

# 1 minute guide: Dangerous Dogs

Dangerous Dogs have been featured in the local and national media over the recent months. Last year, there were nearly 22,000 cases of out-of-control dogs causing injury and in 2022 there were 10 fatal dog attacks, of which 4 were children.

## What is a Dangerous Dog?

A dog that aggressively attacks a person or other animal, causing physical injury or death is classed as a dangerous dog.

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that prohibits or restricts certain types of dogs and codifies the criminal offence of allowing a dog of any breed to be dangerously out of control. The Act outlaws four types of dogs: the pitbull terrier, Japanese tosa, dogo Argentino, and fila Brasileiro. **However please be aware that there is potential that any dog can pose as a risk to children.**

## Why is it important to consider Health & Safety around the setting?

Dogs can have a positive impact on children's learning and development including their wellbeing, however sometimes dogs and children can accidentally hurt each other. Any dog can bite if they are worried or scared and feel they have no other choice. We often underestimate the likelihood of our own dog biting, but 91% of bites to children happen at home with a dog they know.

It is important to understand the Health & Safety implications of having our family dogs within the setting.

Listed below are some useful tips to consider to ensure children and dogs stay safe together

- Make sure your dog is always supervised when they are around children, which includes - watching, listening and staying close – so you can respond before anything bad happens.
- Intervene when you see anything unsafe, or if a dog or child looks uncomfortable. Paying close attention to your child's behaviour and your dog's body language will help you spot early signals and step in before there's a problem.
- Separate your dog and child at times you know you'll be busy or distracted and you know you cannot ensure they will be supervised. You could consider using a safety gate or putting your dog in another room or take the child/ren or dog with you.
- Ensure parents are aware of the dogs within your home.
- Ensure you have a Pet Policy and permission forms within your setting.
- Risk assessments should also be in place to minimise any risk or injury to a child, parent, visitor or member of staff.
- Ensure when out in the local community children are discouraged from touching unfamiliar dogs.
- Consider health and hygiene practice within your settings for e.g., children's sleeping and eating areas, feeding bowls, litter trays, and ensuring a thorough risk assessment is completed before children attend.

## Understanding a dog's behaviour

The RSPCA outlines distinct behaviours that dogs show when they are worried and when they are angry or very unhappy. Examples include:

- A worried dog may have their head low and ears back with tail tucked.
- An angry dog may have a tense body, weight forward with their ears and tail up, looking directly at you.
- Remember every dog is an individual and may have different ways of showing that they are uncomfortable, worried or anxious. We need to get to know these signs in our own dog so that we can step in early.

Use these guides from the [RSPCA](#) and [Dogs Trust](#) to help you better understand your dog.

### **The procedure to be followed should a child be bitten by a dog.**

- Give medical treatment to the injured child and record the incident of event and fill in the body map
- Consider the safety of other children and adults in this situation
- Parents should be contacted immediately
- Advise parents to seek medical attention
- Inform Ofsted via the online form within 14 days 'Reporting a significant event'
- Dial 999 if you see a dog out of control.
- Call 101 to report a dangerous dog.

### **If you consider a dog is a serious risk to a child, you should contact the Police immediately.**

Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Partnership have recently updated the Dangerous Dogs Guidance in response to a recent Local Children's Safeguarding Practice Review.

### **Useful links:**

[Dangerous Dogs Practice Guidance \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://proceduresonline.com)

[Banned dogs | South Yorkshire Police](#)

[Children and dogs - PDSA](#)

[Children & Dogs - How They Can Live Together | RSPCA](#)

[dogstrust.org.uk/dog-advice/life-with-your-dog/at-home/dog-and-child-safety](https://dogstrust.org.uk/dog-advice/life-with-your-dog/at-home/dog-and-child-safety)