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## **Foster Care Policy**

Pawed Pals Animal Rescue's (PPAR's) foster care policy is to ensure that every rescued animal is placed into a suitable temporary home where he/she will be loved, well cared for, well prepared for and promoted for adoption while awaiting a permanent home; that every foster caregiver is well supported by PPAR and is made aware of their responsibilities and of PPAR's role in the foster care process; and that all foster decisions are made in the best interests of PPAR animals.

### **Application and Screening**

- Potential foster caregivers must be at least 18 years old and must complete, sign and submit an application form.
- If a potential foster caregiver's home is an apartment, other rental or condo, they must provide PPAR with a letter from their landlord or condo board indicating permission for a foster pet and identifying any restrictions in the species, breed, size or number of pets.
- If a potential caregiver resides in the home of their parents, other relative or friend, the home owner must participate in the screening process.
- The foster screening process includes a home visit by the foster coordinator/volunteer, with the applicant in attendance, to inspect and ensure that the home and property will be suitable for a foster pet and that any and all current resident pets are well cared for.
- If an applicant fosters or intends to foster for another rescue/shelter organization they must disclose to PPAR the name of that organization, what types of animals, how many and how often they will be fostering for that organization, and must state how they will mitigate any conflict of interests.
- All animals resident in the potential foster home, including those belonging to the caregiver and any animals fostered for another rescue/shelter organization must be spayed/neutered and have up-to-date vaccinations.
- If the foster coordinator/volunteer determines that some corrective action is needed within the home or property before approving the foster application, the homeowner will be asked to make the necessary adjustments and will be subject to another home visit in two weeks.
- Foster applications may be approved or denied at PPAR's discretion.
- Other than disclosure to the Board of Directors and to the applicant themselves, reasons for denial will remain private and confidential within PPAR's Animal Care Unit (ACU).

### **Foster Contract**

- The **Foster Contract** document is available on the PPAR website for potential caregivers to read all Terms and Conditions prior to proceeding.
- When a Foster Application has been approved, a Foster Contract must be completed by the foster coordinator/volunteer, dated and signed by the caregiver and witnessed by the coordinator/volunteer.

- If the caregiver resides in the home of their parents, other relative or friend, the home owner must co-sign the Foster Contract.
- By signing the Foster Contract, the caregiver agrees to all Terms and Conditions of foster care.

### **Animal Placement**

- A newly approved caregiver will not necessarily receive a PPAR foster animal immediately upon approval. Placement will depend on the animals currently in need of a foster home.
- An approved caregiver will be notified by their foster coordinator when an animal is in need of placement in a home which meets the caregiver's preferences and capabilities for care and is within their animal limit. The coordinator will advise if the animal is a new intake or is moving from another foster home and will advise the approximate age, gender, the expected level of care needed, and (if known) the animal's temperament, behaviour and medical condition. The caregiver has the right to refuse or accept the animal into their home.
- When a PPAR animal is accepted by the caregiver, the animal will be brought to their home by the foster coordinator/volunteer at an agreed time and date; or the animal may be picked up by the caregiver if all parties agree.
- The foster coordinator/volunteer will explain the appropriate care plan for the animal and will provide any necessary written guidelines (ex. quarantine rules for new intakes, administering medications, bottle feeding, etc.) The caregiver is expected to follow the prescribed care plan.
- All fostered animals remain the property of PPAR at all times until placed into their permanent adoptive homes; and may be removed from the foster home with or without advance notice.
- If a caregiver no longer wants to receive animal placement requests from PPAR, they should ask their foster coordinator to remove them from the foster call list.

### **Animal Limits**

- PPAR will limit the number of animals in care at any one time with any one caregiver based on that caregiver's experience, the level of care needed for specific PPAR foster animals, as well as the number and care level of resident pets and any animals in the home being fostered for another organization.
- A caregiver's limit will be periodically reassessed and adjusted (increased or decreased) as often as deemed appropriate by their foster coordinator or PPAR's Director of Animal Care.
- Caregivers must immediately inform their foster coordinator of any change in the number of resident pets and/or animals fostered for another organization.
- Irrespective of the animal limits set by PPAR, caregivers must not accept more animals than they feel they can adequately care for at any one time.
- PPAR will not be held responsible or liable for any fines, fees or penalties incurred by the caregiver as a result of their failure to comply with animal control bylaws in their city or municipality.

