



## CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

**Introduction**

This Code of Ethics and Conduct establishes the ethical and professional standards expected of all FGASA members, encompassing both individual members and those employed by FGASA member companies. It serves as a framework for guiding member conduct and upholding the integrity and reputation of the field guiding profession.

Date of Approval	February 2025
Date of Last Review	November 2024
Date of Next Review	Annual review – November 2025
Policy Owner	The Field Guides Association of Southern Africa
Approved by	Board of Directors

### 1. Definitions and interpretation

In this Code of Conduct, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms have the following meanings:

<i>"Board"</i>	means the Board of Directors of the FGASA;
<i>"Code"</i>	means the FGASA Member Code of Ethics and Conduct applicable to Members of the FGASA, as amended from time to time;
<i>"FGASA"</i>	means the Field Guides Association of Southern Africa
<i>"FGASA's Regulations"</i>	These encompass all rules, policies, regulations, and similar documents established by FGASA, including those outlined in its Memorandum of Incorporation, Board decisions, or executive directives. This includes, but is not limited to, regulations concerning membership, professional designations/certifications, Member conduct (including this Code), disciplinary procedures, and continuing professional development, as may be updated periodically
<i>"Member"</i>	means a member as defined in the FGASA Memorandum of Incorporation and Membership Policy
<i>"Misconduct"</i>	means any act or omission, whether deliberate or accidental, that contravenes any of the rules or guidelines outlined in this Code

*“Organisation”*

means, without derogating from the generality of the term, the organisation(s) irrespective of juristic form, to which the Member owns or is appointed, assigned, employed or contracted from time to time; and means the profession of a guide or similar role within an organisation, irrespective of the actual designation of such role.

*“Profession”*

## **2. Background**

This Code of Conduct establishes the ethical and professional standards expected of all FGASA members, encompassing both individual members and those employed by FGASA member companies. It serves as a framework for guiding member conduct and upholding the integrity and reputation of the field guiding profession.

## **3. Purpose**

The primary purpose of the FGASA Code of Ethics and Conduct is to establish and maintain the highest professional standards within the field guiding industry. It serves as a guiding framework for members, ensuring ethical and responsible conduct in all aspects of their work. This includes upholding safety standards for clients and wildlife, preserving the integrity of the natural environment, and maintaining a high level of professionalism in their interactions with clients, colleagues, and the general public. The Code of Conduct enhances the reputation of FGASA and its members.

## **4. Scope and application**

This Policy applies to all applicants in the process of applying for a FGASA designation, students studying towards a guiding qualification, anyone working within the guiding sector or anyone that may have an interest in FGASA.

## **5. Guiding Principles**

This Code is founded upon the following six fundamental principles:

### *Integrity*

- 5.1 Members shall act with honesty, transparency, and ethical conduct in all professional dealings.
- 5.2 Conflicts of interest must be proactively identified, declared, and managed appropriately.
- 5.3 Members shall refrain from any unlawful or unethical activities that may bring disrepute to themselves, their organization, the field guiding profession, or FGASA.

### *Competence*

- 5.4 Members shall possess and maintain the necessary knowledge, skills, and expertise to effectively fulfill their professional responsibilities.
- 5.5 Continuous professional development is essential to enhance proficiency and effectiveness within the field guiding profession.
- 5.6 Members shall demonstrate the core technical and personal competencies expected of a professional designated guide.

### *Responsibility*

- 5.7 Members shall act with due care, skill, and diligence in all professional endeavors.

- 5.8 Members shall dedicate sufficient time and attention to their professional responsibilities and avoid overcommitments.

*Accountability*

- 5.9 Members shall remain accountable for their actions and decisions, even when delegating tasks.

*Fairness*

- 5.10 Members shall act with independence of mind and impartiality in all professional judgements.  
5.11 Decisions should be based on fair, rational, and objective criteria, considering the legitimate interests of all stakeholders.

*Transparency*

- 5.12 Members shall conduct their professional activities with transparency and openness, while respecting any necessary confidentiality requirements.

## **6. Specific Responsibilities**

Members have specific responsibilities towards

*Their Organisation(s)*

- 6.1 Act with integrity and in the best interests of their organization at all times.  
6.2 Promote and uphold good governance practices within their organization.  
6.3 Ensure that the legitimate interests of all stakeholders are considered in organizational decision-making.  
6.4 Comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and codes of best practice.  
6.5 Exercise sound judgment in evaluating risks and opportunities.  
6.6 Manage conflicts of interest appropriately.  
6.7 Maintain open and transparent communication with stakeholders.  
6.8 Promote an ethical and responsible organizational culture.  
6.9 Devote sufficient time and attention to their professional duties.

*The Profession*

- 6.10 Uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct within the field guiding profession.  
6.11 Contribute to the advancement and professionalization of the field guiding profession in Southern Africa.  
6.12 Refrain from any conduct that may bring disrepute to the field guiding profession.  
6.13 Report suspected misconduct by other members in accordance with FGASA procedures.

*The Field Guides Association of Southern Africa*

- 6.14 Adhere to all FGASA policies, regulations and guidelines.  
6.15 Comply with any directives or decisions issued by FGASA.  
6.16 Refrain from any conduct that may bring disrepute to the organization.

