEGRITY**... all members should be committed to performing their functions with integrity and to avoiding the improper use of the influence of their office, and conflicts of interest, both apparent and real

# The Therapy Dog's Bill of Rights

As a Therapy Dog I have the right to a handler who -

- Obtains my consent to participate in the work
- Provides gentle training to help me understand what I'm supposed to do
- Is considerate of my perception of the world
- Helps me to adapt to the work environment
- Guides the client, staff, and visitors to interact with me appropriately
- Focuses on me as much as the client, staff and visitors
- Pays attention to my non-verbal cues
- Takes action to reduce my stress
- Supports me during interaction with the client
- Protects me from overwork
- Gives me ways to relax after sessions
- Provides a well-rounded life with nutritional food, medical care, physical and mental exercise, social time, and activities beyond work
- Respects my desire to retire from work, when I think it's time



Touch our Pets – Therapy Dogs  
.....spread smiles for miles.....

## 'TOP Dogs' Policies and Procedures

Here is our **Therapy Dog working manual**. It is important that **you not only read this, but also LEARN it.**

There's more to being a 'TOP Dog' Handler than just holding onto the looped end of a lead.

### **Section 1**

1. Before you become a 'TOP Dogs' team please **examine your motives**. Do you want to do this work for your dog's sake, or for your own? Not all dogs enjoy therapy work, and are therefore not suitable.
2. **Commitment** is very important, if you pull out of a visit at the last minute, it could mean the visit has to be cancelled, and our clients disappointed. Visit Leaders have to balance probationary dogs with qualified dogs. Our aim is to spread smiles not frowns.
3. Please **advise the Visit Leader of the visits you are attending**, especially when on probation. Visit Leaders [and 2IC] information is on the visit schedule, please put their contact details in your phone. Register your attendance on the app.
4. There is a WhatsApp group for each visit, so once you decide you will commit to being a regular attender at a visit, please make sure you are added to that group.
5. **Meet and greet socialising time** before the visit **is very important**. The dogs need to 'meet & greet', toilet and focus, before going into the facility. If you are late you must contact the Visit Leader and request permission to join in the visit [**keep cell numbers in your phone**]. It is not an automatic right to join in, and risk disrupting dogs already working.
6. **Permission**, from the Visit Leader must be gained **before bringing visitors** with you.
7. **Visitors are not allowed with dogs on probation**. This can give a false impression of their normal behaviour.
8. **Only qualified 'TOP Dogs' handlers** can handle our dogs, when representing 'TOP Dogs', or our insurance is void. [Not even the dog's extended human family are covered by our insurance when the dog is representing 'TOP Dogs']
9. **Dogs must not work alone**, there must be at least two dogs, and two handlers, in **visual** contact with each other, at all times. This also ensures handlers are always chaperoned, for their own protection. Dementia patients can become confused, and accuse a handler of misconduct. [One dog with two handlers can be used in extreme cases, but only if sanctioned by the Visit Leader]
10. If you have an emergency you can hand your dog to another qualified handler, **never** to someone who is not qualified with TOP Dogs.
11. When representing 'TOP Dogs' **it is required that you, and your dog, wear your uniform with a visible badge**. 'TOP Dogs' colours are **navy**

with white, for **handlers and dogs**. We recommend buying leads and collars supplied by TOP Dogs.

12. Whenever a dog is representing 'TOP Dogs' you must have their temporary, or up-to-date permanent certificate, with you.
13. **One handler cannot take two dogs** – you cannot watch them both and interact with the client in safety.
14. **Be aware of your dog at all times**, particularly if you are talking to someone, at least be watching your dog and have them on a **short lead** that leaves **you in control**.
15. **Don't let go of your dog's lead**. If you want someone, other than a 'TOP Dogs' handler, to hold a lead, always have a 2<sup>nd</sup> lead for them. [Part of a controlled AAT programme may be the exception, but you will be informed officially]
16. **Do not let your dog off the lead at any facility**, including the grounds. [Part of a controlled AAT programme may be the exception, but you will be informed officially]
17. Your dog is required to wear a 'TOP Dogs' dog jacket, at all official visits and functions, – with a Therapy Dog in training for the probationary visits. This is changed to a TOP Dogs logo badge, after 6 successful probationary visits have been completed The 'Therapy dog' badge, will only be issued, on return of the 'In Training' badge.
18. As this work is totally voluntary, you, as a therapy dog handler, will be **responsible for your own and your dog's expenses**.
19. Please take any suggestions in the spirit in which it is intended – as help for you and/or your dog. **We all make mistakes so do not take it personally**.
20. You must **always adhere to the 'TOP Dogs' procedures** or your membership could be withdrawn.
21. You must **never knowingly bring the name of 'TOP Dogs' into disrepute**.
22. As a member of the team **your input is valued**. Suggestions can be given to any member of the board.

