My Safety Around Dogs

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE INTERACTION BETWEEN CHILDREN (ABOUT 8-9YRS) AND PET DOGS

FREE BOOKLET

English

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These guidelines for safe interaction between children and pet dogs were produced as part of a 2007-08 Summer Research Project by University of Waikato social sciences student Jennifer Carter and her supervisor, Associate Professor David Swain. The report, Stories With Happy Endings: Preventing Pet Dog Attacks on Children (2008) was funded by the Child Accident Prevention Foundation and can be accessed at http://waikato.researchgateway.ac.nz/handle/10289/768

In considering the use of these research-based, valid and reliable safety tips please be aware they are based on a review of research literature and expert informant interviews conducted in good faith and with supervision. Please refer to the Acknowledgements section of the 2008 report for a full list of the sources of our information.

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Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

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Hi there

This booklet will teach you how to behave safely around dogs. You might have a dog at home or maybe you have met a dog that lives at someone else's house.

Try reading this booklet out loud to an adult or a friend and talk about the dog safety tips with them. We hope you have lots of fun doing the activities in this booklet.

Remember that most dogs are friendly and good fun to be around. It is really important that we are kind to all animals. When we treat dogs with respect, they will respect us back.

Bye for now
Jennifer and David

Remember that most dogs are friendly and good fun to be around

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1. ALWAYS ASK THE OWNER BEFORE YOU MEET THEIR DOG!

If you are meeting a dog for the first time you must ask the owner's permission first! Before approaching any dog, even if it is not for the first time, don't run up and try to hug or pat the dog. The owner will tell you if their dog likes to meet children or not. If the owner says "yes" you should:

- Stand still, stand up straight and have your hands down at your side,
- Leave a couple of steps between you and the dog; let the dog approach you first,
- You can talk quietly to the dog if you want to,
- When you feel comfortable, make one hand into a ball, gently raise your arm and let the dog sniff the back of your hand,
- It's important to be calm and confident at all times.

Meeting a dog

2. PAT THE DOG'S CHIN, CHEST OR SIDE OF THE NECK!

Never pat a dog on the head. After the dog has sniffed your hand, give it a gentle rub on the chin, chest or side of the neck. Keep your face away from the dog and don't look into its eyes.

- For very small dogs, you may need to squat or kneel down but keep the top half of your body straight. Don't bend over the dog.
- Stroke the dog's chin, chest or side of the neck. Dogs don't really like being patted on their head by people.

Pat the dog's chin, chest or side of the neck

3. EVEN IF YOU'VE MET THE DOG BEFORE, BE CAREFUL!

Even if it's your neighbour's, friend's, nana's or auntie's dog that you see all the time, you still have to ask them for permission before you play with their dog. You might have met the dog before but it knows that you don't live at its house and it doesn't know you as well as it knows its owners. It could think you are a threat and may bite you to protect itself or its property. Be very careful of dogs that live with other people – even if you've met them before!

It is safer to have an adult watching you when you play with someone else's dog.

4. NEVER SNEAK UP ON A DOG!

Never sneak up on a dog that is eating or sleeping and give it a fright! Any dog could bite you if it is scared, confused or in pain – even your own dog. Always let a dog see you before you approach it. Always let a dog see and sniff you before you pat it.

5. NOT ALL DOGS ARE AS FRIENDLY AS YOUR DOG!

All dogs are different! If you have a dog at home, it is probably very friendly because it knows it is part of your family. You need to be careful of other dogs that don't live at your house because they don't know you as well. They could bite accidentally because they are not used to the games you want to play.

6. IF A DOG RUSHES AT YOU, BE A STATUE!

When a dog is bothering you, drop any food or toys you are holding and 'be a statue' (or a tree). Statues are boring for dogs – they will usually come and sniff you and then go away. Dogs are very good at smelling things and will sniff something to find out who or what it is. You will see dogs sniff each other when they meet. This is also why a dog will come and sniff us when we're being a statue. It's their way of meeting us and getting to know who we are. Remember not to stare a dog in the eyes when you are being a statue.

SHANE MORTON
photographer

BEING A STATUE...