## **7. Enforcement**

Any member found to be in violation of this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to the actions as stated in the PBDP001 Disciplinary Policy clause 7:

- 7.1 a written warning

- 7.2 a suspension of membership
- 7.3 an order to successfully complete a relevant competency- or ethics related course and/or examination
- 7.4 an order to successfully complete personal- or professional coaching
- 7.5 termination of membership for a period
- 7.6 a fine
- 7.7 a life ban on membership
- 7.8 The Disciplinary Committee, as the case may be, may suspend or defer all or any part of sanction(s) for any period on any condition that it deems appropriate in the circumstances

## **8. Review and Amendment**

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed and amended periodically to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

## **9. Disclaimer**

This Code of Conduct provides general guidelines for professional conduct. FGASA reserves the right to interpret and apply this Code of Conduct as necessary. By becoming a member of FGASA, individuals and companies agree to abide by this Code of Conduct and accept the potential consequences of any violations.

# FGASA CODE OF ETHICS, CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS



All members of The Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) must subscribe to the “Guiding principles and Code of Conduct” as laid down by the Professional Body. All members are required to sign the Code of Conduct on joining the Professional Body and on renewal of their membership.

The Code of Ethics, Conduct and Professional Standards is as follows:-

**1. FGASA (The FIELD GUIDES ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA)**

I will adhere to all FGASA policies, regulations and guidelines, and comply with any directives or decisions issued by FGASA.

I will aim to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct within the field guiding profession and as such will refrain from any conduct that may bring disrepute to the organisation and the guiding profession in general.

**2. ADHERENCE TO UNIVERSAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, NORMS AND VALUES**

I welcome tourists to the Country, and promise to serve competently and professionally those under my guidance, and I endeavor to the best of my ability to satisfy their expectations as valued guests and visitors to the Country by dealing with the applicable tour programme and itinerary in a responsible and efficient manner.

**3. ADHERENCE TO SOUTH AFRICA’S LAWS, REGULATIONS AND CUSTOMS**

I adhere to and support the Country’s constitution, laws and regulations, tourism acts and conservation laws and I undertake to assist tourists under my guidance to respect local laws, regulations and customs; in addition, I promise to support and uphold the mission and values of the tourist organization I represent, and I submit to the applicable controls, sanctions and disciplinary procedures. I promise to cooperate within my own levels of expertise and refrain from entering areas for which I am not qualified.

**4. PROMISE TO PROVIDE RELIABLE INFORMATION**

I promise to provide knowledgeable, correct, fair and unbiased information on South Africa to tourists under my guidance, and I promise to keep an open mind towards comments and feedback from visitors to the Country. I undertake to apply professional skills and knowledge that I have acquired through training and experience.

**5. PROMISE TO ACT WITH INTEGRITY AT ALL TIMES**

I will at all times act with honesty, transparency, and ethical conduct in all professional dealings. I will ensure that I am accountable for my actions and decisions, and will always act with fairness of mind, rationality and impartiality in all professional judgements, to the best of my ability.

**6. UNDERTAKE TO CARE FOR THE SAFETY OF TOURISTS**

I undertake to implement all reasonable measures to protect the personal safety of tourists under my guidance, and, in the event of acting as nature guide, I undertake to operate safely and responsibly in whatever mode of transport is used. In the event of any accident, injury, mishap or other situation that compromises the safety of those under my guidance, I pledge to immediately contact the relevant authority for assistance.

**7. FIRST AID PROTOCOLS**

As a certified first-aider, I adhere to the applicable ethical norms and first-aid procedures, and, when requested for aid, commit myself to provide competent first-aid assistance according to standing protocols. I will ensure that my first aid certificate is always current.

**8. ATTITUDE OF RESPECT TOWARDS PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

At all times I treat with respect all people of the world, all languages, all cultures and all religions, local and other customs, histories and folklore, and the indigenous natural environment and animals. All guiding activities should be conducted in such a manner as to cause the least possible damage to the environment.

**9. AVOIDANCE OF DISCRIMINATORY ACTION**

At all times I refrain from any discriminatory, abusive, insensitive or irresponsible action and promise to act fairly in the event of any dispute or conflict.

**10. AVOIDANCE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

At all times I refrain from and avoid substance abuse, smoking in inappropriate areas, or use of any narcotic drug, and I promise to maintain my sobriety.

**11. ADHERENCE TO A DRESS CODE**

I undertake to dress appropriately at all times, and to display the relevant registration badge as a mark of my professional integrity and standards.

**12. STATEMENT OF RELIABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

I undertake to be on time, reliable, honest, conscientious and tactful. The number of people comprising a party should be appropriate to my qualifications as a guide, the nature of the trail, the terrain and the type of activities engaged in.

**13. REJECTION OF TOUTING**

I do not solicit for clients or gratuity.

**14. VIOLATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

I understand that should I violate the Code of Conduct, I may be subject to disciplinary action, in line with all disciplinary policies and procedures of the association, appropriate to the nature of the violation.

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**Name and signature**

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**Date**