



## Safeguarding Children in the Presence of Dogs

### 1. Why it is important?

Dogs play an important part in society and are valued companions for many families, playing an important part of family life.

This guidance provides information to those working with families and children and explains:

- The situations where children are most likely to be vulnerable.
- The advice to be given to families regarding dog and child safety and to prevent dog bites or attacks.
- The basis for an effective assessment of risk and the criteria that should prompt a referral to Children's Social Care or other agencies.

### 7. Further Information

Blue Cross [www.bluecross.org.uk](http://www.bluecross.org.uk)

Keeping your toddler safe around dogs' leaflet

RSPCA [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

Dogs and children – a guide to staying safe leaflet.

6 Golden Rules

Keeping Kids Safe: How to interact with dogs.

Helping children & dogs live safely together.

Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership

Safeguarding Children in the Presence of Dogs policy.

### 6. Prohibited/ Banned Dogs in the UK

In the UK it is illegal to own a Pit bull terrier, the Japanese Tosa, the Dogo Argentino and the Fila Brasileiro.

If you have any concerns the police should be contacted, an assessment made, and necessary action taken to protect children/the public.

### 5. When to refer to Children's Services?

There are clear links between animal cruelty and the capacity for child cruelty.

Where parents/carers have been advised not to leave a baby or young child unattended with a dog and continue to do so.

A child injured by dog bite is under five years of age.

The child is under 18 years and the injuries have required acute medical intervention such as attendance at A&E, Urgent Care or the GP.

Where parents/ carers are believed to be exposing a child to or failing to protect a child from a dog that is believed to be dangerous or prohibited

### 4. Effective assessment of risk

If an agency is aware of an injury caused by a dog, they should record the following information:

- Details of the incident
- The children name, age, address
- Any other children in the home
- The owners name and address
- The dog's name and breed
- The reason for keeping the dog – dogs who are bred for fighting, defending, or threatening present more risks than genuine pets.

### 2. Situations where children are likely to be most vulnerable

Bites on younger children 0-4 years are often from a familiar dog. The younger the child the more unaware and unprepared they will be dealing with dogs and dangers associated with them.

Older children are more likely to be bitten on the hand or arm, by an unfamiliar dog out in the open.

In a number of cases death from dog attack has occurred when the child is in the care of another (e.g., grandparent).

Serious dog bites or attacks, requiring hospitalisation, are more frequent among children from more deprived areas than children from less deprived areas.

The owner of the dog is often not present when the fatal attack occurs and in some cases the attack has occurred when the dog has had unsupervised access to the child.

Families that experience high levels of aggression and domestic tensions are more likely to trigger stress and possible attacks by dogs.

### 3. Preventing Bites and Attacks

Never leave a baby or child unsupervised with a dog, no matter how well known the dog is.

This must be emphasised by practitioners to families with dogs and record the advice given.

The Blue Cross and RSPCA have produced resources on keeping children safe from dogs and practitioners should give or direct any families with a dog or have contact with a dog, towards these resources.



Link to - [Lincolnshire ICB](https://www.lincolnshire.nhs.uk/)