

The Hilltown Hounds Handbook: Class Policies and Expectations

Sign-up and Payment...

Students must sign-up with the class coordinator at or before two weeks prior to the next session. At this point, based on overall enrollment, we decide the number of instructors per hour that will be needed.

Those who want to sign-up after the two week deadline are not guaranteed a space in class. We owe it to the instructors to give them two weeks notice of what their teaching schedule will be. And we owe it to the club to be able to plan on our spending vs. revenue from classes.

Payment can be made any time by sending a check to our treasurer or dropping it in the payment slot on the bulletin board. Without exception, payment must be made at least seven days prior to the first class of a new session.

If writing a check and you have any adjustment to the \$90/session fee, in the memo section of your check please explain your adjustment. For example, “*junior handler fee*” or “*member fee minus one class*”. This is very important for the bookkeeping.

Send payment to:

Hilltown Hounds c/o Mary McCulloch PO Box 29 Williamsburg, MA 01096

Fee schedule is as follows for a standard 6-week session:

Non-member - \$90

Club Member - \$85

Junior Handler - \$90 for first session; \$45 per session thereafter

Members Only Benefit...

The club allows members to excuse themselves from a class/es, and have that class/es be deducted from the session fee at a rate of \$14 per class. The class coordinator must be notified of such dates before the start of a new session. And payment for the session should reflect the adjustment, in one payment before the start of a new session. For example, you know you will be on vacation on week 4 of the new session. When you sign up you notify the class coordinator of your absence on that date, you make your check out for \$71 (\$85 member fee minus \$14), and you write in the memo “*member minus one class*”. Any missed classes without pre-arrangement will not be credited.

Note: Whether a member or not, if you will miss 3 or more classes in a 6-week session, see “drop-in policy” below.

Drop-in policy...

Students are permitted to come to individual classes on a drop-in basis at a rate of \$20 per class, due at the start of the class. This is reserved for intermediate and advanced classes only. A drop-in student must notify the class coordinator of their intent to attend by the Monday before Wednesday’s class. This allows time for the class coordinator to inform the instructor and decide which class he or she should participate in. Instructors always reserve the right to decline a drop-in request. The class coordinator also reserves that right if drop-ins make attendance too high for any one class. A handler who is not a club member and/or a recent class member is permitted as a drop-in only upon the invitation of a member and the permission of the instructor. Instructors reserve the right to personally invite anyone as a drop-in.

Waiver forms...

These can be accessed through our website, www.hilltownhounds.com. Also, at the start of every session there will be a few available to fill out and a place to leave them - either a clipboard or an envelope on the bulletin board. **A signed waiver form must be turned in to the class coordinator before any participation in class, and a current waiver form must be on file for every new calendar year.**

Proof of rabies vaccine...

This must be turned in to the class coordinator before any participation in class. At the start of every session there will be a place to leave them - either a clipboard or an envelope on the bulletin board. It is your responsibility to turn in a new rabies certificate if you are still involved with classes when our dog's rabies vaccine is renewed.

In case of inclement weather...

Call 529-7189 by 3:00pm on the day of class, and listen to the outgoing message. We cannot make calls or send emails in regards to whether or not we are holding class. Inclement can mean anything here in New England ranging from snow, to icy conditions, to bitter cold, to blistering heat, to severe thunder storms. We try not to cancel classes, but there are times when this is either not practical or not safe for some or all parties involved. If you feel that either you or your dog might be in danger due to weather conditions either on the road or at the barn, we urge you to act responsibly. Nothing - not even agility - is worth risking your safety.

If your dog is ill and you suspect that he/she might be contagious...

Please take the night off. All of the other dogs will appreciate it. If your dog becomes ill within a day or two after class, and the illness is contagious, please alert the class coordinator. She or he will inform the other class members who were in class with you.

If your female canine should come into heat...

Hilltown Hounds recognizes that some dogs in our weekly classes are breeding dogs. A bitch in heat is distracting for other dogs in the class as well as the handlers. To mitigate the situation we agree that all handlers having paid for a full 6-week session should be allowed to excuse their dog and not incur an undue expense. The club will offer a credit for up to two weeks missed due to a heat cycle. The handler is required to notify the class coordinator (voice mail or email) before noon on a class date.

Appropriate leashes and collars...

Please have a flat, buckle (preferably a snap buckle) or "Martingale" style collar on your dog. For beginners, the instructors do not recommend using a "slip lead", but rather a buckle collar as mentioned above. A Gentle Leader (or any similar control aid style) is fine; however, please respect your instructor's suggestions about when and how to use them in class. A harness is not recommended. Prong collars or any other type of correction collar is not allowed at the training facility. Please bring a slip lead or a regular flat leash no longer than 6 feet. For safety reasons, retractable leashes are not allowed in the arena and are, in general, not recommended at the training facility.

On leash or secured...

All dogs must be on leash or secured in a crate while they are here at Roaring Brook Farm, except when it is your turn to run the course. As tempting as this may be as a reward for a job well done, please do not let your dog(s) run free either before or after class. Similarly, while you may want to "warm-up" your dog on the equipment, the on-leash policy applies in any "pre-class" time there may be.

Safety with agility equipment...

Please do not allow your dog(s) to play on the equipment before or after class without specific permission from the instructor. This is a safety issue and a very important one. Children, spouses, adults, and friends are not allowed to play on the equipment either!

Use of the warming/viewing room...

Dogs are welcome in this room, but following the policy for the rest of the training facility, dogs must be leashed or secured in a crate. Please keep this privilege relegated only to dogs actively enrolled in agility classes. In general, dogs not enrolled in classes should only be at Roaring Brook Farm with permission from the class coordinator.

In regards to the flow of classes...

Classes are 50 minutes long which allows the instructor (and the rest of us) to adjust the equipment for the next class. Please be prompt in order to facilitate a smooth flow from class to class. Set-up and pick-up falls directly on the students in class. Out of courtesy and respect to your fellow classmates and our instructors, please follow these guidelines so that classes can run as smoothly as possible, and everyone can feel as if they have gotten everything they can out of their time and money spent on class.

During set-up and pick-up, please leave your dog in your car unless the weather does not permit it. If it is too hot or too cold to leave a dog in a car, please crate your dog in the warming/viewing room or tie your dog in the arena. Please be mindful that this is an exception, not a rule. Your dog's health and safety is our prime concern but many dogs in such close quarters in the arena area make for chaotic conditions.

Assuming that we are running three classes for the current session, the class schedule is as follows:

If you are in the 5:30 class, you must arrive at least a half hour before the beginning of class in order to assist with setting up equipment. Often either and/or both your instructor and the assistant will have a map of the equipment lay-out. So, as you arrive, find an instructor or assistant to determine what equipment needs to be brought out and where it goes. Please ask if you are unsure of what to do.

If you are in the 6:30 class, you must have arrived and gotten yourself and your dog ready in time to help with equipment re-set as soon as the previous class is finished, which is 6:20. Remember, the set-up guidelines as spelled out above apply at these times as well. Please follow your instructor's lead both as to what needs to be done and when class is starting.

If you are in the 7:30 class, all of the above applies. In addition, you are expected to help with pick-up after class.

Thank you for reading the policies and adhering to them to the best of your ability!