- **Stand still and straight,** with feet together, your fists held under your chin and elbows close against your chest. If you are holding food or a toy drop it on the ground,
- **Don't scream and don't run away.** You might be feeling very scared but you have to be brave and STAND STILL – let the dog come and sniff you, usually it will sniff you and go away,
- **Don't stare into the dog's eyes** because it might think you want to fight. Look at the dog's paws, chest or over the top of its head,
- **If the dog moves, turn slowly so that you can always see where it is.** Never let the dog walk around behind you,
- **If the dog does attack, protect yourself** by putting something between you and the dog. This could be your jacket or jersey, lunch box, backpack, book, bicycle or anything you can put in between,
- **Stay like a statue until the dog leaves** or an adult comes to help you. Slowly move backwards while still facing the dog; remember not to stare into its eyes,
- **Never turn and run!**

Being a statue

BEING A STONE...

- **If you fall or are knocked to the ground 'be a stone'.** Curl into a ball, face down, with your hands over your head and neck. Protect your face. Try to stay still – do not scream or roll around,
- **Stay like a stone until the dog leaves** or an adult comes to help you. When you do move, you must move slowly. Slowly move backwards while still facing the dog Remember not to stare into its eyes,
- **Never turn and run!**

Being a stone

Proudly sponsored by the Waikato BOP Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Animal Control Officers

Please contact your local Animal Control Unit for assistance with dog control matters or advice

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7. DON'T RUN AND SHOUT AROUND DOGS!

Be careful not to run around or shout, ride your bike or skate close to a dog. Some dogs could feel scared because they are not used to children doing these things. Other dogs may chase and even bite you.

If you are at home or someone else's house and you want to run around and be noisy or play-fight with other children, it is best to ask an adult to put the dog away in a safe place. This is important because when children play-fight, a dog could bite the visiting children if it thinks they are hurting the children that it lives with. If the dog is not put away and it gets too frisky or excited, you and the other children need to 'be a statue'.

8. NEVER RUN AWAY FROM A DOG!

Even if you feel scared, never scream or run! If you want to get away from a dog, back away slowly and quietly. If you need to, turn your body slowly so that you can always see the dog. Never let the dog walk around behind you because many children get bitten from behind! And remember, never stare into a dog's eyes – look at the dog's paws, chest or over the top of its head.

Backing away from a dog

Photo supplied by Kirstie Smith

9. NEVER TEASE OR ANNOY A DOG!

Dogs may bite people who annoy them. Never pull its ears, tail or fur. Don't try and pull a toy, a stick, or any item from the dog's mouth. Don't piggy-back on the dog: you might hurt it. There is no need to hit a dog or poke it with a stick. Remember any dog can bite you if it is scared, confused or in pain...and they will bite! You know you are not supposed to tease dogs....so don't!

10. KEEP AWAY FROM A DOG THAT'S EATING!

Dogs like being on their own when they eat or chew their bone. If you touch or play with a dog while it's eating it might think you are trying to take some of its food. The dog could bite to protect its food. It is best to stay away from a dog's food and bones, even when it is not eating them.

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11. FEED THE DOG ON THE GROUND.

Don't let the dog take food out of your hands. A dog that learns to take food from children's hands may snatch food from a young child and accidentally bite him or her. If you feed the dog, it is safer to drop the food on the ground. Don't ever feed it any food off your plate.

12. DON'T HUG AND KISS DOGS!

Dogs don't like to be hugged around the neck and kissed; it is not how they meet each other. Even with your own dog it is best not to kiss it, hug it around the neck or put your face down close to its teeth. It's gross to let dogs lick your face because they have bad breath, they smell other dogs' bottoms, and they can give you worms and parasites.

13. STAY AWAY FROM A DOG THAT IS PROTECTING SOMETHING!

Dogs are territorial animals which means they will naturally protect their property and home. This could be their owner's home, backyard, car and the dog's bed or kennel. Even if you've met the dog before and it seems friendly, you must stay away from it. This means:

- Never reach through a fence to pat a dog – it is protecting the owner's property,
- Don't pat a dog through a car window – it is protecting the car,
- Don't pat a dog sitting on the back of a truck – it is protecting the truck,
- Don't pat or play with a dog when it's on its bed. It is better to stand back and call the dog out of its bed if you want to pat it,
- If your ball or toy accidentally goes over someone's fence, don't go and get it yourself. Ask an adult for help.

