Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe
Foster Pet Guidelines

Email: foster@hstt.org
Direct Line (Call or Text): 530-582-2499
Emergency Foster Phone: 530-582-7918

General Foster Responsibilities

- All people living in the home must agree to and follow these foster guidelines.
- Your foster pet(s) remains under the guardianship of the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe (HSTT) while in your care. Foster parents are responsible for the animal's safety and well-being while the animal is in their home or under their supervision.
- You must provide your foster pet with adequate food, fresh water, shelter, supervision, and kind, loving treatment at all times.
- Foster parents must follow all applicable state and local animal laws, as well as any additional written instructions provided by HSTT.
- Foster parents must respond to communications from HSTT staff within **2 hours**.
- If you are no longer able to foster your pet(s), please give HSTT as much notice as possible so that a suitable replacement foster home can be arranged.
- As a foster parent, you agree to allow HSTT to visit the premises where your foster pet(s) is being kept to ensure that the environment is appropriate.
- HSTT staff may remove a foster pet(s) from a home for any reason deemed necessary.

Safety & Supervision

- If you have other pets in your home, you **must** keep your foster pet(s) safely separated from them whenever you are not present. This is to ensure the safety of both your own pet and the foster pet(s).
- Please keep your foster pet(s) separate from other animals in the house for the first two weeks.
- You may not foster animals from other organizations or private individuals while actively fostering pet(s) from HSTT.
- Keep a close eye on doorways to make sure your foster pet(s) can't escape. One door left open can have tragic implications for foster animals, especially when they are adjusting to a new environment and don't know where "home" is.
- If your foster pet(s) goes missing, you must contact the Foster Team **IMMEDIATELY** at **530-582-2499**. If it is after hours, call the **Emergency Foster Phone at 530-582-7918**.

- When guests visit your home, monitor your foster pet(s) for signs of stress or discomfort. If your foster pet(s) appears uneasy or the situation becomes overwhelming, place the animal(s) in a quiet, separate space away from visitors.
- Your foster pet(s) depends on you to look out for their safety and well-being. If anyone is behaving inappropriately toward or treating your foster pet poorly, you must stop them immediately.
- Always supervise interactions between children and your foster pet(s). **Never leave young children unattended with your foster pet(s).**

Cats & Kittens

- **Foster cats and kittens must be kept indoors at all times. No exceptions.** They must be kept in an area separate from other animals in the foster home.
- Kittens need to be handled on a regular basis for socialization purposes. Make sure that you are playing with, holding and handling them safely and regularly.
- If your foster cat(s) or kitten(s) escapes or goes missing, contact the Foster Team **IMMEDIATELY** at 530-582-7918. If you cannot reach the Foster Team, call HSTT directly at 530-587-5948.
- Do not give cats or kittens milk. They cannot digest it.

Dogs & Puppies

- Puppies need to be handled on a regular basis for socialization purposes. Make sure that you are playing with, holding and handling them safely and regularly.
- **Puppies under four months of age must remain inside the home and in the home's secure yard.** They are not fully vaccinated and aren't adequately protected against diseases, so they cannot go out into the world just yet.
- **Foster dogs must be kept on leash whenever they are outside**, unless they are in a fully enclosed area (such as a securely fenced yard, house, or deck) **and under direct supervision.**
- Foster dogs must always wear their collar and HSTT identification tag. Harnesses can be removed while the dog is relaxing inside the home.
- Do not allow anyone to take your foster dog on outings away from the home.
- Never leave a foster dog outside for extended periods or while you are away from home.
- Never tie or chain your foster dog outside or leave them on a runner. Contact the Foster Team if you need guidance on appropriate confinement.
- Never transport a foster dog in the open bed of a truck, even if the dog is tethered. HSTT dogs must either be in a crate or attached to a dog seatbelt when transported in the car.

