

BELGIAN SHEEPDOG CLUB OF AMERICA
MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS*

This Code of Ethics for BSCA members is established in accordance with the objectives of the BSCA. The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to promote civility, collegiality, and collaboration among BSCA members and to discourage the bullying, hostility, and incivility that frequently accompanies communications of any type.

AS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF THE BELGIAN SHEEPDOG CLUB OF AMERICA,

I shall:

1. Abide by the Constitution and by-laws of the BSCA
2. Conform to the rules and regulations of the American Kennel Club (AKC).
3. Act, at all times, in a manner that reflects positively on the sports of purebred dogs, the BSCA, and the AKC.
4. Encourage eligible individuals to become members of BSCA.
5. Support both the parent and affiliate clubs.
6. To the extent possible, engage in volunteer activity on behalf of the BSCA.
7. Refrain from engaging in false or misleading advertising or other misrepresentations of Belgian Sheepdogs, breeding practices, or other aspects of the breed or its characteristics
8. Refrain from knowingly taking any action that might endanger the non-profit status of the BSCA or expose it to an increased risk of liability.
9. Demonstrate, in my actions and words, concern for the best interests of the breed, recognizing that reasonable minds may differ on what constitutes the “best interests” of the breed.
10. Act with responsible and courteous behavior, as a representative of the BSCA and the breed,
 - a. in face-to-face encounters with other club members and event exhibitors or participants,
 - b. through email,
 - c. through text messages,
 - d. in any written communications of any sort, and,
 - e. on social media.
 - f. I agree to this provision whether I am interacting with another individual at a dog show, performance event, in any other type of dog event, or in interactions with Club members and other dog fanciers that may occur in everyday life.
11. If I engage in communication regarding Club matters and practices or the best interests of the breed using any form of social media or any written or electronic communication, I shall:
 - a. Engage in only frank, fair, and polite communication about matters related to the BSCA and the welfare of the breed.
 - b. Encourage only frank, fair, and polite communication about matters related to the BSCA and the welfare of the breed among other club members, my colleagues and associates.
 - c. Refrain from engaging in malicious, rude, derogatory, or bullying expressions about that matter, on any electronic platform or media and in any other communications, including, but not limited to, any written or electronic communications.
 - d. Direct my concerns to the Officers and the Board, in writing, and refrain from relying on or using innuendo, rumor, bullying or similar methods of expression in any media or format to express my concerns, and understand that it may take some time to address my concerns.

- e. When using any communication on any social media, which now exists or which may hereafter be developed, refrain from engaging in, fostering, or encouraging bullying, rumor, innuendo, hostility, or misinterpretation of information because my opinion and understanding of the information differs or diverges from that of the elected Officers, Board Members, Committee Members, or other Club members.
- f. Acknowledge that reasonable minds may differ on many issues regarding the welfare of the breed and the management of the BSCA and refrain from engaging in hostile or disparaging communication with or about an individual or idea that is different from mine.
- g. Acknowledge that I recognize that if I choose to engage in any of the prohibited conduct identified above, the BSCA Board will take further actions consistent with this Code of Ethics.

AS AN EXHIBITOR, I shall:

1. Commit to learning about the type of competition I have selected to engage in and to seek out individuals willing to act as a mentor so that I might advance the Belgian Sheepdog as a well-rounded, versatile breed.
2. Commit to being a positive mentor to new and inexperienced persons interested in and participating in any type of competition, including conformation, companion events, and performance events with a Belgian Sheepdog.
3. Exhibit generosity and grace in every competition, regardless of whether the dog I am participating with wins or loses and regardless of the type of competition.
4. Demonstrate respect for judges, show, trial and test officials, and all other competitors.
5. Recognize that reasonable minds may differ about the outcome of a particular competition and, if not in agreement with the outcome, refrain from engaging in disparaging or malicious comments, bullying, rumor, or innuendo and similar responses in any form, on any platform, and in any medium.
6. Follow AKC rules and guidelines regarding participation in any AKC sanctioned event.
7. To the extent possible, make myself available to the general public who are seeking more information about the breed or direct them to sources to obtain additional information.

In all situations that do not appear to be specifically covered by this BSCA Code of Ethics, the individual Member, Exhibitor, or Breeder shall review the BSCA Constitution and By-Laws, the standards set forth by the AKC regarding the particular issue, and consult with at least 3 other members of BSCA, before making a final determination as to their conduct.

The Member may also seek the assistance of the Officers, the Board, or the appropriate Committee Chair before making a decision on any topic. In all circumstances, recognizing that reasonable minds may differ, a Member shall refrain from any practice, speech, or communication, on any platform or in any format, that risks subjecting the BSCA to any legal liability, including libel and slander, or that endangers its non-profit status in any way.

Failure to follow or comply with the Code of Ethics set forth in this document, that are deemed, by the Board, to be prejudicial to the sports of purebred dogs and that appear to be contrary to the best interests of the BSCA and the Breed shall result in the following penalties.

First offense: Letter of Reprimand.

Second offense: Two-year suspension of membership privileges.

Third offense: Five-year suspension of membership privileges.

Fourth offense: Permanent suspension from the BSCA.

In addition to the consequences set out above, the Board retains the right to remove any member from any appointed position or to decline to renew their appointment to that position because of conduct and communications that appear to violate the spirit and intent of this document.

If the AKC suspends a BSCA member or criminal charges are brought against a BSCA member, the BSCA will, at a minimum, adhere to the same disciplinary action as the AKC. If the criminal charges relate to animal abuse or endangerment or any form of child abuse, the Board retains the right to take additional action against the member based upon the type and severity of the criminal charges.

These penalties may be modified to reflect any changes in penalties that are included in a new BSCA Constitution without further action of the Board or membership. (Adopted May 3, 1997; Referenced in the BSCA Constitution, Revised 1998.)

In addition to internal actions the BSCA may undertake regarding the unauthorized use or misuse of assets, the BSCA retains the right to bring a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction, administrative agency, or similar tribunal and/or pursue criminal charges if the unauthorized use or misuse of Club assets is alleged.

I acknowledge that the duties and obligations set out in this Agreement are continuing obligations, for a period of 2 years following the end of my term of office, regardless of whether my term ended by resignation or the natural expiration of my term of office.

I have read and understand the contents of this Agreement and agree to the terms and conditions described in it.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH AKC PRACTICES FOR INFRACTIONS OF
THE BSCA CODE OF ETHICS

First offense: Letter of Reprimand.

Second offense: Two-year suspension of membership privileges.

Third offense: Five-year suspension of membership privileges.

Fourth offense: Permanent suspension from the BSCA

If for any reason the AKC suspends a BSCA member, the BSCA will adhere to the same disciplinary action as the AKC.

(Adopted May 3, 1997; Referenced in the BSCA Constitution, Revised 1998. Revised March 17, 2022.)

By joining the BSCA or by renewing my membership in BSCA, I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to this Code of Ethics.