If you go near a dog that is protecting its property, it could think you are an intruder and may bite you to protect its space.

Children and dogs need to respect each other

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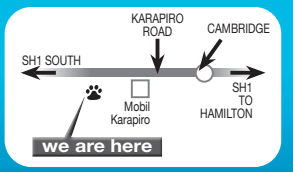

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14. DON'T TEACH DOGS TO PLAY ROUGH!

It can be dangerous to play chasing games or tug-of-war with a dog. These games teach dogs to bite hard and be rough with people – we don't want to teach them that! It's better to play *hide and seek* where the dog has to find you or something you hide, and *fetch* where you swap the thing for a treat so the dog learns to give it back. You can also teach your dog tricks like sit, lie down, roll over and play dead. Get an adult to show you how to do this safely. It is better to pat dogs gently.

Playing fetch with a dog

15. DOGS ON THEIR OWN MUST BE LEFT ALONE!

- If you see a stray dog running around on its own, turn and go the other way. Never call a stray dog over to you – it is not safe! If this dog has been teased or annoyed by other kids, it might think you are going to hurt it and might bite to protect itself.
- If you see a strange dog tied up, leave it alone! It could be outside a shop, a supermarket or even in your own backyard if someone is visiting your house. If strange dogs are tied up, you must leave them alone because they can't get away from you and may bite to protect their space.

16. ALWAYS MEET PUPPIES WITH A GROWN-UP!

When puppies are still with the mother dog, it is safer if a grown-up picks up the puppy and then lets you hold it when you are sitting down. Mother dogs are very protective of their puppies and may bite anyone or anything they think will hurt them. Be extra careful if the mother dog does not live at your house because she doesn't know you very well and might think you are a threat. Puppies are very cute but remember they have sharp teeth too!

17. LEARN 'DOG LANGUAGE'

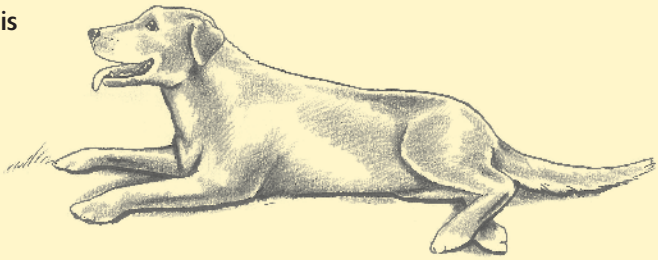
People use words to talk to each other. Dogs can't use words so it is important you learn to understand 'dog language'. Understanding 'dog language' will help keep you safe because you will know when a dog wants to be left alone.

When dogs 'speak' they use their whole bodies to tell us how they are feeling. We need to look at a dog's ears, lips, tail and whether their body is tall and stiff or crouched down low. Barking and growling are only part of the way that dogs talk to us. When we understand dog language we know if the dog is feeling relaxed, playful, scared or very angry. The drawings below will show you how to work out what they are saying.

Sometimes dogs could bite by accident if they are very playful. They will often warn us they are feeling scared or angry before they bite. Keep away from any dog that tells you it is feeling scared or very angry!

RELAXED

Here Bella is telling you that she is relaxed.
She has a relaxed body position, and all her hair is lying flat on her body. She is panting with her tongue out and has a happy expression on her face.

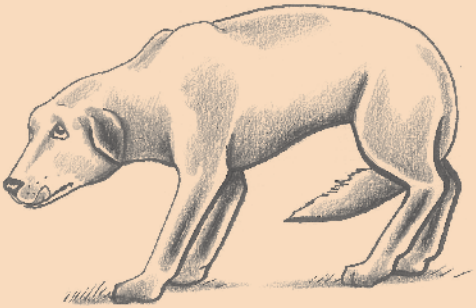


PLAYFUL

Here Bella is telling you she feels playful.
The front of her body is low down and the back half of her body is still up in the air.
Her tail is up and might wag slowly.
Her ears are up and she could bark a little bit.

