



BE DOG SMART

**A Humane Approach to Dog Bite Prevention
Adaptable Kindergarten - Grade 4 Health
Education Unit**

Educator's Guide

**Created by The Regina Humane Society
In Partnership with The Saskatchewan Health
Authority**

Unit Overview

Be Dog Smart is a humane, age-appropriate dog bite prevention unit designed to help students stay safe by **understanding dogs as living beings with feelings, needs, and instincts.**

Rather than focusing on rules or fear-based warnings, this unit teaches students why dogs behave the way they do and how children can make safer choices around dogs through empathy, observation, and calm responses.

Time & Structure

- **Total Lessons:** 6
- **Lesson Length:** Approximately 30 minutes per lesson
- **Unit Length:** Can be taught consecutively or spread over several weeks

Each lesson is intentionally focused, allowing students time to process new ideas without becoming overwhelmed.

Instructional Approach

This unit uses a holistic, prevention-based approach to dog bite safety by guiding students through a clear learning progression:

**Understanding → Awareness →
Prevention → Confidence**

Students first learn about dog emotions and needs, then explore instincts and communication, and finally apply this understanding to real-life safety situations.

Technology & Materials

Lessons are tech-friendly but not tech-dependent. Suggested technology includes:

- short videos
- SMART Board activities
- slides or visual prompts

Assessment Philosophy

Assessment in this unit is formative and supportive, focusing on:

- student understanding
- participation
- ability to explain safety choices

Teacher Note

Teachers are encouraged to adapt pacing, discussion depth, and activities to best meet the needs of their students.

Saskatchewan Curriculum Health Outcomes & Indicators

The following outcomes and indicators connect to the learning experiences within this unit, including empathy for living beings, recognizing feelings, personal safety, decision-making, and respectful interactions.

Kindergarten

USCK.1 - Develop basic habits to establish healthy relationships with self, others, and the environment.

USCK.2 - Establish behaviours that support safety of self and others (including safety at school and at home).

Grade 1

USC1.1 - Examine healthy behaviours and opportunities and begin to determine how these behaviours and opportunities may affect personal well-being.

USC1.4 - Determine and practise safe pedestrian/street behaviours and examine related safety challenges in the community.

DM1.1 - Examine initial steps (i.e., Stop, Think, Do) for making basic choices regarding healthy behaviours; healthy brain, heart, and lungs; healthy relationships; pedestrian/street safety; and a healthy sense of self.

API.1 - Apply the steps of Stop, Think, and Do (with guidance) to develop healthy behaviours related to a healthy brain, heart, and lungs; healthy relationships; pedestrian/street safety; and a healthy sense of self.

Grade 2

USC2.1 - Demonstrate a basic understanding of how thoughts, feelings, and actions influence health and well-being.

USC2.4 - Examine social and personal meanings of “respect” and establish ways to show respect for self, persons, living things, possessions, and the environment.

USC2.5 - Recognize potential safety risks in community “play areas” and determine safe practices/behaviours to identify, assess, and reduce the risks.

DM2.1 - Demonstrate how, why, and when to ask for help and/or advice when discovering healthy connections related to thoughts-feelings-actions, healthy snacking, affects of illness/disease, respect, safety, and diversity.

Grade 3

USC3.4 - Understand what it means to contribute to the health of self, family and home.

USC3.5 - Evaluate safe behaviours/practices to increase the safety of self and others while at home.

DM3.1 - Demonstrate the importance of investigating information for making informed decisions related to healthy foods and physical activity, one’s “inner self”, helpful and harmful substances, healthy family and home, safety at home, and impact of violence.

Grade 4

USC4.4 - Determine basic personal responsibility for safety and protection in various environments/situations.

DM4.1 - Investigate the importance of personal responsibility and communication in making informed decisions related to healthy eating and physical activity, prevention/management of health challenges, negotiating disagreements, safety and protection, personal identity, and stressors.

Key Safety Messages

Students learn how to stay safe around dogs by understanding that dogs are living beings with feelings, needs, and instincts. By paying attention to how dogs feel and behave, students can make kind and safe choices.

