



## STAYING SAFE AROUND DOGS

### Parent-led activity

Length: 30 minutes to 1 hour

Suggested ages: 7 - 11 years old

#### What you need:

- Just the presentation, plus a sense of fun and a good imagination!

#### Key words

- What Woody Wants
- Stand like a statue
- Be a tortoise

#### Useful web page if you'd like to know more

[woodgreen.org.uk/pet-advice/article/how-to-keep-children-safe-around-dogs](http://woodgreen.org.uk/pet-advice/article/how-to-keep-children-safe-around-dogs)



## PRESENTATION GUIDE

**SLIDE 1. Introduce Wood Green, The Animals Charity.** Explain Wood Green is an animal charity, helping thousands of pets every year. Ask your child: what pets do you think might be staying at Wood Green, looking for a loving new home?

**SLIDE 2.** Listen to their ideas and share with them all the animals that stay at Wood Green – everything from cats and dogs to rats, guinea pigs, chinchillas, degus, chickens, ferrets, hamsters, mice, gerbils and rabbits. Explain all of the animals at Wood Green are homeless and are looking for a new owner to look after them. Introduce the session as being all about dogs.

#### Main section

Explain staying safe around dogs is important for everybody whether we have our own dog at home or not. Introduce a dog safety game – show sentences on the screen and ask your child if the sentence is true (thumbs up), or false (thumbs down).

**SLIDE 3.** "Dogs like walks" – **true**. A warm-up question to check they are awake!

**SLIDE 4.** "Dogs like being picked up" – **false**. Explain dogs much prefer having all of their paws on the ground, being picked up can be a little scary for a dog.

**SLIDE 5.** "Dogs like kisses and cuddles." – **false**. Explain most dogs prefer not to be kissed and cuddled. They'd much rather play with a toy with you, even your own dog. Dogs don't kiss and cuddle their best doggy friends, they prefer to play with them, so the best way they can be their dog's best friend is to do this as well.

**SLIDE 6.** "Dogs have feelings just like we do." – **true**. Explain dogs have feelings, exactly the same as we do. They can feel happy, sad, excited and even frightened. Ask your child: how do you work out how a dog is feeling?

Explain dogs show us how they are feeling using **body language** – putting their body in different positions. In fact we are all body language experts, not dog body language experts (yet!) but definitely human body language experts. Prove this to your child by suddenly going quiet, dropping your head, averting your eyes and generally looking sad. When your child notices and asks what's wrong, you can congratulate them on noticing your changed body language – how did they think you felt? Did they work out you were sad? Explain that they didn't just look at your face, they looked at the position of your arms and body. They can work out how a dog is feeling in just the same way, often by looking at their tail, ears and body position – their body language.

**SLIDE 7.** Ask your child how they think the dog on this slide looks. He's frightened. Highlight his flattened ears and tucked tail. They just learned some dog body language! Ask your child: if you saw a frightened dog looking like this, hiding away, what would you do? They can find the answer themselves by watching a dog safety animation on the following slide.

**SLIDE 8. Dog safety animation** – press the play button at the bottom of the screen. Ask your child: can you remember what you should do if you see a frightened dog hiding away?

**Leave them alone. Challenge them to remember the other four times a dog would prefer to be left alone:**

- 1 Sleeping
- 2 Eating
- 3 Tied up
- 4 Poorly

Discuss these scenarios with your child and see if they can imagine how **they** would feel in those situations – for example if they were sleeping and someone suddenly came and woke them up. They would feel just the same as the dog in each situation.



**SLIDE 9.** Can your child work out what Wiggles is doing in this picture from the animation? He is growling. Explain this is one way a dog tells us they would like to be left alone. Growls are very clever as they tell us very clearly to go away. Explain that if a dog ever growls at them, to tell an adult. It's then the adult's job to work out what made the dog growl and help prevent the dog feeling that worried to growl again in the future.

### Playing with your dog

Explain that your child is NOW an expert on when to leave dogs alone and talking a bit of dog language, how about working out a safe way to ask a dog to play? Be clear that this would only be their own or a friend's dog – dogs the children see out on a walk that they don't know would prefer just to carry on enjoying their walk and having some lovely sniffs, rather than meet a stranger for some playtime.

Ask your child to act out how they would get a dog to play. If you like, have a go yourself and ask your child to feedback on how safe it looks!