### **Veterinary Care Obligations**

- All PPAR animals will receive initial and ongoing veterinary care which will include vaccinations, spay/neuter, other surgeries, x-rays, other diagnostic tests, medications, supplements, de-worming treatments, etc.
- When PPAR foster animals require veterinary care, their caregiver will be consulted about a suitable time and date and will be asked to transport the animals to and from that appointment. PPAR's veterinary care coordinator (or another authorized volunteer) will meet them at the appointment. If the caregiver is unable to attend or transport the animals, the coordinator will arrange transportation and chaperone services with another volunteer.
- Caregivers must regularly assess the physical condition, growth and behaviour of animals in their care, as they would for their own pets, to monitor for any signs of illness, injury or concerning behaviour.
- When necessary (and when agreed within their foster preferences), caregivers must administer medications and monitor post-operative progress. If this level of care becomes necessary but is outside of the caregiver's stated preferences or abilities, the animal may be transferred to another foster home or an approved volunteer may visit the foster home to assist with care as needed.
- Caregivers will not make their own veterinary appointments or medical decisions for animals in their care and will not be reimbursed for veterinary care. The care plan, scheduling and cost of vet work for fostered animals remains PPAR's responsibility until the animals are placed into their permanent adoptive homes.
- If a caregiver voluntarily pays a veterinary bill as a donation towards the care of PPAR animals this is greatly appreciated! However, the care must still be decided and scheduled by PPAR and provided by an approved PPAR veterinarian.
- In case of a medical emergency, the caregiver must immediately contact their foster coordinator or PPAR's Director of Animal Care. If they are unable to reach any PPAR representatives they are expected to directly contact PPAR's veterinarian or an approved alternate emergency veterinarian if necessary.

### **General Care Obligations**

- Caregivers will house and maintain PPAR animals in a safe, clean, sanitary and comfortable environment within their own home.
- Caregivers will treat PPAR animals in a humane manner, and will provide interaction, socialization, stimulation and play time appropriate to each animal's age and needs.
- They must also ensure that PPAR animals receive humane treatment from all other occupants of and visitors to the foster home; and must take necessary precautions to prevent PPAR animals from suffering injury or abuse in the home, and from escaping and roaming. Cats and kittens must be kept indoors.
- Caregivers will feed PPAR animals at the quantity and frequency advised in the care plan; will ensure that fresh water is available at all times, and must wash food and water dishes daily.
- They will remove waste from litter boxes at least daily; will replenish with clean litter regularly to maintain sufficient levels; and must empty, sanitize and refill periodically as needed for the number of cats and boxes.
- Caregivers will groom and (if necessary) bathe PPAR animals and trim their nails as required and as advised by the foster coordinator. Assistance will be provided if necessary.
- Caregivers will not purchase their own supplies for animals in their care and will not be reimbursed for food, cat litter, toys, treats or other supplies. The procurement and cost of

such supplies for fostered animals remains PPAR's responsibility until the animals are placed into their permanent adoptive homes.

- If a caregiver voluntarily purchases their general supplies as a donation towards the care of PPAR animals this is greatly appreciated! However, the recommended quality and quantity of food is still expected to be followed.
- PPAR will routinely provide caregivers with sufficient quantity of an appropriate quality and variety of food to maintain good health and growth of the animals in their care, plus treats if allowed in the care plan.
- PPAR will also provide a litter box (or boxes) and cat litter adequate for the number and needs of the animals in foster care.
- Food and water dishes, nail clippers, brush/comb, scratching post, climbing structure, toys and a pet carrier/cage may also be provided. This will all be dependent on the availability of donated supplies and each animal's needs.
- Initial supplies will be delivered to the foster home by the foster coordinator along with the first animal placement. Thereafter food, treats and litter will be delivered by PPAR's supplies coordinator on an approximate bi-weekly basis or may be picked up from the supplies coordinator in certain circumstances.
- PPAR food, treats and litter will be allocated by the supplies coordinator based on the number and needs of PPAR foster animals in the home, excluding resident pets and animals fostered for another organization.
- Any unused supply of PPAR food and cat litter, and any litter boxes, food dishes, climbing structures, carriers, etc. must be returned to PPAR when a foster animal leaves the home in cases where there will be no other PPAR animal remaining in the home that requires the same supplies. Litter boxes, food/water dishes and carriers/cages must be sanitized before returning to PPAR.

### **Progress Assessments**

- The caregiver must provide a monthly **Foster Progress Report** to their foster coordinator/volunteer for each animal in their care. This can be done by email, over the phone, or in person through an in-home visit by the foster coordinator/volunteer.
- Through the process of this monthly report the foster coordinator/volunteer will discuss any concerns in the animal's progress and will advise of any changes in the care plan.
- Caregivers are encouraged to contact their foster coordinator at any time as needed between monthly reports.
- Excluding emergency situations, the caregiver should give PPAR at least two weeks' notice if they no longer want to, or no longer are able to, care for their foster animal(s).
- A foster coordinator/volunteer will visit the foster home at least every two months to personally assess the progress and condition of all fostered animals and to ensure that safety, shelter, hygiene, general care requirements and animal limits are being met.
- An in-home assessment will also be conducted if any concerns about the wellbeing of foster animals are brought to PPAR's attention.
- The caregiver will be alerted to any areas for improvement identified during an assessment and will be given opportunity to rectify those concerns.
- Should the caregiver fail to resolve any problems, their foster animal will be temporarily or permanently removed from the home. Return of the animal to that foster home is not guaranteed. It will be at PPAR's discretion and subject to another in-home assessment.
- Should a PPAR animal be considered to be in imminent danger they will be removed from their foster home on the spot.