Dogs Have Feelings

Dogs can feel happy, scared, excited, or uncomfortable. Like people, they need kindness, care, and space to feel safe. Treating them with kindness and avoiding unkind behaviours builds empathy within us.

Dogs Protect What Matters

Dogs may protect things that are important to them, such as:

- food
- toys
- their family
- their home or yard
- themselves if they are scared or hurt

Dogs Talk With Their Bodies

Dogs do not use words. They communicate with their bodies. Students can look for clues such as:

- ears
- tail
- mouth
- body posture

These clues help us understand how a dog might be feeling.

Not All Dogs Feel the Same

Every dog is different. Some dogs enjoy playing, meeting people, or being close to children, while others may feel uncomfortable. When a dog looks unsure, the kindest choice is to give the dog space.

Safe Steps to Meet a Dog

Only approach a dog when the owner is present and says it is okay.

1. Ask permission – “May I pet your dog?”
2. Let the dog approach and sniff you.
3. Pet gently if the dog stays calm.

If a Dog Comes Near You

If a dog approaches and there is no owner nearby or you’re uncomfortable:

Stand Like a Tree

- stop moving
- arms down or crossed
- feet together
- look at the ground
- stay quiet and still

Lie Like a Log

If knocked down:

- lie face down
- cover your neck and ears
- stay still and quiet

Remember: If the owner is not there, do not approach the dog. Staying calm and paying attention to dog’s body language helps keep both people and dogs safe.

Lesson Overview

Unit Lesson Sequence

The Be Dog Smart unit is organized into 6 connected lessons, each approximately 30 minutes, designed to build understanding gradually while keeping concepts clear and manageable.

Lessons move from empathy and understanding toward safety and prevention. They may be taught consecutively or spaced out as needed.

Lesson 1 - Animals Have Feelings and Needs

Students discuss animals as living beings with emotions and needs. They explore how meeting or not meeting an animal's needs can affect how an animal feels.

Lesson 2 - Why Dogs Protect

This lesson introduces the instinct dogs have to protect things that are important to them, such as food, toys, space, family, or themselves. Protecting is framed as a natural and caring response.

Lesson 3 - Do You Speak Dog?

Students are introduced to dog body language and practice observing how dogs show feelings using their bodies. Students learn when it may be safer to give a dog space.

Lesson 4 - Not All Dogs Feel the Same

Students learn that different dogs have different preferences and comfort levels. Through movement, discussion, and visual analysis, students explore how the same situation can feel very different to different dogs. The lesson emphasizes that noticing body language and giving space can be the kindest choice.

Lesson 5 - Safe Choices, Kind Actions: When Is It Safe To Approach A Dog?

Students learn situations when dogs should not be touched and practice the correct steps for safely meeting a dog when it is appropriate to do so.

Lesson 6 - Safe Choices When Dogs Are Nearby

Students learn calm, age-appropriate strategies for staying safe if a dog approaches them. The lesson emphasizes confidence, staying calm, and knowing when to get help.

Educator Note

- Lessons are designed to be low-prep and discussion-based
- Activities are flexible and adaptable across grade levels
- Concepts may be revisited or reinforced as needed

Lesson 1 – Animals Have Feelings and Needs

Lesson Overview

This lesson establishes empathy and care for animals, which supports all safety learning later in the unit.

I Can Statement

- I can explain that animals have feelings and needs, just like people.

Materials

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Fill-in-the-blank worksheet (one per student)

Notes for Adaptation

- Kindergarten - Grade 2: Focus on oral discussion and drawing
- Grades 3–4: Encourage complete sentences and examples

Set – Feelings Freeze

- Students stand in an open space.
- Call out different feelings one at a time (for example: happy, scared, calm, excited). Students freeze and show that feeling using their face or body.
- After each feeling, ask:
 - “Can animals feel this way too?”
 - “How can we tell how an animal might be feeling?”

Explain that even though animals cannot use words, they still have feelings.

- **Optional phrasing:** “Even though animals don’t use words, they still have feelings, just like we do. They show their feelings with their bodies instead of their voices.”

