

## COURSE POLICIES

Welcome! We look forward to working with you and your dog! Please take a moment to review our policies; these support safety and create a positive learning experience for all. If you have questions, please contact us before registering for a class.

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

- Dogs/puppies must have been in the owner's household for 10 days prior to the first class with dogs.
- Puppies over 14 weeks must have rabies vaccination. All dogs must have distemper/parvo vaccination (puppies must be started on the vaccination series). Clear documentation must be provided.
- Dogs/puppies must be healthy and free of all internal/external parasites/contagious conditions.
- If your dog/puppy is not well (e.g., sneezing, coughing, diarrhea), attend class without your dog/puppy.
- For any 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.
- Handlers 16 and younger are considered on a case-by-case basis; please contact instructor before registration to discuss.
- Dogs must always be on-leash in and around the classroom/building.
- We cannot accept wild canine crosses or hybrids (e.g., wolf-hybrids).
- Some dogs have needs that group classes are 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 are encouraged to 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.

- **Cancellations, registration, and refunds**

*Gold Star Dog Training works with local Recreation Departments to offer classes. Recreation Dept. policies supersede all policies below. 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 the instructor or Recreation Dept. cancels a course, a full refund will be issued.
- If a week's class is cancelled by the instructor or Recreation Dept., we will try to offer a make-up class. If a make-up class is not possible, or if the make-up class occurs when the participant is not able to attend, a refund for that week's class will be offered. (Exception: weather-related cancellations.)
- We 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 (see 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 may be possible.
- Partial refunds and/or credits are only 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.

- **Other**

- ***Supplies/equipment/permitted training collars:*** You will need a leash (no retractable leashes); regular collar (your dog should be acclimated to wearing collar/leash before the class); favorite toy or two; and treats. We may ask you to purchase additional equipment for safety or training reasons (e.g., EasyWalk, Freedom harness). We do not permit the use of prong/pinch collars, choke chains (or their variations), or e-collars/shock collars. If the course involves the use of any other supplies (e.g., blanket, mat, chair), your instructor will advise of this at the first night of class.
- ***Children/additional guests in class:*** Guests may observe class upon instructor approval. Some classes/programs may not be able to accommodate children or guests. Young children must be accompanied by an adult who is not training the dog in class. The instructor reserves the right to enforce any limitation, and to do so at any point during the course.

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

- Dogs must have completed the Gold Star Dog Training Basic/Essentials course (completion of Beyond Basics highly recommended); 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. Dogs with reactivity, aggression/history of aggression, anxiety, or fearfulness are not good candidates for this course.
- 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.

- This course is designed to give general guidance on the skills best suited for therapy dog work and common elements on most 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 up to the dog owner 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). So, PLEASE contact Deb ([deb@goldstardog.com](mailto:deb@goldstardog.com)) before registration if you have any questions or concerns.