



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR

**CANINE  
ETHICS**

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# **The ICE AI Code of Practice**

*for Ethical Canine Professionals*

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[www.canineethics.org](http://www.canineethics.org)

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## Version control

This is a living document. Version 1.0 was published in May 2026. Future versions may revise or supersede the contents of this document as technology, regulation and sector practice evolve. The current version is always available at [www.canineethics.org](http://www.canineethics.org).

## Document development

This Code of Practice was developed by the International Institute for Canine Ethics (IICE) for the canine professional community we serve.

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## Foreword

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Artificial intelligence has moved from the margins of professional life to the centre of it. Canine professionals across our sector, including trainers, behaviourists, walkers, boarders, groomers, hydrotherapists, masseurs, writers and teachers, are now using AI tools daily and often without clear guidance on what counts as ethical practice. The pace of adoption has outrun the pace of professional reflection.

This Code of Practice exists to close that gap.

It is written for ethical, force-free and fear-free canine professionals who care about welfare-first practice and who want to use AI in ways that reinforce, rather than undermine, the principles their work is built on. It sets out eight core principles that should guide AI use in canine practice, alongside practical guidance for everyday situations.

This document does not tell practitioners which AI tools to use. That choice belongs to the individual. What it does establish is what ethical AI use looks like, regardless of which tool is in front of you.

The International Institute for Canine Ethics is committed to setting the gold standard for ethical practice in our sector. This Code is offered in that spirit and is intended to support every member of the canine professional community we serve.

# About this Code

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## Purpose

This Code establishes the ethical standards that the International Institute for Canine Ethics expects of its members in their use of artificial intelligence in professional practice. It is intended to protect dogs, clients, practitioners and the wider profession from the harms that poor AI use can cause, while supporting the genuine benefits that thoughtful AI use can offer.

## Who this Code applies to

This Code applies to all IICE members across the full range of professional roles our membership covers, including:

- Dog trainers and canine behaviourists
- Dog walkers, home boarders and canine carers
- Dog groomers
- Canine hydrotherapists, masseurs and clinical bodyworkers
- Dog writers, course creators and teachers
- Any other canine professional whose work intersects with these areas

Different roles will encounter AI in different ways. The principles in this Code are written to apply across the full range of roles, with practical examples drawn from across the sector.

## What this Code does not do

This Code does not list approved or prohibited AI tools. The AI landscape changes too quickly for that kind of list to remain useful. It also does not tell practitioners how to run their businesses or which technology to choose. The principles are tool-agnostic and durable.

## A living document

This Code is published as Version 1.0. AI is evolving quickly, and so must our collective response to it. Future versions will reflect changes in technology, regulation, sector practice and the lived experience of IICE members. Feedback from practitioners is actively welcomed and will inform future revisions.

## How this Code sits within IICE's wider framework

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This Code does not stand alone. It sits within the wider professional framework that IICE members already operate within.

### **The IICE Ethics Policy**

The IICE Ethics Policy is the foundational standard for ethical practice in canine professional work. It sets out the core values and obligations that all IICE members commit to. The principles in this Code are extensions of, not departures from, that foundational policy. Where this Code addresses AI specifically, the Ethics Policy addresses ethical practice as a whole.

### **The IICE Ethical Scholarship and Academic Integrity Standard**

The IICE Ethical Scholarship and Academic Integrity Standard governs AI use in academic and learning contexts, including how learners may and may not use AI in their studies and assessments. Where the Academic Integrity Standard addresses AI use in study, this Code addresses AI use in professional practice. The two are complementary and share the same ethical spine.

### **The Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC)**

IICE members working towards or maintaining ABTC registration must continue to meet the standards set by the ABTC in their domain. Where ABTC standards apply, they take precedence within their scope. This Code complements ABTC standards by addressing AI use specifically, which the ABTC framework does not yet cover in detail.

### **The IICE Concerns Policy**

Where a member observes a breach of this Code that they feel unable to address directly, or that involves welfare risk, the IICE Concerns Policy provides the mechanism for raising concerns formally. The Concerns Policy is available at [www.canineethics.org/concerns](http://www.canineethics.org/concerns).

