ISNHCP Code of Conduct & Ethics

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1. Purpose

1.1.1. The ISNHCP Code of Ethics and Conduct establishes the ethical principles, standards of behaviour and professional responsibilities expected of all individuals subject to this Code.

1.1.2. The Code is intended to uphold the integrity, values and objectives of ISNHCP, promote the humane treatment and welfare of horses, and maintain a professional, respectful and safe environment across all ISNHCP activities.

1.2. Scope of Application

1.2.1. This Code applies to all ISNHCP Student Members, Full Members, instructors, clinicians, mentors and any other individuals acting in an official or authorised capacity on behalf of ISNHCP.

1.2.2. The Code governs conduct in connection with ISNHCP education, training, assessments, professional practice, organisational activities and interactions undertaken in association with ISNHCP.

1.2.3. All individuals subject to this Code are required to comply with its provisions and uphold the ethical and behavioural standards established herein.

1.3. Relationship to Other ISNHCP Standards

1.3.1. This Code forms part of the ISNHCP governing framework and shall be read in conjunction with other applicable ISNHCP standards, rules and policies.

1.3.2. The Code establishes ethical and behavioural obligations without replacing the specific educational, professional, membership or disciplinary requirements prescribed under other ISNHCP governing documents.

2. Ethical Principles and Professional Integrity

2.1. General Ethical Obligations

2.1.1. All individuals subject to this Code shall uphold the ethical principles, values and objectives of ISNHCP and conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, fairness and accountability.

2.1.2. Individuals shall exercise sound judgement, act in good faith and maintain standards of conduct consistent with the responsibilities and trust placed in them through their association with ISNHCP.

2.1.3. Individuals shall represent their qualifications, experience, abilities and professional standing honestly and shall not knowingly mislead others regarding their competence or authority.

2.2. Commitment to ISNHCP Principles

2.2.1. All individuals subject to this Code shall respect and uphold the ISNHCP Vital Mission and the ethical commitments expressed in the Oath of Allegiance, as applicable to their respective roles and responsibilities.

2.2.2. Individuals shall act in a manner consistent with the principles of Natural Horse Care and shall not knowingly misrepresent, undermine or compromise the integrity of the ISNHCP educational and professional framework.

2.3. Equality and Fair Treatment

2.3.1. ISNHCP is committed to the equal and fair treatment of all individuals, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, native language, religion, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, pregnancy or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

2.3.2. All individuals subject to this Code shall respect the dignity, rights and beliefs of others and shall not engage in discrimination, prejudice or unfair treatment in connection with ISNHCP activities.

2.4. Personal Accountability

2.4.1. Individuals are personally responsible for their conduct, decisions and actions undertaken in connection with ISNHCP and shall remain accountable for any failure to comply with the ethical obligations established under this Code.

2.4.2. Individuals shall not knowingly engage in conduct that compromises the welfare of horses, the safety or dignity of others, or the integrity and reputation of ISNHCP.

2.5. Professional Solidarity and Fair Competition

2.5.1. ISNHCP is committed to fostering a professional community founded on mutual respect, cooperation, integrity and support among its members. All members are expected to uphold these principles in their professional relationships and commercial activities.

2.5.2. Members shall not engage in deliberate or unethical practices intended to undermine, disadvantage or interfere with another member's professional standing, reputation, client relationships or business interests for personal or commercial gain.

2.5.3. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, deliberate interference with another member's client relationships through dishonest or improper means, malicious disparagement, misrepresentation, misuse of confidential information or other forms of unfair professional conduct.

2.5.4. Legitimate professional competition, including differences in pricing, services or personal approach, and a client's freedom to choose or change practitioners shall not, in themselves, constitute a breach of this Code.

2.5.5. Alleged breaches of this provision shall be addressed in accordance with the ISNHCP Complaints and Disciplinary Policy.

3. Equine Welfare and Ethical Responsibilities

3.1. Fundamental Ethical Principles

3.1.1. The welfare of the horse shall remain a primary consideration in all activities undertaken by individuals subject to this Code.

3.1.2. All individuals shall uphold the two foundational ethical tenets of the Natural Trim method:

- First, do no harm.

- Respect the healing powers of nature.

3.1.3. These ethical tenets shall guide decisions, actions and professional judgement in the care, handling and management of horses.

3.2. Humane Treatment and Respect for the Horse

3.2.1. All horses shall be treated with kindness, patience, compassion and respect, recognising their physical, behavioural and psychological needs.

3.2.2. Individuals shall not engage in, encourage or knowingly permit cruelty, abuse, neglect, unnecessary suffering or inhumane treatment of horses.

3.2.3. The handling and care of horses shall be guided by an understanding of equine behaviour, natural needs and the importance of developing trust and cooperation rather than fear or coercion.

