

MENDOCINO COUNTY ANIMAL CARE SERVICES STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

The Mendocino County Animal Shelter seeks to provide a calm, safe environment where staff and members of the community can come together to help animals in need. While you are visiting the Shelter, please remember to be considerate to those around you. To ensure a positive Shelter experience for visitors, volunteers and employees, the Board of Supervisors has adopted the following Animal Care Services Code of Conduct:

Respect Shelter Rules

Patrons and volunteers must follow the rules and policies of the Mendocino County Animal Shelter.

Food or Drink

Eating and drinking in the Shelter is allowed only in designated areas.

Selling, Soliciting, Mass Distribution of Materials or Panhandling

Selling, soliciting, panhandling, or mass distribution of unapproved materials is prohibited. Any such materials shall be submitted to the Animal Shelter Manager for approval prior to distribution and/or posting.

Public Displays of Obscene Material

Public displays of obscene or visually disturbing material that interferes with the ability of others to use the Shelter, or as prohibited by law, is prohibited.

Loitering

Loitering in the Shelter, on Shelter steps, entryway or Shelter property thereby creating a nuisance to those who are trying to enter or exit the building or to use Shelter resources is prohibited. Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of the Shelter while on Shelter property.

Inappropriate Language

Inappropriate or abusive language is prohibited.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited inside the building, on Shelter steps, all entry ways or outside of any public entryway. Smokers must be at least 20 feet from any entrance or operable window at the Shelter.

Offensive Odors and Dress Code

Anyone whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the building. Since many people are sensitive to strong fragrances, patrons are asked to refrain from excessive use of perfumes or colognes. Being fully clothed, including shirt, shoes, and pants, dress, or skirt, is a requirement of using the Shelter. Closed-toed shoes are required in all kennel and dog play areas.

Harassing Behavior

Harassing behavior is prohibited. Harassing behavior may take many forms and includes, but is not limited to: unwanted conversations, verbal abuse, advances of a personal or sexual nature that intimidate or make the other party uncomfortable, harassing or obscene gestures or sounds, offensive touching, staring at Shelter staff or at other patrons so that performance of their duties or use of Shelter resources is materially disrupted, and intentionally monopolizing staff time so that performance of duties is materially disrupted even after the staff member has clearly indicated that a reference or customer service transaction has ended. For the purposes of enforcing the Mendocino County Animal Shelter's Code of Conduct, harassing behavior directed at a Shelter employee, volunteer or patron by a volunteer or patron shall include behavior which occurs anywhere both on and off Shelter property, over the phone, by mail or any electronic source, such as email or social media.

Disturbing Noise

Disturbing anyone by unreasonable noise (e.g., cell phones; videoconferencing applications such as Skype or Face time; loud conversations; loud singing; radios; other electronic devices with headphones turned up at an unreasonable volume; etc.) is prohibited.

Following/Stalking

Stalking employees, volunteers or patrons in the Shelter is prohibited. Stalking is the willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person. For the purposes of enforcing the Mendocino County Animal Shelter's Code of Conduct, following/stalking behavior directed at a Shelter employee or volunteer, shall include behavior which occurs anywhere both on and off of Shelter property.

Abusive Behavior

Abusive behavior, such as threats or violent behavior toward staff, volunteers or patrons, is prohibited.

Unsafe Behavior

Unsafe behavior such as roughhousing, climbing on kennels, disturbing animals, running, skateboarding, or any other potentially injurious action is prohibited.

Trespassing

Trespassing is prohibited. To trespass includes entering the Shelter during a period of suspension of Shelter privileges, entering any non-public area of the Shelter without permission, failing to leave the Shelter immediately upon closing, or being in the Shelter before or after public hours without express permission from authorized Shelter personnel.

Unattended Children

Children are encouraged to visit our Shelter. The Shelter is concerned about children's safety and welfare. We recognize parents' or guardians' responsibility for the behavior and well-being of their children. We respect the privacy of all Shelter patrons and intervene only when a child is deemed at risk.

If an unattended child comes to the attention of Shelter staff, staff will make a good-faith attempt to contact the parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the child will be referred to the local law enforcement agency. Children age 12 and under may not be left unattended anywhere in the Shelter and must be accompanied and directly supervised by a responsible adult.

