

Animal Anti-Cruelty League™

Membership Policy

1. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for membership of the Animal Anti-Cruelty League (AACL™), including the rights, responsibilities, governance expectations, and standards applicable to all members.

AACL™ is a voluntary association committed to the care, protection, and welfare of animals through compassionate intervention, community support, education, wellness initiatives, and preventative veterinary care.

Membership supports not only the sustainability of the organisation but also its governance and accountability structures.

2. Commitment to Governance and Accountability

AACL™ is committed to strengthening ethical leadership, transparency, accountability, and organisational sustainability in alignment with recognised nonprofit governance principles, including the King V Report on Corporate Governance.

The organisation recognises the importance of member participation in maintaining a responsible and community-driven organisation and is committed to improving communication, governance processes, and member engagement.

3. Eligibility for Membership

Membership is open to individuals aged 18 years and older who:

- Support the objectives and values of AACL™
- Commit to promoting animal welfare and responsible animal care
- Agree to abide by the Constitution, policies, procedures, and Code of Conduct of the organisation
- Conduct themselves in a manner that supports the reputation and objectives of AACL™.

Membership is a privilege and not an automatic entitlement.

The Branch Committee reserves the right to approve, decline, suspend, or terminate membership applications or memberships where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the organisation and its charitable objectives.

4. Membership Categories - AACL™ recognises the categories of membership as stated in the constitution.

5. Rights of Members

Members in good standing shall have the right to:

- Attend Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and other official member meetings
- Vote at AGMs, subject to the Constitution and membership requirements
- Receive organisational communications and updates
- Participate in the governance processes of the organisation

- Support and promote the objectives of AACL™.

To exercise voting rights, members must:

- Be 18 years or older;
- Be fully paid up where applicable;
- Be a member in good standing;
- Meet any minimum membership period requirements outlined in the Constitution.

Each eligible member shall be entitled to one vote.

6. Responsibilities of Members

Members are expected to:

- Support the mission, vision, and objectives of AACL™
- Promote responsible animal welfare and humane treatment of animals
- Act honestly, respectfully, and in good faith
- Treat the public, staff, volunteers, committee members, and fellow members with dignity and respect
- Refrain from conduct that may harm the reputation, operations, or sustainability of the organisation
- Avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any actual or perceived conflicts where applicable.

Membership may not be used to further personal, political, commercial, extremist, or unrelated agendas inconsistent with the objectives of AACL™.

Members should acquaint themselves with the differences between animal welfare and animal rights, as they are different and the AACL™ is neither an animal rights nor a pro-life organisation.

7. Member Conduct and Disciplinary Action

The Branch Committee reserves the right to investigate conduct that may be contrary to the interests, objectives, governance standards, or reputation of AACL™.

Grounds for disciplinary action, suspension, or termination of membership may include:

- Conduct inconsistent with the objectives of the organisation;
- Abuse, harassment, intimidation, or discrimination toward staff, volunteers, members, or members of the public
- Cruelty toward animals or conduct contrary to animal welfare principles
- Fraudulent, dishonest, or unlawful conduct
- Misrepresentation of the organisation
- Bringing the organisation into disrepute
- Failure to comply with the Constitution, policies, or lawful decisions of the organisation.

Where reasonably possible, affected members may be afforded an opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

The decision of the Branch Committee shall be final, subject to any review procedures provided for in the Constitution.

8. Privacy and Protection of Information

AACL™ respects the privacy of its members and is committed to protecting personal information in accordance with applicable South African legislation, including the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA).

Member information will only be used for legitimate organisational purposes, including:

- Membership administration;
- Governance communication;
- Newsletters and organisational updates;
- Fundraising and donor communication;
- Issuing tax certificates where applicable.

AACL™ will take reasonable steps to ensure that member information is securely stored and appropriately managed.

9. Communication with Members

Members will receive periodic communication relating to:

- Organisational updates and activities;
- Animal welfare initiatives and campaigns;
- Annual General Meetings and governance matters;
- Membership renewals;
- Fundraising appeals and community engagement opportunities.

The organisation is committed to improving communication and transparency with members as part of its ongoing governance and sustainability initiatives.

10. Membership Fees

Membership fees shall be determined from time to time by the National Body and communicated to members accordingly.

Membership fees are non-refundable unless otherwise determined by the National Body under exceptional circumstances.

Membership fees contribute toward the sustainability of AACL™ and the continuation of its animal welfare services and community support initiatives.

11. Amendments and Review

This policy may be reviewed and amended from time to time to ensure alignment with:

- Applicable legislation
- Governance best practices
- The Constitution of AACL™
- Operational and strategic requirements of the organisation.

All amendments shall be approved in accordance with the governance structures of AACL™.

12. Acceptance of Membership

By applying for or renewing membership with AACL™, members acknowledge that they:

- Support the objectives of the organisation
- Agree to abide by its Constitution, policies, and procedures
- Understand the rights and responsibilities associated with membership
- Commit to supporting the welfare and protection of animals in a respectful and constructive manner.

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