## Travel / Relocation

- PPAR foster animals must not be taken along when the caregiver travels, with the exception of a vacation property (ex. cottage or cabin) which has undergone a site inspection and been approved by PPAR as an extension of the foster home. Otherwise, alternate arrangements for care must be made by the caregiver and approved in advance by PPAR. If necessary PPAR will assist in making alternate arrangements for foster care to cover vacations and any other circumstances where the caregiver will be absent from the foster home.
- Caregivers must notify PPAR at least two weeks in advance of any plans to relocate to a new address. Their new residence must be inspected and approved in order to continue as a PPAR foster home.

## Lost Animals

- If a PPAR foster animal is lost, the caregiver must contact their foster coordinator immediately.
- In addition, the caregiver is expected to look in all possible hiding spots, search their neighbourhood, contact their neighbours, and assist PPAR volunteers in putting up posters, contacting local animal control facilities and using all other standard means of locating a lost animal as recommended by PPAR.

## Problems / Incidents

- If a caregiver experiences behavioural problems with a PPAR animal they must contact their foster coordinator immediately.
- PPAR will assist by assessing the situation, recommending behaviour modification techniques or disciplinary actions, or by moving the animal to a new foster home if necessary.
- Minor incidents, including typical behaviour adjustments found when socializing a stray/neglected/abandoned animal into a home environment, should be logged and reviewed through the regular monthly progress assessments.
- For any serious incidents, including damage to personal property, injury or aggression towards other animals or humans, the foster coordinator must advise PPAR's Director of Animal Care and must update the ACU records with an **Incident Report** for future reference.
- PPAR will not be held responsible for any damages, injuries, infections or other harm caused by a PPAR foster animal to the caregiver, their property, any other person or animal, and will not be held liable for any costs incurred by the caregiver or other parties from such events; except if those events are a result of PPAR's gross negligence or intentional misconduct.
- PPAR will not hold the caregiver responsible for any damages, injuries, infections or other harm to a PPAR foster animal caused by the caregiver or any other person or animal, and will not hold the caregiver liable for any costs incurred by PPAR from such events; except if those events are a result of the caregiver's gross negligence or intentional misconduct including their failure to adhere to the Terms and Conditions of their Foster Contract.

## Adoption Assistance

- When a PPAR animal has been declared ready for adoption, the foster coordinator or advertising volunteer will ask the caregiver to provide at least two clear colour photos and to write an adoption profile. Assistance will be provided with profile writing and photography. Depending on their age and the length of time an animal remains in foster care, the caregiver may periodically be asked to provide a new profile and photos.
- If animals are eligible for a photo session with PPAR's volunteer professional photographer, their caregiver will be consulted about a suitable time and date and will be asked to transport the animals to and from that appointment. If the caregiver is unable to attend or transport the animals, the foster coordinator will make alternate arrangements for transportation.
- The caregiver is expected to and welcomed to promote PPAR adoptable foster animals to their family, friends, neighbours, coworkers, etc. through any reasonable means available to them – word of mouth, email, social media, etc. Names, phone numbers, email addresses and social media accounts of PPAR members must not be shared unless authorized by the members themselves.
- The caregiver will be notified by their foster coordinator or by an events coordinator when their animals are eligible to attend a local adoption fair or other promotional event, and will be asked to transport the animals to and from the event, to promote and care for them throughout the event. If the caregiver is unable to attend with their foster animals, the coordinator will arrange alternate transportation and animal care for that event.
- When a potential adopter is interested in meeting an animal in foster care, they will be screened and approved by PPAR before making arrangements to visit the foster home. The caregiver will be asked to allow those pre-approved applicants into their home and to answer questions about their foster animals.
- Any follow-up visits, emails or phone calls from a potential adopter will not be made directly to the caregiver unless authorized via the adoption coordinator.
- Unless authorized to do so by PPAR's Director of Animal Care, the caregiver will not make the decision to approve or decline an adoption, but their feedback will be requested by the adoption coordinator after the meet and greet.
- When an adoption is finalized, the adoption coordinator will arrange with the caregiver for a date and time when the animal is to be picked up from the foster home. The coordinator may meet the adopter at the foster home to sign the adoption contract before receiving the animal. The caregiver must not turn the animal over to anyone unless authorized by the adoption coordinator; and must not turn the animal over before the agreed date.
- The foster caregiver and the adopter may keep in touch if they so choose after adoption. In any case, the caregiver should feel proud knowing they've helped to save a rescued animal's life and to prepare it for a loving lifetime home!
- The caregiver must apply to PPAR and be approved through the normal adoption process, must pay the adoption fee and sign an Adoption Contract if they should desire to adopt their foster animal(s).