Development:

Part 1: Animal vs. Me Chart

Create a two-column chart on either the board or chart paper labeled:

- Me
- Animals

Begin with a shared discussion and record student responses under both columns.

- “What do people need to feel safe and happy?”
- “What do animals need to feel safe and happy?”
- “Do animals also need love?”
- “Do animals need kindness?”
- “How does it feel when someone is kind to you?”

Educator note: Students may suggest unsafe behaviours (e.g., hugging animals). Acknowledge the intent to be kind, and explain that kindness also means giving animals space. Ensure the chart includes ideas such as:

- food and water
- rest and shelter
- love
- kindness
- gentle care

Part 2: Kindness Discussion

Pose the guiding question: **“How can we show kindness to an animal?”**

Invite students to share examples such as gentle voices, giving space, caring for needs, or being calm.

Reinforce the idea that **kind actions help animals feel safe, happy, and loved.**

- “When we are kind to animals, it helps them feel safe and loved. Just like people, animals feel better when they are treated gently and with care.”

Pose the next question: **“What are some things that would be unkind to animals?”**

Invite students to share examples (pulling tails, yelling at animals, throwing things, hitting, chasing, or bothering animals when they are resting or eating). Explain that these actions can make animals feel scared, hurt, or upset. Reinforce the idea that unkind actions can cause animals to feel unsafe and may lead them to react by running away, growling, or protecting themselves.

- “When people are rough or loud with animals, it can make animals feel scared or hurt. Just like people, animals need to be treated gently and with care.”

Closure – Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet

Students complete the attached, fill-in-the-blank worksheet that reads: “This animal feels happy and loved because _____.” Invite a few students to share their worksheet responses.

Close with: “When we understand how animals feel, we can make kinder and safer choices.”

Optional Extension Activities

What Dogs Need Colouring Pages

Students colour the provided pages that show what dogs need to feel safe and cared for. Once colouring is complete, students review the information printed beneath the images.

Discussion prompts while colouring may include:

- “How do these pictures show a dog feeling safe?”
- “Which pictures show kindness and care?”
- “How can you help a dog feel happy or loved?”

Caring for a Dog Collage

Each student is given a picture of a dog. Students look through magazines or flyers to find images that show ways they could help meet the dog’s needs.

Examples may include:

- food or water
- a bed or safe space
- toys or play
- gentle care
- people being calm or kind

Students cut out and glue the images around the dog picture to create a “caring collage.”

Once collages are complete, students may:

- share one image they chose and explain why
- describe how their choices help the dog feel happy and loved

Lesson 2 – Why Dogs Protect

Lesson Overview

Students explore the idea that dogs have natural instincts to protect things that are important to them. Through discussion, visuals, and guided reflection, students learn that protecting is a caring response connected to strong feelings.

I Can Statement

I can explain that dogs protect things that are important to them.

Materials

- Visuals or slideshow showing dogs with food, toys, puppies, family, or resting spaces
- Matching worksheet (items a dog might protect → why they are important)

Set – What Do You Protect?

Begin with a whole-group discussion. Prompt students with the starting question, “Is there something very important to you?”

Follow up with the following prompts:

- “How would you feel if someone tried to take it?”
- “What might you want to do to keep it safe?”

Acknowledge student responses and guide the discussion toward the idea that **protecting comes from caring**.

Teacher language may include: “When something is important to us, we want to keep it safe. Dogs feel that way too.”

Development

Part 1: What Do Dogs Protect?

Brainstorm with the class: “What are things that dogs may think are important?” If possible, write the responses on the board or chart paper.

Using visuals from the accompanying Lesson Visuals document, show images of dogs with:

- Food
- Toys
- Puppies
- Family members
- In their yards
- When they are in a corner (protecting themselves)

For each image, guide discussion with questions such as:

- “What do you think this dog might want to protect?”
- “Why would that be important to the dog?”
- “How might the dog be feeling?”

