

Pet Safety Tips for Kids

Ask the owner before petting Rover.

Many dogs are very friendly, but some dogs are not. Make sure to ask the owners if their dog is friendly and if it's okay for you to pet the dog; and make sure to also ask your own parent or guardian before you pet somebody else's dog. And be sure to follow all of the safety tips!

Puppy or kitten, ask for permission.

It is also important to ask an adult before petting puppies or kittens, especially when the mama dog or cat is present. Mothers of almost any animal are naturally protective of their babies.

Petting the chin is where you begin.

After you have received permission to pet a dog, you should pet the dog under its chin or on its chest. This way the dog can see where your hand is and what you are doing. Many dogs don't like to be petted on the top of the head. They might think you are trying to hurt or dominate them.

He sniffs your hand to understand.

A dog's sense of smell is much, much greater than our own. Dogs use this sense of smell when greeting and getting to know newcomers. If a dog smells you to get to know you, let him sniff the back of your hand. This will keep your fingers out of the way as well as not threaten the dog.

If he has a bone, leave him alone. If he has a snack, you must keep back.

If a dog is eating or is chewing on a bone or other item, he/she might think you are going to take it away, which could cause the dog to protect what it has by growling, snapping or biting.

Respecting his space will save your face.

It is common sense to keep a respectable distance between a child's face and the teeth of a dog or a cat, even if it is the family pet.

If you run and shout, he's gonna freak out.

The way you behave can influence the way a dog behaves. If you scream, shout, run or swing your arms or feet around dogs, they are more likely to chase or attack you.

He'll think you're the bomb if you act very calm.

Your behavior can influence the way any dog behaves, but shy or nervous dogs can be even more affected by rambunctious children. Being calm around a shy dog can make them feel less nervous and more secure.

Whether girl or a boy, never tease or annoy.

If you are teasing or annoying a dog or a cat, they can't tell you in words that they want you to stop; but they can tell you to stop by growling, biting or scratching.

Quiet and slow is the way to go.

If you are scared of a dog, do not run or scream. It is safer to walk away slowly and quietly. As you calmly walk away, try not to stare into the dog's eyes; or the dog might think you want to fight.