### **UK and international law**

Members must always comply with the law in the jurisdictions they practise in. This includes data protection law (UK GDPR for UK practitioners, and equivalent frameworks elsewhere), advertising and consumer protection law, and any sector-specific regulation that applies to their work. This Code sets professional expectations beyond legal minimums.

# Glossary

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The terms used in this Code are defined below. Where a term has multiple meanings in wider use, the definition given here is the one that applies within this Code.

## AI terms

### Artificial intelligence (AI)

A broad category of computer systems that perform tasks that typically require human cognition, such as generating text, recognising images, making predictions, or producing recommendations. In this Code, "AI" refers principally to the tools canine professionals are most likely to encounter in daily work, including generative AI and AI-powered features embedded in business platforms.

### Generative AI (GenAI)

AI systems that produce new content, such as written text, images, audio or video, in response to prompts. Examples include Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini and image generation tools. Most of the practical guidance in this Code applies to generative AI.

### Large language model (LLM)

The underlying technology behind most generative text AI tools. LLMs are trained on very large bodies of text and produce output by predicting plausible word sequences. They do not understand the content they produce in the way a human professional does.

### Prompt and prompting

The instruction or question given to an AI tool. "Prompting" refers to the practice of designing those instructions to produce more useful output. Prompting is a skill that affects the quality and usefulness of AI output.

### Hallucination

When an AI tool produces output that is plausible-sounding but factually false. AI tools can hallucinate references, statistics, quotations, study findings, professional names, legal details and almost any other type of information. This Code treats verification as the responsibility of the practitioner using the tool.

### Training data

The body of text, images or other content that an AI tool was developed on. AI tools may behave in ways that reflect biases or errors in their training data. Practitioners cannot usually see or audit the training data for the tools they use.

### Data processing and data training

The way an AI tool handles information that is entered into it. Some AI tools use user inputs to improve future versions of the model (data training), some store inputs for a period (data processing),

and some do neither. Practitioners should understand what their chosen tools do with the information they enter.

### **Anonymisation**

The process of removing or altering identifying information from data so that individuals (human or canine) cannot reasonably be identified from it. Effective anonymisation requires more than removing names, since combinations of details can also be identifying.

## **Canine professional terms**

### **Aversive methods**

Training methods that rely on the application of unpleasant stimuli or the threat of them in order to suppress or modify behaviour. The scientific consensus, reflected in the IICE Ethics Policy and across the force-free professional community, is that aversive methods compromise welfare and are not appropriate in ethical practice.

### **Force-free and fear-free practice**

Professional practice that excludes the use of force, fear, intimidation or other aversive approaches in working with dogs. The IICE supports and represents force-free and fear-free practitioners.

### **Welfare science**

The body of peer-reviewed scientific research that informs understanding of canine welfare, behaviour, learning, emotional life and wellbeing. Ethical practice in the canine sector is grounded in welfare science rather than in tradition, opinion, or unverified popular claims.

### **Evidence-based practice**

Professional practice that is grounded in the best available evidence, including welfare science, peer-reviewed research and the practitioner's professional experience and judgement. AI output is not evidence.

### **Clinical or behavioural judgement**

The professional assessment of an individual dog's behaviour, welfare needs or required intervention. In this Code, clinical and behavioural judgement is always the professional responsibility of the practitioner with direct knowledge of the case.



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*Part One*

# **The Eight Principles**

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## 1

## PRINCIPLE

**Professional judgement remains human**

***AI tools must not be used to make welfare decisions, behavioural assessments or clinical judgements about individual dogs.***

**Why this matters**

Behavioural and welfare judgement is the professional responsibility of the practitioner. It requires direct observation, contextual understanding and the kind of integrated thinking that AI tools cannot perform. Behaviour is the visible symptom; the root cause requires sentient, situated assessment. A dog displaying resource guarding may be in pain, in fear, in conflict or responding to handler error, and only a human professional in direct contact with the dog can distinguish between these in a specific case.

AI tools can support professional thinking. They cannot replace it.