Reinforce the key idea: **Dogs protect things because they care about them.**

Part 2: Video Discussion – Dogs Protect What Matters

Explain to students that they will watch three short videos of dogs protecting things that are important to them. Before watching each video, briefly explain:

- “In this video, we are going to watch a dog with something the dog cares about. As we watch, think about what the dog might be protecting and why it matters to the dog.”

Video 1 – Protecting Family

Watch the video “[German shepherd saves six-year-old from being attacked by another dog](#)” on Youtube.

After viewing, discuss:

- “What was the dog protecting?”
- “Why do you think that was important to the dog?”
- “How do you think the dog felt about their family?”

Guide students to understand that **family is important**, and protecting family is a caring response.

Video 2 – Protecting Food

Watch the video “[He doesn’t play when it comes to his bone](#)” on Youtube.

After viewing, discuss:

- “What might the dog be protecting?”
- “How might the dog be feeling when someone is near him while he has his bone?”
- “How is this dog communicating? What would he be saying if he could talk?”

Reinforce: “The bone is this dog’s food and treat. He’s trying to communicate that he doesn’t want anyone touching it or taking it away.”

Video 3 – Working Dogs Protecting Their Animals

Watch the video “[Dogs Protect Herd From Wolves Caught in Night Vision | BBC Earth](#)” on Youtube.

After viewing, guide discussion with prompts such as:

- What were the dogs working together to protect? What were they protecting from?
- These dogs are working dogs, what is their job?
- How do these dogs feel about the herd of sheep?

Highlight that dogs may protect other animals and their space. Some animals have “jobs” and are trained how to do this.

Closing Activity – What/Why Animals Protect

Have your students complete one of the following “Why Dogs Protect” worksheets depending on age and ability.

Optional Extension Activity

Protecting From a Dog’s Point of View

Students choose one item a dog might protect (for example: food, a toy, family, resting space, or themselves).

Students then complete one of the following activities:

- Drawing option: draw a picture of the dog protecting the item and add a speech bubble that says why it matters.
- Writing option: complete the sentence: “I want to protect _____ because _____.”

Encourage students to use feeling words (safe, loved, worried, important, comfortable).

Lesson 3 – Do You Speak Dog?

Lesson Overview

Students learn that dogs communicate how they are feeling through their bodies rather than words. By observing dog body language, students practice identifying emotions and begin learning when it may be safer to give a dog space.

I Can Statement

I can tell how a dog might be feeling by looking at its body language.

Materials

- SMART Board or screen
- Visuals of dogs showing different body language (happy, relaxed, worried, uncomfortable, playful)
- Paper and crayons or pencils (for final activity)

Set – How Do Dogs Talk?

Begin with a brief whole-group discussion. Start with the question: “Yesterday, I ran into a dog outside, and I asked him what his name was? Do you know what he said? He said nothing, because dogs can’t talk like you and me.”

Ask:

- “How do people talk to each other?”
- “Do dogs talk like humans?”

Guide students to notice that dogs do not use words in the same way people do.

Then ask: “If dogs don’t use words, how do you think they tell us how they feel?” Record or acknowledge student responses, such as:

- They use their
 - Tails
 - Ears
 - Faces
 - Bodies
 - Sounds - growling, barking, etc.

Reinforce the key idea: **Dogs talk with their bodies.**

Preview the lesson by saying: “Today we are going to practice listening to what a dog is telling us by looking at its body.”

Development – Listening to Dog Body Language (Visual Analysis)

Explain that students will practice “**listening**” to dogs by **looking at their bodies.**

Remind students: “Dogs cannot talk with words, but they are always telling us how they feel with their bodies.”

Image 1 – Happy / Relaxed Dog

Step 1 – Show the Unlabeled Image

Display the first image showing the relaxed dog. Allow students a moment to observe quietly.

Ask:

- “What do we notice about this dog’s body?”
- “What do you think this dog might be trying to say?”
- “How might this dog be feeling?”

Encourage students to notice:

- tail movement
- ears
- mouth
- body posture

Step 2 – Show the Labeled Image

Display the labeled version.

Explain: “This dog is showing us that he feels happy and relaxed.”

