



Redlands Dog Obedience Club

Policy – **DOG POLICY**

Summary

OUR APPROACH: Redlands Dog Obedience Club is a volunteer run community organisation. We support dogs and their handlers to learn how to be good community members and train in dog sports. We provide training that requires the handler to listen, learn and act upon advice provided. Our training is provided upon the proviso that both the handler and dog can work in a class environment and are seen to be developing and learning. The following policy explains in what situations we may recommend a private trainer, behaviourist, vet or doing work away from the club before returning.

We **DO NOT** take dogs that have been Declared Dangerous by a local Council.

Handler obligations:

You have a duty to notify us if:

- Your dog has bitten a person or another dog.
- You are unsure if your dog has or it has acted in an aggressive manner towards dogs, animals or humans.
- You are unable to physically control your dog without compromising yourself, ie. Hold and restrain them with ease.

Who is responsible for the implementation of this policy

- Management Committee
- Instructors
- Handlers

- Volunteers

Details

SCREENING AND DISCLOSURE:

1. At point of enquiry handler is advised in standard email reply that we cannot work with dogs with severe behavioural issues that prevent them from taking part in group classes and recommend private one to one trainers.
2. Inform handlers at the Induction session and in Intake booklet of our requirements and limitations and refer to this Policy.
3. Provide assessment of dogs where we have been notified of a potential problem and feedback on whether the dog is suitable to train in a club environment.
4. Form completed for each new dog declaring dog's issues, goals and training sought.
5. If, after allowing time to settle to a new and unfamiliar environment, an Instructor identifies a dog showing snarling, growling or severe lunging at other dogs or people OR a handler appears unable to control their dog - refer for immediate assessment by Training Sub Committee using the form at the end of this policy.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLERS: On the Grounds and in class

1. No play sessions at training
2. No meet and greet with others, No "let's say hi". You and your dog are here to learn and create a relationship between you and your dog/s.
3. Know and understand your dog's natural breed instincts and manage the situation accordingly.
4. Focus always on your dog - look for signs of stress or fear and overexcitement and respond by withdrawing them from the situation.
5. Know your dog's TRIGGERS - what winds them up and avoid these.
6. Remove your dog from class if he/she is overtired, not able to focus on you or rewards, and exhibiting poor behaviour. THIS IS NOT A SIGN OF FAILURE – it's a sign that you are working FOR your dog. If possible crate it or leave it safely in the car and return to listen to the end of the class so you can keep up with training at home.
7. Ask questions in class if you are unsure. It is better for the class to hear as many will have the same question!

FOR INSTRUCTORS: Class management

1. Allow time for the dogs in class to settle into the new unfamiliar situation of group classes.
2. Management options in class include moving handler and dog slightly away from the group, separation of particular dogs that spark each other off (Or request swapping class where possible, very useful for dogs from the same family), focused walking at a distance around the oval to calm and desensitise the dog, or take a break and have some play fun with dog.
3. Remind handlers that if their dog is not focusing on them or is stressed, they don't need permission to remove the dog from class (see above) - just go!
4. Assess dogs week by week - look for improvements that show the handler is really trying and applying their learnings from class.

IF PROGRESS IS NOT VISIBLY BEING MADE – Instructor will assess using the following criteria: (Please see form at the end of the policy)

1. Does the owner acknowledge the dog has an issue and is making real efforts to address it?
2. Can the dog be refocussed back to the handler?
3. Has the handler/dog made progress to date?
4. Is the handler constantly on the lookout for triggers and doing all they can to avoid these?
5. Is the behaviour observed a new behaviour, or an exception to their normal behaviour in class – maybe there's another reason for it – i.e. pain, fear of something new?

If the instructor is concerned, they should complete the form at the end of this policy and send it to the secretary or hand to the training sub-committee for assessment. The handler is to be advised that the dog is to not attend training until the sub-committee has made a decision.

Training Subcommittee member to decide based on the Instructors report on this Criteria and further discussions. If necessary, observation during a class may be recommended.

The Training Sub Committee decision is final, however the training sub-committee may refer the decision to the Management Committee. All decisions must be made in writing via the club secretary and the management committee notified.

Comments

If after the first THREE (approx) classes, the dog is ONLY able to work at a distance that's so far away that the handler can't hear what's being taught in class, it's not working. The handler will to be told to withdraw from the class and seek other options with one-to-one trainers.

Instructor Assessment Form			
Name of Dog			
Class		Date	
Name of Member/Handler			
Why is this dog being assessed? (Please provide details of concern)			
Has the handler been notified of your concerns? Y/N			
If no please detail why below.			
Has the dog made any improvement over the last 3 weeks?			
Yes (Significant)	Yes (Slight)	No	Worse
Can the dog work at a distance from the class and still participate?			
Yes	No (Too far away)	Sometimes	Rarely
Are you aware of the triggers for the dog? Y/N			
If yes is the handler aware of the triggers? Y/N			
Is this a new problem or a continuation of previous ones? Y/N			
If yes has the dog been checked by a vet? Y/N			
Is the dog disrupting the rest of the class?			
Yes (Significant)	Yes (Sometimes)	No	No (Too far away)
Do you feel the dog is a risk to the rest of the class or yourself?			
Yes	No	Not Sure	
Please list any specific behaviours that are concerning you.			