



GROUP VI: NON-SPORTING DOGS

CHOW CHOW

RECOGNIZED: 1911

Effective: July 2024

The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.

ORIGIN & PURPOSE

The Chow Chow is an ancient breed of Northern Chinese origin. As a working Spitz breed in its area of origin, possessing some of the characteristics associated with the molossoid classification of dogs, the Chow Chow was used to guard and hunt. Today, the Chow Chow is primarily a family companion dog.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

A cobby, powerful dog of medium size, active and alert, with strong, muscular development and perfect balance. Body proportion is square; measured from the ground to the withers and from the point of the shoulder to the Ischium. The body depth to leg ratio is 1:1, measured from the withers to the tip of the elbow, and from the tip of the elbow to the ground. Head is broad and flat, with a short, broad and deep muzzle. The whole body is supported by straight strong legs. Tail carried well over the back. Clothed in an off-standing smooth or rough double coat. In the rough variety the head is accentuated by a ruff. Dogs to look masculine. Bitches to look feminine. When comparing the different sexes, allowance should be made for bitches who may not have as much head and substance. The Chow Chow has two distinctive traits: a solid blue-black surface of the tongue and a stilted gait. The Chow Chow is a masterpiece of beauty, dignity and untouched naturalness. The Chow Chow is not generally considered a brachycephalic breed.

TEMPERAMENT

Dignified, with keen intelligence, independent spirit, aloof and reserved with strangers. Aggressiveness or timidity is undesirable. Because of its deep-set eyes, the Chow Chow has limited peripheral vision and is best approached from the front.

SIZE

Height at the shoulder: Dogs, 45.75 to 53.25 cm (18 to 21 in); bitches, 43.25 to 50.75 cm (17 to 20 in)

In every case, consideration of overall balance and type should take precedence over size.

COAT

There are two types of coat, rough and smooth. Both are double coated. Other than trimming of the feet, no obvious trimming, sculpting, tipping of guard hairs or shaping of the coat is permitted; all of which must be penalized to the degree that the dog deviates from its natural condition.

Rough: The coat is abundant, dense, straight, and off standing; rather coarse in texture with a soft, thick, woolly undercoat. Coat and ruff generally longer in dogs, than in bitches. Tail well feathered. Texture and condition should be given greater emphasis than the length.

Smooth: Should have a harsh, dense, smooth outercoat with a woolly undercoat, but the smooth's outercoat is short and gives a sleek appearance. The Smooth Chow Chow is judged by the same standard as the rough variety with the exception of coat length.

COLOUR

There are five acceptable coat colours: red (light golden to deep mahogany), black, blue (silver blue to dark slate), cinnamon (light fawn to deep cinnamon) and cream. The colour must be clear, solid throughout, with lighter shadings on ruff, tail and breechings permitted. Red Chow Chows and cinnamon Chow Chows, and particularly puppies, may have a black or grey mask, and grey shadings that, with maturity, change to a clear coat colour. Black Chow Chows and blue Chow Chows may have silver shadings. Cream Chow Chows may have lighter or darker shadings of cream. Not in patches or particoloured. All five accepted colours are of equal merit and shall be judged on an equal basis.

