

Rotorua Dog Obedience Club Safe Training Management Policy

Safety is paramount for Rotorua Dog Obedience Club this applies to Handlers, trainers, dogs as well as the general public. This policy aims to ensure that everyone involved with the club is kept safe from harm at all times to the best of our ability.

If there is any immediate danger to any person or animal, or a biting incident has occurred, the trainer will ask the handler to remove themselves and their dog from the grounds straight away. If this occurs the trainer will explain to the handler

- Temporary removal from the grounds is about ensuring safety for themselves and others.
- The committee will be informed about the situation by the trainer or coordinator (within 48 hours). A member of the committee will be in contact with the handler within 48 hours. This 48 hour period is to allow all parties time to calm down and reflect.
- Following this period the handler, the trainer, the appropriate coordinator and an additional senior handler will be involved in developing a plan to return the dog to the class environment in a safe manner. This plan will involve following the Safety Action plan step 4.

Where a dog is not an immediate danger, and is observed to display any or all of the **behaviours**, the safety action plan may be implemented. A trainer has absolute authority to initiate the safety action plan. For minor issues it is expected a trainer begins at step 1, trainers may escalate directly to step 3 if required.

Safety Action plan steps.

- 1.) Trainer peer support. A trainer may ask for advice from another trainer within the club. This may involve a discussion about the situation and brainstorming session. It may also involve the second trainer observing (subtly) the dog in order to give their assistance.
- 2.) Coordinator involvement – The trainer may ask for assistance from the appropriate (agility or obedience) coordinator to find an appropriate senior trainer for assistance
- 3.) Senior trainer involvement. –

****This step must be undertaken before any changes to the handler's situation are made****

A senior trainer will initially subtly observe the dog in the class environment. Following this a discussion will be had between the trainer and the senior trainer about the dog, handler and the circumstances and a plan of action proposed. The following **actions** may be considered to deal with the situation.

- 4.) Where an action step has been decided upon by the trainer and the senior trainer they must:
- A. Inform the handler of the reasons behind the decision (making the environment safe)
 - B. Inform the handler that any **action** is in place in order to help modify the behaviour to create a safe environment, not as a punishment. The point of the action is to change the behavior and return to the dog's unobstructed participation in class.
 - C. Put a plan in place in conjunction with the handler about how the behaviour will be modified. The handler must be actively involved in this process. The plan will outline the steps that will be undertaken by the trainers and the handler in order to support the dog returning to the class environment unobstructed.
 - D. Provide clear support for the handler both throughout and following any **action** outcomes.

Definitions

Action (this list is not comprehensive but indicative of the types of actions the trainers may agree on)

- One on one training and support for the handler
- Referral to a private behaviorist trainer
- Wearing of a Halti/Headcollar
- Education of the class the dog is involved in
- Change in class/trainer (ensure coordinators involvement)
- Wearing of an 'I need space' vest while in class
- Muzzling of dog while in class.

Behaviours (this list is not comprehensive but indicative of the types of behaviors the trainers may observe):

- The trainer feels threatened by the handler or dog
- The dog is barking and lunging at other dogs, with the intention to connect
- The dog growling at other dogs
- The dog has growling at other people
- The trainer does not feel that the dog is trustworthy
- The dog bites another dog
- The dog bites a person
- The dog is lifting its lips
- The dog has its hackles up
- The handlers does not display competence to control the dog
- The dog displays a flight or fight response eg the dog is backing up on approach