



Port Chester Obedience Training Club

Policies & Procedures

Policies and Procedures, by their very nature, are subject to occasional change and modification. As such, this document will be reviewed on a regular basis, changes will be made as warranted, and distribution of the revised document will be made promptly.

Users of this document should also familiarize themselves with the club's Constitution and By-Laws. There you will find valuable information including descriptions and explanations of PCOTC's membership regulations, types and nature of club meetings, the structure of the Board of Directors, voting and election processes.

Content of this Policies & Procedures document is arranged alphabetically.

Agility Equipment

Agility students are required, with guidance from instructors, to help set up, and take down the equipment, and set the bar heights.

Students must wear appropriate shoes in consideration of good safety practices. No heels, sandals, etc.

Breed Handling

The Breed Handling instructor must be sure that every student who is not enrolled for the entire session (drop-ins) sign a liability waiver before class begins, and to be sure all drop-ins pay for the class.

Breed Handling drop-ins need not be PCOTC members.

Class Assistants

It is the intention of the Board of Directors to continuously seek out top-quality, dedicated instructors. Our Training Directors and instructors are asked to keep an eye out for possible additions to our instructor corps. In addition, the club encourages all members who have the desire and background to apply to be Class Assistants. The Board of Directors will have final approval on Class Assistants.

Class Closings

We use electronic media extensively for fastest possible notifications in the event of class closings. Our attitude is safety first. We avoid any possibility that a student travels to the club only to learn that his/her class has been cancelled.

Class cancellations are at the decision of the individual instructor or Club President. In either case, the following must be informed immediately:

- Students in each affected class
- Training Directors
- Registrars
- Club Web /Face Book Master

All cancellations, including those that are weather-related, will be made:

- No later than 6:00 a.m. for classes scheduled to begin at 8:00 to noon
- No later than 11:00 a.m. for classes scheduled to begin 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- No later than 4:00 p.m. for classes to begin after 6:00 p.m.

Note: A good rule of thumb in determining a weather cancellation is to listen for local school closings. If schools are closing, it is probable that conditions dictate our closing, too. In cancelling, careful consideration is made to the fact that students and instructors travel from a wide range of locations to the PCOTC facility.

Sessions that are held in months when snow is most likely are followed by a dark week (no classes scheduled). Dark weeks allow for classes that have been cancelled to be made up, ideally on the same day of the week and at the same time.

Class Limits

Class sizes are determined by the nature of training and feasibility of an instructor giving proper attention to each student. The Board of Directors determines the maximum number of students in a class. When an instructor wants to change the limits of a class, s/he should notify the TD who will then confirm with the TD Liaison/Board before the change takes place.

Class Sizes

For all classes, in all disciplines, a minimum of 3 students must enroll for the class to run. Instructors are permitted to rent the room when a class is canceled and offer a two-person semi-private lesson. The instructor has to rent the room through the Corresponding Secretary at: PCOTCcalendar@gmail.com

For low enrollment, the first alternative when a class is cancelled is to schedule another class, not necessarily of the same discipline, to run.

If an instructor's class does not attract the minimum required registration (three students) on a continuing basis (two or more sessions), the TD and/or Board may review to determine if that time slot could be put to better use for any discipline.

Cleanliness, Orderliness

It is each instructor and renter's responsibility to leave the facility as clean and tidy after class as it was when s/he entered. All equipment must be stored properly unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor in a later class to leave items in place e.g. Agility equipment.

Club Rules and Regulations

Student rules and regulations and other useful information can be found on our website at <http://www.pcotc.org>.

Crating, Leashing

PCOTC strictly adheres to a "Safety First" policy. Therefore, it is essential that dogs be under handlers' control at all times. Leashes, with appropriate collars, harnesses, and leashes must be used at all times when not working/training; dogs must be crated at all times when not working/training.

