

At Dig It training club we welcome children to train with their pets however, it is important that we have some strict guidelines in place to protect children and dogs.

There are occasions when we get dogs and puppies into class who for a number of reasons may not have experienced children. Often if it is a rescue dog the owner may not even be aware that the dog has a problem until it is confronted by the child.

It can also be difficult for dogs used to children to concentrate whilst there is child activity going on around them. I'm sure you are all aware of dogs and children can wind each other up without much effort at all.

With this in mind we have put in place the following guidelines:

1. Only 1 child may be around the dog in training at any time with a parent. We will set aside an area for other children to sit and wait (Please bring no more than 2 children in one night). This is because a number of children trying to be involved can upset the dog in question and can cause problems for other owners who may be struggling to hear the instructors or handle their dogs who are reacting to the busyness by them.
2. One parent must take responsibility for the training of the dog until the foundations are in place and then they can pass it on to the other family members. During class one child may join in with the parent. The reason for this is that with the best will in the world children are not consistent with training and often struggle with their timing of rewards and cues. We ask that any child involved in class is 8 years or older. The dog may also associate the presence of the children with messing around and therefore will not concentrate.
3. All children in class must adhere to the rules set out by the instructors. They will be briefed at the beginning of class.
4. There must be NO running past dogs, shouting, shrieking or general messing. Any of this happening near a dog that is reactive to children or noise may result in an injury to someone.
5. We do not take responsibility for children in class. They must be accompanied by a parent and Parents are solely responsible for their child in class and around the site.

It is also worth pointing out that children taking dogs for walks unsupervised is fraught with problems. As well as inconsistencies in training a child will be unable to handle a difficult situation eg, your dogs gets into a fight on lead, sees a squirrel and dashes into the road or if your dog gets a fright your child may encourage the dogs fear and thus exaggerate the problem.