



The Canine Code



It's a dog's life so take care of it

'One of the animals which a generous and sociable man would soonest become is a dog. A dog can have a friend; he has affections and character; he can enjoy equally the field and the fireside: he dreams, he caresses, he propitiates; he offends and is pardoned; he stands by you in adversity; he is a good fellow'.

Leigh Hunt

The Canine Code

The aim of this booklet is to highlight the responsibilities of dog ownership and to give both owners and prospective owners guidance in developing an enjoyable and rewarding relationship with their dog.

It aims to emphasise the many considerations, both financial and practical, which must be made to ensure that your dog is healthy and happy. Dogs give us love and companionship. In return, we must care for them, train them and understand the unique bond between dogs and people.

The emphasis throughout this booklet is on RESPONSIBILITY – the owner's responsibility both to the dog and to society in general.



Thinking of buying a dog

If you have decided to buy a dog or if you already own one, work hard to achieve mutual respect and understanding. Having obtained your dog it is essential you receive advice on your responsibilities as a dog owner. The Kennel Club has designed a wide variety of schemes to help you with all your canine queries, which are aimed at developing a strong and rewarding relationship with your dog.

From an early age children in the family should be taught to care for and respect their canine friends; dogs provide a valuable emotional support for us all, especially the sick and the elderly. Dogs give so much and if you give enough in return, you will gain a loyal friend and a new family member.



'The one absolutely unselfish friend man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog... When all other friends desert he remains...'

George Graham Vest
(In a speech to the U.S. Senate 1884).

There is no such thing as a bad dog, just an untrained owner! Buying a dog is the only time you will ever get to choose a member of your family, so your choice must be the right one if things are going to work out.

A very important factor to consider when buying a dog is your lifestyle and how you can train your dog to live in your lifestyle and become familiar with the benefits and the boundaries of daily life situations. After all, humans are not brought into the world with the fountain of all knowledge, we need an education to help us learn and understand the way that life works and our dogs are exactly the same.

Before buying a dog, ask yourself



- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can I afford to have a dog, taking into account not only the initial cost of purchasing the dog, but also the ongoing expenses such as: food, veterinary fees and canine insurance? As a very rough estimate a dog can cost £25 a week. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can I make a lifelong commitment to a dog? A dog's average lifespan is 12 years. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is my home big enough to house a dog? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I really want to exercise a dog every day? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Will there be someone home for a dog? Dogs get lonely just like humans. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Will I find time to train, groom and generally care for a dog? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Will I be able to answer YES to these questions every day of the year? |

If you are unable to fulfil all of the above requirements, then you should re-consider your decision of bringing a dog into your home.

If you are confident you can offer a dog all of the above, then the next section will assist you in your decision to buy a dog or a puppy and which type of dog would best suit your lifestyle.

Where to start

The big question we all ask ourselves when we are looking to buy a dog is where to start? The Kennel Club is conversant in all canine matters and can be of valuable assistance when you have made the choice to start looking for a new canine member of your family.

A good match between owner and dog is essential for a happy long-term partnership. Whether it is a puppy, pedigree, crossbreed, rescue or adult dog, the right dog for your lifestyle is very important.

Seek out responsible breeders; the Kennel Club operates an Accredited Breeder Scheme and full details can be found on the Kennel Club website. A list of breeders and Accredited Breeders with puppies currently available is also available through the Puppy Sales List on the website www.findapuppy.org.uk.

The Kennel Club will give you information regarding the different breeds of dog and the names and addresses of breeders through its puppy pack service, secretaries of Breed Clubs and Welfare and Rescue Organisations. Much of this information is available through the Kennel Club website.

Canine Welfare and Rescue Organisations always have dogs and puppies available that need good homes. Both pedigrees and crossbreeds can be obtained in this way e.g. Dogs Trust, RSPCA, Blue Cross, Breed Rescue.

