



Spot the problem

For 7-11 year olds

English | PSHE | Citizenship

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Teacher's notes



About this activity

Our 'Dog safety workshops' teach children how to behave safely around dogs, ensuring the child-dog bond can be enjoyed to its fullest. The 'Spot the problem' story is designed to encourage children to consider and adapt how they behave around dogs, as well as identify common, everyday risks.




Age range: 7-11 years

Subjects: English, PSHE and Citizenship

You will need:

-  Copies of the story for pupils to read individually, or in pairs or groups. Alternatively, the story can be displayed on a whiteboard and read as a class.
-  'Spot the problem' answer sheet (optional).

Optional extension activities:

-  'Stay safe around dogs' worksheet for each child.
-  'Safety poster challenge' – display for whole class or a copy for each table group.
-  The 'Stay safe around dogs top tips' could be copied and sent home with each pupil so they can read it with their parents.

How to use this activity

Deliver this as a whole class activity or with children working in pairs or small groups, depending on their age and ability.

Read the story 'Spot the problem'

As a class, or in pairs or groups

Deal with the problems

There are 10 'problems' included in the story, which could be considered problems for both the people and the dogs.

1 Identify the problems

Ask the children if they can identify the 10 'problems.'

2 Explain the problems

Once a problem has been identified, can the children explain why it is a problem? A version of the story is provided with the 'problems' highlighted and an explanation of each.

3 Remove the problems

In pairs, groups, or as a class, discuss how each problem could be prevented or solved.



Extension activities (optional)

Display the 'Stay safe around dogs top tips' for the whole class to see.

Activity 1: Stay safe around dogs

Individually, children complete the 'Stay safe around dogs' worksheet,

Activity 2: Stay safe around dogs poster challenge

Children each create a poster to teach everyone about being responsible and staying safe around dogs. We've included a challenge guide (page 13) that you can share on the whiteboard or provide as a handout.

They can use our 'Stay safe around dogs top tips' and they should:

- 🐾 Include a catchy slogan or title
- 🐾 Include pictures and images
- 🐾 Include the Dogs Trust logo
- 🐾 Be careful with spelling, punctuation and grammar
- 🐾 Include top tips for staying safe around dogs.



Create a display of all the posters for the whole school to see!

You could even share them on your school website or in the parents' newsletter to help teach even more people about being responsible and staying safe around dogs.

Spot the problem story

Problems highlighted in red

It was a lovely sunny day, so Tom and his dad decided to take their dog, Rufus, on a nice long walk. Rufus was snoozing on the sofa so **Tom went over to wake him up** so that they could head out on their walk.

Once outside, Tom's dad suggested that they should go to the local park because it was such a **lovely, hot day**. As they were walking up the street, they bumped into their friendly neighbour, Joe, and his excitable dog, Luna. **Luna didn't wear a lead** like Rufus did because Joe always talked about how well behaved she was. After a quick chat between Joe and Tom's dad, and after letting Luna and Rufus have a little play, they went on their way.

On their way to the park, Tom's dad said he was going to treat Tom to a nice ice-cream from the local shop as it was such a nice day. After **tying Rufus up outside of the shop**, Tom went into the shop with his dad to choose his ice-cream. When they came out of the shop, **some people were fussing and stroking Rufus**. Tom didn't like this because Rufus can get very nervous around strangers. Once the people had left, **Tom decided to cheer Rufus up by giving him a hug**.

Soon they were at the park. Once there, they let Rufus off his lead to have a runaround. He had so much fun and even **ran into the children's playground to say hello to everyone**. It wasn't long before Rufus was feeling tired and started panting, but **Tom's dad had forgotten to bring some water for him**.

After a while, they decided it was best to head home. Tom had had a great time at the park with Rufus and his dad. On the way out of the park, Rufus picked up a ball that belonged to another dog. **Tom quickly took the ball out of Rufus' mouth** so that he could give it back.

Once home, Rufus was given his dinner, which he was very excited about after all that playing. **Tom stroked Rufus whilst he was eating** to let him know he was a good boy. Tom then went into the living room to watch some TV whilst Rufus had a nap in his bed.

Problems explained



1 'Tom went over to wake him up'

When dogs are sleeping or resting anywhere in the house, it's important to leave them alone and give them space. Dogs can feel worried if they are woken up and might even respond in a way that is unsafe for us. This isn't because they're unfriendly, it's because sleeping and resting is very important to dogs, and they can struggle to cope when woken up or disturbed.

2 'a lovely, hot day'

We should be careful when walking our dogs on hot days. Walking them in the middle of the day, when it is usually hottest, can be dangerous due to the heat. Dogs may struggle to cool down in hot temperatures, and this can make them very unwell, and it can sometimes be fatal. Hot pavements can also burn their paw pads. Instead, we should aim to walk them early in the morning or in the evening when it is cooler.

4 'tying Rufus up outside of the shop'

It's important to never leave dogs tied up by themselves. Dogs can be stolen in these situations or can be approached by strangers, which will be frightening for the majority of dogs. When out and about, it's important to always be with or near your dog in order to keep everybody safe and happy.

3 'Luna didn't wear a lead'

All dogs, even well-behaved dogs like Luna, should always wear a lead when out and about. This stops them from running into roads and helps to keep everyone safe. Even well-behaved dogs might be tempted to chase or run after something exciting that they see, or run away if something scares them.