## **Section 2**

### **23. PROTECT YOUR DOG AT ALL TIMES**

24. **Dogs may not commence visits**, after evaluation, until all health checks and documentation have been completed, the Public Liability Insurance/membership payment has been made, and the handler has attended an Orientation Workshop.
25. **Probationary visits** need to be completed within 6 months of being evaluated, or dogs may have to be re-evaluated.
26. **Qualified dogs, who haven't worked for 6 months**, have to be re-evaluated.
27. Only dogs on recognised visits, and adhering to 'TOP Dogs' rules, will be covered by our **public liability insurance**.
28. **Carry a clean-up kit and drinking water at all times**. Even the most reliable dog can be ill, and change its usual needs. [You may have to clean up vomit, for example]
29. When giving your dog a **drink**, please have a cloth, under the bowl, in case of spills or drips

30. Be aware **when other dogs are drinking**, to keep your dog at a distance, unless your dog is invited to drink. Some dogs might be possessive of their own bowl.
31. **Annual health checks** must be performed by a Vet, with signed documentation.
32. Dogs must have **annual vaccinations** – health checks can be done at the same visit.
33. Dogs must be up to date with **de-worming** depending on the product you use.
34. Dogs must have up to date **tick/flea control**, either tablet or spot on, **not dipping**, as it leaves a residue on the coat that will transfer to client's hands. Flea collars can be used if removed for the duration of the visit.
35. Dogs must be **bathed at least once a month**, no more than 24 hours prior to visiting immune compromised/hospital patients.
36. Prior to **all visits** they must be **clean, groomed, teeth cleaned and nails checked**, and a Veterinary or other appropriate **anti-bacterial spray applied**.
37. The dog's equipment – collar, lead, jacket, and your treat bag, need to be also be washed regularly – especially prior to a hospital visit
38. Dogs **may not** visit any patient in need of **isolation, for their own safety**. Some infections can cross the species barrier, **from patient to dog**.
39. Dogs that are **ill, have wounds, stitches, or are not enjoying their visits**, must be removed from the programme.
40. Dogs that have had **a recent serious illness** must have certification from the Vet that they are well enough to resume visits.
41. **Bitches 'in season'** must be removed from visits, until hormones have stabilised. This can vary from bitch to bitch.
42. Always **set your dog up to succeed**. If they make a mistake you need to examine your own performance. Were you **re**-active rather than **pro**-active? e.g. If a dog jumps up at someone, the handler allowed it to happen.
43. Learn to **read your dog's body language**, as they learn yours.
44. **Do not 'over-control'** your dog. They have to learn good judgement for themselves. They are not at obedience school.
45. **Do not let your dog invade the personal space of another dog**. Some need more space than others, so you also need to familiarise yourself with the needs of other dogs.
46. **If your dog needs extra personal space** this is something you can also help them to cope with, and advise other handlers.
47. **Be careful when giving treats**. Food can cause squabbles between dogs.
48. **Dogs may not have toy rewards** at a visit - **Before, during or after**, while other dogs are present.
49. Small dogs can be lifted nearer to clients, but **this can leave them vulnerable** from unpredictable behaviour by the client. – i.e. jerking, grabbing, hitting etc. **be pro-active**.
50. **Be watchful that your dog does not eat anything off the floor** – it could be a pill that is harmful to them. **Teach 'Leave it'**
51. The visit should be enjoyable. **If your dog shows signs of stress** remove them from the situation fast and do something they enjoy i.e. playing, running, etc. you know your own dog. If they return and show stress again, take them home. Maybe it is the type of visit they dislike, so try them somewhere else. If they are not happy at any visits, they will not be able to continue the work.

