



ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Tiny Cat Animal Rescue (“**TCAR**,” “**we**,” “**our**,” or “**us**”) is committed to maintaining an environment of respect, dignity, and equal opportunity for all individuals who participate in or are served by TCAR's programs and operations. This Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy (this “**Policy**”) sets forth TCAR's commitment to prohibiting discrimination and harassment in all aspects of its operations.

1. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all TCAR directors, officers, and other volunteers (collectively, “**Volunteers**”). This Policy also governs TCAR's interactions with the public, including prospective and current adopters, surrendering owners, donors, and community members. This Policy applies to all TCAR-related activities and communications conducted in connection with TCAR's operations.

All Volunteers are responsible for adhering to this Policy and for reporting any violations they observe.

2. DEFINITIONS

“**Bullying**” means repeated, unreasonable, or unwelcome conduct directed at an individual that creates a risk to health, safety, or well-being, regardless of whether such conduct is related to a Protected Characteristic. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse, threatening or intimidating behavior, humiliation, and sabotage of a person's work or volunteer contributions, where such conduct materially interferes with TCAR operations or an individual's ability to participate in TCAR activities.

“**Compliance Officer**” means the individual designated to receive, investigate, and resolve reports made under this Policy. The Secretary shall serve as the Compliance Officer. In any case where the Secretary's conduct is at issue, the Executive Director or another officer designated by the Board of Directors shall serve as the Compliance Officer.

“**Cyberbullying / Online Harassment**” means bullying or harassment, as defined in this Policy, conducted through digital or electronic means, including but not limited to

email, text messaging, social media platforms, messaging applications, online forums, or any other digital communication channel.

"Discrimination" means any adverse or unequal treatment of an individual based on a Protected Characteristic, including but not limited to denial of volunteer opportunities, exclusion from programs, denial of adoption or foster applications on a prohibited basis, harassment, intimidation, or any other conduct that creates an unwelcoming or hostile environment.

"Harassment" means unwelcome conduct based on a Protected Characteristic that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for any Volunteer or member of the public interacting with TCAR.

"Protected Characteristics" means race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

"Sexual Harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (i) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in TCAR's programs or volunteer activities; (ii) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual's volunteer opportunities or participation; or (iii) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's volunteer service or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- (a) **Equal Opportunity in Volunteer Participation.** TCAR provides equal opportunity to all individuals who wish to volunteer, foster, or otherwise participate in TCAR's programs and operations, without regard to any Protected Characteristic. All decisions regarding volunteer recruitment, placement, advancement, training, and termination of volunteer service shall be based on the individual's qualifications, skills, performance, and the needs of the organization. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit TCAR's ability to make decisions based on legitimate organizational needs or the qualifications of individual Volunteers.
- (b) **Non-Discrimination in Services.** TCAR shall not unlawfully discriminate against any member of the public in the provision of adoption, fostering, surrender, TNVR, community cat support, or any other service offered by TCAR. Adoption and foster placement decisions shall be based solely on factors relevant to the welfare of the animal, including the applicant's ability to provide appropriate care,

housing, and a safe environment, and shall not be influenced by any Protected Characteristic of the applicant.

- (c) **Prohibition of Harassment.** TCAR prohibits harassment of any Volunteer or member of the public based on any Protected Characteristic. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal or written comments, slurs, jokes, or derogatory remarks; display of offensive images or materials; intimidation, threats, or physical aggression; and any other conduct that creates a hostile or unwelcoming environment.
- (d) **Prohibition of Bullying.** TCAR prohibits bullying of any Volunteer, whether or not related to a Protected Characteristic. TCAR is committed to fostering a culture of humane discourse, and Volunteers are expected to raise issues of concern through appropriate channels rather than engaging in bullying or hostile conduct.
- (e) **Prohibition of Retaliation.** TCAR prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports a concern under this Policy, participates or cooperates in an investigation (whether internal or external), or opposes any practice that the individual reasonably believes to be discriminatory or constitutes harassment.

4. VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

As set forth in TCAR's Volunteer Agreement and Waiver of Liability, all volunteers agree to treat adopters, community members, fellow volunteers, TCAR directors, and the public with respect and courtesy. Volunteers further agree that they will not unlawfully discriminate against a potential adopter or foster for any reason. This Policy reinforces and expands upon those commitments.

5. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any Volunteer or member of the public who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment in connection with TCAR's operations should report the matter promptly to the Compliance Officer.

Reports may be made verbally or in writing and should include, to the extent possible, a description of the conduct, the identity of the individuals involved, the date(s) and location(s) of the conduct, and the names of any witnesses. Any Board member or officer who receives a report under this Policy shall promptly escalate the matter to the Compliance Officer.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to prevent any individual from filing a complaint or charge with any applicable federal, state, or local agency, including but not limited to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Virginia Office of Civil Rights, or the Virginia Office of the Attorney General.

6. INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION

The Compliance Officer is responsible for overseeing compliance with this Policy. All reports of discrimination or harassment will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and in a manner appropriate to the nature of the report. TCAR will maintain confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible, consistent with the need to conduct a thorough investigation.

Upon completion of the investigation, TCAR will take appropriate corrective action, which may include counseling, additional training, reassignment of volunteer responsibilities, a written warning, temporary suspension, or termination of volunteer service.

All reports, investigations, findings, and resolutions shall be documented and maintained in accordance with TCAR's Document Retention Policy.

7. ACCESSIBILITY

TCAR is committed to fostering an inclusive volunteer environment. TCAR will work with Volunteers on a case-by-case basis to identify ways to facilitate their participation in TCAR's programs and operations where reasonably practicable.

8. DISSEMINATION

This Policy will be available to all Volunteers.

9. POLICY UPDATES

We may revise this Policy periodically and update it as necessary to reflect changes in applicable law, regulation, or organizational practice.

10. CONTACT US

If you have questions, requests, or concerns regarding this Policy, contact us:

Email: cats@tinycatanimalrescue.org

Website: www.tinycatanimalrescue.org