Briefly review the body cues labeled on the image:

- ears forward and relaxed
- tail wagging
- open relaxed mouth

Reinforce: “A dog can feel happy but still change emotions quickly. Even though this dog looks happy, we still cannot go up to pet the dog because we do not see the owner to ask permission.”

Next, show the real-life examples of what this could look like.

Image 2 – Anxious/Scared Dog

Step 1 – Repeat Step 1 from the Happy Dog

Step 2 – Show the Labeled Image

Display the labeled version.

Explain: “This dog is feeling scared or worried.”

Briefly review the body cues labeled on the image:

- ears flat to the dog’s head
- the tail is under its body
- it is trying to get as low to the ground as it can

Reinforce: “This is an anxious or scared dog. This dog doesn’t want to bite, but it’s scared and may bite if it feels that it’s in danger. This dog is saying, “**I’m scared. Please give me space and don’t pet me**”. It is best to give this dog lots of space to help it feel more comfortable.”

Next, show the real-life examples of what this could look like.

Image 3 – Angry/Aggressive Dog

Step 1 – Repeat Step 1 from the Happy Dog

Step 2 – Show the Labeled Image

Display the labeled version.

Explain: “This dog is feeling angry or very upset.”

Briefly review the body cues labeled on the image:

- Open mouth showing teeth with growling
- The tail is pointed up or outward and is stiff vs. relaxed
- Its ears are pointed forward, and it’s very focused

Reinforce: “This is an **aggressive** dog. He is ready to attack or bite if needed. He might be scared or angry, but either way, this dog is saying, “**Leave me alone!**” DO NOT interact with a dog that is communicating like this.”

Next, show the real-life examples of what this could look like.

Closure Activity – If This Dog Could Talk...

Students complete one of the following worksheets, depending on age and ability:

- **Activity 1:** Students match up the picture of the dog to what it is trying to communicate with them.
- **Activity 2:** Students label the body language of the dog. Then, underneath, they write what the dog is feeling and trying to communicate with them.

Encourage students to use feeling words and observations from the lesson.

Optional Extension Activity – What Is My Body Language Communicating?

Students choose an emotion (for example: happy, sad, worried, excited, calm). Students then:

1. Draw themselves showing that emotion using body language (such as facial expression, posture, hands, or body position).
2. Add labels to their drawing, identifying body cues (for example: shoulders slumped, smiling face, arms crossed).
3. Complete the sentence underneath the drawing: **“My body language is telling others that I feel _____.”**

Encourage students to think about how bodies communicate feelings even without words.

Adaptation Options

- **Kindergarten–Grade 2:** Focus on drawing and oral explanation
- **Grades 3–4:** Encourage detailed labels and complete sentences

Lesson 4 – Not All Dogs Feel the Same

Lesson Overview

Students learn that not all dogs feel the same way about the same situations. Through movement, discussion, and visual analysis, students explore how differences in preferences mean that some dogs may need space. The lesson emphasizes empathy, observation, and making kind choices.

I Can Statement

I can explain that not all dogs feel the same and that some dogs need space.

Materials

- Open classroom space
- SMART Board or screen
- Visuals showing the same activity with different dogs

Set – Move If You Like It

Call out pairs of preferences and have students move to opposite sides of the room based on what they like. Examples:

- chocolate ice cream / vanilla ice cream
- baseball / hockey
- loud music / quiet music
- playing outside / staying inside

After several rounds, bring students back together. Guide discussion with prompts such as:

- “Did everyone choose the same side?”
- “Was one choice better than the other?”
- “Do our differences make us wrong or bad?”

Reinforce: **Our differences are what make us unique.**

Transition to Dogs

Explain: “Dogs are like people — not all dogs like the same things.”

Share examples:

- Some dogs love swimming; some do not
- Some dogs enjoy playing loudly; some prefer quiet
- Some dogs like hugs and cuddling; some feel uncomfortable
- Some dogs love kids; some dogs feel uncomfortable around kids

Reinforce: **Just because one dog likes something does not mean all dogs do.**

Development – Same Situation, Different Dog

Display two images showing the same situation with different dogs (for example, two dogs being hugged - one relaxed, one uncomfortable). For each pair of images, guide discussion using prompts such as:

- “Do these dogs feel the same?”
- “What do you notice about each dog’s body?”
- “How can you tell how each dog might be feeling?”
- “What might one dog like that the other does not?”

