



## Shih Tzu

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 and Purpose

The Shih Tzu was developed in the palaces of China from Tibetan Temple dogs crossed with other Chinese breeds. It was originally bred to be a companion and that remains its sole purpose today. Sturdy and surprisingly hardy, they are well suited to both city and country living.

### General Appearance

The Shih Tzu is an abundantly coated dog with a distinctly oriental appearance. It is a solid, sound little dog that is rather heavy for its size.

### Temperament

Shih Tzu are distinctly arrogant with a character all their own. They are exceptionally good natured, affectionate and intelligent. They are full of life and have an air of importance that cannot be denied.

### Size

The Shih Tzu is not a toy dog. This is a smaller type of dog with good bone and substance. Height at withers approximately 23-27 cm (9-10 ½ in). Breed type and balance always to be main consideration.

### Coat and Colour

A luxurious, long, flowing coat with an undercoat. May be slightly wavy but never curly. The coat may be parted from the root of the tail to the back of the skull. The hair on the head may be tied up to form a topknot. A bow or ribbon to be optional. Coat may be trimmed so as not to interfere with the movement of the dog. All colours are acceptable providing they have black noses, lips and eye rims. The exceptions are the livers and blues which have pigmentation that compliments that particular colour.

### Head

**Skull** round, broad and wide between the eyes with a definite stop.

The **muzzle** is short, square and about one fifth of the total length of the skull. The muzzle is approximately 2.5 cm (1 in) from the stop to the tip of the nose. The upward sweep of the front part of the muzzle should place the nose level with the bottom of the eye. The placement of the muzzle is directly responsible for the nose placement which may be slightly tilted or level.

The **nose** leather should be broad and the nostrils well open.

**Eyes** should be large, dark and round except in livers and blues where the lighter colour is permissible. The eyes should be well set in the skull and the expression should be warm and irresistible.

**Ear** leathers drooping, set just below the crown of the head and so heavily coated that they appear to blend with hair of the neck. Mouth is slightly undershot or level, the bottom jaw is wide and strong.

**Teeth** should not be visible when the mouth is closed.

### Neck

The neck must be in balance with the body length and must also compliment the high tail set and carriage.



### **Forequarters**

Shoulders well developed, muscular and well set to allow freedom of movement. The upper arm well laid back thus allowing for the desired width and depth forming a good forechest. The legs straight, well boned, set well under the body and fitting closely to the chest. Feet moderate size and well padded.

### **Body**

*This is not a square dog.* The length of back from the withers to the tail set to be slightly longer than the height from the withers to the ground. Taking into consideration the forechest as well as the area behind the tail, the Shih Tzu should appear rectangular in outline. The body should be deep, sturdy and well coupled with a good spring of rib. There should be little or no tuck up of the underline. A good forechest is essential to both the movement and balance of the Shih Tzu. The topline should be level both standing and moving.

### **Hindquarters**

Strong, muscled, well angulated and in balance with forequarters. Hocks short, sturdy and turning neither in nor out. Feet moderate and well padded.

### **Tail**

Well feathered, set high and carried gaily over the back in a loose curve with the tip just touching the back.

### **Gait**

Should be smooth and flowing with the head and tail held high. Extension both front and rear. Front legs should move out of the coat in a straight line, feet turning neither in nor out. Rear legs show strong rear action displaying full pads on the move. The Shih Tzu has a distinct swagger when on the move that is enhanced by his air of importance.

### **Faults**

Any departure from the aforementioned ideals shall be considered faulty to the degree in which it interferes with the health and well-being of the dog and the breed's purpose.

- a) Temperament - Any deviation from the above-mentioned temperament to be considered very undesirable.
- b) Size - Lack of proper bone and substance.
- c) Coat and Colour - Excessive trimming, sparse or woolly coats, missing pigmentation.
- d) Head - Narrow head, lack of stop, pink on nose or eye rims, small or light coloured eyes, eye white showing, missing canines or incisors, lack of strength of underjaw, pinched nostrils, wry mouths, tongue showing when the mouth is closed. Wrinkles like a Peke.
- e) Neck - Too short in that it does not compliment the carriage and outline of the Shih Tzu.
- f) Forequarters Excessive legginess and crooked legs.
- g) Body - Lack of forechest, narrow, weedy bodies with no bone and substance, high in rear standing or moving, Shih Tzu not adhering to the correct rectangular outline.
- h) Hindquarters - Slipping stifles and luxating hocks, cow hocks.
- i) Tail - Tails flat on back, pig tails, tails not carried gaily or happily, tails carried sickle like without tip touching back.
- j) Gait - Lack of reach and drive, bouncing gait, inability to move with tail or head held high.

### **Disqualifications**

Scissors or overshot bites, one or two blue eyes.

Breed Name: Shih Tzu  
Year of Recognition: 1952  
Effective Date: January 2004