

BUCHANAN COUNTY UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

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TEAM GUIDELINES

Pony Express Therapy Dogs strive to assist every certified and probationary team to become successful in their interactions while representing the organization in official activities.

A. General Requirements

1. Participation in Pony Express Therapy Dogs (PET Dogs) requires your commitment.
2. The handler must be in possession of the dog for a minimum of three months. All dogs must be at least one year old.
3. Dogs must always be on a leash.
4. Every person who expects to take their dog on a visit must pass the Pony Express Therapy Dogs evaluation with their dog. The dog/handler are evaluated and approved as a “team”.
5. In order to be evaluated as a team, you must be at least
 - a. 18 years old or
 - b. 14 years old and accompanied by a board-approved handler over the age of 18. This adult will be with you during the exam and during each probationary visit. The dog, under 18 handler, and approved adult constitute the “team” for the probationary visits. After a successful probationary period and approval of the executive board, the youth under age 18 may serve as a junior handler but must continue to be accompanied by the board-approved handler. The board-approved handler may also bring their PET Dogs approved dog in conjunction with the site visits after the 12 months of supervising the junior handler.
6. Participation in the Pony Express Therapy Dogs program requires that you and your dog pass the evaluation and successfully complete the probationary period.
7. Annual dues for all members (handlers) are assessed as follows:
 - a. 1st year – \$25 which is the approximate cost of the purchase of a Pony Express Therapy Dogs’ approved dog therapy vest, including embroidery. Handlers will be charged the additional cost for larger vests.

- b. An existing Pony Express Handler with a new dog will be assessed \$25 the first year.
- c. A second handler with a currently approved dog will be assessed \$15 the first year.
- d. 2nd and subsequent years - \$20, due and payable on August 1st of each year. Dues will be prorated for members joining during the year: November – February \$15; March – June \$10.
- e. *Special exception*: if a non-certified member pays dues and then gets certified and purchases the required vest, a prorated refund will be made pursuant to the schedule set forth above.
- f. Re-evaluation of handler/dog teams will not entail a monetary assessment after their first two years as a successful team.

B. Before the Evaluation

1. Provide obedience training for your dog. The AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) is an option that can be obtained with completion of all of the CGC requirements.
2. Supply a fully executed Health Record to the Executive Director prior to the evaluation. This form provides veterinarian certification of proof of rabies, distemper, Bordetella vaccination and a clear fecal report.
3. Attend the orientation session for potential new teams to include handlers and their dogs.
4. Attend “meet and greet” and practice sessions, if possible. Attendance is recommended but optional.
5. Make sure your dog is clean, well-groomed and free of fleas, ticks and other pests.

C. Equipment

1. Pony Express Therapy Dogs require all dogs be on a leash and collar.
2. Pony Express Therapy Dogs **does not** permit the following leashes or collars:
 - Leashes:
 - Retractable leads/leashes
 - Leashes longer than 6’
 - Elastic or bungee leashes
 - Collars:
 - Pinch, prong or spiked collars
 - Electronic collars
3. Strollers are allowed for small dogs if they are specifically designed for dogs.

D. Evaluation Guidelines

1. Teams need to pass each item on the evaluation, unless marked as optional.
2. Evaluation items may be given in any order.
3. A CGC can be earned by completing all of the evaluation items, including the “down” and “20 foot” option.
4. No treats will be given during the exam.
5. Handlers are encouraged to praise their dogs throughout the exam and may give leash, verbal and non-verbal commands.
6. Dogs must be on a leash at all times.
7. Any dog that eliminates during the evaluation will fail.

E. Evaluation Process

1. **Examine therapy pack and fill out the top of evaluation form:** The handler will fill out the top of the evaluation form while the therapy pack is examined.

The Therapy Pack must include:

- Pony Express Therapy Dogs ID (to be worn)
- Copy of health record
- Incident Report form
- Disposable bag
- Paper towel
- Sanitary wipes
- Facial mask for the handler

A copy of the Photo Release and a pen are also recommended

2. **Dogs will:**
 - a. **Come in through a controlled entry:** The dog and handler approach a doorway. Handler will make the dog wait and then enter. The dog should not jump, pull or bolt through the entry.
 - b. **Accept a friendly stranger:** Dogs will be petted/hugged and given a brief physical exam. The vet or a representative of Pony Express Therapy Dogs will pet and give the dog a brief exam by examining various parts of their body (i.e. ears, paws, brushing, etc.). Dogs should remain calm and allow the exam to take place without a great deal of struggle. At some point the handler will be asked to demonstrate that their dog can sit and down [down is an OPTION for CGC].
 - c. **Be checked for appearance, grooming and pests:** Dogs must be clean and pest free.
 - d. **Walk to the side of their handler:** Dogs should be in control at the side of the handler, not pulling or lagging, i.e. loose lead) and show change of direction and pace. Dogs should not lunge or get ahead of the handler, and they also should not lag behind. Dogs will demonstrate change of direction by a right turn, left turn and an about turn with at least one stop in between and another at the end.