Encourage students to refer to:

- body position
- facial expression
- stiffness or looseness
- overall posture

Avoid labeling dogs as “good” or “bad.” Emphasize that dogs are communicating preferences. Reinforce the key idea: **Not all dogs feel the same about the same things.**

Explain that **when a dog looks uncomfortable, it may be telling us it needs space.**

Closure – The Kindest Choice Is...

Bring students back together for a whole-group reflection.

Ask:

- “Did all dogs in today’s pictures feel the same?”
- “Did all dogs like the same things?”

Then ask: “If we are not sure how a dog feels, what is the kindest choice?”

Guide students toward the shared response: **Give it space.**

Invite students to complete orally:

- “The kindest choice is to _____.”
- “If a dog looks uncomfortable, I will _____.”
- “Not all dogs like _____.”

Close by repeating the anchor message: **Not all dogs feel the same. The kindest choice is to give space.**

Adaptation Notes

- **Kindergarten–Grade 2:** Focus on movement, visuals, and oral discussion
- **Grades 3–4:** Encourage explanation and reasoning using observations

Optional Extension Activity

My Dog Is Not Every Dog

Students think about a dog they know (their own dog, a friend’s dog, or a dog they have met).

Students then complete the following prompts:

- **Prompt 1:** “A dog I know likes _____.”
- **Prompt 2:** “But not all dogs like _____.”

Students may:

- draw a picture to go with their response
- share their ideas orally with a partner or the class

Encourage students to think about activities such as:

- hugs or cuddling
- playing loudly
- meeting new people
- being around children
- quiet time or space

Lesson 5 - Safe Choices, Kind Actions: When Is It Safe to Approach a Dog?

Lesson Overview

Students learn when it is safe to approach a dog and practice the correct steps for meeting a dog respectfully. The lesson emphasizes asking permission, recognizing when dogs should not be approached, and understanding that safe choices help dogs and people feel comfortable.

I Can Statement

I can explain when it is safe to approach a dog and how to meet a dog safely.

Materials

- SMART Board or projector
- Slideshow or images of dogs in different situations
- Stuffed dog or classroom object for demonstration (optional)

Set – When Is It Safe to Approach a Dog?

Begin by reviewing previous learning.

Ask students:

- “Do all dogs like the same things?”
- “Can we always tell how a dog feels just by looking quickly?”

Remind students: Dogs have feelings, protect things that matter to them, and communicate with their bodies.

Then ask the key question: **“When do you think it is safe to go pet a dog?”** Allow students to share ideas.

Guide the discussion toward the rule: It is only safe to approach a dog when the owner is there and gives permission.

Explain clearly: **“If the owner is not there, we do not go near the dog.”**

Development

Part 1: When NOT to Approach a Dog

Show the 10 given pictures of dogs using the Discussion Prompts for each picture. Reinforce the rule each time: **If the owner is not there, we do not approach the dog.**

Explain that the only dog it is safe to pet is a dog that is with its owner. Even if a dog looks happy or friendly, the only way to know if it is safe to approach is to ask the owner first. Tell students that when meeting a dog for the first time, they must always practice safe and respectful behaviour.

Students should always ask permission before petting any animal.

Explain that some dogs may feel uncomfortable around:

- strangers
- children
- certain people
- new situations

Because of this, the owner is the person who knows the dog best and can tell whether the dog is comfortable meeting someone new.

Reinforce the key message: If the owner is not there, we do not approach the dog.

Part 2: Understanding a Dog's Space

Before showing the following video, say:

- "In this video, we are going to see what it might feel like to be a dog when people interact with us. As we watch, think about which actions might make a dog feel comfortable and which actions might make a dog feel uncomfortable."