**In practice**

- Behavioural assessments are written by the practitioner who conducted the assessment.
- Welfare judgements about an individual dog are made by the practitioner with direct contact with that dog.
- AI may be used to help structure thinking, organise notes or check terminology. It must not generate the clinical conclusion itself.

**Case in point****Sarah, a canine behaviourist**

*Sarah receives a long email from a client describing their dog's escalating response to visitors. She is tempted to paste the email into an AI tool to get a quick assessment. Instead, she uses AI to help her summarise the key behavioural details the client has described so that she can review them efficiently. She then arranges a video consultation to observe the dog directly before writing her assessment in her own professional voice.*

**Good practice in action**

- Using AI to summarise your own case notes for your own review.
- Using AI to suggest questions you might ask during your own consultation.
- Using AI to check the spelling of a behavioural term in your draft.

**Common failure modes**

- Submitting an AI-generated behaviour plan as the practitioner's own clinical work.
- Using AI to "diagnose" a dog from a written description without direct assessment.
- Relying on AI summaries as a substitute for case-specific observation.

## 2

## PRINCIPLE

**High-risk domains require direct human practice**

***Certain areas of canine professional work carry welfare or safety risks too significant to be supported by AI advice. These require direct, human professional practice.***

**Why this matters**

Some professional decisions carry consequences that cannot be undone. A dog being bitten by another dog. A child being bitten by a dog. A dog being surrendered or euthanised because their behaviour was misread. In these high-risk areas, AI-generated advice introduces unacceptable variability and risk, regardless of how confidently it is presented.

**AI should not be used to generate or support**

- Aggression cases or bite history assessment.
- Welfare risk assessments.
- Veterinary referral decisions.
- Cases involving children, vulnerable adults or contested family situations.
- Court reports or legal evidence.
- Cases requiring multi-agency liaison.
- Decisions about whether a dog should be rehomed, returned to rescue or, in the gravest cases, considered for euthanasia.

**Case in point****Mark, a dog trainer**

*Mark is asked by a solicitor to provide a written opinion for a court case involving a bite incident. He recognises this falls squarely within Principle 2 and decides not to use AI in any part of the process. He drafts the report himself, having directly assessed the dog and reviewed the case documentation, and seeks peer review from a colleague before submission.*

## Good practice in action

- Carrying out high-risk assessments through direct, in-person professional practice.
- Documenting your reasoning and evidence in your own professional voice.
- Seeking peer consultation or supervision for high-stakes decisions, rather than seeking AI input.

## Common failure modes

- Asking AI to draft an aggression management plan for a specific client case.
- Using AI to determine whether a dog needs veterinary referral.
- Producing court report content through AI generation.
- Using AI "behaviour analysis" tools that claim to assess dogs from video.

# 3

## PRINCIPLE

# Critical evaluation against welfare science

***AI output relating to canine behaviour, training or welfare must be critically evaluated against current welfare science before it is used or shared.***

## Why this matters

AI tools are trained on large bodies of internet text. That text includes peer-reviewed welfare science alongside outdated dominance theory, aversive training advice and harmful misinformation. AI tools cannot reliably distinguish between them. The output may sound confident and authoritative while citing or paraphrasing methods that compromise welfare.

This is the area of greatest day-to-day risk for ethical canine professionals. Force-free and fear-free practitioners cannot assume that AI output reflects their professional values. Every output relating to behaviour, training or welfare must be evaluated against the current scientific consensus on welfare-first methods.

## In practice

- Treat AI output as a draft requiring verification, not a finished answer.
- Cross-check claims against trusted, peer-reviewed sources.
- Be especially alert to language that subtly normalises aversive methods, for example "correction", "dominance", "pack leadership" and "alpha".
- Never share AI-generated behaviour or training advice with clients, audiences or social media without verifying its alignment with welfare science.

## Case in point

### Priya, a dog trainer and writer

*Priya is writing a blog post about reactivity. She uses AI to help her organise her draft, but notices the output uses language around "correcting" reactive behaviour and references "dominance" concepts. She rewrites those sections herself, replacing the language with welfare-aligned framing around emotional regulation and trigger management. The published post reflects her professional values, not the AI's training data.*

## Good practice in action

- Reviewing every AI output for outdated training language before use.
- Cross-referencing AI claims against your professional reading and CPD.
- Maintaining a personal list of trusted sources you check AI output against.

