

SOTC General Agility Class Policies

Scheduling Policies

- Classes are in 1 hour sessions
- Maximum class size is 12 dogs; minimum class size is 6 dogs.
- If any class does not meet the minimum of 6 students by one week before the starting date, the class may be canceled or re-scheduled.
- Pre-registration and payment is required.

Advancement Policies

If there is any question about class level placement, an Agility Instructor will evaluate the dog and handler and make a recommendation. In order to be successful, dogs should be placed in the proper class for their skill level. Keep in mind that different dogs will advance at different rates. And, beginning handlers will need more instruction than an experienced one. Recommendations about placement will be made in order to assure that the dog and handler can maintain the highest level of accomplishment at each level. There is no prescribed length of time for Level 3, 4, 5 or 6.

The following is to help ensure that each dog and handler has a safe and positive experience while training at SOTC:

You will want to wear comfortable clothing so that you can move unrestricted. Because of the heat, shorts and t-shirts work well, but long sleeves and pants can protect you from insects. Pockets are helpful to hold treats or toys. Absolutely NO sandals or heels will be allowed on the agility field. Any type of running, walking or soccer shoes will give you the support and traction that you will need.

Your dog's attire is much simpler. One option is a quick-release, flat buckle collar with NO tags or hanging objects (AKC regulations). Another option is the martingale collar which looks just like a flat buckle collar, but has a "handle" built into it that allows the handler a bit more control. A third option is no collar at all. You will need to decide which options works best for you and your dog.

The dog walking area is the grassy area in the parking lot. It is your responsibility to pick up after your dog. Baggies and waste disposal are available on the concrete area in front of the building. For younger dogs, it is a great idea to give them dog plenty of exercise before you come to class. That way, your dog will have eliminated at home and you will have "taken the edge off" so that your dog can focus on you and agility.

If you are scheduled for the first class of the evening, please arrive early (15 min.) to help the instructor set up that night's courses. And, if you are scheduled for the last class of the evening, please help move and / or put equipment away. By helping with the equipment, not only are you helping your instructor, you are also learning about using the equipment properly and where and how it is all stored.

If you are scheduled for the second class of the evening and arrive early, please be courteous to the previous class and wait outside the gate until the instructor says it's ok to come in.

Check in with the class instructor (or assistant) each week to make sure your attendance is recorded. Plan to be ready to work when class begins.

This is a great time to put together an "Agility Bag." This will be any type of bag that you will take to an agility trial that will hold things such as an extra leash, poop bags, treats, toys, balls, water (for two!) and a water bowl.

You will be exploring different motivators for your dog – some dogs will work for food only. Different food treats to try are hot dogs, cooked chicken, string cheese, chopped dog food rolls, or any variety of biscuits. The key to all of these is to cut them into tiny bite-sized pieces. They should be a taste only – you do not want to have to wait for your dog to chew and swallow or even worse, for them to crunch up a biscuit and then have to dig around in the grass for the extra pieces.

Other motivators can be a ball or a tug toy. And, some dogs like the combination of both food and toys. Your job will be to mix it up and make it fun and interesting for the dog.

In order to assure each handler has plenty of opportunity to work their dog, please watch for "your turn" and be ready to begin the sequence when the handler before you has completed their turn. This practice will get you prepared for agility trials where you must be aware of the running order and be at the gate and ready run when your number is called.

You will need to get your dog warmed up a bit before each sequence. Practice jumps are always available. It is never a good idea to warm up on equipment that you or your dog are not familiar with. Your instructor will help you with different ideas on how to warm your dog up properly.

Be considerate of other handlers and their dogs. You are responsible for your dog's behavior, so please keep an eye on your dog at all times.

The entire class time is your opportunity to learn. Working with the instructor is only one way to improve your skills. Another is to watch how the other participants handle their dogs and then listen to any suggestions the instructor has. Many times, we all make the same mistakes and therefore, a suggestion for one person will also work for another.

If your dog becomes injured or comes in season, you are welcome to come to class without your dog. If you have another dog at the same level or above and would like to work that dog instead, please contact your instructor for the OK.

Don't hesitate to ask questions or to make suggestions. Keep in mind that our sessions can be flexible and that any special handling "issues" can be incorporated into a future class course layout.

Level 4 and Level 5 Class Policy: Dogs must be in a crate or X pen when not working. This will allow you to walk the courses and listen to your instructor without distraction. Also, this is a good time to teach your dog about the crate and about good crate manners, which will be needed during

agility trials. This policy will also reduce any unwanted interaction between dogs. Please remember that dog parks are for play and class time is for learning and bonding between you and your dog.

Non-Negotiable Class Policy: EVERYONE is expected to adjust jump heights when needed – cooperation from all helps the class to run more smoothly and gives everyone extra opportunity to work with their dogs.

Agility lessons don't have to end when you walk off the field! You are encouraged to set up some jumps at home to practice your handling. Your instructor can help you with some ideas for different sequences. You are also encouraged to purchase or make a set of weave poles, which is one piece of equipment that every one who is serious about agility should own.

Advanced Handling with Karen Holik Class Policies

- Current class members have first chance to repeat the class but will forfeit their spot if the agility registrar has not received their application and fees by one week prior to the start of the next class session.
- A waiting list will be maintained by the agility registrar to fill positions in the classes as they become available. These positions will be filled first by SOTC Agility Instructors, second by SOTC Agility Assistants, third by SOTC members, and fourth by non-SOTC members.
- To get on waiting list for an opening in these classes, please contact the SOTC agility registrar.
- Handlers and dogs should be competing at least at the Open agility level. Otherwise, permission of the instructor is required.

Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to working with you!