- e. **Tolerate raised voices, being petted by several at once and walking through a milling crowd:** a group of volunteers will surround the team and will pet the dog. They will also praise the dog and at least one will raise their voice. Dogs must remain calm and should not either be overly excited or too shy.
 - f. **Stay (either sit or down) from a distance of 10 feet:** The handler chooses the position for leaving the dog in the stay. The dog's leash is replaced with a leash 20 feet long. When instructed by the evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of the line, turns and returns to the dog at a natural pace. The dog must remain in the place in which it was left (it may change position) until the evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or the side. 20 ft. is OPTION for CGC; 10 ft. is required.
 - g. **Come from a distance of 10 feet:** The handler will put the dog in a stay. The handler will then walk 10 feet in front of their dog and call the dog using their "come" command. The dog should not go to the handler until called and without wandering off.
 - h. **Meet and greet people with neutral-dog(s):** Two handlers and dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries and continue on for 10 feet. Dogs will remain at the side of the handler and should not growl (or show other aggressive behaviors), bark, attempt to lunge or jump up.
 - i. **Not react negatively to a distraction:** This demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations. The evaluator will select and present two distractions, i.e. unsteady person, staggering or gesturing, someone in a wheelchair, or dropping a crutch or a person will approach the dog with a walker and will appear to be unsteady. Dogs will remain calm and must not jump up on the volunteer.
 - j. **Be separated from the handler for three minutes to show control during separation:** Handler will leave the dog with the evaluator and will go out of sight. Dogs **may** be somewhat anxious, but will remain under control without constant whining, barking etc. Following a period of three (3) minutes the handler will be called back.
 - k. **Pass by treats to demonstrate they can "leave it":** Treats will either be in a bowl or on the floor and the handler will give the "leave it" command as they pass by. Dogs may express interest but should not get any of the treats. The dog does not have to stop at the treats.
 - l. **Remain under control throughout the evaluation:** Dogs will follow commands given and will behave in a controlled manner.
3. Handlers who pass will be asked to complete paperwork before they leave.

F. Probationary Period (after passing the evaluation)

1. The probationary period is an opportunity for Facility Coordinators to assist in the growth and development of the probationary teams and their success.
2. An Active Probationary Team is a handler/dog team that adheres to all of the requirements of the Pony Express Therapy Dogs program, but who has not yet graduated
3. New teams will be on probation for a minimum of 3 months. During probation, the team will need to make 2 visits each month (total of 6). If it is decided by the Executive Committee that a new team needs additional work, the probationary period may be extended.
4. New teams are required to participate in a variety of facilities, which allows interaction with different therapy teams and types of visits.
5. A certified therapy team shall always be present at probationary visits. It is the Facility Coordinator's responsibility to make sure there is a certified team with any probationary team.
6. The Facility Coordinator shall provide the handler feedback immediately upon completion of a visit.
7. After successful completion of the probationary period, a new team will graduate and participate in the program as a certified team.

G. Scheduling Visits

1. Each certified handler will be assigned an individual account for the on-line calendar in order to schedule their visits.
2. A "visit" (with a handler and dog) is the event identified on the calendar, i.e. date, length of time, location.
3. Each visit identifies the number of "slots" (teams) required for the visit. When appropriate, the slots are separated between "probationary" and "certified".
4. A "joint visit" is by two certified handlers with one dog. Each handler is certified as a team with that dog. A joint visit does meet the requirement of two sets of eyes. The joint visit is signed up on the calendar as a visit for one of the teams, with a note that the other handler is also present and may be handling the dog.
5. Visits should be scheduled using the on-line calendar, which is coordinated by the Pony Express Therapy Dogs' calendar appointee.
6. The Facility Coordinator(s) for each site is identified on the calendar, with contact information. The Facility Coordinator is responsible for: coordinating visits, reporting the teams who attended to the Secretary (if different than the calendar), and handling any issues that may come up at the visit.
7. It is the handler's responsibility to contact the Facility Coordinator ahead of time if the team cannot make a scheduled visit. The handler should also update the on-line calendar, if applicable.

