



## **K9 Agility Club Policy for Management of Dog Aggression In Class**

Realistically, agility is a high drive sport and there will be times that dogs may tell another dog off in order to create space – these episodes are short lived, there is no contact between dogs and the handlers remain in control of their animals. The policy below is designed for serious incidents whereby there is contact between dogs and where it is the intent of a dog to cause harm to another dog or to a person.

### **Definitions:**

**Aggression** is where a dog approaches or rushes at a person / dog in a menacing manner, displaying aggressive behaviours including snarling, growling, raised hackles and biting.

**Incident** means any injury to any person / dog that occurs at the club. It can also mean any breach of the club rules, displays of aggression from both dog and human

### **Reporting**

Any incident should be discussed by committee / instructors present as soon as possible after the event to determine necessity of immediate action, clarify details and to ensure prompt reports are written.

It is mandatory for a report to be written for the following circumstances:

- Any dog to person aggression;
- Any aggressive contact between dogs; and
- Where there is any injury to a person or dog however caused

The instructor of the class where the aggressive dog incident occurred must submit a written report as soon as possible to the committee describing the incident in objective detail. Any close witnesses should also submit a report. Where any witness refuses to write a report, their refusal should be recorded on the instructor's report. If the aggressive dog incident took place during training times but not within a class, a report must be prepared by a committee member gathering information from witnesses.

All incident reports must be submitted to the Secretary and will be discussed at the next committee meeting to decide the action to be taken according to the severity of the incident.



## **Dealing with incidents**

Any aggressing dogs are automatically suspended from K9 Agility Club grounds until all reports have been evaluated by the committee and actions advised by the committee to the handler/s.

Actions which may be taken by the committee include:

- i. No action required;
- ii. Warning letter outlining expected behaviour and possible action to be taken should behaviour reoccur;
- iii. Referral to a registered, qualified private trainer who has experience with aggressive dogs;
- iv. Dog must be on lead at all times whilst at club when it is not its turn to train/run;
- v. Dog must be muzzled at all times whilst at club;
- vi. Temporary suspension of dog being brought to club; and/or
- vii. Permanent expulsion of dog from the club.

After consideration the committee may review / revoke / amend any action/s taken.

## K9 Agility Club Policy for Management of Absconding In Class

Absconding is a frustrating and potentially dangerous behaviour in an agility club, as the absconding dog will cause disruption and may cause aggression with other dogs in class. There are two types of absconding behaviour classified at K9 Agility Club.

Absconding to blow off steam (zoomies) is commonly seen as a displacement behaviour in dogs that feel pressured or stressed, or in young dogs that get overexcited but do not yet quite understand their task. The absconding dog does not try to instigate contact with other dogs, but just tends to run loops. Many dogs will mature out of this behaviour as handlers become more proficient at engaging their dogs and their arousal is channelled into work.

Absconding with intent to interfere with other dogs is a much more serious problem in class. These dogs leave their handlers to go to other dog and handler teams, and may instigate aggressive incidents with dogs who are on lead and in high arousal mode, or they may cause fear and stress in an on lead dog who begins to see agility as a non-safe environment.

### Absconding Management System flow chart.

We ask that you guide members who need to be prompted to act in accordance with this system.





## **The duty of instructors**

Instructors should remind handlers at the start of every class to watch their own dogs and that dogs must be on lead at all times until directed by instructor that it is their turn to train.

When aggression or absconding problems occur in class the instructor must politely but firmly inform the handler of the relevant club policy as set out above. If an incident is sufficiently serious as to require a report to be written, the handler should be advised that the incident/s will be reported to committee and that the committee will contact them regarding the incident and that their dog will be suspended pending the investigation.

If a handler behaves in an aggressive or unpleasant manner towards the instructor, then the instructor should immediately seek a committee member (or second instructor if there is no committee member available) to help manage the situation. In accordance with the K9 Agility Rules, the behaviour of the handler should also be reported to the committee.

Absconding Management System flow chart. We ask that you guide members who need to be prompted to act in accordance with this system.