Directors' Duties

Our Constitution and By-Laws do not specify particular duties for club Directors. Traditionally, the (non-Officer) Directors carry the following responsibilities:

- House: Directs the cleaning, stocking, and repair of the facility, repair or replacement of defective training equipment.
- Programs and Seminars: Directs the proposing, securing, scheduling and performance of seminars and workshops.
- Publicity and PR: Directs club advertising and publicity via print, club participation in public events, website, and brochure distribution.
- Membership: Directs new member application and intake, yearly membership renewals, preparation of the "Red Book," tracking of volunteer hours, and membership awards.

Dogs with Issues

Particularly for Family Manners classes and Foundation Agility classes, instructors should try to identify dogs with behavioral issues in the first or second week of classes and report them to the Training Director. It is the determination of instructor whether or not the dog may stay in classes, should be moved to another class, or removed from PCOTC classes entirely.

Any dog that shows signs of aggression towards humans must be reported to the TD. Any dog that displays any aggressive behavior *must* be immediately removed from classes. Further action can be discussed on a case-by-case basis by the Board and the individual parties.

A dog displaying aggression or threatening (intimidating) behavior - particularly where the handler fails to or is unable to take appropriate action to correct the dog - is considered aggressive. If a dog is identified as aggressive due to an incident during a scheduled class, a pink Incident Form, found on the PCOTC bulletin board, *must* be filled out immediately following the event.

The instructor should gather sufficient information at the time of the incident, including statements from each party involved, and submit the form to the club office at the completion of the class. The dog/handler *must* be removed from the class immediately. The instructor should act in a professional and mature manner and strenuously discourage discussion of the incident outside of the class.

Dog Waste

Students will not allow their dogs to eliminate on a building wall, the sidewalk, cars in the parking lot, or our metal deck at the entrance to the facility.

The City of White Plains requires that all dog refuse be picked up; there is a \$250 fine for each violation.

"Pooper-scooper" bags are available in front of the facility door, as well as inside the facility. Students are encouraged to bring their own. Bags should be deposited in the metal trashcan just outside the entry door. A Poop Station is located in the rear parking area by the rail tracks.

Instructor Rentals

Instructors are permitted to rent the facility to teach, but only the subject they are teaching in that session. Private lessons are limited to a maximum of 2 students. The students do not have to be club members. Instructors may charge any amount they wish for private lessons; the club only requires the room rental be at regular (volunteer member) rates. Only instructors currently teaching at PCOTC may rent the facility for private lessons—no club member, Board member, or anyone else may teach private lessons at PCOTC. The room must be reserved by request via the email address pcotccalendar@gmail.com

Instructors/Registration

Instructors cannot collect applications or payment for classes. All registration must be done through the club Registrars.

Instructors must not allow anyone to remain in a class who is not on their roster; they may not allow anyone to drop in if the class has met limits and all students are in attendance.

Insurance

Volunteers/assistants

Under the policy issued for the Port Chester Obedience Training Club, volunteers are automatically included. They are afforded the same liability limits as the club. In addition, volunteers have some coverage under the medical benefits.

Independent Contractors:

It is the position of PCOTC that any dog trainer working in the club facility must purchase her/his own insurance. Each Instructor must have a current Certificate of Insurance on file at the club. It is her/his responsibility to keep the policy up-to-date and current. No one may teach at PCOTC without a current insurance policy in effect.

Invoices/Expenses

Instructors must submit invoices to their Training Directors every month. Instructors who work in several disciplines must submit a separate invoice to the relevant TD. Invoices will be paid no later than 30 days after the first of the month of provided service.

PCOTC will pay mileage costs to instructors over the first 30 miles to and from instructors home and the facility. PCOTC will not reimburse instructors for tolls.

Expense claims made by any club member must be submitted to the Treasurer within 30 days of the time the expense was incurred.

Make-Up Classes

Students who miss classes are permitted to make up the class in a similar class with the permission of the instructor and provided a space is available. Students who miss class(s), without documentation from a Doctor or Veterinarian, are not given credits or refunds.