SCARED

Here Bella is telling you to leave her alone because she is scared! She is trying to make herself look as small as possible. Her whole body is lowered to the ground and it could be shaking. Her tail is tucked under her body. Her ears are low or lay back against her head. The hair on her back may be standing up on end. She will not want to look at you, she will keep turning her head away. **Remember not to stare into a dog's eyes, especially when it is telling you it feels scared! A scared dog will bite you if it can't run away!**



VERY ANGRY

Here Jess is telling you to keep away and leave her alone! She is angry! She is trying to make herself look as big and scary as possible. She is standing tall and stiff and slightly leaning forward. Her tail is stiff and it pokes out or up, it may even be wagging a little bit too. The hair on her back is standing up on end. Her ears are up, her nose is wrinkled and she is showing you her teeth! She will stare straight at you while snarling, growling or barking at you. **Remember not to stare into a dog's eyes, especially when it is telling you it feels very angry!**

Now you have learned some dog language. You know how to look at all the parts of the body together to see what a dog is feeling. It is important to pay attention to dog language so you know when a dog wants to be left alone.
Remember that a dog wagging its tail is NOT always friendly.

WHEN YOU'RE OUT AND ABOUT...

- If you are walking past someone's house and a dog rushes out at you, 'be a statue'. Remember not to stare into a dog's eyes.
- If you are riding your bike past someone's house and a dog starts to chase you STOP, try to jump off your bike and use it as a shield between you and the dog. Don't keep riding because dogs can run faster; they will chase you and might attack you. If the bike falls over, 'be a statue' OR if you fall over 'be a stone'.
- Stay like 'a statue' OR 'a stone' until the dog leaves OR an adult comes to help you. When you do move, slowly back away from the property with the dog still in view. Never turn and run.
- Don't back the dog into a corner; always give it plenty of room to get away from you. If the dog cannot get away from you, it may bite because it feels trapped.
- Remember these dogs don't know you. They are protecting their property because they think you are an intruder.

Being a statue

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IN SUMMARY:

1. ALWAYS ASK THE OWNER BEFORE YOU MEET THEIR DOG!
2. PAT THE DOG'S CHIN, CHEST OR SIDE OF THE NECK!
3. EVEN IF YOU'VE MET THE DOG BEFORE, BE CAREFUL!
4. NEVER SNEAK UP ON A DOG!
5. NOT ALL DOGS ARE AS FRIENDLY AS YOUR DOG!
6. IF A DOG RUSHES AT YOU, BE A STATUE!
7. DON'T RUN AND SHOUT AROUND DOGS!
8. NEVER RUN AWAY FROM A DOG!
9. NEVER TEASE OR ANNOY A DOG!
   - Never approach a dog that is scared, confused or in pain.
10. KEEP AWAY FROM A DOG THAT'S EATING!
11. FEED THE DOG ON THE GROUND.
12. DON'T HUG AND KISS DOGS!
13. STAY AWAY FROM A DOG THAT IS PROTECTING SOMETHING!
14. DON'T TEACH DOGS TO PLAY ROUGH!
15. DOGS ON THEIR OWN MUST BE LEFT ALONE!
    - If you see a strange dog tied up leave it alone!
16. ALWAYS MEET PUPPIES WITH A GROWN-UP!
17. LEARN DOG LANGUAGE.
    - Remember not to stare into a dog's eyes!

There is no ONE rule that fits all situations all the time to prevent dogs from attacking. These tips can help reduce the chances of being bitten.

The Pet Practice

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Taupo District Council

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THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Te Tari Taiwhenua