5 'people were fussing and stroking Rufus'

Before going up to or stroking somebody else's dog, it's important to always ask the owner first. The people fussing and stroking Rufus did not do this, which was unsafe for everyone and unfair to Rufus. If we see a dog tied up by themselves we should give them space as this is often a time dogs can feel particularly worried and might therefore react in an unsafe way. At Dogs Trust we recommend that it is generally best to avoid stroking other people's dogs altogether.

6 'Tom decided to cheer Rufus up by giving him a hug'

Tightly hugging or squeezing a dog might seem like a kind thing to do, but dogs can find it uncomfortable and worrying when we do this. It's very important that dogs are always able to move away from us if they choose to, which hugging doesn't allow them to do. Dogs do often enjoy being close to us though, and a better way to show them we care is having a snuggle instead. This means they still have a choice about whether to be near us and can move away if they wish to.

7 'ran into the children's playground to say hello to everyone'

Dogs usually cannot go into children's play areas in parks, especially off of their lead, and there are often signs to say this. Either way, dogs should never be allowed to run into a playground as this is likely to cause a lot of excitement from children which could easily worry or scare a dog and could, therefore, be unsafe for all involved. There could also be children/adults in the playground who are afraid of dogs.

8 'Tom's dad had forgotten to bring some water for him'

On hot days we should take water with us when we walk our dogs in case they need a drink. They also need access to fresh, clean water at home, at all times.

9 'Tom quickly took the ball out of Rufus' mouth'

It's unsafe to just take something out of a dog's mouth, even when it's a toy or item we don't want them to have. We need to swap rather than take. Dogs should always be offered something more rewarding or exciting instead, like a treat or their favourite toy, that they will then be happy to swap for. We simply throw the treat or favourite toy, which will normally mean they drop the other item they had. You can then pick that item up.

10 'Tom stroked Rufus whilst he was eating'

Food is very important to a dog and if we go near them or touch them when they are eating, they can sometimes be worried that we're going to take their food away. It is very natural and understandable for dogs to feel protective of their food. It is very important therefore, then when a dog is eating, whether that be their dinner, a chew, or something else they've been given to enjoy, we leave them alone and give them plenty of space.



Spot the problem story

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Once outside, Tom's dad suggested that they should go to the local park because it was such a lovely, hot day. As they were walking up the street, they bumped into their friendly neighbour, Joe, and his excitable dog, Luna. Luna didn't wear a lead like Rufus did because Joe always talked about how well behaved she was. After a quick chat between Joe and Tom's dad, and after letting Luna and Rufus have a little play, they went on their way.

On their way to the park, Tom's dad said he was going to treat Tom to a nice ice-cream from the local shop as it was such a nice day. After tying Rufus up outside of the shop, Tom went into the shop with his dad to choose his ice-cream. When they came out of the shop, some people were fussing and stroking Rufus. Tom didn't like this because Rufus can get very nervous around strangers. Once the people had left, Tom decided to cheer Rufus up by giving him a hug.

Soon they were at the park. Once there, they let Rufus off his lead to have a runaround. He had so much fun and even ran into the children's playground to say hello to everyone. It wasn't long before Rufus was feeling tired and started panting, but Tom's dad had forgotten to bring some water for him.

After a while, they decided it was best to head home. Tom had had a great time at the park with Rufus and his dad. On the way out of the park, Rufus picked up a ball that belonged to another dog. Tom quickly took the ball out of Rufus' mouth so that he could give it back.

Once home, Rufus was given his dinner, which he was very excited about after all that playing. Tom stroked Rufus whilst he was eating to let him know he was a good boy. Tom then went into the living room to watch some TV whilst Rufus had a nap in his bed.

Spot the problem

answers



Can you identify the ten problems in the story?

1

2

3

4

5





Can you identify the ten problems in the story?

6

7

8

9

10



Stay safe around dogs



Can you complete the sentences using one of the words in the boxes below?

1 Ask the _ _ _ _ _ .

2 Stand still and let the dog _ _ _ _ _ you.

3 If the dog comes to you, _ _ _ _ _ them gently on their side or shoulder

If the dog doesn't come over, _ _ _ _ _ them alone

stroke

owner

smell

leave

Remember!



It is best not to stroke dogs that we don't know!

Often, when we see dogs out and about, they are enjoying their daily exercise and will probably not want to be approached or touched by a stranger.

Stay safe around dogs



Top tips!

- 1** Always ask the owner before stroking their dog.
- 2** Always stand still and let new dogs sniff you before stroking them.
- 3** Stand to the side of the dog and gently stroke their shoulder.
- 4** Stay calm and quiet around dogs.
- 5** Always give dogs space when they are busy eating.
- 6** Always give dogs space when they are busy sleeping or resting anywhere in the house.
- 7** If you see a dog tied up by themselves, give them space; strangers may make them feel frightened or anxious.
- 8** Only play fairly, kindly and safely with dogs (that means no teasing).
- 9** Use gentle strokes or snuggles to show dogs that you care – hugging can make dogs feel trapped and worried.
- 10** Dogs must always be free to move away from us, somebody else, or a situation if they choose to. Giving them choice and space is so important and helps to keep everyone safe and happy.

Safety poster challenge



Can you create a poster to teach everyone about being responsible and staying safe around dogs?

Remember to:

- 1 Include a catchy slogan or title**
- 2 Include pictures and images**
- 3 Include the Dogs Trust logo**
- 4 Be careful with spelling, punctuation and grammar**
- 5 Include top tips for staying safe around dogs.**



Make your poster bright and colourful, so it stands out!



You could even include a link to the Dogs Trust education website:
www.learnwithdogstrust.co.uk