



Regina  
Humane  
Society

## Lesson Two “Be Dog Smart”

Dogs are an important part of our lives and teaching students the right and wrong ways to communicate with dogs benefits everyone. According to the Canada Safety Council, children are the most common victims of dog bites and are more likely to be severely injured. Children unfamiliar with safe behaviour around dogs can easily enter or create a situation where an otherwise “friendly” animal may bite (i.e. approaching a dog that is eating, hugging a dog, taking away a dog’s toys or treats, etc.). If dog bite prevention and simple safety rules are taught early and often, both in school and at home, many dog bites will be avoidable.

### Objectives

- Students will learn how to meet a dog safely.
- Students will learn how to react to a stray or attacking dog.
- Students will learn how to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations with dogs.

### Procedure

Explain to students that they will learn how to “Be Dog Smart” today and learn all about dogs and how to meet them safely. Start by asking these questions:

- “Who likes dogs?”
- “Is there anyone here who is afraid of dogs?”
- “Do you know someone who is afraid of dogs?”
- “Why are you/they afraid of dogs?”

Some students will most likely say that they are afraid of dogs. Their reasons may include: dogs bite, dogs are mean, dogs growl, etc. It is often easy to be afraid of things that we have had a bad experience with or do not understand. Explain that in today’s lesson, students are going to Be Dog Smart and learn a lot about dogs, including the way they think and act.



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Regina Qu'Appelle  
HEALTH REGION

## Dogs are Different, Dogs Behave the Same

Display Picture Cards 2.1-2.6 for the class.

Card	Category
PC 2.1	Siberian Husky
PC 2.2	Bloodhound
PC 2.3	Golden Retriever
PC 2.4	Old English Sheepdog
PC 2.5	Poodle
PC 2.6	Saluki

Examine the students carefully. Comment on the many difference sizes of the children. Note that some have straight hair, some curly; some have blonde/brown/black hair; some have blue/brown/green eyes. They are all very different.

Suggest that the students are all probably good at doing different things as well. Ask students to share some of the things that they are good at doing with the class. Answers will range from sports to drawing to playing video games. Explain to the students that, just like people, dogs may look very different from each other and they are good at doing many different things, too.

Ask the students to look at the different pictures of dogs that you have displayed. Tell them that you are going to describe one of the dogs and they must try to guess which dog you are describing. To make it more challenging, only offer one or two pieces of information at a time before the students have guessed the dog you are describing.

Card	Descriptions
PC 2.1	<p>This dog has two layers of fur because he was made to spend a lot of time in the snow and cold. He has black eyeliner around his eyes to help him see on bright sunny days in the snow. His feet are fat and wide which makes it easy for him to run in the snow. Which dog am I describing?</p> <p>Answer: Siberian Husky</p>
PC 2.2	<p>This dog has the best nose in the whole world. His sense of smell is so good that he can find people or animals that have been lost for days. He has many loose folds of skin on his face. When he bends down to smell something, the loose skin hangs down and traps the scent close to his nose. Which dog am I describing?</p> <p>Answer: Bloodhound</p>
PC 2.3	<p>This dog always seems to be smiling. He has a kind and energetic personality. He is very eager to please humans and is willing to learn. This dog often works as a guide dog or another kind of assistance dog because of his temperament. Which dog am I describing?</p> <p>Answer: Golden Retriever</p>
PC 2.4	<p>This dog does not like things to be unorganized. If we were running around in the classroom right now, this dog would run around and nip at our heels until we were in a nice organized group. These dogs were originally made for driving sheep and cattle to market, now they are more commonly seen as family pets. Which dog am I describing?</p> <p>Answer: Old English Sheepdog</p>
PC 2.5	<p>Although many people think that this dog is from France, he is actually from Germany. It is thought that this dog's name comes from the German word "Pudel." This dog was originally a water retrieving dog. His "pom-pom" haircut was designed to help it retrieve in cold water. Most of his hair was trimmed so that he could swim faster, but pom-poms were left around the joints to help keep them warm. Which dog am I describing?</p> <p>Answer: Poodle</p>
PC 2.6	<p>The last dog is called a Saluki. What do you think he is good at doing? Think about his shape, size, etc.</p> <p>Answer: This dog is a type of greyhound, and is a very good runner. These dogs were first used to hunt gazelle by desert tribesmen because they can easily run over 30 miles per hour. The dogs were so valuable to their masters that they were carried from camp to camp by camels to prevent their feet from burning on the sand.</p>

Once finished, explain to students that, as we have seen, all dogs can be very different. They can look different and be good at different things. But:

**All dogs, no matter how big or small, tall or short, young or old, will behave exactly the same way if they are protecting something.**

**Dogs Protect**

Ask the class to brainstorm things that dogs protect. Suggestions may include: food, the yard, the house, toys, cars, people, themselves, puppies, etc. Ask students to tell you how dogs might protect things (i.e. barking, growling, jumping, scratching or biting).

