

Brookings Regional Humane Society

Volunteer Code of Conduct & Policies

By initialing/signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and agree to follow the following expectations and policies while volunteering with BRHS.

Age & Eligibility

- Volunteers under **18 years of age** must have a parent or legal guardian sign their volunteer application.
- Volunteers under **16 years of age** must have an adult (18+) present with them at the shelter at all times.
- Volunteers must be **at least 18 years old to walk dogs**, and dog-walking privileges are determined on a case-by-case basis.
- BRHS may limit or change volunteer activities based on age, experience, training, animal behavior, safety, or current shelter needs.

Appropriate Attire

- **Closed-toed shoes are required at all times.** No sandals, slides, flip-flops, or other open-toed footwear.
- Wear clothing that you are comfortable getting **dirty, wet, scratched, or exposed to cleaning products such as bleach.**
- **Pants are strongly recommended**, particularly when working directly with animals. Shorts may occasionally be appropriate for certain outdoor activities, but volunteers should use good judgment based on the animals and tasks they will be handling.
- Shirts should provide appropriate coverage and be suitable for working around animals that may jump, scratch, shed, or make a mess. Tank tops are generally not recommended.
- Avoid loose clothing, dangling accessories, or anything that could create a safety hazard around animals or equipment.
- If staff determine that an outfit or footwear is unsafe or inappropriate for the planned activity, the volunteer may be asked to change, modify their activity, or leave for the day.

Animal Handling & Safety

- Volunteers may only handle animals and perform activities for which they have been approved or trained.
- Follow all instructions from BRHS staff regarding animal handling, cleaning, disease prevention, and safety.
- Do not enter animal areas, kennels, cages, isolation areas, or other restricted spaces without permission.
- Never force an interaction with an animal. If an animal seems frightened, stressed, aggressive, sick, or otherwise uncomfortable, stop and notify staff.
- Volunteers must immediately report bites, scratches, escapes, injuries, unusual animal behavior, or other safety concerns to a staff member.
- When walking dogs or taking animals outside, volunteers are responsible for cleaning up after them.
- Do not give animals food, treats, medication, toys, or other items unless specifically instructed or approved by BRHS staff.

Professionalism & Respect

- Treat animals, staff, other volunteers, adopters, fosters, visitors, and members of the community with respect.
- Follow staff directions and ask questions when they are unsure how to complete a task.
- Maintain a positive, professional, and cooperative attitude.
- Refrain from harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, or inappropriate behavior of any kind.
- Keep personal disagreements or conflicts from interfering with the shelter environment.
- Remember that volunteers represent BRHS while volunteering, participating in BRHS activities, or otherwise publicly representing the organization.

Drugs, Alcohol & Impairment

- The use, possession, or distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs while volunteering or on BRHS property is prohibited.
- Volunteers may not volunteer while impaired by alcohol, drugs, or any substance that could affect their ability to safely perform volunteer duties.
- BRHS staff may end a volunteer shift if they have concerns about a volunteer's ability to safely participate.

Confidentiality, Social Media & Photography

- Do not share confidential or non-public information learned through volunteering.
- Do not share private information about adopters, fosters, volunteers, staff, or other members of the public.
- Do not post or share photos, videos, stories, medical information, or other information about animals or people connected to BRHS without following BRHS's guidelines and obtaining staff approval when required.
- Questions, concerns, complaints, or sensitive situations should be brought to BRHS staff rather than discussed publicly or on social media.

Shelter Property & Supplies

- Treat BRHS property, equipment, supplies, vehicles, animal-care items, and donated goods with care.
- Use supplies appropriately and return equipment and materials to their proper locations when finished.
- If something is broken, damaged, missing, or running low, please let staff know.

Following Shelter Procedures

- BRHS procedures may change as animal-care needs, staffing, disease-management practices, or shelter operations change. Volunteers are expected to follow the most current instructions provided by BRHS staff.
- Volunteers should use the resources provided at the shelter, including the volunteer task list, handbook, and room task cards.

Attendance & Scheduling

- Volunteers must sign in and out of the volunteer log for every shift.
- Volunteers should arrive on time for scheduled shifts and notify BRHS as soon as possible if they cannot attend.
- Volunteers should only sign up for shifts they reasonably expect to attend.
- BRHS may cancel, modify, or limit volunteer opportunities when necessary for animal welfare, staffing, weather, emergencies, or other shelter needs.

Questions & Concerns

- Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions! If you are unsure about a procedure, animal, interaction, or situation, please ask a staff member.
- If you have a concern about another volunteer, staff member, animal, or BRHS procedure, please bring it directly to BRHS management so that it can be addressed appropriately.

Violation of the Code of Conduct

Volunteering at BRHS is a privilege. Failure to follow this Code of Conduct, BRHS policies and procedures, or staff instructions may result in the immediate termination of a volunteer's shift, volunteer privileges, or volunteer relationship with BRHS.

BRHS reserves the right to modify volunteer assignments or requirements at any time when necessary for the safety and well-being of animals, volunteers, staff, or the organization.