## Common failure modes

- Publishing AI-generated training advice without checking its methodological basis.
- Forwarding AI output to clients as if it were the practitioner's own science-backed guidance.
- Trusting the AI tone of authority as a proxy for scientific accuracy.

# 4

## PRINCIPLE

# Intellectual honesty and authorship

***AI-generated content must not be presented as the practitioner's own original work without appropriate acknowledgement.***

## Why this matters

Authorship matters. Clients, colleagues and the wider profession have a legitimate interest in knowing whose thinking they are engaging with. When AI is used substantively in producing professional content, such as assessments, articles, client communications, training plans or course material, the practitioner must be honest about that involvement, both with themselves and, where appropriate, with their audience.

This principle aligns with the IICE Ethical Scholarship and Academic Integrity Standard, which addresses authorship in academic contexts. The same principle applies in professional contexts: your work should represent your thinking.

## In practice

- Use AI to support your thinking, not to substitute for it.
- Where AI has substantially shaped content, ensure the final output reflects your own professional understanding and judgement.
- Be especially careful with reflective writing, case studies, professional articles and CPD records. These should represent genuine human reflection.

## Case in point

### **Tom, working towards full membership**

*Tom is writing a reflective CPD entry for his IICE record. He is short on time and considers asking AI to generate the reflection based on a brief description of what he did. He recognises that genuine reflection cannot be outsourced. He sets aside 30 minutes to write it himself. The result is shorter and rougher than AI output would be, but it represents what he actually learned, which is the point.*

## Good practice in action

- Doing your own reflective writing, even when it is harder than asking AI.
- Substantively rewriting AI-drafted content so the final voice is yours.
- Adding a brief note where AI was a substantive part of the process, for transparency with yourself and others.

## Common failure modes

- Submitting AI-generated reflective writing as personal reflection.
- Publishing AI-drafted articles under your own name without substantive editorial reworking.
- Using AI to fabricate case histories or professional anecdotes.
- Asking AI to "write in my voice" so that the appearance of authorship is preserved while the substance is not.

## 5

## PRINCIPLE

**Transparency with clients and stakeholders**

*Where AI tools have shaped material that clients receive, this should be disclosed honestly and proportionately.*

**Why this matters**

Clients have a right to understand what they are paying for. A behaviour assessment they believed was personally written for their dog is materially different from one substantially produced by AI. Transparency does not require listing every tool used to draft an email, but it does require that clients are not misled about the human professional judgement they are receiving.

This principle is also about trust. The canine profession is built on relationships, between practitioner and client, practitioner and dog, and between practitioners and the wider community. AI use that erodes that trust ultimately damages the profession.

**In practice**

- Be open with clients about how AI may be involved in their materials.
- Avoid using AI in ways that would surprise or disappoint your clients if disclosed.
- Where appropriate, include a brief AI statement in client agreements or service descriptions.

**Case in point****Lisa, an online course creator**

*Lisa runs an online dog training course. She uses AI to help draft her welcome emails and then personalises them with her own voice. She adds a short statement to her course welcome page explaining how AI supports her work: "AI helps me with drafting and admin so I have more time to support you and your dog directly. All teaching content, behaviour guidance and feedback comes from me."*

### Good practice in action

- Adding a short AI use statement to your terms of service or course welcome.
- Answering honestly if a client asks whether AI was involved in their materials.
- Choosing to handle sensitive client communication personally rather than via AI drafting.

### Common failure modes

- Generating personalised reports through AI while implying bespoke human work.
- Hiding AI involvement when clients ask directly.
- Using AI to imitate personal communication in ways that mislead the client.

## 6

### PRINCIPLE

## Data protection and confidentiality

***Identifiable information about clients, dogs or third parties must not be entered into AI tools without informed consent and lawful basis.***

### Why this matters

Most AI tools process data in ways that may train future models, store inputs, or share information with third parties. Entering client names, dog details, behavioural histories, case notes, photographs or video footage into AI tools without appropriate consent can breach data protection law and professional confidentiality alike.