H. Conduct at Visits

1. Only certified Pony Express Therapy teams are allowed to handle dogs at visits. Visitors or non-Pony Express members are allowed to attend visits at the discretion of the site coordinator.
2. Personal business of any kind cannot be promoted during any Pony Express Therapy program visit or special event.
3. A visit starts as soon as you get out of your car and ends when you get back in your car. Dogs may not be transported to and from the visit site in the back of an open bed pickup or similar vehicle.
4. Handlers must wear the Pony Express Therapy Dogs badge on each visit and have their therapy pack with them.
5. Dogs must wear either the scarf (during probation) or the cape (after graduating) during each visit. Scarves and capes are only to be worn at official Pony Express Therapy Dog scheduled events.
6. Dogs are expected to be clean, groomed and pest free on each visit.
7. Licking is to be discouraged for health reasons.
8. Dogs must be on a leash at all times.
9. No treats/water are allowed during a visit. Treats/water should be provided to your dog outside of the facility. Treats during a visit may be disruptive to other therapy teams. (*be considerate of others*)
10. Handlers should be clean, well-groomed and sensibly dressed. Clothes should be clean, not torn or ripped, and show no obscene logos or designs. For safety reasons, handlers must wear closed-toe shoes with a back or a back strap.
11. Two sets of eyes are required on each visit. At the very minimum this means two members and one dog. The Executive Committee, for special events, presentations or other non-standard visits, may grant an exception to this.
12. Teams should be at the visits 5-10 minutes before each visit to allow the dogs time to socialize.
13. Any incident during a visit must be immediately reported and the Incident Report procedures followed. (See Incident Report Section L)
14. A Photo Release Waiver must be obtained from a parent/guardian/person if any photograph is taken at a visit showing a person with the dog. (See Guidelines under Photo Release in Section K)
15. If a visit is “officially canceled” by the Facility Coordinator for weather, illness at the facility or any other situation beyond the team’s control, the visit will still count.
16. If your dog is agitated or stressed for any reason during a visit, you should remove your dog and try to refocus them – then return to the visit. If that did not clear up the behavior, you should notify the Facility Coordinator and leave the visit. Remember – you are always an advocate for your dog!!

I. Special Visit Requirements

1. Book Buddies

The Pony Express Therapy Dogs Book Buddies program encourages children to improve their reading skills by reading to a therapy dog in a relaxed, non-threatening situation.

The Book Buddies reading program takes place in libraries and schools.

- A. Probationary teams may only serve as library greeters during library visits.
- B. To participate in the Book Buddies program, the certified team must:
 - 1. Attend a scheduled library visit as a greeter.
 - 2. Sign up on the scheduling calendar.
 - 3. Observe all policies, procedures, and precautions required by the host facility, especially rules of privacy and confidentiality.
 - 4. Obtain required permission to take pictures of the children using the Photo Release Form or via the host's blanket permission policy.

2. Hospice

All hospice visits are coordinated through the Mosaic Hospice office. Any team wanting to participate in hospice must complete the Mosaic Hospice training program. If interested, the program's coordinator will provide the information. This visit is not appropriate for probationary teams.

An exception to the "two eyes" policy can be granted if the following requirement is met:

Six (6) successful hospice visits accompanied by a hospice-trained member must be completed before going solo.

3. Prayer Buddies

The Prayer Buddies program is a specialty program and not available to probationary teams. Special approval is required from the Executive Committee for any Prayer Buddies event.

J. Facility Coordinator Responsibilities

- 1. The Facility Coordinator should be a handler in good standing that has been approved by the Executive Committee.
- 2. The Facility Coordinator shall be responsible for the scheduling of their facility visits.
- 3. The Facility Coordinator of a care facility shall contact the site prior to each visit to verify the lack of contagious diseases during periods of numerous incidents.

4. The Facility Coordinator shall monitor the calendar and verify there are sufficient teams signed up to allow the visit to occur, including the presence of a certified team with any probationary team to allow one-on-one mentoring.
5. If there are not sufficient teams, the Facility Coordinator shall contact teams to fill required spots, if possible.
6. The Facility Coordinator shall closely monitor on-going visits and adjust visits as necessary.
7. The Facility Coordinator shall provide the probationary handler feedback immediately upon completion of a visit.
8. If there is an incident at a visit, the Facility Coordinator shall prepare the necessary Incident Report. (See Section L)
9. The Facility Coordinator shall discuss any inappropriate behavior with a handler upon completion of the visit.
10. If a visit does not have the required teams, or is required to be canceled for other reasons, the Facility Coordinator shall be responsible for contacting the teams signed up, the facility contact, and the Calendar Coordinator to update the calendar.
11. The Facility Coordinator shall contact the facility's contact person once a year and update any applicable information. If there have been personnel changes, the treasurer must be notified with the new information.