There is a maximum of two make-up classes per student per session.

In no case may a make-up occur in a class that has met enrollment limits. In no case may a make-up be scheduled in a class where an additional student would put the class over the stated class limit.

During the winter months, January through April, the week following scheduled class is held for snow day make-ups. If a class is cancelled, the student is expected to come to the make-up. Make-up classes are determined, throughout the year, according to space availability and with the intention of accommodating as many students as possible. There are no refunds for missing the make-up if it is scheduled on the same day and time as the original class. Only if a class is cancelled and no make-up is scheduled, will credits will be issued.

Minors

Children and teenagers are welcomed at PCOTC subject to the following guidelines:

- In any case, and for all classes, instructors reserve the right to ask disruptive children to leave the building and/or require a legal guardian to be present and/or take over training the dog.
- Children aged 7 and up may handle dogs in Breed Handling classes, but a legal guardian must be present at all times.
- Children under age 9 may come to classes, if supervised outside the training ring by a legal guardian who is not handling the dog.
- Children 9 to 11 years old may, at the instructor's discretion, participate in class if accompanied in the training ring by a legal guardian. Children 12 and over may train their own dogs, but a legal guardian must be at ringside during class.

If a Junior Handlers class or other class that is specifically designed to include minors, the guidelines, above, will not apply, and other guidelines will be established.

Observers

PCOTC classes are considered private, for registrants only. With very few exceptions, non-participants may not observe. Those exceptions must be approved, at least 24 hours in advance of the class, by the Instructor, Training Director, and Board of Directors. A person anticipating registering for a class may be permitted, by the Instructor, to do an observation.

Parking

There are four spaces in the facility parking lot, designated for instructors *only*. This restriction is in effect Monday through Friday, until 5:00 p.m. Students may not park in the lot during these times. Vehicles that are not tagged as permitted are subject to police towing. Free street parking is readily available.

Refunds/Class Credits

If Registrars are notified of cancellation prior to on-line registration closing, a 100% refund or class credit will be issued. Thereafter, if notified before the first class, a 50% refund or class credit will be issued. After the first class, no refunds or credits will be issued unless for medical reasons, with appropriate documentation from a doctor or veterinarian. All cancellations or registration changes will be charged a \$25 administrative fee. In the case of a class cancellation, a make-up will be scheduled where possible or a class credit will be issued. No class credit will be issued if a student is unable to attend the make-up. Class credits must be used within six months of issue.

Removing Handlers/Dogs from a Class

Instructors have the right to deny a student and/or dog participation in a class. In such a case, the Instructor must notify the student, the Training Director, and the Registrars. The Registrars will then attempt to move the student and dog to another class or, if that is not possible, to begin refund procedures.

Instructors have the right to deny a student and/or dog entry into any particular level of classes. If a student disagrees with the Instructor's opinion, the Instructor must notify the Registrar and Training Director as soon as class rosters are distributed so that the Registrar can get the student/dog moved to the appropriate level of class; ideally, before classes begin. The Training Director should mediate the situation as warranted. Should the student register for the inappropriate level with another Instructor, the new Instructor should respect the opinion of the first Instructor and not allow the student into that level of class.

Rescue/Shelter Dog Discount

Within 12 months of adoption PCOTC offers a \$50 class credit. After registering for your first set of classes please contact the Registrars at: dog.class.register@gmail.com with a copy of your adoption agreement in order for the credit to be applied to the adopted dog's account for **future use**.

The class credit must be used within 6 months of being issued.

Room Rentals

It is imperative for all to understand that classes take precedence over rentals, even if that proves to be an inconvenience to potential renters.

Only volunteer members may rent the facility for practice. Only instructors may rent to conduct private lessons. The room must be reserved through the PCOTC calendar e-mail address. Reservation requests must be made at least 48 hours in advance. Payment should be made immediately before/after the rental using the envelopes/deposit slips and left in the club office. Renters may use the Obedience, Rally, Nose Work and Agility equipment. Any damages should be reported to the House Director.