52. If you know **your dog dislikes a certain type of visit** e.g. crowds of children, confined spaces etc., avoid those visits.
53. If **you** do not like particular types of visits, it's **OK to avoid those**, or your feelings will transmit to your dog.
54. **Do not give treats to other dogs** without asking permission. Some have special diets, or aren't allowed treats.
55. **Large dogs, with waggy tails**, can spill or break things – be aware.
56. Be **watchful that your dog does not stand, or sit, on some-ones foot**. Large dogs can be heavy
57. Dogs are only allowed to visit hospitals or events where the public has got access to, after being qualified – **VL to look out for newly qualified dogs** [Some dogs might never be suitable for these visits, others might be ready earlier.]
58. Remember we are working with dogs, **not furry little people!!!**
59. When a treat is dropped it **must be picked up by the handler** and not the patient.
60. **No peanut butter is allowed in any treats**, due to the fact that people may have an allergy to nuts.

### Section 3

61. **Always knock and ask** before entering a room, or approaching a client, not everyone likes animals, they have the right to choose.
62. **Handlers with backpacks** can knock things off walls, as space is often very limited. Leave kit bags **safely**, out of the way, near doorways.
63. **Carry a towel**, or something similar, for if you put your dog onto some-ones knee or bed. Most people do not mind a few dog hairs, but give them the choice.
64. **If you move any equipment**, to get nearer to the client, i.e. a walking frame, **don't forget to put it back**.
65. After visiting clients in their own room **ask if they want the door leaving open or closed**.
66. **Old people often have very fragile skin** – be very careful with dogs claws, or rough paw pads, getting too close and causing damage. If damage is caused it must be reported to the staff at the facility, and the Visit Leader. An incident report form needs to be completed, which a **member of staff must sign**. It has to be logged in case of an insurance claim later. – don't panic if it does happen, it won't be the first, but just make sure you follow the correct procedure
67. Should you **witness** any **incident, or behaviour**, contrary to our procedures, please bring it to the **attention of the Visit Leader**. [VL] We all learn from each other, and a VL can't see/hear everything.
68. **Don't get personally involved** with our clients. Be friendly, but your role is to **facilitate interaction with your dog**. Research proves that animal interaction is more beneficial than interaction with people, including family members, so **don't hog the limelight**.
69. **Touch** is often something the elderly miss out on, so holding their hand, while the dog is working, can be very beneficial, as can **wearing perfume** as this is often stimulation, particularly for those with failing eyesight.
70. **Don't give any form of gift**, unless discussed with the team in advance, and everyone receives the same. Our job is to spread smiles, not disappointment or resentment, from those who weren't treated equally.

71. **If taking photos** a signed consent form must be completed. If possible, a blanket consent form from the institution is also acceptable and to be renewed every year. Regardless, the handler must always ask for permission before taken any photos.
72. **Photos of children** must have their faces hidden, or have signed permission from the parent or facility.
73. **Photo's for social media** must be provided to the marketing or social media team, after checking there are no infringements of our procedures.
74. The above consent rules, also apply to posts on your personal pages.
75. **Be non-judgmental at visits.** If we criticise what we see or hear we could be requested to cease our visits, and that would be detrimental to everyone. If you feel strongly about a situation, please find a way to intervene as a private individual, but not while representing 'TOP Dogs'.
76. **Confidentiality-** anything you witness, hear, or observe at a visit, or meeting, stays within the organisation, or your membership **will** be revoked.
77. **The most important factor of being a TOP Dog team, is that both you and your dog, as well those we visit, enjoy it.**
78. Spouses, family members or people living in the same household may not sign off each other's observation or probation visits.
79. A person may not sign off their own probation or observation visit.
80. **No probationer may be a visit leader or acting visit leader at a visit,** even if they are an experienced handler working with a new dog.
81. A person must complete their probation with the dog that they evaluated with at the evaluation.

