



INTERNATIONAL EQUINE TOUCH ASSOCIATION - UK



This document presents the Code of Ethics that all members of IETA-UK are required to adhere to and the procedures that will be applied if the Code is contravened.

Code of Ethics

The International Equine Touch Association UK (IETA-UK) is the professional body for both Equine Touch (ET) and Vibromuscular Harmonisation Technique (VHT) students and practitioners. Members of IETA-UK voluntarily commit themselves to be governed by a Code of Ethics. This Code ensures that practitioners and students of both the techniques are committed to high standards, professionalism and the care of their client either equine or human. All Equine Touch and VHT Practitioners in the UK must be a member of IETA-UK to practice under the name of Equine Touch and VHT respectively.

IETA-UK's Committee oversees adherence to the Code and should a complaint be received about a member, has the ultimate power to remove that person from membership.

Each individual member of the IETA-UK, whether student or practitioner must:

- Have a sincere commitment to provide the highest quality of care to those who seek their professional services.
- Represent the Equine Touch/VHT and their qualifications honestly, including their educational achievements and professional affiliations and will provide only the services, which they are 'qualified' or trained to provide.
- Never diagnose or use the word diagnosis, or intimate that you are diagnosing to relate to any problem presented by an equine unless you are a qualified veterinary surgeon.
- Never give advice or instructions to any owner as to the care or care management of their horse, which would be contrary to that given by a licensed veterinary surgeon or that which they are not trained to give.
- Not under any circumstances use any title or description which gives the impression that they are a practitioner of veterinary medicine.
- Refrain from using the title equine therapist unless they are legally qualified to call themselves such.
- Never use the words heal, or intimate by word or by any other medium to any person that by using the procedures taught by the Equine Touch Foundation (ETF) they can heal any problem real or imagined.
- Accurately inform clients, animal health care professionals and the general public of the scope and limits of their discipline.
- Acknowledge any contraindications of any discipline, which they practice.
- Practice the procedures only where there is a reasonable expectation that it will be advantageous to the equine.
- Consistently maintain and improve professional knowledge and competence, striving for professional excellence through regular assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses and through ongoing education training.
- Conduct their business and professional activities with honesty, integrity and respect with inherent worth to all, animals and humans.

All students should be informed that breaches of the ETF code of ethics come under the control of IETA-UK and disciplinary measures include, having the right to use the name Equine Touch™ / Vibromuscular Harmonisation Technique (VHT) removed, suspended from being a member of IETA-UK, as well as being denied the right to attend any further classes, tutorials or workshops in the discipline.

Any Practitioner breaching the ETF Code of Ethics can ultimately lose their right to be a member. As membership is compulsory for practitioners of either discipline, the Practitioner can lose their right to practice under the name of Equine Touch or Vibromuscular Harmonisation Technique.



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Contravention of the Code

If a member of the IETA-UK contravenes the Code of Ethics (the 'Code') he or she can make themselves liable for a complaint to be made against them. IETA-UK will take action against members who break its Code. Four levels of complaints have been defined and are presented in Table One below.

Types	Definitions
Informal Verbal	This is defined as being information received by a person who does not wish to take the serious step of backing up or carrying the complaint through to an official conclusion. However, the recipient of the complaint feels that the information warrants consideration as it may have a prejudicial effect on ET. The information may be hearsay.
Formal Verbal	This is defined as being information received by a person who while they do not wish to personally lodge a formal complaint in writing is supplying information regarding a matter which they definitely and personally know about and wish to pass that information on for the protection of ET and its code of ethics. They will be prepared to back up the information if required and feels that the subject should be officially addressed.
Informal Written	This is defined as being information received in writing with the express purpose of 'supplying' knowledge regarding what could be a breach of Ethics, or an incident, which the informant deems prejudicial to the good name of ET. This is not a formal complaint the words 'official complaint' not being used on the document, however the subject contained could be considered sufficiently detrimental to ET or serious enough for the disciplinary committee to take it further.
Formal Written	This is defined as information received in writing where there is no mistaking the wording that this is an 'Official Complaint in Writing' Where the author is prepared to provide evidence at an official investigation or hearing, and expects the subject to be addressed at an official level.

Once a complaint involving an alleged breach of the Code has been made against a member and is to be investigated by IETA-UK, that member shall not be entitled to resign from membership of IETA-UK until the investigation has been completed and the member notified in writing of the outcome.

Disciplinary action may be taken against any member who:

- (a) contravenes the provisions of any part of the Code; or
- (b) is convicted of a relevant criminal offence or is found by a competent court or other tribunal to have been professionally negligent or incompetent or otherwise to have acted in a manner prejudicial to the good reputation of Equine Touch, the Equine Touch Foundation, IETA-UK and the bodywork industry; or
- (c) in the opinion of IETA-UK is guilty of unprofessional behaviour, incompetence, irresponsibility or of such conduct as to render him or her unfit to continue to be a member of the IETA-UK.