K. Photo Release

1. Any photograph taken during a visit that includes any non-PET Dogs member (*i.e. child at the library, parent, resident at a nursing home, etc.*), the approved Pony Express Therapy Dogs Photo Release Waiver must be signed by the individual or parent/guardian of a minor. Please note, some care centers and schools will not allow any pictures to be taken and some already have an approved permission list for residents and students. The Facility Coordinator should ask what the current status or policy is.
2. The use of the photograph is solely for use by the Pony Express Therapy Dog program (through the Buchanan County University of Missouri Extension Office) for display of such photographs in presentations, publications, websites, social media and any other means. The photograph should not be used for personal use.
3. The photograph and waiver should be provided to the Facility Coordinator and a copy to the Secretary for the files.

L. Incident Report

1. If an incident occurs at any visit:
 - It should be reported to the Facility Coordinator immediately;
 - A Pony Express Therapy Dogs' Incident Report form shall be immediately prepared by the Facility Coordinator and one other PET Dogs member; and
 - The Incident Report should be submitted to the Executive Committee within twelve (12) hours of the incident.
2. The team involved and any witnesses should assist in the preparation of the Incident Report.
3. The Executive Committee will immediately notify the Extension Office and provide a copy of the Incident Report, as well as a copy to the facility.
4. The Executive Committee will review the Incident Report and take necessary action.

M. Maintaining Your Membership

1. Membership in Pony Express Therapy Dogs is a privilege, not a right.
2. Active Probationary Team: See Probation (Section F).
3. Non-Registered Member: is a member who does not currently have a dog, but anticipates becoming a Registered Team in the future. This member will actively participate in the program assisting in events.
4. A Registered Team is required to make at least one visit a month. A sign-up for the visits is done in advance using the on-line calendar. If the team is not able to attend a visit, the Facility Coordinator should be notified immediately. The contact information is on the calendar. The calendar must also be updated to correctly reflect the visit.
5. Any incident of aggression by a dog during a visit will be grounds for immediate removal from the program.
6. Serious or repetitive incidents may subject a team to suspension or termination, based on a review by the Executive Committee. (See Sections M, N, O and P).
7. Vaccination records must be kept current and on file with the Executive Committee. If updated records are not provided by the due date, a reminder will be sent by the Vaccination Coordinator. The reminder will indicate that the vaccinations are overdue and, if not received within thirty (30) days, the team will be suspended from visits until the vaccinations are updated and the information provided.
8. An existing PET Dogs approved team must be evaluated every two years. This will consist of passing the evaluation process and completing two successful observation visits with a consequent report on each visit made by another PET Dog Handler. In addition, the dog will need to be current on their vaccinations and have a clean fecal report.
9. If any team cannot participate in the program for a period of time because of illness, out of town, etc., a written request shall be made to the Executive Committee prior to the anticipated leave requesting their participation be put on "hold" for a specific period of time. The Executive Committee will review and provide a written reply.

10. Without the approval of the Executive Committee,
 - a. Any certified team that has not attended a site visit during a 3-month period must successfully complete 2 scheduled observation site visits prior to reapproval as a team.
 - b. A team that misses more than 4 months is considered inactive and must go through a complete re-evaluation.
11. Any violation of the Pony Express Therapy Dog requirements may result in the Executive Committee imposing a suspension of the team.
12. Performance plans may be established for members who are not meeting their obligations: The Executive Director will make personal contact to discuss the situation. An email/letter will then be sent from the Executive Committee to address the non-compliance issues and what needs to be done. An optional meeting can be scheduled with the Executive Committee to discuss the situation, possible performance plans or dismissal from the program, if deemed necessary.
13. The Executive Committee of Pony Express Therapy Dogs will address any issues with teams that may come up through complaints of other members, facilities or other incidents. The Executive Committee of Pony Express Therapy Dogs reserves the right to deny, revoke or not renew any team membership. The Executive Committee of Pony Express Therapy Dogs will work with teams to try and correct/resolve issues. In certain cases, it may require that a team withdraw from the program.
14. The Pony Express Therapy Dogs' Executive Committee reserves the right to grant exceptions to any requirement or regulation upon a majority vote of the Executive Committee.
15. The Pony Express Therapy Dogs' Executive Committee has the ability to amend these Guidelines as may become necessary and provide notification to all members at that time.

