

Instructor Introduction

Staying Safe and Smart Around Dogs and Cats (Grades K-2)
Recognizing Animal Communication (supplement for Grades 3-5)

Students will learn how to safely approach dogs, how to determine which animals should be avoided, what to do in unfriendly and potentially dangerous situations.

Students will learn how to recognize different ways dogs and cats communicate their feelings.

Excerpts from the MSPCA's Statement of Belief:

“The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that responsible pet owners protect the welfare of animals kept as pets, while at the same time ensuring that their pets do not impact negatively on other animals, the public, or the environment.”

The following bullets list the important elements behind this lesson plan. For more information on any dog safety questions, please visit the MSPCA's website:

www.mspca.org/petowners_Dog_Behave_Dog_Bite_Prevention or contact an MSPCA Education Coordinator.

- every dog has the potential to bite
- dogs use body language and vocalization to communicate; a dog may bite for many reasons, including aggression or fear, or in response to injury, illness, or being startled, or to protect or possess food, property, or a person
- like people, animals communicate in a variety of ways; learning basic communication can be effective at preventing unsafe situations
- there are situations when it is not safe for kids to approach a dog, as he might become scared, stressed, surprised, territorial, or aggressive. Kids should not disturb a dog (even their own) when she is eating, sleeping, ill, injured, playing by herself with a toy, chewing a bone, or caring for puppies
- it is unsafe for kids and adults to approach an unknown dog that is tied up, behind a fence, in a car, or roaming without a leash
- there is an appropriate way to greet a dog on leash; kids should be taught to:
 - ask their parent/guardian's permission first
 - ask if the dog is friendly
 - ask the dog's owner/guardian "May I pet your dog?"
 - know the appropriate places to pet a dog and know where not to pet a dog
- children can feel empowered by knowing what to do in a potentially dangerous situation involving an unfriendly dog