Practitioners working in the UK must comply with UK GDPR. Practitioners elsewhere must comply with their local data protection framework. In all jurisdictions, professional confidentiality is a foundational duty.

### In practice

- Anonymise case material before entering it into AI tools.
- Obtain informed consent if identifiable client or dog information is to be processed by AI.
- Review the privacy and data-training settings of any AI tool you use professionally.
- Avoid uploading photographs or video of identifiable people, dogs or premises without explicit consent.
- Maintain a clear record of which AI tools you use and what type of data each one processes.

## Case in point

### Ahmed, a canine behaviourist

*Ahmed is working through a complex case. He removes all identifying details (client name, dog's name, location, breed-specific descriptions that could identify the household) before discussing the anonymised case with AI to help him structure his thinking. He records the anonymisation step in his case notes as evidence of his data protection process.*

## Good practice in action

- Reading the privacy policy of any AI tool you use for professional purposes.
- Turning off data-training options where the tool offers them.
- Treating client information in AI tools with the same confidentiality you would apply to your case notes.

## Common failure modes

- Pasting a full client case history into an AI tool to generate a plan.
- Uploading client videos for AI analysis without consent.
- Treating "I just asked AI" as exempt from data protection responsibilities.
- Forgetting that anonymisation requires more than removing names.

# 7

## PRINCIPLE

# AI does not replace professional development

***AI tools are not a substitute for continuing professional development, supervision, peer learning or supervised practice.***

## Why this matters

Genuine professional development is constructive, reflective and relational. It depends on engagement with peers, mentors, ongoing reading, supervised practice and critical self-examination. AI tools can support these processes by summarising reading, suggesting questions or clarifying concepts, but they cannot replace them.

A practitioner whose understanding of behaviour, welfare or learning theory is built primarily on AI output is not adequately prepared for professional practice. Certification awarded on the basis of AI-generated work creates practitioners who hold credentials but lack capability, which is a risk to dogs, to clients and to the wider profession.

### In practice

- Use AI to support learning, not to complete it.
- Continue investing in genuine CPD: reading, mentoring, peer dialogue, supervised practice.
- Reflect on what you have learned, not just on what AI has produced for you.
- Treat AI summaries as a starting point for engagement, not an endpoint.

### Case in point

#### **Hannah, a practising member working towards full membership**

*Hannah is preparing for an IICE assessment. She is tempted to use AI to summarise the welfare science reading list rather than working through it herself. She recognises this would create the appearance of learning without the substance, and would let her down at the assessment and in her future practice. She sets aside a study schedule to work through the materials directly, using AI occasionally to clarify difficult concepts as they arise.*

### Good practice in action

- Reading source material directly, then using AI to consolidate your own notes.
- Attending live CPD events and member meetings rather than relying on AI summaries.
- Discussing what you have learned with peers, mentors or supervisors.
- Writing your own reflections in your own words.

### Common failure modes

- Using AI to complete required CPD reflection or assignments.
- Substituting AI-generated content for genuine ongoing study.
- Relying on AI to keep up with sector developments without independent reading.

## 8

## PRINCIPLE

## Continuous ethical reflection

*The ethical use of AI is an ongoing professional practice, not a one-time decision.*

### Why this matters

AI is changing rapidly. Tools that are appropriate today may not be appropriate tomorrow. Corporate decisions by AI providers, including military partnerships, changes in data handling, shifts in pricing or access, may alter the ethical landscape overnight. Ethical AI practice therefore requires continuous reflection, not a single decision to adopt or reject.

This is part of being a professional. The world changes. Practice changes. Ethics is not a settled position but a living relationship between values and circumstances.

### In practice

- Periodically review which AI tools you use and why.
- Stay informed about changes in AI ethics, regulation and corporate practice.
- Engage with peer discussion on AI use in your sector.
- Be willing to change tools, methods or practices when ethical conditions change.