N. Aggression Policy

Pony Express Therapy Dogs will not tolerate aggressive behavior e.g. biting, snapping, snarling, aggressive lunging, growling, etc. exhibited by any of our dogs. Such behavior is a potential threat to the people we visit, ourselves, our dogs and to the continuation of the organization.

Any aggressive behavior directed at a person or dog by a current Pony Express Therapy Dogs team (either approved or probationary) when participating in a Pony Express event may result in the immediate dismissal of that team from the program. Any type of aggressive behavior of a dog shall be reported to an Executive Committee member immediately. The Executive Committee will evaluate the situation and will take appropriate action.

1. Upon an issue of aggression, the team shall immediately be removed from the program and leave the facility.
2. The team will work with the Facility Coordinator to prepare the Incident Report.
3. The cape will be surrendered within 30 days of the incident.
4. No team removed for an incident of aggression shall be allowed back in the program.

O. Removal from the Program

If a dog or team is in violation of any of the Guidelines of the program, they may be suspended or removed immediately from the program.

P. Failure to Follow the Guidelines

1. If an alleged violation (failure to follow Pony Express Guidelines) is brought to the attention of the Executive Committee, the Committee shall determine if there is a violation and if further action is required.
2. The Executive Director shall contact the handler subject to the violation and get their opinion of the incident.
3. A written report will be presented to the Executive Committee, with a copy to the handler.
4. Repeated violations of the Guidelines are serious. Depending on the violation and frequency, the Executive Committee may decide to take further action, i.e. suspension or removal.
5. Discussion about any team violations shall be handled in a “closed session” of the Executive Committee.
6. Minutes from a meeting discussing the alleged violation should reference “discussion of alleged violation of the Guidelines.” All facts and discussion from the closed session will be kept confidential.
7. A separate, confidential summary of the closed session shall be prepared for the Executive Committee only and maintained by the Secretary in a confidential file.

Q. Awards Program

Pony Express Therapy Dogs is proud to have a program to recognize the number of visits made by a dog. The visits are acknowledged at the following levels: 25, 50, 100, 200, 300, 400 and more if appropriate. This achievement is identified by an embroidered star on the dog’s cape/vest with the number of visits.

The procedure to obtain this recognition is:

1. Handler will email the Calendar Coordinator and request a count of the dog’s visits.
2. The Calendar Coordinator will notify the handler of the count.
3. Depending on the number of visits, the handler will receive a Certificate from the Secretary indicating the number of approved visits.
4. The handler (at their own cost) will take the Certificate to Sports Page in Savannah (*Pony Express approved embroiderer*) to have them put the star(s) on the vest. [*i.e. if a dog has 100 visits, they can have three stars – 25, 50, 100; or just one for 100. That is up to the handler.*]

R. Retirement

1. If a team decides to retire their dog from the program, they must provide written notice to the Executive Committee. As of the date of that notification, the team shall no longer make any visits as a Pony Express Therapy Dog.
2. The handler can remain a member of the organization by paying regular annual dues.
3. The cape for a retiring dog does not need to be returned. It can be kept by the handler but cannot be used on any other dog until they have passed the evaluation and graduated into the Pony Express Therapy Dogs program.

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES

Pony Express Therapy Dogs (PET Dogs) is an all-volunteer organization under the oversight of the University of Missouri, Buchanan County Extension Office.

Any permission to use the certified name, logo or slogan must be submitted and approved by the Executive Committee of Pony Express Therapy Dogs.

Membership is a privilege. Failure to adhere to the Pony Express Therapy Dogs Team Guidelines may jeopardize a team's membership.

Pony Express Therapy Dogs is governed by an Executive Committee made up of: Executive Director, Secretary, Treasurer, three (3) Committee Members and an ex-officio representative of the Buchanan County Extension Office.

A. Membership

The Pony Express Therapy Dogs membership is made up of Registered Teams (handler/dog) and Non-Registered Members.

- **Registered Team:** This is a handler/dog team that adheres to all of the requirements of the Pony Express Therapy Dogs program.
- **Non-Registered Member:** This is a member who does not currently have a dog, but anticipates becoming a Registered Team in the future. This member will actively participate in the program assisting in events.
- **Active Probationary Team:** This is a handler/dog team that adheres to all of the requirements of the Pony Express Therapy Dogs program, but has not yet graduated.
- **Junior Handler:** Refer to Team Guidelines / General Requirements (Section A)

Any member who wishes to resign from the program shall provide notice to the Executive Director or Secretary.

B. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee membership shall consist of

- **Executive Director:** The Executive Director may be a current member of Pony Express Therapy Dogs, with or without a dog. The Executive Director is responsible for conducting the meetings, coordinating communication of events with the therapy dog teams and discussing issues presented to the Committee. Serves as co-owner of the PET Dogs Google Drive (electronic files).

- **Secretary:** Maintains all correspondence and minutes of Pony Express Therapy Dogs. Monitors and maintains the electronic collection of all documents, forms, minutes, pictures and other records on PET Dogs Google Drive. Works with the Executive Committee to determine electronic access levels for each member. Assists the organization in an annual review/update of the Team and Organization Guidelines and forms on the PET Dogs Google Drive.
- **Treasurer:** Keeps the calendar, membership roster and records of visits by each Pony Express Therapy Dogs team. Also keeps track of annual dues payments and coordinates deposits and expenditures for the group in the account established by the Buchanan County Extension Office.
- **Ex-Officio Member:** The Buchanan County Extension Office representative shall be a voting member. In addition to overseeing the organization, the Extension Office will:
 1. Establish a bank account for the organization's use
 2. Coordinate placement of the program information on the University's website
 3. Assist in publicity for the organization
- **Committee Members:** There will be three (3) additional Committee members. A Committee Member may be a Registered Team or Non-Registered member.

Committee Members may volunteer for or receive assignments for other organizational responsibilities such as:

1. Maintaining the PET Dogs electronic calendar for visits, meetings and other events
2. Maintaining the vaccination records and related correspondence
3. Assisting the Executive Committee with marketing and public relations

All members of the Executive Committee are expected to assist in orientations and team evaluations.

All members of the Executive Committee shall have one vote on the decisions and approvals of PET Dogs.

Committee members may be a current member of Pony Express Therapy Dogs, with or without a dog. The Executive Committee will review issues and conduct the normal course of Executive Committee business, as needed. A quorum of 3 members is required to conduct official business.

The general membership may be asked to serve on, or chair committees, participate in evaluations or assume other responsibilities, as needed.

C. Terms

Executive Director, Secretary and Treasurer: The term length for the Executive Director, Secretary and Treasurer shall be three (3) years. There are no term limits.

Committee Members: The term length for Executive Committee Members is three (3) years unless filling someone's partial term. There are no term limits.

D. Duties of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will:

1. Handle all of the on-going duties necessary to keep the program current
2. Schedule and/or maintain any and all facility visits
3. Schedule and/or approve any additional visits or special programs
4. Provide on-going communications to publicize the program
5. Serve as an active recruiter to expand the program
6. Address and resolve any complaints or concerns provided to them in regard to any aspect of the program and/or specific teams

E. Resignation, Removal and Vacancies

Resignation: A Committee Member may resign from the Executive Committee by providing written notice to the Executive Director or, in the case of the Executive Director, to the Executive Committee Secretary.

Removal: A Committee Member, who is no longer eligible to serve on the Executive Committee, will be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee, when a quorum is present.

Vacancies: Vacancies on the Executive Committee will be filled for the unexpired portion of a vacant term by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. A decision will be made based on the eligible members who apply for the position.

F. Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be conducted by the Executive Director.

The Executive Committee shall meet at least on a quarterly basis (January, April, July, October). A special meeting can be scheduled if required to address an immediate concern. Meetings are open to all Pony Express Therapy Dogs members. A closed session may be conducted as necessary to handle sensitive issues.

The Executive Committee will hold a general membership meeting, as needed, to provide updates or training to the whole membership. Any vote taken at a general meeting will be by a majority of all members present (certified, non-certified and ex-officio).

Expediency may be necessary on issues requiring an immediate decision in which a physical Executive Committee meeting is not possible. In those situations, the President may host a Zoom meeting, a telephone conference call or an electronic discussion through email. Following

appropriate parliamentary procedures, a decision may be made by a recorded vote. The secretary will document the minutes of this meeting.

G. Communication

The Executive Committee, through the Executive Director, Secretary and/or Treasurer, shall keep the general membership updated on visits and other on-going information relative to the entire group through email and reference to PET Dogs Google Drive documents.

H. Decisions

All decisions made by the Executive Committee shall be by a majority vote of the committee members present.