HEAD

The head is large in proportion to the size of the dog. It is proudly carried, not over exaggerated as to make the dog seem top heavy, or to result in a low head carriage. **Skull:** Broad and flat; well filled under the eyes; moderate stop. Expression essentially dignified, lordly, scowling, discerning, sober, and snobbish-one of independence. Excessive loose skin is not desirable. **Muzzle** is short in comparison to length of skull but not less than one-third of head length. Broad from eyes to end of nose, and of equal depth. The lips somewhat full and overhanging, but not pendulous. **Teeth:** Strong and level, with a scissors bite; should neither be overshot, nor undershot. **Nose:** Large and broad. Red Chow Chows and black Chow Chows must have a solid black nose. Blue Chow Chows and cinnamon Chow Chows must have a solid dark blue/grey or slate-coloured nose, the darker the better. Cream Chow Chows may have a lighter coloured nose, with or without darker rim pigment at the outer edge; all of which are equally correct. **Eyes:** Dark, deep set of moderate size, and almond shaped, pupils should be visible. Regardless of coat colour, eye-rim colour should be dark in colour and completely pigmented. Due to its limited peripheral vision, the Chow Chow should always be approached from the front, not the side, when examined. **Ears:** Small, thick, slightly rounded at tip, stiffly carried with a slight forward tilt, the inner corner of the ear to be in line with the outer corner of the eye. They should be placed wide apart, on top of the skull. This all contributes to the essential dignified lordly, discerning, scowling expression, one of independence. **Tongue** being blue-black is a distinctive breed trait. The surface of the tongue must be solid blue-black, with no distinct pink spot(s) or pink streak(s). Due to the impact of environmental conditions the surface of the tongue may temporarily appear more lavender than blue-black in colour; even so, no distinct pink spot(s) or pink streak(s) should be visible. The roof of the mouth and the gum tissue should approximate black. A solid black mouth and gums are preferred.

NECK

Strong, full, set well on the shoulders nicely arched and of sufficient length to carry the head proudly, well above the top line when standing.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders muscular, slightly sloping, forelegs perfectly straight, with heavy bone and upright pasterns, placed well apart and parallel. Elbow joints set well back alongside the chest wall, elbows turning neither in nor out. Feet round, catlike with thick pads, standing well up on the toes both front and rear. Dewclaws may or may not be present.

BODY

Short, compact, close coupled, strongly muscled, broad and deep. Back short, straight, and strong. Chest broad, deep, (never narrow) and muscular, with well-sprung ribs, but not a barrel. A narrow chest is a serious fault. Loins broad, deep, and powerful, and well let down in the flank giving an overall appearance of squareness. The topline is straight, strong and level from the withers to the base of the tail.

HINDQUARTERS

Hind legs straight-hocked, muscular, and heavy boned. Rear and front bone approximately equal. Stifle shows little angulation, hock joints well let down, must be strong, well knit, never bowing or breaking forward or to the side. Hock joint and metatarsals to be in a straight line below the hip joint. Feet same as forequarters.

TAIL

Set well up and carried closely to the back, following the line of spine at the start.

GAIT

Completely individual to the breed; the Chow Chow's stilted gait is a distinctive breed trait. Short and stilted because of a straight stifle and straight hocks. Sound, straight moving, agile, quick and powerful, never lumbering or lacking stamina due to unsoundness. It is from the side that the unique stilted action is most easily viewed and assessed. The rear leg moves up and forward from the hip in a straight, stilted pendulum-like line, with a slight bounce in the rump, legs extend neither far forward nor backward. There should be no roll through the midsection. Viewed from the rear, the line of bone from the hip joint to pad remains straight as the dog moves. As speed increases, the hind legs incline slightly inward. Viewed from the front, the line of bone from shoulder joint to pad remain straight as the dog moves. As speed increases, the forelegs may incline slightly inward, but the front legs must not swing out in semi circles nor mince or show any evidence of hackney action. Somewhat lacking in speed, the Chow Chow has excellent endurance.

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

- Overshot or undershot bites
- A narrow chest
- Partial or full pink eye rim pigment, regardless of coat colour

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- For red Chow Chows and black Chow Chows, a nose spotted with pink, streaked with pink, or distinctly any other colour than solid black. For blue Chow Chows and cinnamon Chow Chows, a nose spotted with pink, streaked with pink, or distinctly any other colour than solid dark blue/grey or slate. There shall be no excusal or disqualification of the cream Chow Chow for nose colour. The nose shall not be changed by the use of dye, chalk or other substance.
- Tongue red, pink or obviously spotted with red or pink
- Drop ear or ears. A drop ear is one which is stiffly carried or stiffly erect, but which breaks over at any point from its base to its tip or which lies parallel to the top of the skull.
- Other than the five acceptable colours described above, any other coat colour or any coat pattern such as, but not limited to, brindle, merle, tricolour or particoloured.