3.3. Ethical Responsibility in Hoof Care and Management

3.3.1. Individuals shall act responsibly and in the best interests of the horse when undertaking or advising on hoof care, husbandry and management.

3.3.2. Individuals shall recognise the relationship between hoof health, equine adaptation and the horse's living environment, and shall not knowingly disregard conditions or practices that may compromise equine welfare.

3.3.3. No individual shall knowingly undertake or recommend an intervention that presents an unjustifiable risk of harm to the horse.

3.4. Responsibility to Act

3.4.1. Individuals who become aware of practices or circumstances that may compromise a horse's welfare shall respond responsibly and take appropriate action within the limits of their knowledge, competence and authority.

3.4.2. Where a horse's needs exceed an individual's competence or professional scope, appropriate assistance or referral shall be sought in the interests of the horse's welfare.

4. Professional Conduct and Behaviour

4.1. Standards of Professional Conduct

4.1.1. All individuals subject to this Code shall conduct themselves with professionalism, courtesy and respect, maintaining appropriate standards of behaviour in their dealings with colleagues, students, instructors, clients and others.

4.1.2. Individuals shall respect the dignity, rights and personal boundaries of others and conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a safe, respectful and cooperative environment.

4.1.3. Differences of opinion, disagreements and professional concerns shall be expressed and addressed respectfully, without hostility, intimidation or personal attacks.

4.2. Prohibited Conduct

4.2.1. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion, victimisation and verbal, physical or psychological abuse are prohibited.

4.2.2. Individuals shall not engage in unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

4.2.3. Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate sexual comments or conduct, requests for sexual favours, and any attempt to obtain sexual compliance through the misuse of authority or influence, is prohibited.

4.2.4. Sexual assault, physical violence, threats of violence and other forms of non-consensual physical contact are prohibited.

4.3. Professional Relationships and Positions of Authority

4.3.1. Individuals shall maintain appropriate professional boundaries and shall not exploit relationships of trust, dependency or authority for personal advantage.

4.3.2. Individuals entrusted with teaching, supervision, assessment or other positions of responsibility shall exercise their authority fairly, impartially and without favouritism.

4.3.3. Personal relationships or interests shall not compromise professional judgement, impartiality or the proper discharge of responsibilities undertaken in connection with ISNHCP.

4.4. Conduct During ISNHCP Activities

4.4.1. Individuals shall conduct themselves in a manner that does not obstruct, disrupt or interfere with the proper delivery of ISNHCP activities or the participation of others.

4.4.2. Individuals shall respect differences in personal beliefs, opinions and perspectives. Discussions unrelated to the purpose of an ISNHCP activity shall not interfere with its proceedings or create an inappropriate or hostile environment.

5. Conduct During ISNHCP Educational and Training Activities

5.1. Authority and Direction of Training

5.1.1. All ISNHCP educational and training activities are instructor-led and shall be conducted exclusively under the direction of ISNHCP-authorised instructors or other personnel expressly designated by ISNHCP to deliver the instruction.

5.1.2. Students shall follow the instructions and directions of the authorised instructor responsible for the training. They shall not accept instruction from other students or unauthorised individuals, nor undertake practical activities under their direction.

5.1.3. The authorised instructor is responsible for directing the training, maintaining order and ensuring that instruction is delivered in accordance with ISNHCP requirements. Students shall respect this authority and shall not interfere with the instructor's ability to fulfil these responsibilities.

5.2. Authorised Curriculum and Training Boundaries

5.2.1. All instruction shall be limited to the curriculum, training requirements and learning objectives authorised by ISNHCP for the relevant educational activity.

5.2.2. Students shall not independently introduce, undertake, modify or extend any practical exercise, demonstration or other training activity beyond the authorised content or instructions provided by the responsible instructor.

5.2.3. Students are not entitled to determine, negotiate or demand changes to the curriculum, structure, content or delivery of an educational activity. Such decisions rest with ISNHCP and its authorised instructors, acting within their respective responsibilities.

5.2.4. Requests for additional instruction or activities outside the authorised training shall not be imposed upon instructors. Any proposed changes to the curriculum or training programme must be submitted to ISNHCP through its designated feedback or communication procedures.

5.3. Conduct and Participation During Training

5.3.1. Students and instructors shall maintain a respectful, cooperative and orderly learning environment, free from behaviour that disrupts instruction or interferes with the participation of others.

5.3.2. Students may ask questions and seek clarification concerning the instruction being delivered. Questions and discussions shall remain relevant to the authorised training and shall not be used to challenge, obstruct or pressure instructors into changing the prescribed curriculum or structure of the session.

5.3.3. Disagreements with the curriculum, teaching arrangements or decisions concerning the delivery of training do not entitle participants to interrupt proceedings, disregard instructions or demand alternative activities.

