

Walking & Hiking Group – Code of Conduct

1. Purpose & Scope

- This group exists to create a safe, enjoyable, inclusive, and nature-respecting environment.
- The Code of Conduct applies to all members, guests, leaders, and participants—whether on hikes, walks, social gatherings, or in group communications.

2. Core Principles

- **Respect** – Treat all members with kindness, dignity, and fairness.
- **Safety** – The wellbeing of every participant is a priority.
- **Inclusivity** – Everyone is welcome, regardless of background, age, experience, or ability.
- **Environmental Stewardship** – Follow Leave No Trace principles, stay on trails, and respect nature, wildlife, and private property.

3. Participant Responsibilities

- **Follow the Leader** – Stay with the group and follow the hike leader's instructions. If you need to leave, inform the leader.
- **Be Prepared** – Bring appropriate clothing, footwear, and supplies such as water, snacks, or rain gear suitable for the trail and conditions.
- **Stay Together** – Keep pace with the group; let others pass as needed; watch out for one another.
- **Communicate** – Arrive on time; notify leaders if you cannot attend or must leave early.

- **Know Your Limits** – Choose walks and hikes suited to your fitness level and abilities.
- **No Dogs** – For safety and comfort of all participants, dogs are not permitted on group walks or hikes.
- **Respect the Trail** – Carry out what you bring in, dispose of litter properly, and leave the environment as you found it.

4. Unacceptable Behavior

- Harassment, bullying, or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Avoid divisive or political conversations that may cause discomfort. Group discussions should remain respectful and focused on positive, inclusive topics.
- Do not misrepresent yourself as speaking on behalf of the group unless authorized.

5. Consequences & Reporting

- Anyone engaging in unacceptable behavior will be asked to stop immediately.
- If the behavior continues, leaders may ask the individual to leave the activity or the group.
- Concerns or issues can be reported confidentially to the organizer.

6. Safety & Emergencies

- Leaders will be equipped with basic safety tools and will provide guidance for the route.
- Participants should know basic safety practices and be prepared to handle minor issues (e.g., first aid, hydration).
- In the event of an emergency, follow the leader's instructions and stay calm.
- If you choose to leave the group during an outing to continue hiking or pursue other activities, we'll ask you to sign a form confirming this choice. This removes responsibility from the group leader for your safety beyond that point.