### Case in point

**James, an early adopter**

*James was an early adopter of a popular AI tool. He learns that the tool's developer has changed its data handling practices in ways he is not comfortable with, and that it has entered into partnerships he does not want to support. He researches alternatives, discusses the move with peers in the IICE community, and changes his workflow accordingly, even though it means relearning his processes.*

### Good practice in action

- Setting a regular cadence (for example, six-monthly) to review your AI use.
- Following developments in AI ethics through trusted news sources.
- Bringing AI questions to your IICE peer community and member meetings.
- Updating your practice when new information warrants it.

### Common failure modes

- Treating an early choice of AI tool as permanently settled.

- Ignoring developments in AI ethics that affect your practice.
- Defending past AI choices because they were once acceptable, rather than evaluating them on current terms.



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*Part Two*

# Practical Guidance

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# Acceptable uses of AI in canine professional practice

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Much of this Code addresses areas where AI use requires caution or restraint. It is equally important to be clear about where AI can be used well. Used thoughtfully, AI can lighten administrative load, support accessibility, free up time for the parts of canine practice that matter most, and help small business owners and individual practitioners do work that would otherwise be out of reach.

The following list is not exhaustive. It is offered as a generous guide to the kinds of AI use that fit comfortably within the principles of this Code, provided the underlying principles are still respected.

## Marketing and communication

- Drafting blog posts, social media content, newsletters and website copy (with the principles in mind).
- Generating ideas for marketing campaigns, content series or course launches.
- Editing and proofreading your own writing.
- Drafting email responses for routine enquiries.
- Producing image content for general marketing use (with the welfare-representation caveats noted in the FAQ).

## Business administration

- Drafting standard business documents such as terms and conditions, policies, agreements (subject to appropriate professional review).
- Creating standard client communication templates.
- Scheduling support, calendar management, admin organisation.
- Summarising your own notes, plans or business documents.

## Course and content creation

- Generating draft outlines for talks, workshops or course modules.
- Creating quiz questions for your own courses (with review).
- Drafting slide decks from your own source material.
- Translating your own materials into other languages (with review).

## Learning and thinking support

- Summarising your own reading and notes for your own review.
- Clarifying difficult concepts as a starting point for further study.
- Suggesting areas for further reading.
- Structuring your own thinking before you write.

## Accessibility support

AI is genuinely valuable as an accessibility tool. For practitioners with dyslexia, ADHD, executive function difficulties, visual or hearing differences, or other accessibility needs, AI can support equal participation in professional work. This Code explicitly supports such uses, which sit comfortably within the principles set out above.

- Reorganising your own writing for clarity.
- Reading text aloud, or converting speech to text.
- Helping with executive function tasks such as breaking down workload into manageable steps.
- Supporting time management and prioritisation.

## The "Should I use AI for this?" decision framework

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When you are uncertain whether AI use is appropriate for a particular task, work through the questions below in order. Stop at the first question where the answer requires you to pause or change your approach.

### 1. Does this task involve a clinical, welfare or behavioural judgement about an individual dog?

If yes, do not use AI. This work is your professional responsibility. (Principle 1)

### 2. Does this task fall within a high-risk domain?

Aggression, bite history, court reports, vulnerable adults, veterinary referral, multi-agency cases, decisions about rehoming or euthanasia. If yes, do not use AI. (Principle 2)

### 3. Does this task involve identifiable personal data about clients, dogs or third parties?

If yes, have you anonymised the data, or obtained informed consent for AI processing? If not, pause and address data protection before proceeding. (Principle 6)

### 4. Does this task involve behavioural, training or welfare claims that will be acted on or shared?

If yes, do you have a clear process for verifying AI output against current welfare science? If not, pause and establish your verification process before continuing. (Principle 3)

### 5. Will the output be presented as your own original professional work?

If yes, will the final content represent your own thinking and authorship? If not, stop and address authorship before submitting or publishing. (Principle 4)

**6. Will clients or stakeholders receive material that has been substantially shaped by AI?**

If yes, consider how to be transparent about this in a proportionate way. (Principle 5)

**7. Is this AI use replacing genuine professional development that you should be doing yourself?**

If yes, reconsider. AI cannot substitute for your own learning, supervision or peer dialogue. (Principle 7)

**8. When did you last reflect on whether your AI choices remain ethically sound?**

If it has been more than six months, schedule time to review. Continuous reflection is part of ethical AI practice. (Principle 8)

If you have worked through all eight questions and none has required you to pause, you may proceed with appropriate confidence. Keep the principles in mind as you work.