Members who rent for practice with Agility equipment must have earned an Agility title or must obtain written permission to rent from a current PCOTC Agility instructor.

All participants in a practice group must be PCOTC volunteer members. Each person in a practice group must sign and file an insurance waiver with the club through the PCOTC calendar. All Agility rentals are for whole room only. Whole room rentals are limited to a maximum of six renters; half- room rentals are limited to three renters.

Renters must allow authorized service people or contractors to enter the facility and carry out necessary repairs or renovation during practice sessions. It may not be possible to give renters advance notice of work people's arrival. If the repairs or renovation work make it difficult or impossible to practice during your time slot, notify the House Director.

No one may charge fees to other participants during practice sessions except for PCOTC instructors who are teaching semi-private or private lessons.

Substitute Instructors

If an Instructor is unable to teach for all or part of a session, s/he is required to notify the appropriate Training Director before the affected schedule is completed. If the class schedule cannot be created to accommodate the instructor's time off, it is strongly recommended that the instructor find a substitute.

If an Instructor is unable to teach their scheduled class(es) when the session is in progress, the appropriate Training Director should be informed and a substitute instructor found. Instructors will not be paid for classes they do not teach. Substitute instructors will be paid directly by the Club, at the agreed upon rate.

While it is preferable to use someone from the current PCOTC instructional roster, any instructor with similar teaching method, years of experience, and level of accomplishment, and who has dog instructor liability insurance, could be acceptable.

If not already part of the instructional roster, the substitute must submit a copy of a current liability insurance policy, showing her/himself as the insured and PCOTC as a named insured, to the Training Director before the substitute may teach at PCOTC. The Board of Directors must approve all substitutes not currently on the instructor roster.

Under no circumstances may anyone teach at PCOTC without appropriate insurance.

Substitute instructors must follow the same procedures as an instructor. They must have a thorough understanding of these procedures prior to the start of class. If an irregular incident occurs, the substitute instructor must report it to the instructor immediately.

If the instructor and/or Training Director cannot find a substitute, the PCOTC Board of Directors will attempt to do so. The Board will negotiate an amount to be paid to him/her, and pay him/her directly.

If there is a dark week following a session that may possibly have a weather cancelation (Nov/Dec, Jan/Feb, March/April) the instructor should make every effort to first find a substitute

instead of re-scheduling the class(es) during the dark week. If a substitute cannot be found, the class(es) will be canceled and made up if a dark week follows the affected session.. If there is no dark week the class(es) will be canceled and a class credit will be issued to the students. The instructor will not be paid for the canceled class.
Every effort should be made for classes to run as scheduled.

Training Devices and Equipment

PCOTC advocates positive reinforcement. Flexi leads and electronic shock collars are prohibited anywhere inside the PCOTC facility.

Prong collars or chain collars may be used in class only with the explicit approval of the class instructor.

Training Directors Duties/Responsibilities

The Port Chester Obedience Training Club has four training directors who are responsible for developing the Club's 1) Agility; 2) Competition Obedience/Rally; 3) Family Manners and 4) Nose Work programs. They are required to:

- Attend Board of Directors meetings when requested
- Act as a liaison between the instructors and TD Liaison
- Approve instructor invoices and submit them to the Treasurer for payment
- Collect proof of liability insurance from instructors, substitute instructors, and apprentices
- Make personnel recommendations, within their disciplines, to the TD Liaison
- Submit seminar input
- Write articles for Sit 'n Stay, and encourage instructors within their disciplines to participate in producing articles
- Act as a representative of the club to members, students and the public
- Advance the interests of the club
- Be sure that instructors, apprentices and substitute instructors are aware of club policies and procedures found in this document
- Hold quarterly meetings with instructors by way of in-person gatherings, online chat, tele-conferencing or equivalent form of communication.

Vaccinations

Dogs four months of age and older are required to have current rabies vaccinations before participating in any PCOTC training course or activity.