Veterinary surgeries are an excellent source of information. Staff will give you general guidance on what you should do once you have made your choice.



Choosing the right dog for you

Always consider what the dog was originally bred for.

Whether it is a working, pastoral, toy, utility, terrier or companion breed, each breed has its own characteristics. If you match these with your personality and lifestyle, it is much more likely that you will have a happy and fulfilling relationship with your dog. Remember that crossbred dogs will have the characteristics of more than one breed.

The breed characteristics will have an influence on the dog's demeanour and this in turn will affect its learning span, exercise requirements and training needs.

Breed characteristics are detailed in the Kennel Club Breed Standard and can be obtained from the Kennel Club.

Consider whether you and the prospective dog are:

-  Energetic and lively or couch potatoes. Is the type of dog that you are considering bred for action or companionship?
-  Strong willed and ambitious or easy-going and indulgent. Is the breed you are considering bred to be independent or bred to be affectionate and attentive?
-  Friendly with humans or reserved with strangers. Is the breed you are considering bred to interact with humans or bred for guarding?
-  Friendly to dogs, cats and other pets or disinterested or incompatible. Is the breed you are considering bred to interact with other animals or bred for hunting, retrieving or terrier work?
-  Playful or disinterested in toys. Is the breed you are considering bred to engage in games or bred to be self motivating?

What to look for in puppies

- 1 A Pedigree dog is more predictable as to its future character and size than a crossbreed. Ask the breeder for the Kennel Club Registration Certificate or, if it is not available, ensure that the breeder undertakes in writing to forward it on as soon as it is received from the Kennel Club. This will enable you to transfer the puppy into your name from the breeder and receive all the benefits associated with Kennel Club Registration.
- 2 Dogs of any breed can be expensive to buy whether pedigree or crossbreed. Try to find out as much as possible about its parents so that you can gauge the end result. Consider the breed's characteristics and remember that if you are considering buying a crossbreed, these dogs will have the characteristics of more than one breed.
- 3 Ask which vaccinations your puppy has had and which ones are still required.



What to look for in puppies *continued*

- 4 Contact the Breed Club. Each breed has at least one Club, regionally or nationally that promotes and educates enthusiasts on that particular breed. Breed Clubs are a good point of contact as you can talk to owners and breeders who have first hand experience of the characteristics and compatibility of that breed. Breed Club also hold Breed specific seminars, educational workshops and fun activity days which can be good places to visit if you want to find out more about a particular breed. Details of Breed Clubs can be found on the Kennel Club website.
- 5 Register your new puppy with a veterinary surgeon as soon as possible and ask advice on health, microchipping, vaccinations and diet etc.
- 6 Just like humans, some breeds of dog can be affected by inherited conditions. The Kennel Club (KC) and the British Veterinary Association (BVA) offer three canine health schemes, which aim to detect and monitor these. It is important that you are aware of these conditions and know the right questions to ask before buying a puppy. There are also some DNA tests now available to help determine whether a dog is free of certain inherited diseases.
- 7 Buy direct from the breeder. See the mother (dam), as this is a good indication as to how the puppy will develop.
- 8 If buying a pedigree dog always go to a specialist breeder, not a dealer. A dealer usually advertises several breeds of dog and these dogs may have been obtained from various sources so their health and condition may be difficult to determine.
- 9 It is always wise to agree the right to return the puppy if all is not well and arrange a veterinary examination soon after purchase.
- 10 Make sure you receive full care instructions from the breeder, (dietary requirements, pedigree, a copy of any Health Screening Certificates for the parents – if applicable) and any further documentation such as a Kennel Club Registration Certificate and six weeks free pet insurance cover.
- 11 Ask the breeder for a feeding chart and some information on how the puppy has been weaned. Some breeders may give you a small amount of food to feed the puppy on for the first few days to start you off.