Unlawful Behavior

Unlawful behavior while in the Shelter or on Shelter property, including, but not limited to, carrying unlawful weapons, assault, indecent exposure or sex acts, use of drugs or alcohol, damage to Shelter property, theft, attempted theft, brandishing a weapon, public drunkenness or intoxication, public urination and defecation, is prohibited.

Unauthorized Areas

Certain areas of the shelter are not accessible to the general public due to health and safety concerns. Shelter privileges may be revoked pursuant to this policy if a member of the public accesses unauthorized areas of the shelter.

Shelter Specific Behaviors/Rules/Issues/etc.

The expected behavior of shelter volunteer's is outlined in the Animal Care Services Volunteer and Community Involvement Policy.

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors determines all Shelter policies, including standards for public behavior on the premises. The Shelter retains the right to take any action necessary to ensure a safe and appropriate environment for everyone.

These standards of behavior are available as a brochure and online at the Animal Care Services website. The Shelter Manager and his/her designated staff are responsible for interpreting these rules in accordance with applicable law and for ensuring appropriate behavior in the Shelter.

Enforcement of these rules will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Any person who violates these standards will be asked to bring their behavior into compliance immediately or leave the Shelter. Failure to comply with the Shelter's established rules, regulations, and policies could result in removal from the premises and suspension from the Shelter for a period of one day to one year. Violations could also result in the restriction and/or termination of Shelter privileges.

A patron or volunteer has the right to request an Administrative Review of a suspension order that is for a period greater than seven days. Please see Suspension of Shelter Privileges Notification and Appeal Process.

SUSPENSION OF SHELTER PRIVILEGES NOTIFICATION AND APPEAL PROCESS

Patrons or volunteers who do not comply with the Mendocino County Animal Shelter Standards of Behavior Policy may be asked to leave the Shelter for a period of one to 30 days by the Shelter Manager or his/her designee. The Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) Director will make determinations on any proposed suspensions of 30 days to up to one year.

A. IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION WITH FURTHER ACTION TO FOLLOW:

The following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- physical abuse or assault

- fighting or challenging to fight
- making violent or threatening statements
- damaging, destroying, or theft of Shelter property

Authorized Shelter staff will instruct anyone displaying these behaviors to leave the Shelter immediately. Police will be called and additional legal action may occur, as appropriate. In addition, based on the severity of the situation, a suspension of Shelter privileges for up to one year will be applied without advance warning or prior suspension. Shelter staff will notify the Shelter Manager immediately, where a determination of the appropriate suspension period and procedures will be assigned.

All other prohibited behaviors will be addressed in the following manner:

First Violation: Initial warning and given copy of the Standards of Behavior

Second Violation: Shelter privileges suspended for the day

Third Violation: Shelter privileges suspended for seven days

Fourth Violation: Shelter privileges suspended for up to a year

Circumstances, including the seriousness or continuing nature of the conduct may warrant immediate suspension of Shelter privileges.

At the recommendation of Shelter staff, the Shelter Manager or designee will issue a letter to the volunteer or patron specifying the behavior that violated the Mendocino County Animal Shelter Behavior Policy; penalty for doing so, which may include a suspension of Shelter privileges; and the designated suspension time of up to one year. The date of the letter will serve as the date of notice in starting the timeline for appeal. The Clerk of the Board of Supervisors will schedule a hearing requesting a hearing date for the appeal of a suspension of privileges within 30 days of the notice of suspension of privileges.

At the recommendation of the Shelter, the Board of Supervisors may suspend a patron or volunteer from Mendocino County Animal Shelter facility for a period of one year or more if the patron or volunteer's conduct is deemed an ongoing threat to Shelter patrons, volunteers or staff.

Any patron or volunteer who has had his or her Shelter privileges suspended may appeal once in writing to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. An appeal petition must be mailed or delivered to the Executive Office, 501 Low Gap Rd, Room 1010, Ukiah, CA 95482, within 15 days of the suspension. The appeal petition must include all reasons the patron believes he or she is not in violation of the Mendocino County Animal Shelter's Behavior Policy or why the suspension is not appropriate.

The Board of Supervisors, upon hearing the petition during a public meeting and then voted upon, will issue a written determination of the appeal within 60 days of the receipt of the petition. The Board of Supervisors may uphold the suspension, overturn the suspension or propose an alternative. The determination is final and shall have no precedential value. An appeal may not be repeated.