Show the video: "[How would YOU like it??](#)" by the San Diego Humane Society on Youtube

After the video, ask questions such as:

- "What were some things the people did that a dog might not like?"
- "How might a dog feel when someone hugs them or leans over them?"
- "What might a dog want instead?"

Guide students toward the key ideas: **Dogs may feel uncomfortable when people:**

- hug them
- lean over them
- stare into their eyes
- grab their face or head
- shout or move loudly around them

Explain that dogs, like people, need personal space.

Part 3: Safe Steps to Meeting A Dog

Explain that if the owner says it is okay, there are three safe steps to meeting a dog.

Step 1 – Ask Permission

Always ask the owner before touching a dog. Say: "May I pet your dog?" Explain that the owner knows their dog best and can tell you if the dog is comfortable meeting someone new.

Reinforce: If the owner is not there, do not approach the dog.

Step 2 – Let the Dog Approach and Smell You

After the owner says it is okay, stand still and let the dog come to you.

Show students how to:

- make a quiet body
- hold their hand in a gentle fist
- let the dog sniff the back of the fist

Explain:

- dogs learn about people through their noses
- letting the dog come to you helps the dog feel safe

Remind students:

- do not lean over the dog
- do not stare into the dog's eyes
- move calmly and quietly

Step 3 – Pet Gently

If the dog stays calm and the owner says it is okay, pet the dog slowly and gently. Show students how to pet:

- under the chin, or
- on the back near the shoulders

Explain that some dogs do not like:

- hugs
- hands reaching over their head

Encourage students to use slow, gentle movements so the dog stays comfortable.

Closure – The Golden Rule for Meeting Dogs

Ask students: “When is it safe to pet a dog?”

Students respond: “When the owner is there and says yes.”

Repeat together: Ask first. Move slowly. Pet gently.

Explain: “Safe choices help dogs feel calm and help people stay safe.”

Activity – Safe or Unsafe Worksheet

Have the children complete the accompanying worksheet, circling if a dog is safe or unsafe to approach and pet.

Optional Extension Activities

Role-Play Practice

- Students practice asking: “May I pet your dog?”
- One student plays the dog owner and responds with either “yes” or “no”
- If the owner has said yes, they then practice safely interacting with the dog

RHS Field Trip Connection

If visiting the Regina Humane Society, students can practice calm behaviour around animals and observe how staff interact safely with dogs.

Picture	Discussion Prompts
1	<p>This dog is eating a delicious bowl of food. Is he okay to pet? What might he be protecting? If 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>
2	<p>This dog is chewing on a delicious bone. Is he safe to pet? What might he be protecting?</p> <p>Answer: Dogs protect their bones and other treats. This dog is NOT safe to pet.</p>
3	<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 might 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>
4	<p>Are these dogs safe to pet? St. Bernards are so friendly and goofy. What might they be protecting?</p> <p>Answer: Dogs protect their babies and other animals they love. They are NOT safe to pet.</p>
5	<p>This dog is sitting on her driveway in front of her house. She is on a chain. Is she safe to pet? What might 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>
6	<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 might 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>
7	<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's difficult to tell if this dog would bite or not. However, he's missing something. What is he missing? Unless he has owners to ask, it is still unsafe to approach or pet him.</p>
8	<p>These are two little Dachshund puppies. Aren't they cute? Are these puppies safe to pet? Do puppies bite? Could they be protecting each other?</p> <p>Answer: It's difficult to tell if these dogs would bite or not. However, they're missing something. What are they missing? Unless they have owners to ask, it is still unsafe to approach or pet them.</p>
9	<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 if this dog would bite or not. However, he's missing something. What is he missing? Unless he has owners to ask, it is still unsafe to approach or pet him.</p>
10	<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>

Lesson 6 - Safe Choices When Dogs Are Nearby

Lesson Overview

Students learn what to do if they feel uncomfortable around a dog or if a dog approaches them without an owner present. Students practice two important safety strategies: **standing like a tree and lying like a log**. These strategies help students stay calm and reduce the chance that a dog becomes excited or frightened.