## Frequently asked questions

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These are some of the questions IICE members most commonly raise about AI use in professional practice. The list will be updated as new questions emerge.

**Q. I am dyslexic and use AI to help me organise my thinking. Is that acceptable under this Code?**

Yes. Accessibility uses of AI are explicitly supported. AI as a thinking aid for neurodivergent practitioners is one of its most legitimate applications. This Code is not about restricting access to assistive technology, it is about maintaining professional judgement and welfare standards. Continue to apply the principles around authorship, transparency and data protection as you would for any other AI use.

**Q. Can I use AI to write blog posts for my business?**

Yes, with care. Marketing and content creation are areas where AI can lighten the load significantly. The principles still apply: ensure factual accuracy, evaluate any behaviour or training claims against welfare science (Principle 3), and consider transparency where it matters (Principle 5). If you are writing under your professional name about welfare science topics, your readers reasonably expect your professional voice and judgement.

**Q. What if a client asks me directly whether I used AI to write their behaviour assessment?**

Tell them honestly. If you used AI to support your thinking but the assessment represents your professional judgement, say so. If AI substantially shaped the content, that is a different conversation and one Principle 1 suggests you should not have been in.

**Q. Does this Code override my ABTC obligations?**

No. Where ABTC standards apply they take precedence within their domain. This Code complements ABTC standards by addressing AI use specifically, an area ABTC standards do not yet directly cover. The two should be read together.

**Q. Can I use AI-generated images for my marketing?**

Generally yes, with caveats. Be aware that some AI-generated images of dogs misrepresent welfare-first practice, for example by depicting aversive equipment, fearful body language presented as relaxed, or training scenarios that no ethical practitioner would set up. Review images carefully before using them. Disclose AI-generated images where misrepresentation could occur, particularly in educational content.

**Q. What about using AI to transcribe my own client meetings or consultations?**

With informed consent from the client and appropriate data protection, yes. Without consent, no. See Principle 6. Be especially careful with cloud-based transcription tools that may store or process audio in ways that compromise confidentiality.

**Q. I run a course and use AI to create quiz questions. Is that acceptable?**

Yes, this is a sound use of AI. You should still review the questions for accuracy and welfare-aligned framing before using them with learners.

**Q. What about AI tools that record and analyse client video calls?**

This is high-risk territory. Even with consent, consider whether the data security, the accuracy of AI analysis, and the welfare implications justify the use. Be especially cautious about any AI tool that claims to interpret canine behaviour from video. Principle 1 and Principle 2 both apply.

**Q. I am being marketed AI tools that claim to assess dog behaviour automatically. Should I use them?**

Be very cautious. Principle 2 places behavioural assessment in the high-risk domain category. Tools claiming automated behavioural assessment may produce confident output that bears no relationship to actual welfare reality. At present, no AI tool can reliably replace direct professional observation and judgement.

**Q. What if I see a colleague using AI in ways that breach this Code?**

First, consider whether direct collegial conversation is appropriate. Many practitioners are unsure about AI ethics and welcome a thoughtful conversation. If concerns persist, or if welfare is at risk, refer to the IICE Concerns Policy at [www.canineethics.org/concerns](http://www.canineethics.org/concerns).

**Q. I am a small business owner without a tech team. Am I expected to audit AI tools?**

You are expected to act reasonably. Read the privacy policies of the tools you use, set up the data-training options sensibly, anonymise sensitive material, and stay engaged with peer discussion. You are not expected to be a technology specialist. You are expected to be a thoughtful professional.

**Q. Will this Code change?**

Yes. This is a living document. AI is evolving rapidly and our collective response must evolve with it. Future versions will reflect changes in technology, regulation, sector practice and member feedback.



