

## Kennel Club – Good Citizens Scheme

The Kennel Club Good Citizens Scheme is made up of four courses.

**Starting with the puppy foundation course** - this is mainly about having a puppy which is generally well behaved - so one of the things you have to do to pass is be able to eat a biscuit without the dog trying to steal it.

Therefore, puppy training is a great way to socialise young pups and help improve the bond between you and your pet without quite as much formality.

There are 3 further courses after the Puppy Foundation which you can complete separately (you don't have to have completed the puppy course) these include Bronze, Silver and Gold courses which increase in difficulty. You need to have completed and passed the previous test in order to continue onto the next level.

In all three there are a few questions for the owners to answer in the test - for example 'what vaccinations should your dog receive' or 'what would you do if you saw livestock in the field in which you were walking'. You should also start to learn about the psychology of a dogs training - and generally a trainer would give you ideas of methods which are useful for further training.



without a struggle; be able to examine your dog (like a vet might) and a recall from at least 10 paces away.

**The Bronze course** essentially consists of, showing your dog has the correct collar and ID and that you have a poo bag; that you can remove and put back on a collar and lead safely and fit them correctly; that you and your dog can walk on a loose lead; that you have control of your dog when walking through a door/gate (so generally get them to wait as you open the door and then pass through with or slightly behind you and when you say); a controlled walk around people and other dogs; a one minute stay with you at least five paces away; be able to groom/brush your dog

# Japanese *Snow Flakes* Spitz

**The Silver course** is a step up to showing you can play with your dog; a lead walk on a road; get your dog to wait, then once about 10 paces away, recall your dog; stay for two minutes; be able to get in and out of a vehicle in a controlled manner and be comfortable with the engine on; to be able to walk away from a distraction with your dog; a controlled greeting (so the dog not jumping up); the dog to be able to be around you whilst you eat; and to be able to examine your dog such as a vet might.



**Gold is the highest level you can achieve.**

This involves a road walk with change of pace/speed; off lead call your dog back and walk to 'heel'; free walk beside you (so loose to heel off lead); to stay down for two minutes (this used to be 30 seconds out of sight however it appears now it is done completely in sight); send away to their bed; an emergency stop (be able to stop your dog from distance in any position); a settle whilst you leave the room for 2 minutes; food manners - where the dog has to wait for you to allow them to have their food and you showing you can examine your dog (e.g. handle them all over as a vet might).

After each successful test you receive a certificate and rosette (although sometimes this is at an additional charge) and can proudly show everyone who will stand still to listen to you about how clever your dog is.

I've found that the Japanese Spitz are a really great dog to train with as they are food driven and also want to please - although they can have their stubborn times.

You can then use the skills you've learned in Good Citizens for your daily life, or as a foundation to go on to obedience, rally or some of the other dog sports.

What is really nice about the Good Citizens scheme is that it isn't quite as rigid with the obedience side as you would find in obedience competitions, for example, you need to be able to show that your dog can walk nicely with you on a lead to some form of heel - however they don't need to be pinned to your leg as in obedience. Generally, it is all about us having better behaved and easier to live with pets.

*Images supplied by Krystina Chudley (and Nala)*