

BEING A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER

No matter how friendly or lovable you think your dog is, not everyone wants him gate-crashing their private party! To minimise the risk that your dog will cause another person distress or annoyance, it is crucial that you be a responsible owner. To help keep everyone happy, please follow the guidelines below.

Responsible dog owners:

- Manage situations so that problem/nuisance behaviour doesn't happen, particularly if there is a risk of aggression.
- Carry a bag with them when out in public so that they can immediately clean up after their dog.
- Register and microchip their dogs and ensure their dog is wearing its registration tag.
- Ensure that their dog is not accidentally mated.
- Provide food, water, shelter, and medical attention when needed.
- Provide ongoing socialisation and training so their dog behaves in a socially acceptable way.
- Provide adequate physical activity and mental stimulation for their dogs.
- Ensure constant active supervision of children when they are around their dog.

Dog Walking Etiquette

To prevent unpleasant or dangerous experiences for other users, it is very important to adhere to basic etiquette when you are out and about with your dog. This includes streets, tracks, reserves, beaches, and formal dog parks.

Many dogs and people do not enjoy social interaction with unknown dogs. Just as you would not rush up and hug every person you see on the street, your dog does not need to interact with every dog or person he encounters; allowing this can lead to a dog that becomes a nuisance to every passer-by. Your dog is going for a walk with YOU, and you should be his source of companionship and entertainment – don't expect other dogs and people to do that for you! If you want your dog to have social time, don't just let him run rampant at the nearest dog park; instead, get together for a walk with friends who have compatible dogs – just like humans, most dogs much prefer outings with their known and trusted friends to dealing with strangers. The rest of the time, you are enough company for him, but make sure you are actively interacting with him on walks – don't just be the chauffeur/brake on the end of the lead.

Obviously there is nothing wrong with your dog greeting another dog that is clearly keen to interact. Take your cue from the behaviour of the other owner and dog – are they both relaxed and interested, or are they anxious and trying to avoid a meeting? Are there children, female dogs, or puppies present who might cause the other dog to be protective, or may get hurt if things get rowdy? If you are unsure, or if the other owner asks you to call your dog, call your dog in and keep him with you.

Do:

- Know the local bylaws, keep out of prohibited areas, and only let your dog off lead in a designated off lead area.
- Call your dog in, or put him back on lead, if you are approaching an on-lead dog, see someone else putting their dog on lead, keeping their dog close, trying to avoid a meeting, or clearly busy with their dog and not wanting interference. Respect their right to be left alone - their dog may be afraid, in training, frail or injured, or aggressive.
- Keep your dog away from other people. Non-dog people have a right to use public spaces in peace.
- Put your dog back on lead near children playing.
- Put your dog back on lead if someone with concerns asks you to.
- Put your dog back on lead if play with another dog is getting too rough.
- Put your dog back on lead if you are not sure of a situation.

Don't:

- Let your dog off lead if you are not confident that it will come when called.
- Let your dog off lead if you are not sure how he will behave.
- Let your dog chase or harass protected wildlife (including seabirds), or get out of sight in places where protected wildlife may be present.

DOGS AND CHILDREN

- Children and dogs should always be supervised, no matter how old the dog is or how familiar they are with each other. Older children don't need to be watched as closely as young children but they still need supervision.
- Most serious dog bites occur to children of about four years of age, and from family pets that were thought "safe".
- A large proportion of dogs bite because they are scared or in pain.
- Puppies need to meet lots of different aged children, not just family members, to become well accustomed to them. No matter how much experience your dog has with children, never assume that your dog would never bite.
- Some dogs become less tolerant of kids as they age.
- Socialisation to children needs to be continued for the dog's life.
- Dog owners can teach their dog games that would be appropriate to play with children, such as hide'n'seek.
- Dogs need somewhere they can retreat to when they have had enough of being with children, and children need to know that that place is out of bounds to them.

Children should be taught:

- How to pet and interact appropriately and respectfully with dogs.
- That if they want to interact with a dog, they must let the dog approach them, not approach the dog, and always ask the owner for permission first.
- Be taught what a dog is trying to say with its body language and to respect that.
- To never hug or climb on a dog, or press their face to the dog's face.
- To never jump suddenly at a dog, bark, shout or growl at dog, or try to startle or frighten it in any way, even in play.
- To turn away and stop playing if the puppy or dog jumps up or gets too rough, and not to squeal, flap or run.
- To not pick up puppies or small dogs.
- To stay away from puppies and dogs that are eating or drinking, old or injured, sleeping, frightened, aggressive, tied up, or in a car.
- Children should always be rewarded and praised for doing the right thing with puppies and dogs. Most children are bitten

Puppies need:

- To be taught manners around children. Especially good to use reward based training because the pup will come to associate children with treats toys and fun.
- To be exposed to lots of different children doing lots of different things. The puppy doesn't necessarily have to play with them - just be able to watch them calmly or do things near children to become accustomed to them
- To be taught to tolerate, or maybe even like, inappropriate things that children might do to them. Start slowly and pair behaviour with a reward. Things to practise are staring into puppies eyes, hugging your pup, clumsy patting, squealing and waving arms.
- To learn to be relaxed with people around their food. To help prevent food guarding, put a small portion of your pup's food in his bowl and then keep going back to add more, or walk past while he is eating and add something even better. The idea is to make your pup *want* you to come near him while he is eating.
- To learn to relaxed with having a toy (or other item) taken of him. Practice swapping a toy for a treat and then giving the toy back.