- Do not crate a foster dog or puppy for extended periods of time. Please contact the foster team for guidance on the appropriate amount of time that each dog can be crated.
- DO NOT allow your foster dog to get away with behaviors that a typical adopter may consider undesirable. These include begging, jumping on people or surfaces, or excessive barking. Contact the Foster Team for guidance if you need help addressing a behavior.

Feeding Schedule & Instructions

- Adult dogs should generally be fed **twice a day,** unless otherwise instructed by HSTT.
- Puppies should generally be fed **three times a day,** unless otherwise instructed by HSTT.
- DO NOT give rawhides to any HSTT puppy or dog.
- Keep dry food and water available to cats and kittens at all times unless otherwise instructed. Supplement their diet with wet food as instructed for each cat or kitten.
- Always follow any individualized feeding instructions provided by HSTT. Only feed your foster pet(s) the food provided by HSTT. Please ask the Foster Team before giving your foster pet(s) treats or food not included in your foster supply bags as some HSTT pets are on specialized diets.

Medical & Health Concerns

Puppies and kittens have developing immune systems and are particularly vulnerable to illnesses. **Any medical concern involving a puppy or kitten must be reported to HSTT immediately.**

Your foster pet's health is your responsibility while they are in your care. Contact the Foster Team immediately if you notice any signs of illness, injury, or other health concerns including:

  - Sneezing or coughing
  - Eye or nasal discharge
  - Lethargy or unusual behavior
  - Limping or difficulty moving
  - Changes in appetite or eating habits
  - Vomiting or diarrhea
  - Blood in stool or urine
  - Litter box issues for cats and kittens
  - Any other change that concerns you

- If you notice your foster pet(s) has worms, please contact the Foster Team as soon as possible. HSTT animals are given dewormer before going into foster care and could still present worms in their stool.

If you believe your foster pet(s) is experiencing a medical emergency, CALL the Emergency Foster Phone immediately at (530) 582-7918.

Behavior & Training

- Contact the Foster Team immediately if you observe any concerning behavior under any circumstance. (i.e. reactivity, resource guarding or any behaviors that may pose a safety concern).
- **Any bite that breaks the skin must be reported IMMEDIATELY. No exceptions.**
- **Never physically punish a foster animal in any way.**
- Only use positive reinforcement training techniques. NEVER punish or scold behavior you did not see occur (i.e. getting into the trash, chewing a shoe, having a potty training accident when you did not directly see it happen). It is ineffective and damaging to the animal to be scolded after the fact. Contact the Foster Team with any questions on proper positive reinforcement training.
- Notice and reward good behavior! Praise your foster pet immediately when they respond appropriately to a request.
- Interrupt undesirable behavior when you see it and redirect the animal toward an appropriate behavior. For example: take the shoe they're playing with away, say "thank you," then offer an appropriate toy, and then praise the dog for engaging with the toy.
- For behavior issues, contact the Foster Team immediately for guidance and support.

Adopting Foster Pets

If you are interested in adopting your foster pet, please let the Foster Team know as soon as possible. This must be done prior to the animal returning to the shelter. Foster parents get first priority to adopt their foster animals **unless they are part a Giving Tuesday campaign**.

- If someone you know is interested in adopting your foster pet, contact the Foster Team. **Do not arrange adoptions, meet-and-greets, or adoption interviews on your own.** All HSTT adoptions must be facilitated through HSTT.

Important Reminders

- Please remember that HSTT has provided you with a foster animal that may have an unknown medical or behavioral history. Follow all instructions provided by the Foster Team and communicate any concerns promptly.
- Never make assumptions about your foster pet's behavior, health, or ability to safely interact with people or other animals. When in doubt, contact the Foster Team for guidance.

Foster Parent Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the HSTT Foster Pet Guidelines and the responsibilities associated with caring for a foster animal in my home. I understand that I am responsible for following these guidelines and contacting HSTT with any questions, concerns, medical issues, or behavioral issues involving my foster pet(s).

Date: _____

Printed Name of Foster Parent: _____

Signature of Foster Parent: _____