



Policy: Aggressive dogs and Clancy's Dream

Date Accepted: 13November2018

Justification:

This policy is written and approved to help ensure that Clancy's Dream can avoid being held liable to the injuries and damages caused by aggressive dogs in our care, including by board members, volunteers and adoptive homes by preventing known aggressive dogs entering our system. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, it is imperative that we protect the safety and well-being of Clancy's Dream adopters, volunteers, Board of Directors as well as the public. Knowingly accepting an aggressive dog into our rescue puts everyone at risk of injury.

Definitions

Aggressive dog: a dog that may exhibit any combination or all of the following signs: staring, excessive low-range barking, snarling, growling, snapping, standing tall, holding ears erect and or carrying tail high and moving it stiffly from side to side. These signs may be directed towards a person, another dog, food or an object.

Snapping: a dog that lunges towards a human and attempts to bite or uses the lunge as a warning but does not make physical contact with its mouth on any part of the body, clothing or item in possession of the human target.

Bite: the clamping of skin and subjacent soft tissues between the upper and lower mandible of a canine, which may cause puncture wounds or lacerations. Contact of the mouth with clothing or any other item attached or held by the human target should also be considered a bite.

Bite History: any documented history of a bite made by anyone that knows the dog, including, but not limited to the owner, veterinarian, family member, neighbor, animal shelter, animal control officer etc.

Resource Guarding: behavior that discourages another to take, or get too close to, an object or valued area in a dog's possession. Usually this refers to food, treasured toys or sleeping areas but could also apply to humans as an object. Signs can range from a quiet head turn to a deafening growl, forward charge or an actual bite.

Scope:

This policy applies to any dog that is being evaluated for intake to Clancy's Dream, regardless of source, including, but not limited to; owner surrender, shelter system, another rescue, social media, craigslist, etc. This policy also covers any activities of board members and active volunteers that are contacted for assistance or reach out to provide assistance to any individual requesting help or advice in the placement of a dog.

Description:

Clancy's Dream will NOT accept, be responsible for, provide assistance, support or aid of any type to or for any dog with a bite history or one who exhibits aggressive behavior towards humans, other dogs or exhibits resource-guarding behavior. This includes cross posting on personal, Clancy's Dream or other

rescue's social media pages or contacting rescues, trainers, veterinarians, etc. on behalf of the aggressive dog. We will also not refer these dogs to other rescues.

If signs of aggression occur during the evaluation of a potential incoming dog, it is imperative that the volunteer doing the evaluation keeps their own safety and that of others in the immediate area in mind. Stop the evaluation immediately and seek a safe exit from the presence of the dog. Report the findings to the individual responsible for the dog at the time of the evaluation and document the experience which should then be kept on file with Clancy's Dream records.

If signs of aggression occur after a dog is accepted in to the Clancy's Dream system several steps must be taken. First, it is imperative that the safety of all individuals, especially children, directly in contact with the animal is considered. When aggression signs are observed, the volunteer directly responsible for the animal should contact a Clancy's Dream Board member to communicate the concerns and discuss a plan for the dog. Each situation will be considered individually, based on the dog as well as the capability, confidence and experience level of the volunteer. In most cases, when a confirmed bite has occurred, arrangements will be made to euthanize the dog under the care of the volunteer or the dog will be transferred to a Clancy's Dream Board member for euthanasia. In all cases, a licensed veterinarian will always perform euthanasia.

Suggested discussion points/replies to requests for assistance:

I am sorry that you have experienced aggressive issues with your dog. Unfortunately, we are not aggression experts nor do we accept dogs that are aggressive. We can offer a couple of suggestions for you to try with your dog to salvage your relationship with him and potentially save his life. You should start with your veterinarian and request a full medical evaluation, there could be underlying health issues causing behavioral issues. You might also explore anti-anxiety medications with your veterinarian. After a full medical evaluation, you may want to engage a professional trainer and or behaviorist for assistance in training and/or behavior modifications. Please understand that even with medication and behavioral modifications, your dog may continue to show aggression and if these are successful, these will likely be lifelong practices that you must continue to manage. If those are not viable options, or they are unsuccessful, euthanasia may be the appropriate option. When a dog is conflicted by people, especially at a young age, it usually worsens over time. While the dog is 70-80% sweet, it is the other 20-30% that eventually turns to aggression and biting. Fear and anxiety often leads to biting, especially in herding dogs. It is better to not pass your problem dog onto an unsuspecting individual, so please do not resort to placing him without the assistance of an experienced professional. By putting an already anxious, fearful, aggressive dog into the hands of someone that the dog does not know will only escalate things further putting others at risk of injury or worse. Having your aggressive dog in someone else's hands, who doesn't love him and potentially at the end of his life, means your dog leaves this world completely unloved, afraid and alone, you owe him more than that. We are not suggesting euthanasia as the only option or even the right option, but it is an option that should be considered.

Clancy's Dream wishes you and your dog the best, we apologize that we cannot help you.

References:

<https://www.vin.com/vetinsight/default.aspx?pid=756&catId=5861&Id=5912453>

Lillie Goodrich, Glenhighland Farm, Sweet Border Collie Rescue