IETA-UK will not normally investigate allegations which fall within the competence of a civil or Criminal Court, Employment Tribunal, Local Ombudsman or other duly appointed tribunal. In such cases, however, the IETA-UK reserves the right to consider whether any findings of fact by the relevant tribunal constitute a breach of the Code and if they do, and if IETA-UK accepts the findings, to take appropriate disciplinary action.

IETA-UK will not normally use its disciplinary procedures to investigate disputes between members unless these involve issues detrimental to the public interest.

The duty of investigating an alleged breach of the Code, shall be vested in the IETA-UK Committee. Additionally the responsibilities of the Committee are to monitor and maintain criteria as specified by IETA-UK in respect of membership enrolment requirements and administration of the membership complaints process.



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Complaints procedure

All complaints must be received in writing. If a client has a complaint they should contact IETA-UK to request a complaint form. The form must be returned in full before the complaints procedure can begin.

If the Committee considers that a matter requires investigating, particulars of the alleged breach of Code shall be sent in writing to the member concerned with a request for his or her observations.

Unless the complaint is considered serious or urgent, the Committee shall not normally proceed with its investigation until the member's observations have been received and considered or a period of not less than 14 days has elapsed without reply from the member.

Without prejudice to a member's rights or the Committee's duty, the Committee may invite the member concerned to discuss the matter and may also invite the complainant or such other persons as it wishes to discuss the matter with the Committee (as the case may be). The Committee will then come to a decision whether to take further action against the accused.

The Committee shall be empowered to terminate any investigation:

- (a) if the complainant fails after reasonable notice to provide the Committee with such evidence or information as it may request: or
- (b) if in the opinion of the Committee, the alleged breach of the Code, even if proved, would be so trivial as not to justify further action.
- (c) if the complaint is adjudged to be contractual.

If the Committee concludes that a member's conduct whilst not constituting a breach of the Code, nevertheless falls short of IETA -UK's professional standards, the Committee shall be empowered to advise the member as to the correctness of his or her actions.

Disciplinary Sanctions

If the Committee is satisfied that a breach of the Code has been proved and if the Committee so agrees the Committee shall:

- (a) warn the member as to his or her future conduct;
- (b) reprimand the member;
- (c) suspend the member from membership of IETA -UK for such a period as the Committee shall determine;
- (d) terminate the member's membership of IETA-UK forthwith or from such date as the Committee shall specify; and/or
- (e) impose such other sanction and/or penalty as the Committee should deem appropriate.

Prior to suspending or terminating a member's membership, the Committee shall notify the member concerned of the action proposed, with the reason or reasons therefore, and shall give him or her the opportunity within a period of 28 days of such notification to make an appeal.

Code Implementation

IETA-UK appreciates that members may experience extenuating circumstances relating to their work, which may lead to an unintentional contravention of the Code. Such extenuating circumstances need to be recorded in writing for future reference so that such evidence is available if and when a complaint is lodged.

The effective implementation of the Code will depend largely on the attitude of members and the trust and confidence placed in them whilst membership of IETA-UK is maintained.

By order of the International Equine Touch Committee

August 2006



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Independent Appeals Committee

The responsibilities and powers of the Independent Appeals Committee shall be to hear appeals from members in respect of disciplinary action and/or removal of membership of a member or members of IETA-UK and to review, confirm, impose, mitigate, increase, remit or vary the decision of any sanction and/or penalty imposed by IETA-UK. Members on this will have to be independent of the IETA -UK Committee.

The decision of the Independent Appeals Committee shall be binding in all respects.

Appeals hearings will take the following form:

- (a) The Appellant or his/her representative will present the case for the appeal against the disciplinary action and/or removal from the membership of IETA-UK.
- (b) The Committee will present the case for the disciplinary action and/or removal.
- (c) The Appellant or his representative followed by the Committee will respectively summarise their cases.
- (d) It is intended that the Independent Appeals Committee will endeavour to reach a decision at conclusion of the hearing or at the latest within 24 hours of such conclusion, such decision to be confirmed in writing to all parties no later than 5 working days after the hearing.

Complaint form

All complaints verbal or written should include the following information:

- Complainant's details: Surname, Forename(s), Address, Home Tel, Mobile, Fax, Email, Address at which work was carried out.
- Members Details: Member's Surname, Forename(s), Address (if known) Tel mobile.
- The following information regarding the complaint
 - 1) the date that the complainant first advised the member of their dissatisfaction
 - 2) What subsequent action has been taken
 - 3) Reason for Equine Touch / VHT session
 - 4) Description of the nature of the complaint as clearly and succinctly as possible including reference to any documentation obtained.
 - 5) What aspect of IETA-UK's Code of Ethics the Complainant considers the member has contravened
 - 6) What action, in the Complainant's opinion, should be taken by both parties to resolve this complaint?
- The following declaration signed and dated by the Complainant, 'To the best of my knowledge the details which I have given on this form are complete and correct. I request IETA-UK to investigate this complaint.'