



**Suffolk Safeguarding
Children Board**

Safeguarding Children from Dangerous Dogs Guidance

Version 1.0

Policy Version History

Version and Date	Review Date	Author	Approved at LSCB PPE/TQS
1.0 - 02/10/2018	02/10/2021	Tracy Murphy, Professional Adviser, LSCB.	09/10/2018

Communication Strategy	Details
How will this policy be cascaded to partners and services?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PA to present at Social Care and Early Help Manager's meetings. 2. Through LSCB Newsletter. 3. Through PPR e mail distribution list for key members to cascade to teams and workers. 4. Through Headlines to schools.
What is the monitoring and follow-up process for this policy?	Follow-up in six months time at PPE with key partners.
What training packages does this policy need to link to?	Lone Working and Managing Challenging Behaviours.

Follow-Up
<p>Give details of follow-up process approx. six months after the original date of policy completion and approval.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise at PPE/TQS in six months with key partners regarding monitoring and impact of the guidance.

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Aims of the Guidance

The primary aim of this guidance is to support professionals to protect children in Suffolk from the serious injuries that can be inflicted by dogs that are prohibited, dangerous or poorly managed.

The guidelines set out to explain and describe:

- The dogs most likely to be dangerous.
- The information that should be gathered when any child is injured by a dog and the criteria that should prompt a referral.

Dangerous Dogs

- The Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) provides very detailed information on the legislation covering certain types of dogs, the responsibilities of owners and the actions that can be taken to remove and/or control dogs;
- From the 13 May 2014 the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Section 3 was extended to include the offence of being in charge of a dog dangerously out of control in a public place to 'any place in England or Wales'. This also includes private places. Please see legislation section below.
- In the UK it is against the law to own certain types of dog unless the owner has a certificate of exemption. These dogs are: Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro (see Appendix 1 for pictures). If any agency has any knowledge or report of a dog of this type, the matter should be reported to the police immediately.
- Any dog, irrespective of breed, can be 'dangerous' (as defined by The Act) if it has already been known to inflict or threaten injury;
- Injuries inflicted by certain types of dog are likely to be especially serious and damaging. Strong, powerful dogs such as Pit Bull Types will often use their back jaws (as opposed to 'nipping') and powerful neck muscle to shake their victims violently as they grasp.
- When reports of 'prohibited' dogs and known or potentially dangerous dogs are linked to the presence of children, all agencies should be alert to the possible risks and consequences.

The Dog and the Child: Family Context

When you visit a family that has a dog in the home (this includes dogs in the homes of other family members, not just the child's immediate home) you need to consider whether or not the dog poses any threat to the child's health, development or safety.

- All children are potentially vulnerable from attack(s) from dog(s).
- Young and very small children are likely to be at greatest risk.
- A young child may be unaware and unprepared for the potential dangers they could face.
- A young child may be less able to protect themselves and more likely to be of a size that leaves especially vulnerable parts of their body exposed to any 'assault'.
- Is it a large dog in a small home?
- Is the dog left alone with the child?
- How much money is spent on the dog compared to the child.
- If you consider a dog is a serious risk to a child, you should contact the police immediately.

Owners and Families (including extended family and temporary carers)

- Many commentators will insist that 'the owner, not the dog' is the problem.
- There will be occasions when even the 'best' of owners fails to anticipate or prevent their dog's behaviour.
- The care, control and context of a dog's environment will undoubtedly impact on their behaviour and potential risks.
- Research indicates that neutered or spayed dogs are less likely to be territorial and aggressive towards other dogs and people.
- Dogs that are kept and/or bred for the purpose of fighting, defending or threatening are likely to present more risks than genuine pets.

Owners

- Owners linked to criminal activity, anti-social behaviour, drugs, or violence may have reason to encourage aggressive behaviour from dogs.
- Owners with interests and histories in crime, violence, drugs or anti-social behaviour are unlikely to appreciate or prevent the possible risks their dog(s) present to children.

Families who Experience High Levels of Aggression and Domestic Tensions

- Are more likely to trigger excitement and possible attacks by dogs.
- Are less likely to appreciate and anticipate risks.
- May be less likely to take necessary precautions.
- May be less likely to guarantee the safety of the most vulnerable youngsters.
- Very young, small children living in chaotic or dysfunctional families are likely to be especially vulnerable.
- Prohibited, dangerous, powerful dogs are likely to inflict the most serious injuries.

Practitioner Guidance

Any agency or practitioner who is aware of a dog that could be prohibited or considered dangerous should collect as much information as possible:

- The dog's name and breed.
- The owner.
- The reason for keeping the dog (dogs that are kept and/or bred for the purpose of fighting, defending or threatening are likely to present more risks than genuine pets).
- Any children in the home (particularly young children).

If it is thought that someone owns one of the four banned dogs and doesn't have a certificate of exemption, the matter should be reported to the Police. If a dog is a serious risk to a child or at any point a dog bites a child and there is an element/suspicion of criminal intent, the Police should be contacted on 101.

