

KC PRESS RELEASE

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THE KENNEL CLUB
Making a difference for dogs

Kennel Club Updates Judging Regulations and Code of Best Practice

The Judges Committee and the Board consider there is value in bringing forward a number of new show regulations and a range of additional supporting statements in the code that recognises and protects best practice and underpins and protects the integrity of judges at every level of show.

This is because, in all areas where pedigree dog competitions are discussed, there is always a range of opinions expressed about judges. Their decisions and practices are critiqued and commented on in a variety of different ways and expressed across many different media.

This high level of rigorous oversight and debate has led to a high number of judges who on a regular basis deliver excellence, who care a great deal about the decisions they deliver and are rightly proud of their experience and knowledge.

It is considered important that the show regulations and the code of best practice for judges includes criteria and advice that underpins this level of excellence.

There are many situations in which judges' actions could be misconstrued. The code of best practice describes some of those situations to be avoided and helps all to better understand what is not acceptable and where criticism might arise. The code discusses how judges can best present themselves across the media, including social media. This public forum is an area where people freely debate the finer points of all that happens at a licensed dog show and the code provides guidance to judges as to how their actions could be perceived and where their integrity could be compromised.

It is recognised that judges, in many cases, also exhibit. In fact in order to continuously improve, this can only enhance the knowledge and experience of our judges. That said care must be taken to avoid certain situations which may be misconstrued and lead to the appearance of irregularity.

Some examples of a conflict of interest are provided in the code and are published in the updated regulations. New show regulations will allow judges to request a dog be withdrawn from competition should he/she believe the exhibition of the dog creates a conflict of interest. A regulation is to be introduced to state that exhibitors should not enter a dog for exhibition if a conflict of interest with the judge is apparent.

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said: "Our show community continually strive to exhibit the highest quality of dog, to be judged by our highly competent and experienced judges. The continued evolution of the advice provided to the judges, and recognised by all who show and exhibit, will add a further layer of support for all to see and which will further enhance our shows in the future.

"Perception is important to the reputation of Kennel Club licensed dog shows, their standing in the world of pedigree dogs and the value of awards won and titles gained. Both judges and exhibitors have a responsibility to ensure that dog shows are a positive experience and promote the positive aspects of owning and showing a pedigree dog."

The new regulations will be effective from 1 January 2020 and may be read at the following link: bit.ly/32O698c where all changes are marked in bold. A new edition of the *Code of Best Practice for Judges* may be accessed on the Kennel Club website at bit.ly/2K3XPbY.



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Judging Regulations and Code of Best Practice

This page is to be read in conjunction with the [Kennel Club press release issued on 24 July 2019](#). Changes to regulations are noted in **bold**.

Amended Regulation F10

Judging

Judges at Kennel Club licensed shows must judge in accordance with Kennel Club Breed Standards and Show Regulations. In assessing dogs, judges must penalise any features or exaggerations which they consider would be detrimental to the soundness, health or well-being of the dog. **Judges are also expected to act impartially, with integrity and to only judge on the merits of the dogs in competition and consider no other factors.** Judges must maintain and abide by the highest standards in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and appropriate Codes of Best Practice as published from time to time.

Code of Best Practice for Judges – supporting statements – Chapter 1

1. Judges must reject any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
N.B. judges may be paid fees, reimbursed for travel and receive food and accommodation.

Grey areas

2. There will always be 'grey areas' that may confuse judges. When faced with a dilemma ask yourself whether the situation, however innocent, projects an outward appearance of impropriety. A good rule of thumb is 'if you have concerns about whether something is inappropriate, you probably should avoid the situation.'
3. Judges are often singled out for critical observation by others. Therefore, always keep in mind that perfectly innocent actions or statements can be misconstrued. This includes but is not restricted to participation in public forums and on social media.
4. Actions that bring embarrassment to the Kennel Club, fellow judges or the canine world in general could be subject to disciplinary action which could affect future judging privileges.
5. As a judge you will be invited to attend social functions such as club dinners where exhibitors will be present. Take care to avoid even the appearance of impropriety with anyone who might appear in your ring. You may occasionally find that you will have to tactfully change the subject or excuse yourself from a conversation that involves breeds or exhibitors whom you are likely to judge.
6. All these aspects of avoiding the appearance of impropriety include taking part in any social media discussion. Judges must avoid social media discussion about dogs or breeds ahead of or after a judging appointment. Taking part in discussion on a breed or worse a particular dog or dogs ahead of or after a judging appointment is unacceptable and could lead to disciplinary action.
7. Ahead of an appointment judges should always be circumspect in their interactions with potential exhibitors to avoid the perception of impropriety and/or bias. Exhibitors expect a level playing field and mixing socially with potential exhibitors should be avoided.

