

Port Macquarie Dog Club Inc.

Protocols for Reactive & Aggressive Dogs

Port Macquarie Dog Club Inc. (the Club) aims to provide training for dog owners who want to make their pets "good canine citizens". In some instances there are dogs that require additional attention owing to their aggressive tendencies.

There is no single quick fix solution to altering an aggressive dog to one which could be counted on to be a consistently reliable canine citizen. The Club for its part advocates a mix of strategies to help the owner/handler address the problem and the owner/handler for their part will need to actively pursue these strategies either at Club training or with additional expert advice.

Note that the Club's Obedience and Agility instructors are skilled volunteers but not professional animal behaviourists.

Club Members have the responsibility to be aware of their own dog's behaviour at all times, for the safety of all dogs and all people on Club training grounds.

If a member of the Club elects to voluntarily put into place any of the procedures/processes listed below because they are concerned about their dog's behaviour then the Club will support such action and undertake in all cases, to assist the handler with as many strategies as possible.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Club: (1) Attempt to assist members with an aggressive dog to manage the unwanted behaviour. (2) Depending on the severity of the attack and circumstances, the Club may form a Dog Aggression Committee (DAC), comprising: Chief Instructor, Class Instructor for that handler/dog, and the President or Senior Vice President.

Club Member – Dog Owner: (1) Adopt the recommended course of action outlined by the Chief Instructor and DAC. (2) If the course of action includes obtaining the specialized services of an animal behaviourist then show the Club written evidence from the behaviourist that his/her course of action has been followed. (3) Payment of costs incurred by the recipient of an attack.

Chief Instructor: Complete an incident report and document any recommendations.

PROTOCOLS

1. Dog Aggression Towards Humans

All incidents of dog-human aggression during training times, however minor, must be reported immediately to the Chief Instructor who will then form the DAC. If the aggression is judged to be no more than a fearful dog growling and snapping ineffectively, the DAC may decide whether the Club has the resources to devote to correcting the behaviour. Otherwise the DAC will recommend that the specialized services of a vet, and, or an animal behaviourist be employed.

For a relatively mild incident the Club may require the owner/handler to have the dog identified by wearing a **red flag** at all times while on Club grounds; this enables instructors and others to be particularly vigilant around the dog.

For a repeated incident or if the case is more severe, the Club will require that the dog wears the **red flag and** also be **muzzled**.

If the owner/handler is unwilling to agree to the Club's protocols they may be asked to leave or not participate in Club training activities.

2. Dog Aggression Towards other Dogs

Minor Incident:

If a dog ineffectively growls or snaps at another dog (essentially "keep out of my face and place"), the class instructor should focus the owner/handler's attention on techniques in "TRAINING" below.

If this behaviour recurs, the Chief Instructor must be informed and a strategy of training is to be agreed with the owner/handler.

Severe Attack:

The Chief Instructor must be informed. The Chief Instructor must form the DAC. A strategy of training is to be agreed with the owner/handler, and the dog will wear a **yellow flag** ("caution, I need space") so that other members may be more vigilant around the dog. The specialised services of an animal behaviourist may be recommended.

Should a second attack eventuate the owner/handler will be required to **muzzle** the dog whilst it is on Club training grounds, and at all Club activities excluding competitions, in addition to wearing the **yellow flag**. The specialised services of an animal behaviourist will be recommended.

If the owner/handler is not prepared to follow these protocols then they may be asked to leave or not participate in Club training activities.

The Club's incident report will be attached.