

**The Old English Sheepdog Club of America**  
**Code of Ethics**  
**Revised October, 2000**

The members of the Old English Sheepdog Club of America, in order to protect and promote this noble breed, have set forth this Code of Ethics recommending proper practices, ethics and integrity regarding breeding and showing. It is expected that members will demonstrate their love for the breed as well as their respect for the wisdom outlined in the Code by developing a sense of obligation to it. Further, no Old English Sheepdog should be bred without the owner having studied the Standard for the breed as set forth by the Old English Sheepdog Club of America, and approved and published by the American Kennel Club. Breeding dogs to the Standard of any breed is as much an artistic as it is a scientific endeavor, but certain guidelines remain consistent throughout the sport, regardless of breed. The following guidelines have been developed, based on scientific research, knowledge and experience for owning, breeding and showing Old English Sheepdogs.

1. All Old English Sheepdogs should be sold in good condition, physically sound and of good temperament, and should be free of parasites and disease. They should have received all vaccinations appropriate to their age and part of the country as recommended by a licensed veterinarian. A health record should be provided containing all pertinent information: dates of immunization, worming, identity of parasites, date of birth, identity of sire and dam, etc. Instructions should be provided to the buyer regarding proper nutrition, healthcare, training, and grooming. Seller should also supply a copy of this Code of Ethics to the buyer.
2. Any written agreements or contracts entered into between buyer and seller which state terms and conditions of sale such as guarantees and performance requirements should be developed with the advice of an attorney. It is recommended that all Old English Sheepdogs not sold for breeding or show purposes should be sold with a spay/neuter agreement and that the provisions for AKC Limited Registration be utilized. Sellers must make sure the buyer understands this requirement and a written, signed contract between buyer and seller acknowledging this agreement should be executed.
3. The seller shall disclose those hereditary defects and diseases common to Old English Sheepdogs and furnish as much information as possible regarding the health and soundness of the dog's parents. The seller will assist the buyer in accessing information regarding health issues common in the breed. It is recommended that the seller assist the buyer in becoming knowledgeable on the subjects of hip dysplasia, monorchidism, cryptorchidism, cerebellar ataxia, eye or hearing defects, thyroid disease, and dental irregularities, to name a few. The seller should provide information as to the presence of any of these known hereditary defects in the dog's lineage and what testing has been done to lessen the incidence of these defects. It is recommended that agreements involving co-ownerships, stud service and leasing be written in contract form with the help of an attorney.
4. Puppies must be a minimum of eight weeks old before sale. Initially, the seller will provide the buyer a period of no less than five nor more than seven days to have the dog examined by the buyer's veterinarian at the buyer's expense. During this time, the buyer shall have the privilege of returning the dog to the seller for full refund of purchase price, based upon documented findings of the veterinarian. This period should be extended, if appropriate, to obtain additional data such as laboratory reports. Ideally, to protect the breeder and the rest of the litter, if the dog is a puppy, it should be examined by the buyer's veterinarian within 24-48 hours, and buyer admonished to avoid exposing the puppy to other dogs or places where other dogs frequent to minimize the possibility of contracting disease. It should be stressed that if for any reason the buyer is unhappy with his purchase, or it becomes impossible at some time during the life of the dog for the buyer to keep the dog, he should notify the seller.
5. All registrations, application forms, pedigrees, and certifications must be accurate and valid. Registration papers may not be sold independently of the dog. It is recommended that all dogs sold or being used for breeding, and their offspring, be permanently identified by microchip, DNA, or tattoo. Puppies may not be sold from any temporary marketplace or transient headquarters, no litters purchased or taken on consignment for resale, nor dogs wholesaled to pet shops, auctions, dealers, contest sponsors, raffles, etc. All advertising shall be factual, honest and forthright in nature and not in any way misleading.
6. Only dogs and bitches that are physically sound and of good temperament are to be used for breeding. Old English Sheepdogs that have hip dysplasia, eye defects, auto-immune disease, deafness, or any other significant hereditary problem must not be bred. An annual complete thyroid panel is recommended. Checking dogs for these and other hereditary defects and breeding only clear dogs is important in ensuring the soundness of this breed.
7. Dogs (males) should not be used for breeding until they have been x-rayed for hip dysplasia after achieving at least 18 months of age. This screening is to be considered preliminary only. The films must be evaluated as normal by a Board Certified Radiologist or the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals. In addition, this same dog after reaching 24 months of age and before breeding should be re-examined and the results again evaluated by a Board Certified Radiologist and/or submitted to OFA for certification. Only dogs with normal OFA certification (excellent, good, fair) or, in the opinion of a Board Certified Veterinary Radiologist, showing no evidence of hip dysplasia or degenerative joint disease, shall be used for breeding. Certification by the OFA is recommended because of the large numbers of dogs of the same breed which have been evaluated over a great number of years, creating a large data base for that breed.
8. Before they are bred, bitches should be a minimum of 24 months of age and their hips certified as normal by OFA or a Board Certified Radiologist. Bitches should skip a season between litters and not be bred in two consecutive seasons except on the specific advice of a veterinarian.
9. Dogs and bitches used for breeding should have their eyes examined by a Board Certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist after achieving 15 months of age and/or prior to any breeding. If found to be normal, this exam will qualify them for a CERF certificate issued attesting that the eyes are clear of hereditary defects on the date of examination. Because of the nature of hereditary eye defects, this exam should be repeated every two years or prior to any subsequent breeding. CERF can then recertify the dog. Only eye examinations done by a Cerf-certified veterinary ophthalmologist with proper equipment are conclusive. BAER testing for hearing defects is another diagnostic procedure that is strongly recommended because of the high incidence of hereditary deafness in the breed. We shall not show dogs or be a party to showing dogs that are not clean or well groomed, nor shall we solicit entries of unprepared or ungroomed dogs for the purpose of gaining championship points.
10. New owners need to understand the unique grooming requirement of this breed and breeders/sellers must stand ready to inform, instruct and support these novice owners for at least the first year after the dog has been placed in its new home. To ensure the welfare of the breed, all breeders including stud dog owners, shall actively aid in the placement of any dog of their breeding that can no longer be kept by its owner, and shall be willing to intervene when the health and well-being of the dog is in jeopardy. This responsibility extends for the life of the dog. All who breed an OES should reflect on their motives for breeding and willingness to adhere to these guidelines.
11. Good sportsmanship shall be advanced and encouraged by OESCA members. The dog show fancy is a sport. It is fraught with energy and emotion, and requires work and skill. As with any sport, there can only be one winner at a time; most of the time there are many losers and also-rans. The grace and sportsmanship with which each of these extremes is handled will be the scale of conduct on which each of us will ultimately be judged—by our peers, our friends, our critics, and our audience. Our reputation as breeders of Old English Sheepdogs will be judged in the same way as our adherence to, or lack thereof, to these guidelines is revealed over time. We teach by example—let our behavior reflect, always, the optimism and friendliness of the noble breed we represent. And let the soundness, health, and temperament of dogs that we have bred reflect our dedication to the good breeding practices and best interests of the breed as set forth in this Code of Ethics.

It is our hope that these guidelines as set forth by the Old English Sheepdog Club of America inspire all who read them to become knowledgeable about the breed and demonstrate the integrity required to protect it. It is understood that these guidelines represent the minimum effort on the part of breeders and fanciers to protect the welfare of the Old English Sheepdog. Violations of this Code are addressed in Article VIII of the By-Laws of The Old English Sheepdog Club of America.

I will adhere to this Code of Ethics.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_