Referrals

Practitioners must weigh up if a child/ren are at risk from a dog and whether a referral is required. All cases will be treated on its own merits and any other risk factors or vulnerabilities considered.

Practitioners can seek advice from the MASH Professional Consultation Line. If it is decided that an immediate referral is required, practitioners should contact Customer First on 0808 800 4005 and contact the Emergency Services.

Legislation

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 brought changes to the current Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA) and came into force in England and Wales on 13 May 2014.

- Extension of the law under Section 3, from a dog dangerously out of control in a public place to cover "any place in England and Wales" (whether or not a public place). There is a limited defence in relation to whether the person was a trespasser entering or in a building, part of a building, that is a dwelling or forces' accommodation at the time of the offence;
- Under Section 3 of the DDA a new offence has been created in relation to a dog injuring an assistance dog, such as a guide dog, Dog for the Disabled or Hearing Dog for the deaf, this only covers assistance dogs not other assistance animals. Assistance dog has the meaning given by section 173(1) of the Equality Act 2010;
- New power to Police Officers and to authorised Local Authority Officers to seize a dog in England and Wales which is not a public place, if the dog appears to the constable or officer to be dangerously out of control. This includes a private place, but the dog must be out of control immediately before or at the time the Police Officer or authorised LA Officer makes the decision to seize;

- Increased prison sentences for those convicted of some offences;
- In relation to court, Contingent Destruction Orders on dogs will take into consideration whether the owner is a fit and proper person.

Example Incidents:

- A burglar enters a property, as a trespasser, and is attacked by the house owner's dog. In this case there would be a "house holder case" defence.
- The next door neighbour's son climbs over the garden fence to get his ball back and gets bitten by a dog whilst in the neighbour's garden, this would be an offence. The back garden is not covered in the defence.
- The postman delivering mail entering the driveway with implied permission gets chased by a dog which is snarling and biting at him but does not get bitten but is in fear that he will – this is an offence.
- When dealing with a prohibited breed dog (under Sec. 1 of the DDA), such as a suspected Pitbull, unless out of control immediately before or at the time, a warrant will still be required to seize from a private place.

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 comes into force in October 2018 and states that: Police and Local Authorities will be able to demand that owners take action to prevent a dog attack or risk a fine of up to £20,000.

If a complaint has been made about a dog to the Council or the Police, its owners could be ordered to do any or all of the following:

- Attend dog training classes.
- Muzzle the dog or require it to be on a lead in public.
- Require the dog to be microchipped and/or neutered.
- Repair fencing to prevent the dog leaving the property.

A new manual will guide Police Forces and Local Authorities in the use of their legal powers to prevent dog attacks.

Powers are broken down as follows:

Community Protection Notice – low-level notice issued to stop anti-social behaviour.

Injunction – for higher level incidents.

Criminal Behaviour Order – serious and continuing anti-social behaviour with dogs.

Public Spaces Protection Orders – An order to restrict persistent anti-social behaviour in a public space.

Research

- Male owners have dogs with increased aggression and fear (Roll and Unsheim 1997);
- Shy, tense, emotionally less stable owners have increased aggression in their dogs (Podberscek 1997);
- Presence of children in house reduces behavioural problems (Kebect 2003) but presence of teenagers increases biting;
- Dogs fed at meal times from the owners table causes increased food aggression (O'Sullivan 2008);
- Dogs fed at the table and dogs which sleep with the owner especially in their bed/ bedroom have increased aggression (Jagoe 1996);
- The presence of other dogs in house leads to less fear aggression dependent upon the age spread of dogs (Thompson personal communication PC);
- Dogs kept outside show increased aggression to strangers (Thompson PC);
- Dogs which are walked more have less stranger aggression (Kobect 2003);
- Dogs which have a free run on open space show increased socialisation and therefore less behaviour problems;
- Lack of research on dog type before purchase leads to increased behaviour problems. Those dogs chosen for practicality have less problems whereas those chosen for appearance increased problems (Roll and Unsheim 1997);
- First time dog owners have more behaviour problems in their dogs (Jagoe 1996);
- Those dog owners who have taken classes with their puppies have less behaviour problems as adult dogs (Lindsay 2000).

Further Information

www.bluecross.org.uk

1. Be Safe with Dogs Leaflet – guidance for families.
2. Keeping Your Toddler Safe around Dogs Leaflet.

www.rspca.org.uk

1. Six Golden Rules for Staying Safe.
2. Dogs and Children – a guide to staying safe leaflet.
3. Growing Up with A Dog – helping children to learn about dogs.

www.dogstrust.org.uk

www.battersea.org.uk

www.nawt.org.uk

www.thekennelclub.org

www.ihv.org.uk

1. Parent Tips – Keeping Babies and Children Safe Around Dogs in the Home.
2. Norfolk and Suffolk Crime Prevention, Guidance Notes, Dangerous Dogs, April 2016.

Appendix 1 – Banned Dogs



American Pit Bull Terrier



Dogo Argentino



Japanese Toser



Fila Brasileiro