



## Information & Responsibilities for Guardian Families

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for welcoming a puppy from our breeding program into your home as part of the Guardian Program. This program allows our dogs to live in loving family environments while the breeder retains breeding rights under specific conditions.

In this handbook, you will find all the important information about :

- ~ Your **responsibilities** as a guardian
- ~ Understanding the hormonal cycle
- ~ Managing pregnancy
- ~ The process of whelping and what happens afterwards.

### 1| GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

As a guardian, you play a vital role in your dog's well-being, development, and preparation for future breeding.

#### 1.1 Nutrition

- Provide a high-quality diet suitable for your dog's age, weight, and activity level.
- Avoid table scraps and toxic foods such as chocolate, grapes, onions, and cooked bones.
- Fresh water should always be available.
- If you are unsure about food choices, please contact us for approved nutrition guidelines.

#### 1.2 Grooming and General care

- Brush your dog regularly according to their coat type.
- Clean ears, eyes, and teeth routinely to prevent infections.
- Trim nails when necessary or have them done by a professional groomer.
- Bathe your dog only when needed using dog-friendly products.
- A well-groomed dog is healthier, happier, and more comfortable.

#### 1.3 Exercises and mental stimulation

- Avoid high-impact exercise before the age of 12 months to protect growing joints and bones.
- Before this age, focus on short walks, playtime, and gentle socialization.
- From 1 year onward, your dog can enjoy longer walks, fetch games, swimming, and other physical activities.
- Provide mental stimulation through training, puzzle toys, and safe interactions with other dogs.

## 1.4 Breeding age and Program Limits

- The minimum age for breeding is 1 year for both males and females. However we like to wait till at least the second cycle before breeding our females which is usually between 18 months and 2 years of age.
- Females: Maximum of 3 litters during the entire guardian program, strictly supervised by the breeder.
- Males: Eligible for breeding up to 5 years of age, or sooner if decided by the breeder.

## 2| UNDERSTANDING THE HORMONAL CYCLE

Knowing how your dog's hormonal cycle works is crucial for planning and avoiding unwanted matings.

### 2.1 Female heat cycle

- First heat usually occurs between 6 and 12 months of age.
- Heats typically last 3 weeks, about twice per year.
- Common signs of heat: Light bleeding or spotting \ Swelling of the vulva \ Behavioral changes (more affectionate or occasionally distant)

During this period, keep your female away from any males unless instructed otherwise by the breeder.

### 2.2 Male sexual maturity

- Male dogs reach sexual maturity around 8 to 12 months.
- They may show increased interest in females in heat and may start marking territory.
- If needed, we can provide advice on managing these behavioural changes.

## 3| INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY THE GUARDIAN FAMILY

In order to ensure proper monitoring of the female dog and plan breeding periods effectively, it is essential that the guardian family communicates regularly with the breeder and provides the following information:

### 3.1 Heat cycle monitoring

The family must inform the breeder immediately when noticing any signs of heat:

- Swelling of the vulva
- Light or bloody discharge
- Unusual behaviors: becoming more affectionate or distant
- Increased attention from male dogs
- Changes in appetite or energy levels

**Important:** Keep a precise record of the start and end dates of each heat cycle and any behaviours observed. This information helps determine the best breeding period.

### 3.2 Signs of ovulation

To help with planning, the family should also observe and report:

- Reduction or stopping of bleeding after several days
- Vulva still slightly swollen but less sensitive
- More receptive behavior towards males
- Any noticeable changes typically occurring between day 10 and day 14 of the heat cycle

### 3.3 Possible signs of pregnancy

After mating or insemination, the family should report any signs that may indicate pregnancy:

- Slight increase or temporary decrease in appetite
- Progressive weight gain
- Swelling or color change of the nipples
- Increased tiredness and calmer behavior
- Nesting behaviour (looking for a quiet spot to rest)

If in doubt, the breeder will coordinate veterinary visits to confirm the pregnancy.

### 3.4 Regular communication

- Inform the breeder of any unusual changes in the female's behavior or health.
- Provide regular updates (dates, photos, observations).
- Respond quickly to the breeder's requests for information to ensure optimal monitoring.

## 4| PREGNANCY

Your female is bred at our discretion and under our supervision:

- Pregnancy lasts about 63 days (roughly 2 months).

During pregnancy:

- Maintain a balanced, high-quality diet suited for pregnant females.
- Avoid strenuous exercise but continue light daily walks.
- Watch for any changes in behaviour or health and inform us immediately.
- Veterinary visits and check-ups will be coordinated with the breeder.

## 5| WHELPING AND BEYOND

The whelping process is fully managed by the breeder to ensure safety for both mother and puppies:

- A few days before the expected due date, the female will come back to the breeder's care for preparation.
- Whelping is supervised by professionals to guarantee the health and safety of the mother and the litter.

After whelping :

- The mother remains at the breeder's until the puppies are fully weaned.

- Once her puppies are weaned, she returns to her guardian family.
- Postpartum care, diet, and recovery will be closely guided by the breeder.

## 6| COMMUNICATION AND ONGOING SUPPORT

Throughout the program:

- Stay in close contact with the breeder regarding your dog's health and behaviour
- Notify us immediately if your female shows signs of heat, illness, or unexpected changes.
- Follow all instructions regarding vet visits, breeding appointments, and care plans.
- Our goal is to work together to ensure your dog's well-being and maintain a strong, trusting partnership.

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