

CENTURION HIKING CLUB

www.centurionhikingclub.co.za



CODE OF CONDUCT & GUIDELINES

At our hiking club, we are guided by a few core principles that ensure a positive and inclusive experience for all members. We prioritize safety, responsibility, and respect for each other as well as nature, whilst encouraging everyone to hike responsibly, follow trail etiquette, and leave no trace.

We believe in fostering a supportive and friendly hiking community, where members can connect with one another, share their love for the outdoors, and enjoy each hike or event. Hiking in a group provides companionship and safety. Inclusivity is important and we strive to create an environment where all individuals, regardless of experience level, feel welcome and valued. Together, we aim to promote health, well-being, and a deep appreciation for the natural world.

All participants and members of the Centurion Hiking Club are requested to respect and act in accordance with the following Code of Conduct and Guidelines for an enjoyable and safe hike:

1. Core Principles

- 1.1 The club is founded on the principles of friendship, kindness, respect, and gratitude. Our club's EXCO Members and Hike Leaders volunteer their time to maintain a high level of professionalism.
- 1.2 We believe in an attitude of gratitude. Showing gratitude is one of the healthiest and most powerful things we can do for each other.
- 1.3 As a member of our hiking club, we ask that you always treat our wonderful volunteers with kindness and respect. They dedicate their time and energy to making our hikes and events enjoyable for everyone, and their hard work is truly appreciated. Whether you're asking for help or simply engaging in conversation, please remember that all interactions should be respectful, positive, and considerate. We're all here to have a great time and support one another, and maintaining a friendly, respectful atmosphere ensures that everyone has the best possible experience!

2. **Hiker responsibility**

- 2.1. We are a company of equals walking, hiking and socialising together. The club organises the hike logistics but each person remains responsible for their own actions.
- 2.2. Join the relevant hike WhatsApp group for the hikes that you wish to participate in.
- 2.3. Check the hike difficulty ratings before joining the hike WhatsApp group. Exercise your good judgment when it comes to your health and safety and only join hikes that you are fit enough to complete and capable of doing.
- 2.4. Always be early to the meeting place and be ready to start the hike at the communicated start time.
- 2.5. Be prepared with the right equipment. This includes adequate rain gear, cold weather gear and sun gear. Also ensure that you have sufficient water at all times.
- 2.6. Your membership card with emergency details must always be carried with you.

3. **Hiking in a group**

- 3.1. The safety and wellbeing of all participants is a priority in any and all Centurion Hiking Club hikes, and you are requested to follow and respect the hike leader's directions and guidance at all times. If instructions appear unclear or ambiguous, the hike leader should be asked to clarify them to avoid misunderstanding.
- 3.2. As you are hiking with a group, you are expected to stay with the group. Do not split off. Keep the person behind you in sight.
- 3.3. We cannot help you if we are not made aware that you are experiencing problems or difficulties. Notify the hike leaders and/or sweep hike leader if you are experiencing any problems or difficulties during the hike so that we may assist you.
- 3.4. If a fellow member is struggling to keep up, inform the hike leaders so that appropriate, safe action can be taken.

4. Hikers under the age of 18

- 4.1. Hikers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent and/or guardian (guardian to be 21 years and older) at all times. The parent and/or guardian take responsibility for their behaviour and safety and such an adult accepts all risks for the injury, death or loss of property of such children under his or her supervision.
- 4.2. Certain hike venues have age restrictions and this will be communicated where relevant. Members are requested to respect these restrictions.

5. Dogs

- 5.1. The Centurion Hiking Club will have various dog friendly hikes from time to time. However, not everyone likes dogs, and not every hiker is in favour of sharing the trail with dogs. Hikers with their dogs carry an extra responsibility.
- 5.2. Certain hike venues permit dogs on their trails and others have a strict no pet (dogs) restriction. This will be communicated where relevant but if in doubt please ask the hike organisers if your dog is allowed to accompany you before you set out on a hike.
- 5.3. As a hiker and member, you are responsible for your own actions on the trails as well as your dog's actions. Hikers who take their dogs on the trails (where permitted) are welcome if they are well socialised and are kept on a short leash and under strict command and control at all times.
- 5.4. When out on the trails, hikers are requested to always ensure that they pack out what they pack in, and that includes dog poop. Carry a dog poop bag and ensure that you promptly pick up your dog's poop. Never leave poop behind as it's unsightly and unpleasant for other hikers.