I Can Statement

I can show what to do if a dog approaches me or makes me feel uncomfortable - be a tree and lie like a log.

Materials

- Open classroom space for movement
- Visuals or slides showing:
 - "Stand Like a Tree"
 - "Lie Like a Log"

Set – What Would You Do?

Begin with a short discussion. Ask students:

- "What would you do if a dog ran up to you?"
- "What if a dog was jumping or barking and you felt scared?"

Allow students to share responses.

Explain: Sometimes dogs are friendly, curious, or excited. However, if a dog approaches and there is no owner nearby, the safest thing to do is stay calm and make yourself boring to the dog.

Development

Part 1: Stand Like a Tree

Show the students the visual of "Stand Like a Tree".

Explain that if a dog comes near them and they feel unsure or uncomfortable, they should stand like a tree. Demonstrate the following steps and have the students act them out:

- Stop moving
- Put their arms down at their sides or cross them on their chest (fold in their branches)
- Keep their feet together
- Look down at the ground (watch their roots grow)
- Stay quiet and still like a tree

Explain that dogs often become interested and chase people when they:

- Run
- Wave their arms
- Shout or scream

Standing still makes the person boring to the dog, and the dog will often sniff briefly and walk away. If the dog remains nearby, students can slowly move away using small backward or sideways "baby steps."

Once all of the steps are introduced, watch the video "[National Dog Bite Prevention Week: Be A Tree](#)" on Youtube.

Part 2: Lie Like a Log

Show the students the visual of “Lie Like a Log”.

Explain that in very rare situations, a dog may become aggressive, angry, or overstimulated and knock someone down. If this happens, students should **lie like a log**.

Demonstrate the following steps and have the students act them out:

- lie face down on the ground
- place hands behind the neck
- use arms to cover the ears
- stay still and quiet

Explain that this position protects important areas such as the face, neck, and ears, and it also makes the person less interesting to the dog.

Reassure students: “This situation is **very rare**, but it is helpful to know what to do.”

What To Do If You Are Bitten

Explain to students that bites are very rare, but it is important to know what to do if one happens. If a dog bites you and breaks the skin, follow these steps:

1. Tell a grown-up right away.

Tell a teacher, parent, or another trusted adult.

2. Wash the bite with soap and water.

Cleaning the bite helps keep it from getting infected.

3. Cover the bite with a clean, loose bandage.

4. See a doctor or nurse.

A health care provider will make sure the bite is treated properly.

5. Adults will report the bite.

The grown-ups will contact animal control or public health so they can make sure everyone stays safe.

Reassure students: “Dog bites do not happen very often, but if they do, telling a grown-up right away helps make sure you are safe and taken care of.”

Activity – “Be A Tree” Safety Poster

Explain that students will create a poster that teaches others what to do if a dog approaches them and they feel uncomfortable.

Poster Instructions

Students create a poster that includes:

- a title such as “Be a Tree Around Dogs”
- a drawing of themselves standing like a tree
- labels showing the steps:
 - arms down, feet together, looking at the ground, staying still and quiet

Students may also include the reminder: “If a dog comes near you and you feel uncomfortable, stand like a tree.”

Encourage students to use clear pictures and labels so others can understand the steps.

Closure – What Did We Learn?

Ask students to review the strategies of Be a Tree and Lie Like a Log.

Discuss the following questions with students:

- “What do we do if a dog comes near us and there is no owner?”
- “What does standing like a tree look like?”
- “What do we do if we are knocked down?”

Finish with the message: “Knowing how to stay calm helps keep both people and dogs safe.”

Optional Extension Activity – Safety Scenarios Role Play

Students practice what to do if a dog approaches them by acting out safety scenarios using a stuffed dog or classroom prop.

Students take turns responding to different situations such as:

- A dog runs up to you and there is no owner nearby.
- A dog is barking and making you feel uncomfortable.
- A friend’s dog jumps up on you.
- A dog knocks you to the ground.

Students demonstrate the appropriate safety response: Stand like a tree or lie like a log

Encourage students to notice how staying calm and still can help keep both people and dogs safe.