Puppy socialisation

-  **Socialise your puppy** – Puppies need to meet and have pleasant encounters with a wide variety of adults, children and other animals. Begin when they are very young, taking care not to overwhelm them with too much. Do a little every day, especially during the early weeks. Attending a well-run puppy training class will help keep your puppy sociable with other dogs.
-  **Educate and teach good manners** – Puppies need to know where their boundaries lie just as children do. Teach them, gently, but firmly what is acceptable and what is not.
-  **Use positive, effective training** – Reward-based training can begin as soon as your puppy has settled into the household. Use positive methods for all education, from housetraining through to coming back when called. Prevent bad behaviour, or distract and show them what you want them to do instead. Don't expect too much too quickly – all young animals need time to learn what we expect of them.
-  **Help your puppy find its place in the hierarchy** – Puppies need to learn their place in the human pack. Strong-willed puppies need to learn that they cannot have their own way all the time and what you want must come first.
-  **Teach your puppy to be left alone** – Pack animals like to be with others and our pet dogs need to be taught to tolerate being alone. Begin with short sessions when your puppy is young and build up to longer absences gradually.
-  **Coping with chewing** – Puppies chew while teething and during adolescence. Provide plenty of suitable chews and change them often. Teach your puppy what to chew and what to leave alone, try not to leave your puppy in a place where it can damage your things or itself. Prevention is better than cure.
-  **Be prepared for adolescence** – Adolescence can be a difficult time, during which your puppy's behaviour may deteriorate considerably. Try not to worry, it soon passes, but always keep on training through adolescence.
-  **Don't be afraid to ask** – If you are experiencing difficulties, ask your vet or experienced people for advice. Problems with puppies are usually easily solved so ask for advice sooner rather than later.

This puppy socialisation section was written in conjunction with The Blue Cross, one of Britain's most respected animal welfare charities. Further information leaflets on looking after puppies and dogs are available from The Blue Cross.



What to look for in adult dogs

- 1 If buying from a breeder find out why the dog is for sale.
- 2 See the dog in its home environment before making a decision. This is a good time to consider its behavioural characteristics and the lifestyle that the dog has become accustomed to.
- 3 When buying a puppy from a breeder or obtaining a rescue dog be prepared to be questioned and possibly a home inspection. Very often dogs from welfare or rescue organisations have suffered neglect and ill-treatment in their early lives. It is the priority of any good dog breeder or welfare or rescue organisation to ensure that the remainder of a dogs life will be spent in a good caring home.
- 4 Consider problems that can be experienced when bitches are in season and the cost of neutering, should this be necessary.

Canine Health Schemes

The Kennel Club and the British Veterinary Association currently offer three canine health schemes which aim to screen for the occurrence of inherited conditions; Hip Dysplasia, Elbow Dysplasia and Inherited Eye Conditions. It has been shown that if used responsibly these schemes can help reduce the incidence of these diseases. In addition there are now many DNA tests available, which help to determine whether a dog is free from any inherited diseases. It is important that you are aware of how these diseases could affect different breeds and what questions to ask the breeder. Please contact the Kennel Club Health and Information Department via www.thekennelclub.org.uk for more details.



The Do's of dog ownership

- ❃ The Control of Dogs Order 1992 requires that any dog in a public place must wear a collar tag with the name and address of the owner written on it. Your telephone number is optional. The Kennel Club can provide these tags from the Online Shop.
- ❃ It is highly recommended that you microchip your dog and register it with Petlog, the largest reunification scheme in the UK, as this can prove extremely effective in locating a lost pet. The Petlog Premium service can even alert local vets and dog owners when an owner reports when and where their pet was lost. This can be done by telephone, SMS text message, or via the Petlog website. However, it is vital to the effectiveness of this service that owners keep their records up to date, informing Petlog of any change in circumstances. Contact Petlog on 0870 606 6751.
- ❃ You can teach an old dog new tricks (so to speak), but you do need to consider the type of dog that you own and the task that you are trying to teach it. It is always best to break exercises down into small pieces, so that the message is clear and your dog can learn with confidence.
- ❃ Dogs do not come into the world with the fountain of all knowledge, they need to be trained. Always attend dog training classes to socialise and provide your dog with good education. The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme can provide you with a list of dog training classes in your local area. Telephone 020 7518 1011 or visit the Scheme's website www.gcds.org.uk



