



Be Kind Belize Understanding Dog Body Language Fact Sheet

How do dogs communicate?

Dogs do not talk the way people do. Dogs communicate through body language and smell. We've all seen dogs go up to each other and sniff other dogs bottoms. That is one way they communicate by smell. It may seem disgusting to us, but dogs can learn a lot about each other this way. Dogs also communicate with body language and this is the easiest way for people to understand them if we don't want to have to sniff their bottoms.

What is dog body language?

If you watch dogs carefully you will notice that their eyes, ears, tails, mouths and body position all mean something to other dogs. Because dogs cannot talk, they will also try to communicate with people the same way. Watch out for their ears standing up or laying down; their eyes wide, narrowed or looking away; their tail up straight and wagging, hanging gently or between their legs; their mouths snarling, panting or barking.

Why is it important to understand dog body language?

Human beings have lived with dogs for thousands of years. Even if we don't have dogs ourselves, we will see them at neighbours', friends' and families' houses. We will meet them in the streets, in parks and on the beach. Young people are bitten more often than grown ups and this is often because they do not understand dog body language and did not realise that a dog was telling them to go away or leave them alone. By learning dog body language you will be able to understand the dogs you meet, stay safe and have more fun.

If you have your own dog at home, this will help you to be a better owner and to build a strong relationship with them based on trust and understanding. Remember that if a dog is *anxious, suspicious, threatened, angry, stressed or needs space*, he will use body language to tell you and this is when you need to leave him alone to keep safe.

Please see the back of this factsheet to learn all about dog body language and what a dog is saying to you from a great poster made by Lili Chin at www.doggiedrawings.net

DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"