5.3.4. Discussions unrelated to the authorised instruction are permitted provided they do not disrupt the training agenda, alienate other participants or involve inflammatory, offensive or otherwise unprofessional language or behaviour.

5.3.5. Where disagreements or unrelated discussions become disruptive, the responsible instructor may direct participants to discontinue the discussion or take it outside the learning environment. Participants shall comply with such directions.

5.4. Instructor Responsibilities and Impartiality

5.4.1. Instructors shall deliver authorised instruction in accordance with the established curriculum and shall not independently introduce activities outside the training authorised by ISNHCP.

5.4.2. Instructors shall treat students fairly and impartially. Favouritism, prejudice or unjustified preferential treatment of individual students is prohibited.

5.4.3. Instructors are responsible for maintaining acceptable standards of professional behaviour and may direct disruptive individuals to cease their conduct or remove them from the educational activity where necessary to maintain order and safety.

5.4.4. Concerns regarding instructor favouritism or the conduct of training should, where appropriate, be raised with the responsible instructor in the first instance. Where the concern remains unresolved, or direct discussion is inappropriate, it shall be referred promptly to ISNHCP, preferably while the training activity is still in progress.

5.5. Compliance and Reporting

5.5.1. All participants shall comply with the rules and requirements applicable to the educational activity they are attending, including any instructions concerning participation, supervision and authorised practical work.

5.5.2. Participants who witness conduct that contravenes the requirements of this section are encouraged to report their concerns to ISNHCP.

5.5.3. Nothing in this section shall prevent individuals from raising genuine safety or welfare concerns, reporting misconduct or submitting feedback concerning the quality or content of ISNHCP education through the appropriate channels.

6. Professional Standards and Practical Requirements

6.1. Professional Presentation and Personal Hygiene

6.1.1. All individuals subject to this Code shall maintain a professional and presentable appearance appropriate to the nature of their work and the circumstances in which it is undertaken.

6.1.2. Individuals shall maintain reasonable standards of personal hygiene and wear clothing suitable for their work, taking into account the physical nature of equine activities, prevailing weather conditions and the practical limitations of maintaining a clean appearance throughout the working day.

6.2. Professional Tools and Equipment

6.2.1. Practitioners shall ensure that the tools and equipment used in their professional work are appropriate for their intended purpose and maintained in a safe and serviceable condition.

6.2.2. Cutting tools shall be kept appropriately sharpened and maintained. Damaged, defective or unsafe equipment shall not be used.

6.2.3. Tools and equipment shall be maintained in a reasonably clean and hygienic condition, with appropriate measures taken to prevent contamination and the transmission of infectious diseases.

6.3. Student Preparedness for Clinics and Practical Training

6.3.1. Students attending ISNHCP clinics, field mentorships or other practical training activities shall arrive fully prepared with all tools, equipment, aprons, gloves and other items prescribed by ISNHCP for the relevant training activity.

6.3.2. Certain equipment may be made available by the instructor or training provider where resources permit. Such provision is discretionary and shall not be assumed unless expressly confirmed in advance.

6.3.3. Students remain responsible for bringing all prescribed tools and equipment except those items expressly confirmed as being provided for the relevant training activity.

6.3.4. Students shall ensure that their required tools and equipment are in suitable working condition and available for use throughout the training session.

6.3.5. Students shall comply with any additional equipment and preparation requirements communicated by ISNHCP or the authorised instructor before the training activity.

6.4. Dress and Hygiene Requirements for Practical Training

6.4.1. Students attending practical clinics and field mentorships shall wear sturdy, suitable footwear that provides appropriate protection when working around horses. Bare feet, sandals, open-toed footwear and flimsy shoes are prohibited.

6.4.2. Students shall wear practical clothing that provides adequate coverage and protection, including appropriate upper-body clothing and full-length trousers. Shorts, bathing suits and clothing that unnecessarily exposes the legs, torso or other vulnerable areas are not permitted.

6.4.3. Clothing shall be suitable for the prevailing weather conditions and the physical demands of the training activity.

6.4.4. Students shall arrive for each training day having attended to their personal hygiene and wearing reasonably clean clothing appropriate for working in a shared educational environment.

6.4.5. Students shall show consideration for others who may be sensitive to perfumes, fragrances or strongly scented personal products during ISNHCP educational and training activities.

6.4.6. Students shall comply with any additional dress or protective equipment requirements established by ISNHCP for the relevant training activity.

6.5. Fitness for Work and Training

6.5.1. All individuals subject to this Code shall undertake professional or educational activities only when capable of carrying out their responsibilities safely and with appropriate attention and judgement.

6.5.2. Individuals shall not undertake practical work or participate in training while impaired by alcohol, drugs, medication or any other condition that compromises their ability to act safely.