Test students’ knowledge. Display Picture Cards 2.7-2.16 and explain that you will ask for volunteers to come up one at a time to point out which of the dogs would be safe to pet. Remind volunteers that they can pick more than one dog if they wish. You will find that most of the students will pick as many as three or more dogs as being safe to pet. However, only one of the ten is actually safe to pet.

Once the volunteers have made their choices, explain that you are going to go through the Picture Cards one at a time and students are going to vote on which dogs are safe to pet.

Card	Descriptions
PC 2.7	<p>This dog is eating a delicious bowl of food. Is he okay to pet? What could he be protecting? Is you were eating an ice cream cone, would you be upset or angry if someone took it away from you?</p> <p>Answer: Dogs protect things they are eating. This dog is NOT safe to pet.</p>
PC 2.8	<p>This dog is chewing on a delicious bone. Is he safe to pet? What could he be protecting?</p> <p>Answer: Dogs protect their bones and other treats. This dog is NOT safe to pet.</p>
PC 2.9	<p>This dog looks like she is friendly because she is playing with a toy. She must have a responsible owner because she has a tattoo in her ear. Is she okay to pet? What could she be protecting?</p> <p>Answer: Dogs protect their toys, just like we protect things that belong to us. She is NOT safe to pet.</p>
PC 2.10	<p>Are these dogs safe to pet? St. Bernards are so friendly and goofy. What could they be protecting?</p> <p>Answer: Dogs protect their babies and other animals they love. They are NOT safe to pet.</p>



Card	Descriptions
PC 2.11	<p>This dog is sitting on her driveway in front of her house. She is on a chain. Is she safe to pet? What could she be protecting?</p> <p>Answer: This dog is protecting everything she loves, including her house, her yard, her family, and her belongings. This dog is definitely NOT safe to pet.</p>
PC 2.12	<p>This is Marvin. Marvin is a dog that was helped by the Regina Humane Society after being hurt. His leg was broken and he had an operation to make it better. That is why his leg is shaved. He looks so sad. Would he be safe to pet? What could he be protecting?</p> <p>Answer: Dogs protect themselves if they are afraid or if they are hurt. Marvin is NOT safe to pet.</p>
PC 2.13	<p>This dog is doing something funny with his body. Is he playing? Is he getting ready to jump on you? Is he going to attack you?</p> <p>Answer: It is difficult to tell if this dog would bite or not. We will put him aside for a minute.</p>
PC 2.14	<p>These are two little Dachshund puppies. Aren't they cute? Are these puppies safe to pet? Puppies don't bite, do they? Could they be protecting each other?</p> <p>Answer: It's difficult to tell if these dogs would bite or not. We will put them aside for a minute.</p>
PC 2.15	<p>Some people think this dog looks mean because he looks a little grumpy. Maybe he's just old. Is he safe to pet?</p> <p>Answer: It's difficult to tell whether this dog (PC 2.15), these Dachshunds (PC 2.14), or this dog (PC 2.13) are safe to pet because they are all missing something. What are they missing that could tell us for sure whether they dogs are friendly or not?</p>
PC 2.16	<p>There is only one way to be sure if a dog is friendly or not. The dog must be with an owner who can tell you if the dog is friendly or not. The only dog that is safe to pet is this dog – the dog that is on a leash and with his owner.</p>

## **The Safe Way to Meet a Dog**

Explain that the only dog that is okay to pet is a dog that is with his owners. Although a wagging tail, a happy face, and a playful manner are all good suggestions that a dog is friendly, the only way to be sure is to ask the owner. Tell students that even then they must practice safe behaviour when meeting a dog for the first time.

## **Ask Permission**

You must ALWAYS ask permission before petting anyone’s animal. Some dogs don’t like strangers, kids, people in uniform, men, women, etc. The owner will be able to tell you if their dog is friendly or not.