## **Puppy programme**

Criteria: –

- Must be at least 12 weeks old
- All vaccinations up to date (a week after a full course of puppy vaccinations have been completed)
- Vet Certificate
- Leave the TOP Dogs' puppy programme at 6 months (goes for training and socialisation)
- Must be a qualified TOP Dogs handler
- Evaluation on 1 year to re-join

Standard Operating Procedures –

- Area Coordinator must be informed of a puppy within the group and will keep track of the visits.
- Only a qualified handler is allowed to work with the puppy and another qualified handler and dog team, to work alongside the puppy team, as with probationary dogs.
- No more than one puppy at the same visit.



## **Procedures in situations other than visits.....**

- a) **Before** representing TOP Dogs **anywhere** the Chairperson has to be informed, so it's logged on the calendar for the insurance to be activated, and the 2 handler rule has to be in operation, unless sanctioned by the Chairperson.
- b) We would love handlers to get together for walks, etc. subject to rule a). You and your dogs can be in uniform, and hand out flyers to other walkers. Fundraising walks for other organisations would be great venues. If you are keen, please contact other members, and ask them to join you, or ask the Area Coordinator to send out details. We need handlers in all areas of South Africa.
- c) Our dogs are not allowed on escalators, either walking or being carried. There are too many potential dangers. Find stairs or a lift.
- d) If out in a group in a public place, either inside or out, keep to one side of the path/corridor, to allow people, who wish to avoid the dogs, space to do so.
- e) When putting rule d) in operation indoors, be aware of boy dogs finding an 'interesting' corner to mark!!!
- f) When in the public eye, please make sure both dog and handler uniforms, conform to our standards.

## **Promotions.....**

- g) Rule f) above, applies.
- h) Do not work the dogs too long, especially with the public, they get tired. If you cannot cover the roster, either make the promotion time shorter, or have handlers there without a dog.
- i) Ideally it's 4 handlers and dogs per shift, which allows two at the stand, and 2 on walkabout, but it can be 2 dogs at the stand, and no walkabout.
- j) Please keep the stand tidy and wherever possible, do not eat or drink at the stand, rather arrange to take a break. We always want to portray a professional image.
- k) No probationary dogs are allowed at promotions – Joe Public is just too unpredictable, and we won't risk our dogs encountering a situation that could damage them, either physically or psychologically, then we'd lose them in the organisation. Qualified handlers, and dogs, are more used to expecting the unexpected!!
- l) Handlers are welcome, at promotions, without their dog, as there's lots to do that's easier when not concentrating on a dog, e.g. signing people up for MySchool, & issuing cards, helping to complete recruitment forms, hand out flyers, and stickers etc.

## **Useful Information.....**

Once you've passed your evaluation, you will be invited to update your details on the app, where you will find all the information you need, such as forms, calendars, visit schedules, [please check your own details to make sure they're correct], Kyron products, and price lists.

There's also annual membership and please keep up to date.

If you have any suggestions, questions, or problems, please feel free to contact any Area coordinators, or and of the office bearers.

You will notice we've changed the name of the Area Leader to coordinator, as it was getting confusing.

Coordinators –

**East Rand** – Jennifer Raath – [Jen@therapytopdogs.co.za](mailto:Jen@therapytopdogs.co.za) – 082 584 2149

**Pretoria** – Alta Rossouw – [alta@therapytopdogs.co.za](mailto:alta@therapytopdogs.co.za) - 079 078 4377

**Johannesburg** – Cheryl Williams – [Cheryl@therapytopdogs.co.za](mailto:Cheryl@therapytopdogs.co.za) – 083 454 6177

**West Rand** -Corrie Niemann – [corrie@therapytopdogs.co.za](mailto:corrie@therapytopdogs.co.za) – 083 288 7588

**Eastern Cape** – Jill Thompson – [jill@therapytopdogs.co.za](mailto:jill@therapytopdogs.co.za) – 076 191 4009

**Western Cape** – To be determined