6.5.3. Alcohol consumption during ISNHCP educational and training activities, including scheduled breaks, is prohibited.

6.5.4. Smoking and the use of tobacco products are prohibited during ISNHCP clinic and field instruction hours.

6.5.5. Firearms, unauthorised weapons and other items intended for use as weapons are prohibited at ISNHCP educational and training venues. Legitimate hoof-care tools required for authorised instruction are exempt from this restriction.

6.5.6. Students and instructors shall avoid activities outside scheduled training hours that result in fatigue, impairment, lateness or an inability to participate attentively and safely in subsequent training sessions.

6.6. Compliance with Immediate Safety Instructions

6.6.1. During ISNHCP educational and practical training activities, students shall immediately comply with safety-related instructions issued by an authorised instructor, clinician or mentor.

6.6.2. Instructions requiring immediate action, including releasing a horse's leg, moving away from a horse, ceasing an activity or repositioning for safety, shall be followed without delay, argument or discussion.

6.6.3. Students may seek clarification or discuss the reasons for such instructions once the immediate safety concern has been addressed and the responsible instructor considers it appropriate to do so.

6.6.4. Failure to comply promptly with an immediate safety instruction constitutes a breach of this Code, irrespective of whether injury or harm results.

7. Participation in ISNHCP Educational and Training Activities

7.1. Authorised Training and Instruction

7.1.1. ISNHCP students shall undertake their Natural Trim education and practical training exclusively under the instruction and supervision of ISNHCP-authorised instructors, clinicians or mentors.

7.1.2. During their enrolment in the ISNHCP training programme, students shall not undertake additional hoof-care instruction, training or mentorship provided by individuals or organisations not authorised by ISNHCP, unless prior written approval has been granted by ISNHCP.

7.1.3. Students shall respect the educational standards, principles and teaching authority of ISNHCP throughout their training.

7.2. Attendance and Accompanying Persons

7.2.1. ISNHCP educational and training activities are reserved for authorised participants. Students shall not bring guests, family members or other accompanying persons into training sessions without prior permission.

7.2.2. Attendance for the purpose of observation or auditing requires prior authorisation from ISNHCP.

7.2.3. All participants shall respect the learning environment and comply with reasonable directions concerning attendance and participation.

8. Compliance, Reporting and Accountability

8.1. Obligation to Comply

8.1.1. All individuals subject to this Code shall comply with its provisions and uphold the standards of ethical and professional conduct established by ISNHCP.

8.1.2. Individuals shall take personal responsibility for their conduct and shall not disregard or knowingly facilitate behaviour that contravenes this Code.

8.2. Reporting Concerns and Breaches

8.2.1. Individuals who become aware of conduct that may constitute a breach of this Code are encouraged to report their concerns to ISNHCP through the appropriate reporting procedures.

8.2.2. Concerns shall be raised in good faith, with honesty and due regard for the accuracy of the information provided.

8.2.3. Individuals shall not intimidate, threaten, penalise or otherwise retaliate against any person for raising a concern or reporting a suspected breach of this Code in good faith.

8.3. Responsibility and Cooperation

8.3.1. Individuals shall cooperate with ISNHCP in addressing reported concerns or alleged breaches of this Code, including providing relevant information when reasonably requested.

8.3.2. Individuals shall respect the confidentiality and integrity of any formal review, complaint or disciplinary process conducted by ISNHCP.

8.4. Breaches of the Code

8.4.1. Failure to comply with this Code may result in action by ISNHCP in accordance with its applicable Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and other governing provisions.

8.4.2. Where conduct presents an immediate risk to the safety or welfare of horses or individuals, authorised ISNHCP personnel may take appropriate immediate action to prevent harm, including suspending an activity or removing an individual from the immediate training environment.

9. Authority, Interpretation and Amendment

9.1. Authority of the Code

9.1.1. This Code of Ethics and Conduct is issued under the authority of ISNHCP and establishes binding standards of ethical and professional conduct for all individuals to whom it applies.

9.1.2. Compliance with this Code is a condition of participation in ISNHCP educational activities and of maintaining any membership, qualification or position to which its provisions apply.

9.2. Interpretation and Application

9.2.1. This Code shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with the principles, objectives and governing standards of ISNHCP.

9.2.2. Where matters addressed by this Code are subject to additional ISNHCP policies, standards or procedures, those documents shall be read in conjunction with this Code.

9.2.3. Questions concerning the interpretation or application of this Code shall be referred to ISNHCP, which retains authority to determine its intended meaning and application.

9.3. Amendment and Review

9.3.1. ISNHCP reserves the right to review, amend or replace this Code as necessary to maintain its relevance, clarity and effectiveness.

9.3.2. Amendments shall take effect in accordance with the date or provisions specified by ISNHCP and shall apply to all individuals subject to this Code from that date.