

## **General information about group dog training classes:**

### **Classes and training method:**

Our classes are taught using fun, effective and humane methods. Class sizes are small with a maximum of 4-5 dogs per class which provides for personalized training. Not only will your dog learn many behaviors and skills, we will also teach you how to train your dog so that you can continue your training long after the class ends.

The approach we use is positive reinforcement and primarily clicker training. Today science and veterinary behaviorists have shown us that outdated training methods such as punishment, corrections and force such as prong collars often result in behavior problems such as aggression and fear. So instead we teach using a clicker (which we will provide) to tell the dog when they have done something we like and then we follow up immediately with a reward they enjoy such as food or a toy. All puppies and dogs of any age respond well to clicker training, even those who have been trained previously with “traditional” or correctional based training. Since training is based upon rewards the dog really loves, learning or training happens quickly. Clicker training also promotes the relationship between you and your pet and the results are long lasting.

Some people who are new to clicker training often wonder if they will always need food or the clicker for the rest of their pet’s life to have them respond. The clicker is primarily used to teach new behaviors and once behaviors are reliable you do not need to click your dog’s appropriate behavior. However, we will recommend that you do occasionally reward your dog for their good behavior to maintain it just as we humans go to work expecting from time to time some compensation for our efforts.

### **Class details/schedule:**

Classes meet once per week at the same time. ***Note the first class is for people only, please leave your dog at home!*** The remaining 5 classes are with your dog. *Note, too, the first class will last 1 ½ hours and the remaining classes are 1 hour.*

### **What equipment do I need for class?**

Your dog should be on a leash (no flexi-leads) and buckle collar or harness. You will need to bring lots of tasty treats or your dog’s food or a combination of your dog’s food and treats and a mat, blanket or dog bed for each class. We also recommend a treat pouch. All of this will explained at your first class which you will attend without your dog. Students are expected to practice what they learned in class at home in between lessons. To help with this, each week written descriptions of what and how to practice will be provided.

### **Is your dog appropriate for a group class?**

While our current classes are designed to teach pets and their owners a wide variety of behaviors and skills, some behavior issues are not suited to group classes. Also, to ensure the best experience for all attendees, dogs who continually growl, lunge or excessively bark at people or other dogs may be asked to leave the class. Should we ask you to leave a class, we may be able to assist you with your training goals through private lessons. If you are unsure of whether your dog is appropriate for a class or whether we will cover the behavior issue you have with your dog, please contact us via email: [traininginfo@hsfn.org](mailto:traininginfo@hsfn.org)

### **Who may attend a class?**

As one of the keys of successful training is consistency, we encourage anyone in the family who will participate in the pet’s training and spends a great deal of time with your dog to attend the classes. Children 6 and older are welcome to

join the training fun with the following rules: children 9 and under are required to be under the supervision of an adult who is not the main handler of the dog (one parent will not be able to manage both child and dog).

**Age requirements and vaccines needed to attend a class:**

Our More Than Manners-Puppy class is for puppies 8 to 20 weeks at the time the class starts. Our More Than Manners-Dog class is for dogs 5 months and older at the start date of the class. The following are the vaccine requirements for each class:

More than Manners-Puppy (ages 8 -20 wks): 1 DHPP vaccine at least 48 hrs before 1<sup>st</sup> class, rabies if 12 wks or older, Bordetella

More than Manners-Dog (ages 5 months and up): DHPP series, rabies, Bordetella

Please either attach your vaccine records to your registration form or bring it with you to your first class.

**What if I miss a class or my dog is sick?**

If you are unable to attend one of our classes you might be able to schedule a private make-up lesson with your instructor before the next class. See notes below under private lessons about the fee. Another option is to provide you with the homework sheet from that class either at the next class or by emailing your instructor for the homework sheet.

If your dog is sick, we hope that you will come to class without your dog. This way you can still learn the behaviors and skills to teach your dog when they are feeling better.

If your female dog is in heat, you may not bring her to class.

**Fee for classes:**

Both More Than Manners-Puppy and More Than Manners-Dog is \$100 for dogs adopted from the Humane Society for Greater Nashua and for all other dogs it is \$110.

**Private Lessons:**

Private lessons are available at the shelter for a variety of needs such as when you have one specific issue you would like to address, if you want to make-up a missed group class with your dog, if your dog is not suited to a group class or if you prefer more individualized training for a few issues or need more convenience in scheduling. Note for serious behavior issues such as some aggression issues and separation anxiety we will refer you on to another trainer or a veterinary behaviorist. Please email us at: [traininginfo@hsfn.org](mailto:traininginfo@hsfn.org) to arrange your lesson(s) or for more information.

Fees are:

Make-up a missed lesson (30 min): \$25

All other private training at the shelter is \$50/hour.