Waikato DISTRICT COUNCIL

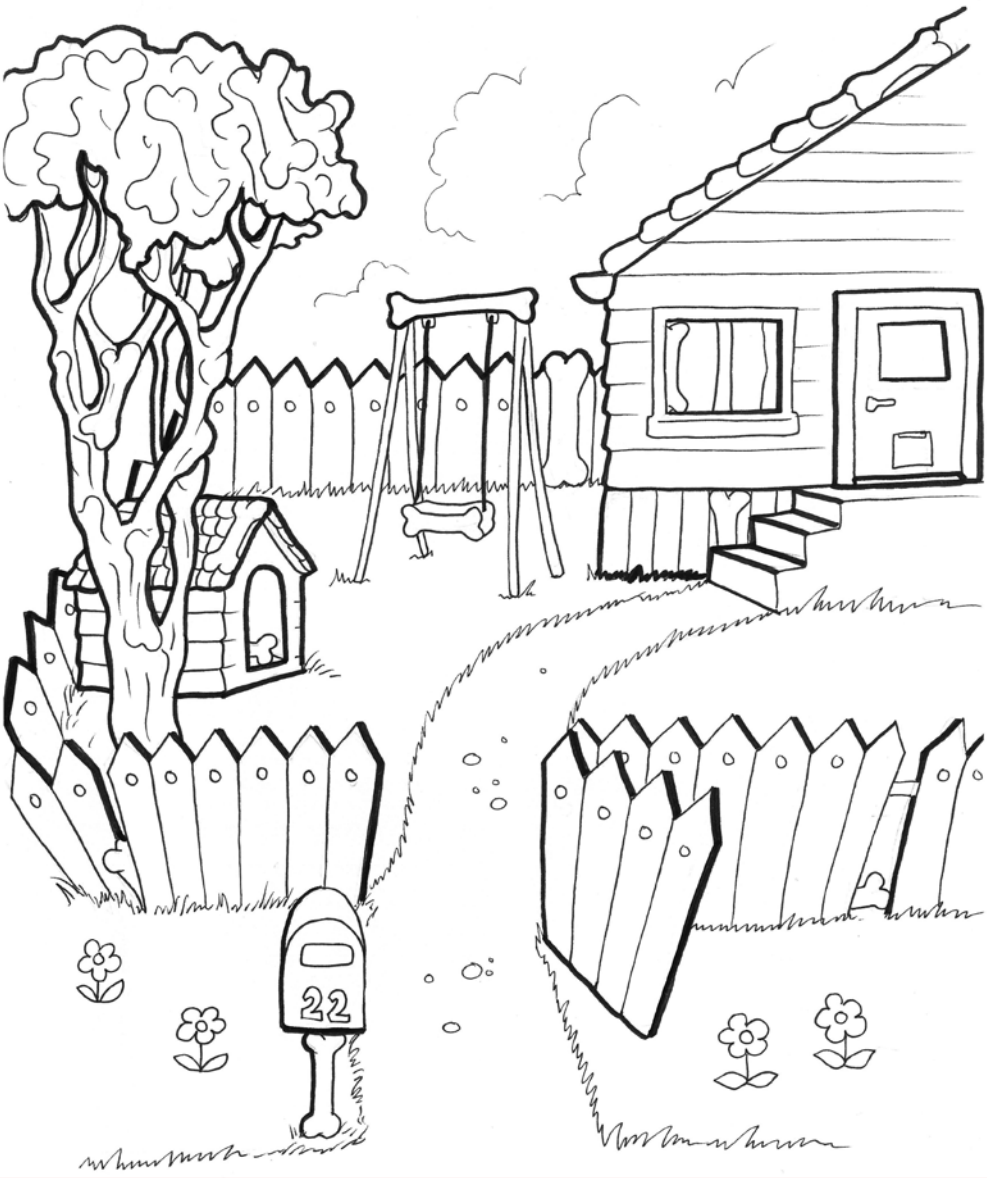
Waikato District Council believes education is a vital tool in ensuring community safety whist allowing people to enjoy the benefits of dog ownership.

Officers are available to give presentations on dong control function, caring for and controlling of dogs, and bite prevention to the following groups:

- Schools
- Public events
- School pet days
- Dog owners
- Community groups
- Discussion groups

FIND THE BONES...

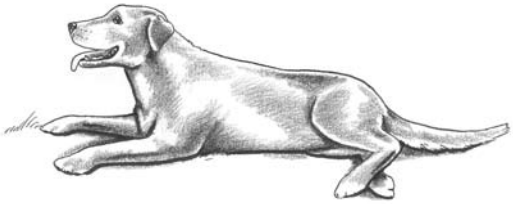
See how many bones you can find...and then colour the picture in.