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*Part Three*

# Member Standards

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## Member commitment

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As a member of the International Institute for Canine Ethics, I commit to upholding this Code of Practice in my professional work. Specifically, I commit to:

1. Keeping welfare and ethical practice at the centre of every AI-related decision in my work.
  2. Maintaining human professional judgement on all clinical, behavioural and welfare matters.
  3. Avoiding AI use in high-risk domains where direct human practice is required.
  4. Critically evaluating AI output against current welfare science before acting on or sharing it.
  5. Being honest with myself and others about authorship and the role of AI in my work.
  6. Being transparent with clients about AI involvement in materials they receive.
  7. Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of clients, dogs and third parties.
  8. Continuing to develop my professional judgement and not allowing AI to replace it.
  9. Reflecting regularly on whether my AI use remains aligned with my values and this Code.
  10. Raising concerns through the IICE Concerns Policy if I witness breaches that I cannot resolve directly.
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## What to do if you witness a breach

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Professional standards depend on the willingness of members to address breaches when they encounter them. The IICE recognises that this can be uncomfortable, particularly when breaches involve peers or colleagues. The following guidance is offered to support members in doing the right thing.

### **Consider direct collegial conversation first**

Many breaches of this Code will be the result of unfamiliarity with AI ethics rather than deliberate misuse. A respectful conversation with the colleague concerned may be enough to address the issue. Where you feel able and safe to do so, this is often the most constructive first step.

### **Use the IICE Concerns Policy where direct conversation is not appropriate**

Where direct conversation is not appropriate, where the breach is serious, where welfare is at risk, or where the matter has not been resolved through direct discussion, the IICE Concerns Policy provides the formal mechanism for raising concerns. The Concerns Policy is available at [www.canineethics.org/concerns](http://www.canineethics.org/concerns).

### **Welfare always takes priority**

If welfare is at risk, do not delay. Raise the concern through the appropriate channels promptly. The welfare of dogs and the safety of clients always takes precedence over professional discomfort.

### **Members raising concerns in good faith are protected**

IICE members who raise concerns in good faith, through the proper channels, are supported by the Institute. The Concerns Policy details the protections available to members who raise concerns honestly.

## Quick-reference card

A one-page summary of the eight principles for printing, pinning up and referring to in daily practice.

<b>1</b>	<b>Professional judgement remains human</b> Welfare and behavioural judgement about individual dogs is yours. AI cannot make it for you.
<b>2</b>	<b>High-risk domains require direct human practice</b> Aggression, bite history, court reports, vulnerable adults, vet referrals, rehoming. No AI.
<b>3</b>	<b>Critical evaluation against welfare science</b> AI output is a draft. Verify everything against current welfare science before using it.
<b>4</b>	<b>Intellectual honesty and authorship</b> Your professional work should represent your professional thinking. Do not pass off AI as your own.
<b>5</b>	<b>Transparency with clients and stakeholders</b> Be honest about how AI shows up in your work. Do not mislead clients about what they are receiving.
<b>6</b>	<b>Data protection and confidentiality</b> Anonymise. Get consent. Read the privacy policy. Treat AI like any other data processor.
<b>7</b>	<b>AI does not replace professional development</b> Read the source. Attend the meeting. Do the reflection. AI cannot do CPD for you.
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous ethical reflection</b> AI is changing. Your ethical position should be revisited regularly, not set once and forgotten.

*The IICE AI Code of Practice for Ethical Canine Professionals | Version 1.0*  
[www.canineethics.org](http://www.canineethics.org)

## Closing

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This Code of Practice does not exist to make AI use harder. It exists to make AI use better, more ethical, more aligned with welfare-first values, and more sustainable for the practitioners and the profession that depend on doing this work well.

Used well, AI can lighten administrative burden, support thinking, support accessibility, and free up time for the parts of canine practice that matter most: the dogs, the clients, the relationships and the welfare outcomes. Used poorly, it can quietly erode the standards the sector has spent decades building.

The choice belongs to each practitioner. This Code is offered as a guide to making that choice well, and as a public commitment to the standards that IICE members hold themselves to.

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### **International Institute for Canine Ethics**

*Setting the gold standard for ethical dog professionals.*

**[www.canineethics.org](http://www.canineethics.org)**

