

## COURSE POLICIES

Please take a moment to review our policies; these support safety and create a positive learning experience for all. –Thanks, Deb



### • **Required vaccinations/health-related policies**

- Dogs/puppies must: have been in owner's household for 10 days prior to first class with dogs and be healthy/free of all internal/external parasites/contagious conditions (if sneezing, coughing, diarrhea, attend class without dog/pup).
- Required vaccinations: rabies (for dogs over 16 weeks), distemper/parvo vaccination (puppies must be started on the series).
- Intact males are permitted in class if their presence does not negatively impact the class/cause issues with other dogs; females in heat should stay home from class (they *may* be permitted case by case if they wear a diaper and if their presence does not negatively impact the class/cause issues with other dogs).
- For questions related to health, we may require a veterinarian's note that the dog can attend class.

### • **Safety**

- It is imperative that the person bringing the dog to class be physically able to hold onto the dog and keep the dog a safe distance from other dogs/people.
- *Some dogs have needs/behaviors that a group class is not designed to meet.* Dogs exhibiting certain levels of aggression, reactivity, fear, anxiety, and/or stress, as well as dogs that are overly disruptive (e.g., excessive barking, lunging), may not be permitted in class. Determinations are at the instructor's discretion. We cannot offer a refund in these instances; participants may attend class without the dog in order to receive all training materials and instructor support. Questions about a dog's suitability for a class must be directed to the instructor at least 7 days prior to the first class.
- *Kiddos, family members, guests:* It can be wonderful to have the whole family in class and have children/young people work with the dog in class—please contact me to discuss. Anyone handling the dog must be 15 or older; younger people considered case-by-case. Young children attending class should be closely supervised. Generally, guests are welcome to visit class with advance notice but are expected to adhere to our safety guidelines (such as not approaching other dogs). The instructor reserves the right to enforce any limitation or restriction related to guests/children at any point during the course. Some classes/programs may not be able to accommodate/be appropriate for children/guests.
- Dogs must always be on-leash in and around the classroom/building.
- We cannot accept wild canine crosses or hybrids (e.g., wolf-hybrids).
- *Supplies/equipment/permitted training collars:* Leash no longer than 6 feet (no retractable leashes); regular collar; favorite toy; treats. We may request other equipment for safety/training reasons. Prong/pinch collars, choke collars, and e-collars/shock collars are not permitted. If the course requires other supplies (e.g., blanket, mat, chair), your instructor will advise of this at the first class.

### • **Cancellations, registration, and refunds**

*We work with Recreation Departments to offer classes. Recreation Dept. policies supersede these policies. Please contact Gold Star Dog Training or the Recreation Dept. if you have any questions.*

- Payment methods and registration policies are determined by the Recreation Dept. offering the course. If a course is cancelled, a full refund will be issued
- Gold Star Dog Training cannot offer refunds or credits (partial or full) once a class begins (some Recreation Departments may require more notice). This also applies if a dog is determined to be unsuitable for class for any reason (including those listed in *Required vaccinations/health-related policies* and *Safety* sections above). If you need to withdraw from a course due to injury, illness, or other extenuating circumstance, please contact us; we will do our best to work with you. In some cases, partial credit/refund may be possible. Partial refunds and/or credit are considered for the number of classes remaining after the participant has given notice of needing to withdraw from a course. Administrative and/or materials fees may be deducted from refunds/credits.
- If a weekly class is cancelled, we will try to schedule a make-up class. If a make-up class is not possible, we will offer a refund for that week's class. (Exception: weather-related cancellations.)

### • **Policies specific to the Therapy Dog Academy (in addition to policies above)**

- Dogs must have completed the Gold Star Dog Training Basic/Essentials course; exceptions may be made by contacting the instructor before registering for the course.
- Dogs are expected to have a solid foundation in basic obedience.
- Dogs must be social with people, tolerant of dogs, and not show any signs of aggression or reactivity. If your dog is fearful or anxious, contact the instructor prior to registration to discuss.
- Dogs must not be disruptive (e.g., excessive barking, whining, lunging toward other dogs-even in play).
- This course does not result in therapy dog certification, nor does it guarantee certification.

- The course offers general guidance on the skills best suited for therapy dog work and common elements on most certification tests. Therapy dog organizations may have different requirements or may emphasize different skills, and some may have additional requirements that limit a dog's ability to become certified (e.g., unacceptable training equipment, breed-specific restrictions, raw meat diet restrictions). It is the dog owner's responsibility to research and understand these for the therapy dog organization s/he chooses.
- If a dog is not suitable for the class for the reasons cited above (at instructor's discretion), the dog may not be permitted to attend class; we cannot issue a refund (the handler is welcome to continue without the dog). Please contact Deb ([deb@goldstardog.com](mailto:deb@goldstardog.com)) before registration if you have any questions about your dog's suitability.

### **Covid-19 Policies**

In order to support the health of all class participants, we will need to employ a few safety guidelines and rules during class.

*As new guidance comes available, we will adjust as needed. If you have any questions about current policies, contact the instructor at [deb@goldstardog.com](mailto:deb@goldstardog.com)*

#### **Participants should be prepared to:**

- Keep at least 6 feet distance from others at all times.
- Follow all instructions for how to safely engage in class exercises.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into elbow.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after going to the bathroom.
- Bring own hand sanitizer.
- Stay home if having any COVID-19 symptoms/feeling sick or have recently been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 (and inform the instructor).
  - You may be required to show proof of negative covid test before being allowed to resume classes

#### **Masks:**

- If you are fully vaccinated and would like to remove your mask during class, please provide proof of vaccination.
- Otherwise, you (and any guests/family members) will be asked to wear a mask at ALL times in class.

#### **Additional family members in class**

- In general, assume that it will not be possible to bring family members or guests to class (i.e., only one person may attend class with the dog).