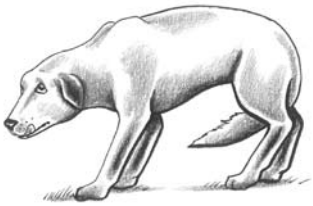


If you find 6 bones → Good work!
If you find 9 bones → Great work!
If you find 13 bones → Excellent!!

DOG LANGUAGE...

Draw a line from each picture of a dog to the matching word.





PLAYFUL

RELAXED

VERY ANGRY

SCARED

TRUE or FALSE

How many of the safety tips do you remember?
Circle TRUE or FALSE next to each question...

- Always meet puppies with a grown-up. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Never stare into a dog's eyes. **TRUE / FALSE**
- If a dog rushes at you – be a statue. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Remember a dog wagging its tail is not always friendly. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Never turn and run away from a dog. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Keep away from a dog that is eating. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Never call a stray dog over to you. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Don't run and shout around dogs. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Never tease or annoy a dog. **TRUE / FALSE**
- Don't teach dogs to play rough. **TRUE / FALSE**

Answers at bottom of page 23

STAYING SAFE...

Choose the best word from the box below to complete each sentence.

1. If you are meeting a dog for the first time you must ask the owner's _____ first!

2. After a dog has sniffed the back of your hand give it a gentle rub on the chin, _____ or side of the neck.

3. Dogs don't like to be _____ around the neck and kissed; it's not how they meet each other.

4. Be _____ of dogs that live with other people – even if you have met them before.

5. If you see a strange dog _____ leave it alone!

6. Any dog could bite you if it is _____, confused or in pain – even your own dog.

7. If you fall or are knocked to the ground be a _____.

8. If your _____ or toy accidentally goes over someone's fence don't go and get it yourself; ask an adult for help.

9. Never reach through a fence to pat a dog – it is _____ the owner's property.

chest **stone** **hugged** **scared**

careful **permission** **protecting** **tied up** **ball**

Answers at bottom of page 23

WORD FIND...

Find as many of the dog safety words in the puzzle as you can.

G C M K Y N N L H V S U O S I
Q P F B K X W P R O T E C T R
J B I T E M O P G A A O N N P
T N A A Z F J M S I T N P E Q
O I O R B A A V F R U B S D J
H Z H I K Y M P W Q E N H I O
Y L S X S I S X L D G E M F J
K U C L E S N E X E F I P N N
R F A D W T I G Y X D Q L O K
G E R V K O T M M A T T A C K
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E A D U A E V C H E D R F G G
S C B J C B Z S I R P E U Q M
F D G R O W L I N G D K L F A
V A U D X Y R G N A Y R E V Z

stone	permission	relaxed
statue	growling	scared
protect	careful	playful
confident	barking	very angry

ANSWERS

DOG LANGUAGE: Compare your answers with the Dog Language section on page 14 & 15.

TRUE OR FALSE: They are all true! ☺

STAYING SAFE: 1-permission 2-chest 3-hugged 4-careful 5-tied up 6-scared 7- stone 8-ball 9-protecting.

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For any information on any Control matters or our dog adoption campaign:

ph 07 348 4199

website: www.rdc.govt.nz
address: Civic Centre
1061 Haupapa St
Private Bag 3029
Rotorua Mail Centre
Rotorua 3046

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NOTES...

USEFUL RESOURCES

BOOKS

McLaine, S. (2004). **Can I pat that dog?** Pymble, N.S.W.: Angus & Robertson.

Weston, R., and Ross, C. (2004). **Kids & dogs: Teaching them to live, play and learn together.** Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin.

WEBSITES

The Department of Internal Affairs **http://www.dogsafety.govt.nz**
Christchurch City Council **http://www.ccc.govt.nz/animals**
The Humane Society of the United States **http://www.hsus.org**
Doggone Safe **http://www.doggonesafe.com**

The American Veterinary Medical Association
http://www.avma.org/communications/brochures/dog_owners.asp

The Kennel Club Safe and Sound Sche

- The 20 Safety Tips **http://www2.the-kenneclub.org.uk/sashi_code**
- The interactive website for learning

http://www2.the-kennel-club.org.uk/safe_and_sound.html

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals **www.spcakids.com**

Dogs are social animals - they enjoy human company

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