

Helen Taylor, Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CCAB)

Settlands, Sackmore Lane, Marnhull, Sturminster Newton, DT10 1PN

Tel: 07951 985193 Email: info@helentaylordorset.co.uk web: www.helentaylordorset.co.uk

Course Information and Rules

Thank you for your interest in our classes. Puppies and young dogs need to experience and enjoy a well-planned socialisation and training programme from an early age if they are to develop into well-adjusted, happy adult dogs with no behavioural problems. Puppy class is aimed at puppies under 5 to 6 months of age at the start of the course. Juniors classes do not have an age limit, but are aimed at dogs that have had at least some prior training – either in a class or at home – although beginners can be accommodated. Training classes are intended to provide training and help owners train their puppies or young dogs and encourage good behaviours. However, they do not and cannot address serious aggression or other behavioural issues - if your dog has aggression issues towards people or other dogs, please discuss this with me before joining as, depending on the nature of the problem, a behavioural consultation may be a better alternative to a class (which can be counter-productive in a dog that is already fearful/aggressive with people/dogs he doesn't know).

This class relies entirely on force-free, reward-based training methods. Good or correct behaviour is rewarded, while owners are taught how to prevent undesired behaviour from being practiced, but instead to set up desirable behaviours to be more rewarding. Any "punishment" used during training involves removal of something rewarding, rather than application of something unpleasant. Reward-based methods are more effective than old fashioned punishment-based methods because they encourage dogs to work enthusiastically and voluntarily in an attempt to earn a reward. Reward-based methods also help to build (rather than break down) trust and the bond between dog and owner and tend to build, rather than erode trust in people in general. Using harsh punishments in an attempt to stop a dog from doing something is generally very ineffective as the dog will often not fully understand which particular piece of behaviour he is being punished for and will often choose to inhibit *all* of his behaviour in an attempt to prevent further punishment. Even worse, use of harsh methods and reprimands very often give rise to aggression and other behavioural problems, as the dog becomes more fearful and defensive, as well as confused. Food rewards of varying levels of desirability are used initially in reward-based training because they are the most practical and effective way of teaching a new skill. Once a skill has been learned sufficiently, food rewards can be gradually reduced and/or replaced by other rewards such as toys, games, praise, attention, freedom etc.

Helen Taylor has an honours degree in Zoology from Southampton University and an Advanced Diploma in Canine Behavioural Management, and is a full-time professional pet behavioural counsellor and dog trainer. She is a full member of two of the most highly respected and recognised professional organisations in the UK:

- The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT No 881) – the UK association for pet dog trainers using positive training methods only - "kind, fair and effective".
- The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) – The only organisation for professional behavioural counsellors in the UK that is universally recognised by veterinary bodies, animal charities and insurance companies.

Helen is also a Certificated Clinical Animal Behaviourist and is listed on the Animal Behaviour and Training Council's registers of Clinical Animal Behaviourists and Animal Trainers.



...Helping your best friend to be even better...

All written content and advice including reports, emails, appendices and handouts, are copyright Helen Taylor and strictly confidential (unless otherwise specified), and may not be distributed or shared without written permission.

All these organisations operate extremely stringent entry criteria based on assessment of qualifications, experience and actual effectiveness, and both have very strict rules barring the use of any harsh methods whatsoever. No punitive methods or equipment are allowed, including choke chains, slip leads, noise devices, spray or shock collars. Most animal welfare organisations, charities and veterinary organisations now only endorse trainers and behaviourists that are members of the APDT or APBC respectively as understanding of the dangers of using harsh methods becomes more widespread.