-  Remember – A trained dog is a happy dog!
-  Keep your dog under control at all times.
-  Train your dog to use the kerb correctly.
-  Always clean up after your dog.
-  Keep your dog close when walking it on a lead.
-  Respect the Countryside Code.
-  Give your dog the correct amount of exercise and play it needs.
-  Feed your dog a balanced, nutritious diet with adequate food and water.
-  Worm your dog routinely.
-  Register your dog with your local vet, attend annual health checks and ensure your dog is adequately immunised/vaccinated.
-  Take out veterinary insurance to cover any unforeseen injuries or illnesses. The Kennel Club offers a range of healthcare policies to suit the needs of you and your pet. For more information please visit www.thekennelclub-petinsurance.co.uk or call 0870 609 2152
-  Groom your dog regularly.
-  When booking holidays, make suitable arrangements for your dog in good time to ensure all vaccination certificates are up to date before booking your dog into kennels.
-  Consider that adult dogs of either sex can be neutered to avoid unwanted puppies.
-  Consider either third party legal liability insurance or take out specific canine insurance in case your dog causes damage or an accident.

Respect the views of others. Never let your dog become a nuisance to others.

The Don'ts of dog ownership

- 🐾 Don't allow your dog to foul footpaths, parks or public places. Local authorities have the power to make it an offence punishable by a fine.
[Dog fouling (Scotland) 2003],
[Clean Neighbourhoods Environment Act (2005)]
- 🐾 Don't leave your dog unattended with a young child.
- 🐾 Don't allow your dog to interfere with passers by on the street.
- 🐾 Don't allow your dog to make unnecessary noise.
- 🐾 Don't take your dog into food shops or places where dogs are not allowed. The Kennel Club runs an "Open for Dogs" scheme, to find out more about the scheme go to www.openfordogs.org.uk
- 🐾 Don't allow your dog to roam freely in grazed fields or through crops.
- 🐾 Don't allow your dog to chase livestock or wildlife.
- 🐾 Don't leave your dog alone for long periods of time dogs feel lonely just like humans.
- 🐾 Don't allow your dog to roam the streets or countryside unsupervised.
- 🐾 Don't spoil your dog spoiled dogs are as bad as spoilt children.
- 🐾 Don't leave your dog unattended in a vehicle.





Good Citizen Dog Scheme

Good training classes are invaluable and can help owners get the most from their dog.

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme is designed to help owners train their dogs to be obedient in everyday situations. The Scheme is not competitive and is aimed at all dogs: young, old, pedigree and crossbreed.

When deciding to join training classes, follow these guidelines:

- 🐾 Telephone or visit the Scheme's website for a full list of local dog training classes – www.gcds.org.uk.
- 🐾 Ring a local training club and speak to the Course Co-ordinator or Secretary.
- 🐾 Don't take your dog to the first club visit. If possible visit other dog training organisations, so that you choose the class and the instructor you feel most comfortable taking your dog to.
- 🐾 Ensure that the training is suitable for your dog's needs.

Finally: After all these serious reminders a note of happiness. Achieving a good partnership with your dog will prove to be one of the most rewarding partnerships you will ever enter.

“A trained dog is a happy dog, lad!”

Presented by



THE KENNEL CLUB

The Kennel Club's mission is 'to promote, in every way, the general improvement of dogs'. The organisation was founded in 1873 and offers dog owners an unparalleled source of information, experience and advice on dog welfare, health, training and many other areas of responsible dog ownership.

Whatever your dog needs, the Kennel Club is here to help and support you and all dogs and their owners.

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