

OTHER BEHAVIORS:

Rolling on his back – *never force your dog into this position*

generally, a submissive behavior

may be fear if tail is tucked & lips are stiff

the Freeze – bite is possible; he may be afraid or guarding

if afraid, gently encourage him away from the stimulus

if guarding, trade with a high value item tossed away

Mounting or Humping – not a sexual act

dog establishing control, dominance, stress, insecurity

Taking Control (sometimes called dominant postures)

standing over another dog; standing tall

chin or paw on another dog's back or neck

INTERVENE WHEN:

*Not all inclusive, notice **all** signs the dog is giving*

excessive mounting or pinning another dog

constant bullying of a dog who does not want to interact

fast non-stop running in a group – high arousal situation

staring – fixed gaze directly at another dog

showing teeth or snarling or raised lip

hackles up at shoulders

DOG FIGHTS: *prevention, prevention, prevention*

If there is a dog causing trouble in the park and the owner won't remove him, then remove your own dog to keep him safe.

By observing your dog and others, you may be able to diffuse high arousal situations before they break out into a fight. Once a dog fight breaks out there is nothing you can do about it except help break it up which can be risky and you may get bitten.

Stay calm, no yelling, have a leash handy.

RECOMMENDED:

spray or dump water on the dogs

use a **citronella** spray (i.e., SprayShield) but NOT pepper spray

throw a blanket over each dog

sound an air horn

NOT RECOMMENDED:

if you reach in to take collar, you may be bitten so use great caution. If you must, grab the back of the collar behind dog's neck, or away from where the bite/mouth is.

Wallingford Dog Lovers Association



Dog Park Etiquette for New Dog Owners



The Bert & Harry Subkowsky Bark Park provides your dog with the opportunity to socialize and interact with other dogs in a safe environment. To ensure that all dogs and humans have an enjoyable experience, everyone must follow the Bark Park Rules as listed on the sign in the entry area of the park. All parks have similar rules and those rules are there for a reason... to keep the park safe for all. The WDLA thanks you for taking the time to read the rules and respect those rules. ***Thank you!***

As new dog owners you may have questions about your dog's behavior either at the park or at home. You may not know what to do about unwanted behaviors such as jumping, barking, mounting, etc. Dogs have a language of their own **BODY LANGUAGE** and **FACIAL EXPRESSIONS**. When you learn to understand your dog's language, you will know how he's feeling. Dogs do not hide or lie about their feelings. Dog feelings are expressed immediately and sometimes intensely. If humans fail to recognize a dog's signs, they cannot predict what a dog may do next.

By observing your dog at the park and learning to read his signals, you will be better able to understand him. Some dogs like rough and tumble play, others prefer to just walk around and sniff or lie down in the shade. Even if your dog loves to play with other dogs, ***all*** dogs can be pushed beyond their tolerance limit.

Not all dogs are suited to dog-park play. Fearful, reactive or aggressive dogs are not good candidates. Play should be friendly – no body slams, mouthing, jumping, humping, etc.

ENTERING THE PARK:

Your dog should be calm and relaxed when entering the park. If he's been sleeping all day or if he is highly excited, play a game of fetch with him until he's tired before you leave the house. This will allow him to run off some excess pent up energy prior to going to the dog park. If he's still highly aroused when you arrive at the park, spend some time walking him around on leash outside the gated area to drain more energy. When he's ready, take him to gate. Have him sit as you open the gate, and then have him enter the holding area. Have him sit again as you remove his leash in the play area.

While you may be tempted to sit at the picnic table and chat with friends or become glued to your cell phone, keep socialization to a minimum and put your phone away. You are there for your dog, and now is a good time for you to learn what all those postures and facial expressions mean.

RESPONDING TO BASIC CUES: Dogs should be taught to respond to some basic verbal cues immediately when they are given. Come when called, sit, leave it/off can be helpful to get your dog under control if necessary.

BODY LANGUAGE and FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

These are only some signals your dog may give. This list is not all inclusive. Also, some signs can be used for multiple situations. You must read your entire dog's body and facial expressions and put all the signals together. A "wagging tail" does NOT necessarily mean a happy dog!

FRIENDLY/RELAXED PLAY:

- relaxed, wiggly body (especially the rear)
- relaxed, soft facial expression
- mouth relaxed and slightly open
- play positions change – back & forth play/chase
- play bow (elbows on ground, rear in the air)
- turning leaps
- pawing at one another
- barking & growling
- some rough play can also be relaxed

ANXIETY/STRESS SIGNS:

- low set tail (may or may not be wagging)
- ears may be sideways or back
- wrinkled brow with hard eyes
- yawning and lip licking
- panting
- body is tense and respiration is fast and shallow
- 1 paw raised
- avoidance (turning head or body, walking away)
- growling
- inattentiveness to owner

FEAR SIGNS:

- lowered stance, dog shrinks to look small
- dilated pupils
- avoidance
- tail tucked under (may be wagging frantically)
- hackles up, body is still
- pacing or walking in circles
- drooling
- whining or barking
- dog shuts down (lies down & will not play)

AGGRESSIVE SIGNS:

Never discourage your dog from growling. When your dog gives a lip curl, shows teeth, gives an air snap, or growls, these are all signs that he's uncomfortable, a bite may or may not follow. Step back and assess the situation to determine what is stressing your dog, or remove him to a safer situation if necessary.

- growl (this growl is different from his other growls)
- snarl – lips curled & teeth showing
- air snap & miss (the miss is intentional)
- aggressive barking that you can't stop
- lunging with barking & growling
- tail raised high
- hard stare
- body posture up and forward
- ears erect and forward