

Policies for “The Persuaded Pooch” Group Classes

First and foremost, have fun with your dog! These policies are in place to ensure that all participants can feel safe, happy and confident in training their dog in a group environment. If you are relaxed, then your dog will be, too, and productive learning will abound!

1. Attendance – 6-week obedience classes: You have six (6) weeks to attend class. No refunds or make-up sessions will be offered on unused classes. All other classes: No refunds or makeup sessions will be offered for missed classes.
2. If your dog is sick, please do not bring them to class. If you have questions or are unsure, please contact the instructor. You are encouraged to come to class without your dog to learn what is covered that day.
3. Dogs in heat should not attend class, as it may be a distraction to other dogs. Likewise, you are encouraged to come to class without your dog to learn what was covered that day, or make other arrangements with your instructor.
4. Please dress appropriately in comfortable clothes and shoes. Participants may be standing for up to an hour on various surfaces without access to seating. For instance, Sandals, flip-flops or shoes with significant heels are not encouraged for training situations!
5. Please potty your dog in appropriate areas prior to entering the class environment. For the health and safety of other students, dogs, staff, other participants and other facility users, please bring potty bags with you and **clean up after your dog immediately.**
6. To maximize learning time, and to minimize class distractions, please be on time for your class. We will make every effort to start and end promptly, as scheduled.
7. **No more than one (2) attendees per dog will be allowed**, so that we may allow for social distancing in the classroom.
8. **Masks are recommended inside**, per the Webster Groves Recreation Complex and St. Louis County guidelines.
9. **Social distancing shall be in effect between all attendees.** Instructor will avoid leash handling, wherever possible.
10. **Please do not participate in training if you are sick and have symptoms. As per the CDC guidelines, if you have knowingly been in contact with an infected person, please wear a mask for 10 days.**
11. Dogs should be on proper training equipment and under the handler’s control at all times. Sniffing other dogs, barking, lunging, and other uncontrolled behavior can be unsafe and cause a distracting or stressful learning environment for both dogs and students. **PLEASE NO DOG-TO-DOG GREETINGS IN CLASS.**

12. All restrictions/requirements in place at any time by the Webster Groves Recreation Complex must be followed to allow entry into the building (ex: hand sanitizing, group size limits)

Training Equipment

Because training with The Persuaded Pooch does not rely on making physical corrections or leash jerks with your dog, pinch collars, choke chains or full slip-type collars are not necessary. Below are the recommended types of training equipment. Please understand that all equipment can be dangerous if used or fitted improperly. Your instructor will be happy to assist you and provide direction, as needed:

Flat Collar – These collars are typically made of nylon, cotton or leather. For safety purposes, a buckle design is preferred over a quick-release or snap connection, but either are acceptable.

Martingale Collar – This collar is made of a large loop for around the dogs neck, and a smaller loop where the leash attaches, that allows the neck loop to tighten as tension is applied. This collar prevents the dogs head from slipping out, however does not tighten all the way so as to choke the dog. Martingales come in a variety of materials, including nylon, cotton and leather. A limited slip collar works similarly to a martingale, and may also be used in class.

Body Harness – Traditional nylon and/or padded harnesses work well on small dogs who may have sensitive necks or throats. If your dog is larger or has a tendency to pull, please consider using a front-clip anti-pull harness. Recommended options include the No-Pull Freedom, Easy-Walk, Sense-ation or Halti harnesses.

Head Halter – A head halter typically fits around the base of your dog's muzzle and around the back of the head. The leash attaches to the underside of the chin, providing control of your dog's head. Not only is it unnecessary to provide leash corrections on a head halter, but it could be damaging to your dog's neck and spine. Because the head halter is fitted around your dog's face, which is a novel experience, some desensitization work is often necessary. Recommended brands include the Gentle Leader and Control Ease.

Leash – A 4' foot to 6' foot leather leash is highly recommended. Nylon and some cotton leashes are slick, and can sometimes slide through your grip too easily, but may still be used. Many nylon leashes also have built-in traffic lead handles or rubber sections to improve grip.

No retractable leashes, please.

Treat Bag – It is recommended that you bring a treat bag or pouch that clips easily to your belt or attaches to your waist, so that your treats are easily accessible.

Treats - We will be training with treats in class. Please bring lots of high-value training pea-sized treats to class, such as low-sodium hot dogs, unseasoned chicken, cheese or other manufactured soft, meaty or freeze-dried training bits to class. It is typically not recommended

that you use your dog's normal dry food as training treats, unless your dog has specific dietary considerations

Tips for Success!

- Please do not feed your dog immediately prior to coming to class. If you must feed your dog before class, please do not feed the entire meal. This will ensure that your dog is slightly hungry and ready to work for you. Treats are a fun and useful part of your dog's daily intake of food, but meals should be adjusted accordingly in order to maintain a healthy weight.
- Part of any good training program includes a commitment to physical exercise, such as walking or playing with your dog. It is most beneficial to exercise your dog(s) on an ongoing daily basis - even after you've completed your group classes. It may help to exercise your high-energy dog before coming to each class.
- Dogs will often stare at each other, and then bark, when the instructor is speaking to the class, because they're not getting as much attention from their humans. Frozen Kongs with peanut butter, bully sticks, Bouncy Bones, and other food-based toys can make a big difference in keeping your pup distracted.
- Bring a mat for them to sit on, can make dogs feel more at ease. A mat is any movable rug, bed, or blanket that you can easily take with you anywhere you go with your dog.
- Send over your vaccination's records ahead of time! The first day of class can be overwhelming for you and your dog. Make your first class easier by having the instructor look at your records before the first day of class.