## **Introduce Yourself**

If the owner says it is okay to pet their dog, you must introduce yourself first. Ask students how animals get to know each other (they sniff each other). Remind them that dogs need to smell you/get to know you before you pet them. Roll your fingers into the palm of your hand with the knuckles up and hold your fist out to demonstrate the best way for a dog to smell you. Explain that it is difficult for dogs to smell fingers one at a time because they are pointy and you may poke the dog in the nose! Instruct students to always roll their fingers into the palm of their hand when offering their hand to a dog to smell. (You are also far less likely to lose a finger in the uncommon event that the dog does bite.) Have them practice doing this.

## **Pet the Dog Under the Chin**

Explain to students that they should only pet a dog once the dog has sniffed the top of their hand. Ask the students where the best place is to pet a dog for the first time. Most students will suggest the top of the head as the best place to pet a dog. You can show students very easily why this is not a good idea.

Take your hand and reach out over the top of one of the student’s heads. Common reactions to this gesture are for the student to back away, duck their head, roll their eyes, make an uncomfortable facial gesture, look uncomfortable or unsure about what you are doing. This very strongly indicates the same feelings for a dog when someone reaches over their head to pet it.

Explain that the safest place to touch a dog for the first time is under the chin. This lets the dog get to know the child before petting further. Doing this also ensures that the child’s face will be the greatest distance from the dog in case the dog is not friendly. If the dog does growl at this first touch, the child can easily back away carefully from the dog. It also ensures that the dog meets the child from the front and that a child does not try to hug the dog in first contact. The dog is also more aware of the child and the gentle pet under the chin is non-threatening.

## **Never Hug a Dog**

Explain that hugging a dog is never acceptable. Tell students that you are putting your face directly beside the mouth of the dog when you hug him. If the dog is frightened because he doesn’t know the child, or if someone steps on his tail, the dog can react with a bite. Ask how students how they would feel if a stranger came up to them and hugged them!

## **Safe Behaviour Around Stray Dogs**

Explain to the students that not every dog will be accompanied by an owner. Some dogs are alone or lost or don’t have a family. Ask the students if they have ever met a stray dog on the street or in the playground. Tell the students that the way they react to a stray dog may keep them from being attacked or injured.

## Stand Like a Tree

Trees are boring to dogs. If a stray dog comes up to them, tell students that they should stand like a tree. If you are a tree, the dog will just sniff you and go away. After all, when was the last time you saw a dog chasing a tree?

Stand like a tree in any of these situations:

- A strange dog comes near you (even if he seems friendly)
- A dog is making you feel uncomfortable, worried, or scared
- A dog is chasing you
- If your own dog or a friend's dog is acting too excited

It's easy to stand like a tree. Just stop, fold in your branches (bring your arms down to your sides and stand with your legs together), watch your roots grow (look down and do not stare into the dog's eyes), and count in your head. Count to the highest number you know and then start back at one again until the dog leaves or help comes.

Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate, and remind students that most dogs do not intend to scare or bite, but they do like to investigate new people. Point out that the volunteer is not very interesting to a dog. They aren't waving their arms in the air, yelling, jumping, or staring at the dog. If you can, students always enjoy if you act out these gestures as you describe them. It is also proof positive that someone standing like a tree is infinitely less interesting than someone acting out these gestures. These behaviours make some dogs very excited or angry, possibly causing them to jump or bite.

In most cases, if the child is standing like a tree the dog will either avoid the child altogether or simply sniff them or walk away. If the dog remains, students can be instructed to move away from the dog backwards or sideways using “baby steps.” Moving backwards or sideways allows the child to see what the dog is doing. If a child turns their back on an angry dog, they will be unable to see the actions of the dog.

## Lie Like a Log

Ask one of the students to lie like a log (face down on the ground, hands clasped behind their neck, elbows covering their ears). Explain to the students that in extremely rare cases, a dog may knock them to the ground and attempt to bite them. If this is the case, children should lie like a log. This position protects the face, neck, ears and is also a fairly non-threatening posture to a dog.

## Never Encourage Aggressive Actions

Never instruct students to hit a dog with a backpack, bag, etc. in order to protect themselves. In older grades, students can be instructed to “feed” (an underhand offering) their backpack to an attacking dog. An angry dog may be distracted enough by the backpack to give the child an opportunity to escape. Younger grades cannot make this distinction.

### If you are bitten...

If it is appropriate for the age and type of group, discuss with students what to do if they are bitten by a dog.