8. Similarly, you must avoid travelling to shows with an exhibitor or accepting invitations to stay overnight with an exhibitor whose dogs you are likely to judge.
9. With common sense, judges can easily avoid a situation which might raise ethical questions.
10. Whenever you have a question about a judging procedure or conduct, consult the Kennel Club, which should be the first port of call to discuss questions concerning best practice as a judge.

New and amended Regulations

F(1)20 – Judges and Judging

New sub-paragraphs and amendments to existing regulations

e. A judge must not alter the ownership of a dog in order to allow that dog to be entered for exhibition at a show where that judge is officiating.

f. Judges may not enter, exhibit, prepare a dog for exhibition or handle a dog in the ring at a Show at which they are officiating (vide F(1)29a(9))

p. A judge must request that a dog be withdrawn from competition if the judge has a conflict of interest with the dog and/or its owner.

F(1)29 Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards

a. A dog may be disqualified by the Board from any award, whether an objection has been lodged or not, if **proven** amongst other things to have been:

(9) Entered or exhibited for competition, or handled in the ring by a Judge of dogs at that Show.

(11) Registered or recorded as owned by the scheduled Judge **or any member of his/her immediate household or immediate family** within a period of twelve months prior to the Show. This shall not apply to dogs owned by a Judge appointed in an emergency.

(12)Handled at a show, boarded or prepared for exhibition within the previous twelve months by the scheduled Judge **or any member of his/her immediate household or immediate family**. This shall not apply to a Judge appointed in an emergency.

Code of Best Practice for Judges – supporting statements – Chapter 1

11. Definition of 'member of immediate family' extends to first and second generations.

For example:

- a dog cannot be exhibited under a judge if it has been registered or recorded as owned by the judge or the judge's spouse or child or anyone permanently residing with the judge within 12 months of the show.
- a dog cannot be exhibited if it has been handled at a show, boarded or prepared for exhibition by the scheduled judge or the judge's spouse or child or any one permanently residing with the judge within 12 months of the show.

F(1)8 Entry for Exhibition

New sub paragraphs

An entry must not be made at any show under a judge of any dog where said judge or any member of his/her immediate household or immediate family has been known to have owned, handled at a show, boarded or prepared such dog for exhibition within 12 months prior to the Show. This regulation shall not apply to judges appointed in an emergency.

j. An entry must not be made at any show under a judge of any dog where said judge has bred the dog. This Regulation shall not apply to judges appointed in an emergency.

k. An exhibitor must not enter or exhibit a dog under a judge which creates a conflict of interest between the dog, exhibitor and/or judge.

Code of Best Practice for Judges – supporting statements Chapter 1

12. Judges start in the sport as breeders and exhibitors. It is natural to want to continue these activities after becoming a judge. Exhibiting and judging can be combined without a problem if the judge is prudent as to how

and when to exhibit. If a judge chooses to exhibit as well as judge he/she should expect to be the subject of scrutiny.

13. A judge should never transfer a dog to someone for the sole purpose of permitting the dog to be exhibited at shows at which you are officiating.
14. A conflict of interest exists when a judge could be said to be influenced by any relationship or factor other than the merit or performance of the dog for example – **a family member, immediate household, financial considerations, employer or employee relationships, separate interest in a kennel name, co-owns a dog with the judge. (This is not a definitive list)
15. In the event of a dog declared Best of Breed and having to be withdrawn from the Group competition due to a conflict of interest, the dog could be invited to do a lap of honour before the group judging starts.
16. It is as much the responsibility of an exhibitor as it is a judge to as far as possible ensure that dog shows are seen to be competitions which are conducted on a level playing field.
17. An exhibitor must decline to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judges' placings could be based on something other than the merits or performance of the dog.
18. The responsibility for entering a dog rests with the exhibitor who should not enter a dog which is ineligible under KC Show Regulations or that the entry could create a conflict of interest between the judge and the exhibitor. Awards won maybe disqualified and exhibitors with repeat breaches of regulations may receive other disciplinary penalties.