6. Hiker and trail etiquette

- 6.1. All members and participants are requested to be considerate of fellow hikers and other trail users at all times. Always be friendly and courteous.
- 6.2. Everyone's personal space must be respected. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, considerate manner towards fellow hikers in terms of both their person and items in their possession. Centurion Hiking Club is an inclusive club and any discriminatory, inappropriate comments, actions or behaviour will be looked at very seriously and may result in action being taken.
- 6.3. The club is represented by its members and you are therefore expected to conduct yourself in a dignified, respectful and friendly manner at all times and in your dealings with fellow hikers, venue and land owners and officials etc. Help us maintain our good reputation.
- 6.4. Remember that each one of us is hiking for our own enjoyment. Please keep noise levels to a respectable level.
- 6.5. Downhill traffic should yield to uphill traffic. Hikers trekking uphill have a narrower field of vision as they are concentrating on the smaller and more immediate areas in front of them. Downhill hikers have gravity and a broader perspective on their side that allows them to easily see what's ahead. If you are an uphill hiker trying to pass another fellow uphill hiker wait until the trail is wide and safe enough to do so, and let them know you're there by simply saying "mind if I pass". When in doubt, give the other user the right of way.
- 6.6. Practice low-impact hiking. For the safety of the group, fellow hikers and the preservation of the hiking trails, you should always stay on the path. Stay on the trail and don't take short cuts.
- 6.7. Familiarize yourself with the hiking principles of '**Leave no trace**'. Pack it in, pack it out. Take only pictures and leave only footprints. Don't pick the wildflowers. Leave nature as you found it. Leave no trace!

7. **Litter**

- 7.1. A very important part of hiking includes the guiding principles of 'Leave No Trace'. Whilst hiking in the outdoors, it's just as important to consider your etiquette towards people as it is to the wildlife and the environment around you.
- 7.2. All rubbish and waste, including but not limited to fruit peels (banana skins, orange or Naartjie peels), apple cores, pips, toilet paper, wet wipes and tissue must be carried out of the hike area and disposed of properly.
- 7.3. Rubbish may not be buried. Any item(s) that has been carried on a hike must be brought back from the hike.

8. **Facebook and WhatsApp groups rules**

8.1. Centurion Hiking Club Posts

The purpose of these groups is to share the social and recreational activities of the Centurion Hiking Club. Only posts related to the Centurion Hiking Club will be allowed. If your account is suspected to be of self-promotion and not related to Centurion Hiking Club hiking and related events, your account / profile will be blocked.

8.2. No Promotions or Spam

Give more than you take to this group. Self-promotion, spam and irrelevant posts and links aren't allowed. Ads by members are strictly prohibited. Only admins may post ads from preferred suppliers, special discount arrangements for the club etc.

8.3. Be Kind and |Courteous

We're all in this together to create a welcoming environment. Let's treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness is required.

8.4. No Hate Speech or Bullying

Make sure everyone feels safe. Bullying of any kind isn't allowed, and degrading comments about things like race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender or identity will not be tolerated.

8.5. Request for Transport /Lifts etc

Any requests/posts regarding lifts or transport arrangements are not permitted on the general Facebook and WhatsApp groups. You may however enquire on the specific hike WhatsApp group for transport and/or lift arrangements. Such transport and/or lifts is not facilitated by the club and Centurion Hiking Club accepts no responsibility nor liability in this regard whatsoever.

8.6. Respect Everyone's Privacy

Being part of this group requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussions make groups great, but may also be sensitive and private. What's shared in the group should stay in the group. By applying for membership you agree to the POPIA section contained in the application form.

9. **Termination of Membership**

9.1. By applying for membership you are agreeing to abide by the Centurion Hiking Club Code of Conduct & Guidelines.

9.2. Membership will be terminated in the following cases:

- a. If membership fees are not paid punctually.
- b. If members, after contravening the Centurion Hiking Club's Code of Conduct & Guidelines and POPIA stipulations contained in the Membership Application form, do not react to corrective guideline and warning measures.
- c. If a member breaches any of the guidelines set out in the code of conduct. Our code of conduct is designed to ensure a positive, respectful, and safe environment for all members and any violation of its terms—whether it relates to behaviour, safety, or treatment of others—will be taken seriously. The club reserves the right to review the situation and, if necessary, terminate membership to maintain the integrity of the club and the well-being of all participants.
- d. At termination of membership no fees will be refunded to the particular member