1. Tell your parent, guardian, or teacher about the bite.
2. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
3. Visit a doctor immediately.
4. Remember everything you can about the dog and report the bite to the following:

Regina Humane Society Animal Protection Services	(306) 777-7700
Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region Environmental Health Department	
Regina	(306) 766-7755
Fort Qu’Appelle	(306) 655-4015
Indian Head	(306) 695-4016

## Summary Activities

### Kindergarten-Grade 3: Rosie Role Play

Introduce Rosie the stuffed dog to the group. Have students practice the three steps to meeting a dog safely. Ask if one of the students would like to show the class the safe way to meet an animal. Remind them that they have three steps to follow. Volunteers usually forget to ask permission before racing to the front to pet Rosie. Sometimes it takes a few tries to reinforce the process.

Review the three steps for meeting a dog safely:

- Step 1:** Ask the owner for permission to find out if the dog is friendly.
- Step 2:** Show the back of your hand to the dog and let him smell you.
- Step 3:** Pet the dog under the chin.

### Grade 4-6: Be Dog Smart PSA Posters

After completing the Be Dog Smart lesson, you may choose to ask your class to do some further research about dog bites and dog bite prevention at the library or on the Internet.

Once their research is complete, students will create an informational poster to be displayed in the school. The posters should include information about how to interact with dogs they know, dogs they do not know but who are accompanied by an owner, and dogs that they do not know who are alone. You may choose to break students up into small groups and assign one of these categories to each group.

Do not hide all that hard work in your classroom! Display your posters throughout the school and help teach other grades the importance of safety around dogs.



## Final Discussion

Review the steps for meeting a dog safely and what to do if students encounter a stray dog. Briefly discuss how what students have learned about safe behaviour around dogs relates to respect, responsibility, fairness, trustworthiness, caring, and citizenship. For example, leaving a dog alone when he is eating would be an example of respect.

Distribute the “Making Friends with Dogs” colouring sheet or “Be Dog Smart” activity sheet. These activities will help reinforce what students have learned during this lesson.



# PC 2.1



# PC 2.2



# PC 2.3



# PC 2.4



# PC 2.5



# PC 2.6



# PC 2.7





# PC 2.8



# PC 2.9



# PC 2.10



# PC 2.11



# PC 2.12



# PC 2.13



# PC 2.14



# PC 2.15





# PC 2.16



# Making Friends with Dogs



**If you have permission from the owner, close your hand. Let the dog sniff the back of your hand.**

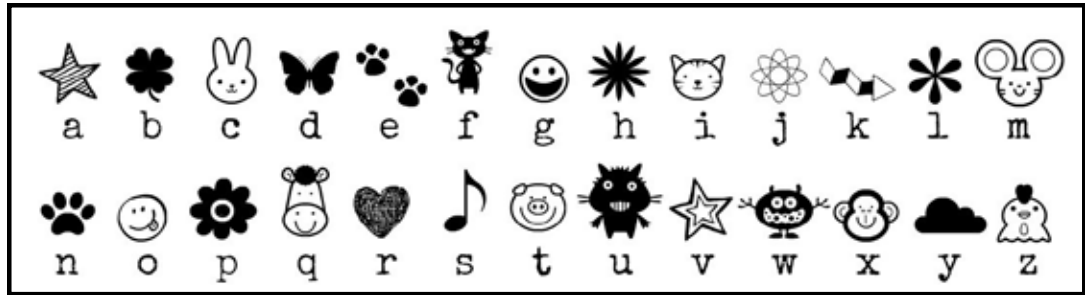
**If a strange dog comes near you and the owner is not there,  
stand like a tree.**




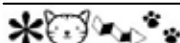






# Be Dog Smart



Do you remember how to act safely around stray dogs?  
Use your detective skills to break the code below  
and finish the sentences.



- Do not pet stray \_\_\_\_\_ .  

- If a dog comes toward you stand still - stand like a \_\_\_\_\_ .  

- Let the dog \_\_\_\_\_ you.  

- Do not stare at the dog. Dogs don't \_\_\_\_\_ this.  

- Do not turn your back and \_\_\_\_\_ .  

- If the dog is \_\_\_\_\_ or growling, slowly walk away,  
  
backwards or sideways. Keep the dog in \_\_\_\_\_ .  

- If the dog \_\_\_\_\_ or jumps on you, lie face down and cover the  
  
back of your head.
- Lie like a \_\_\_\_\_ !  
