

THE SAFETY GUIDE TO CHILDREN AND DOGS

Dogs make wonderful companions and need to be treated with care and respect. Most dogs are very friendly and will not bite. However there are some dogs that will bite for reasons such as fear, anger, frustration or protection. It is vital that you recognize not just the signs that a dog is uncomfortable and maybe about to bite, but the situations that you could be in where the chance of a bite is more likely. Dogs never bite without giving a warning, but while some dogs might growl, tense up, or bark aggressively at you, others will give such subtle or quick warnings, they are easy to miss. Here are a few guidelines that you can follow when you are around dogs to keep yourself safe.



1. Never touch a dog that is unknown to you.
2. Even if you know the dog, always ask permission from an adult you know to see if it is ok to ask the handler if you can pet their dog.
3. Even when you have permission, do not invade the dog's body space. Allow the dog to come up to you and sniff your closed fist (palm down, knuckles facing the dog). If the dog does not want to come and greet you, respect that decision and leave him alone. Do not approach a dog from behind or pet a dog directly on the top of his head. The back or side is the best place to pet. If the dog moves away while being pet he has probably decided that he has had enough so allow him to have space and do not follow.
4. Never stare at a dog and never put your face close to a dog's face. Remember to look at the dog briefly and then look away, look and look away. These are calming signals which tell the dog that you are no threat.
5. Do not tease a dog.
6. Do not touch a dog that has been tied up or left at the end of a chain in a yard, outside a store or behind a fence
7. Tell an adult immediately if you see a dog that is loose in your neighborhood. Do not touch it.
8. Do not touch a dog while she is eating. What would you feel like if a dog came up to you while you were eating and tried to take your food away? I suspect that it might make you angry or you would want to prevent the dog getting your

food. It is the same for a dog so respect that a dog's food is her food and you should not go near it.

9. Do not touch a dog while he is sleeping. You might startle him and he could react without thinking and snap at you.
10. Do not take a bone or toy away from a dog if she is playing with it.
11. Do not push a dog off the sofa or chair if you want to sit there. Always get an adult to remove the dog for you.
12. Do not scream and run away from a dog. If a strange dog comes up to you and you are scared, put your hands together, stand still, look away and completely ignore him until he loses interest in you and goes away. Be a Tree! The more boring you are, the less the dog will want to interact with you. When the dog has finished sniffing and walks away from you, walk slowly away and tell an adult. You can also 'be a tree' if you are at someone's house with a rambunctious dog. Do not feel embarrassed about asking an adult to put the dog away in a different room if he makes you feel uncomfortable
13. If you are on the floor and a dog comes up to you that makes you feel uncomfortable, roll onto your knees and curl up into a ball with your head facing down and with your hands clasped behind your neck. Stay as still as a stone until the dog gets bored and walks away.
14. In the unlikely event a dog bites and you are on the floor, be a stone again, tightly curled with your hands protecting the back of your neck and stay as still as you can until help arrives.
15. Remember that a dog is an animal and not a cuddly toy. Most dogs do not like being hugged. Hugging in dog language can mean that a dog wants to fight and is not an expression of affection like it is in human language. Be gentle with any dog and do not engage in rough play.

Now you have some good safety tips you can tell your friends, family and teachers. If you would like someone to visit your school to talk about dog safety, you can tell a teacher, parent or guardian to contact www.doggonesafe.com to see if there is a 'Be A Tree' presenter in your area.

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