Please bring the following with you to class each week:

- **Very important: Your dog's vaccination certificate (on your first night only). Your puppy cannot attend the class until we have seen this!**
- Your puppy!
- A bum bag or treat pouch to hold treats, etc. A bag is better than pockets as it helps to free up your hands and allow you to keep treats out of range of your dog while you are working with him. Please do not use plastic bags as these can be fatal for a dog (yours or someone else's) if swallowed.
- Smelly training treats. **Please don't rely just on pieces of your dog's complete food even if this works at home!** Make sure any treat is deliverable in tiny pieces no bigger than the nail on your little finger but please bring plenty – at least a mug-full of tiny treats are required.
- A water bowl (optional). Water is available in the hall but communal water bowl is not provided.
- One or two toys and maybe a chew to keep your dog occupied in between exercises.
- A mat or piece of bedding for your dog to lie on if you wish.
- A collar and clip lead (at least 1 metre in length) made of leather or webbing (not a retractable lead, chain lead or a slip lead/choke chain!). If you have a harness or headcollar for your dog, please bring this also.
- Poo bags (a bin is provided)

Course Rules and Terms and Conditions

Your puppy or dog must be up to date on all conventional vaccinations (kennel cough is NOT required) and as mentioned above, **you must bring his vaccination certificate with you on the first night** as your puppy will not be allowed to attend until we have seen his proof of vaccination. **Homeopathic vaccinations are not acceptable.** Puppies may be accepted after their first vaccination – at the owner's risk - but, if this is the case, do not put your puppy down outside the hall.

This class is very much a “course” in that each week builds on concepts taught the previous week, so please try to attend all six sessions. It is particularly important that you do not miss Week 1 as many vital concepts are introduced in this first session and it is difficult for owners to catch up if they miss this one. If you know that you will be unable to come to this first session, it may be better to book onto the next class (usually 7 weeks later) rather than miss the first class. Likewise, if your puppy is the reason for considering missing Week 1, (because he has not had his first vaccination, has not yet arrived or is unwell), it is vital that owners attend the first session (leaving puppy at home if necessary).

Please be prompt when attending class as classes, allowing time to let your puppy toilet outside the hall if needed. Classes start on time and latecomers are a distraction to the other attendees, both two and four-legged!

Class sizes (6 to 10) are kept small and one or two class assistants are also provided to allow for more individual attention and to ensure that the experience is positive for all attendees. Course places are allocated on a first come, first served basis and payment is required to secure a place. If the class you are joining is full, you will be offered the choice of a full refund, transfer onto another class, or a one to one training session (and refund of any fees paid). Much more rarely, if there are insufficient numbers to run a class (minimum 4 for Juniors, 5 for Puppy Class), the start date may be delayed. In this instance you will be offered a full refund if you do not wish to wait for the class to start.

Please note that this class is NOT a puppy party or a playgroup and, in most cases, off-lead free play does not form part of the class. This is because it is very easy for puppies to learn the *wrong* things - especially from play with other puppies – and can learn to bully or be fearful of other dogs in a few minutes of unmanaged play). A short session of managed play and “meet and greets” are done routinely most weeks so that the puppies are able to practice appropriate interactions but these are normally done on-lead so that any

inappropriate behaviour can be interrupted immediately before it causes a problem. This is very much the norm among qualified dog trainers and behaviourists in recent years. This also teaches owners how to manage their pup's interactions with other dogs to help minimise the risk of problems developing.

Extensive handouts are provided electronically to support concepts taught and discussed on this course. These will be made available for download on a hidden page of my website. If you would prefer a paper copy of the handouts, these are available on request for an additional £5 charge.

All dogs must be kept under the control and supervision of their owners. You must watch and control your own dog at all times (with help and advice from us) so that you do not allow it to frighten or hurt another – whether intentionally or not. Whilst all reasonable precautions are taken, all dogs and people attend these activities at the owner's risk and the organisers cannot take responsibility for loss, damage, or injury however caused to dogs, persons, or property.

Please use the grassy edges of the car park for toileting and any grass areas unless marked as "no dogs". Please pick up after your dog (a bin is provided for bagged dog poo).

Children in class

Well-behaved children of any age are welcomed. Children under 16 cannot be held legally responsible for a dog so must always be accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult at all times. All attending children must be capable of sitting quietly for periods of up to 10 minutes at a time (interspersed with practical sessions that they can join in with). Attending children must not cause a disruption to teaching or a nuisance to other attendees. Children can join in with the practical sessions and/or can be occupied with other quiet activities that does not cause a distraction to the teaching staff or other attendees (eg colouring, reading or playing computer games with the sound off). If you are bringing young children, it can be helpful to bring an additional adult to help with the children.