**SLIDE 10.** Explain Wood Green has a really simple and safe way to play with a dog, named after Woody, the dog shown on the screen. It's called What Woody Wants. Firstly, Woody wants us to make sure an adult can watch us play. If they can, we can follow the three Ws of dog safety with Woody:

**SLIDE 11.** Wait for the dog to come to you  
Watch for a  
Wag

Explain that letting the dog come to you is brilliant to remember even for your own dog if you have one. And if they wag their tail, just remember to play where an adult can watch. Some dogs can get a bit excited at playtime – the adult can ask them to stop and calm down, just the same as a teacher might do if someone got a bit over the top in the playground! If the dog doesn't come over to you then the dog doesn't want to play, it might be busy doing one of the things they saw in the film such as eating, or feeling poorly, and is best left alone.

Ask your child to now act out the three Ws to see if they can remember all three steps (feel free to be the dog if you wish!), and if you have more than one child ask them to feedback on their sibling.

### Leave me alone!

Explain that now they know there are times a dog would rather be left alone, what about times when they are out and about and **they** would like to be left alone? Ask your child to pretend they are playing in the park or in a friend's garden and a bouncy dog comes running over and starts being a bit of a nuisance – you or another child could be the bouncy dog. What would your child do? How would they get the dog to leave them alone?

**SLIDE 12.** Show 'Stand like a statue' with arms folded. Explain this is a great way to get a dog giving you unwanted attention to leave you alone – if they were holding anything then it's best to drop it to the floor so the dog doesn't try to jump up and get it. Can they spot the child looking away and ignoring the dog with their eyes? Explain they might get a sniff by the dog but they would soon get bored and leave you alone. This is a clever way to show a dog you're not interested in them. Ask your child to stand up and show you how to stand like a statue.

What if the child screamed and ran away? If you'd like some fun, ask your child to do this and you pretend to be the dog – show a very different reaction and run after them, tugging at their clothes and generally being a very big nuisance! Explain running is very exciting for lots of dogs and they would want to join in and chase, so **if they want a dog to leave them alone, standing still is really important.**

Ask your child to then act out what they would do if the dog knocked them to the floor.

**SLIDE 13.** Show '**Be a tortoise**' on the screen and then ask your child to be a tortoise – you can do it too! Explain that by tucking in their head, arms and legs, the dog has nothing to play with so it's a great way to get a dog to leave you alone.

### Ending

Quick thumbs-up - do dogs like kisses and cuddles?

Can your child show you how to get a dog to leave them alone if they were playing in a friend's garden?

Can they remind you what the three Ws stand for when staying safe with Woody?

**SLIDE 14.** Thank your child for becoming a dog safety expert and ask them to share everything they have learnt today with family and friends.



### Sharing knowledge

If your child sees someone not being safe around dogs, they can now share their new knowledge to keep everybody safe and keep dogs happy!



**WHY NOT HAVE A GO AT OUR  
DOG SAFETY CHALLENGE  
ACTIVITY SHEET?**



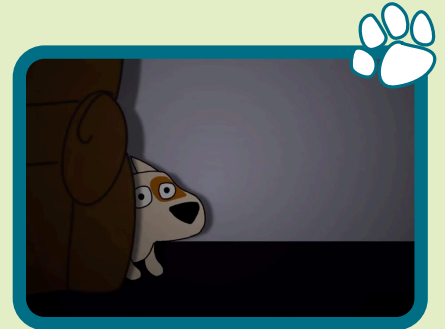
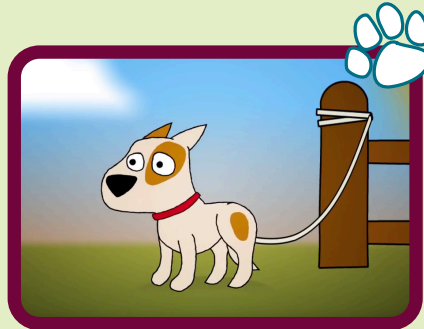
# SAFE SPACES

All dogs need safe spaces in their home to eat, sleep, rest and feel comfortable. These spaces also help to keep us safe too.

Can you work out which dogs in the pictures below would like some safe space and want to be left alone?



## ACTIVITY SHEET



When a dog is sleeping, it is \_\_\_\_\_ to leave them to rest.

If a dog is hiding, \_\_\_\_\_ for them to come to you rather than go up to them.

Dogs which are eating would prefer to be left \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ and tight cuddles are best for soft toys rather than real dogs!

Can you add the missing words into these sentences about staying safe?

kisses

best

alone

wait

# Staying safe around DOGS

What WOODY  
WANTS...



To stay safe when playing with a dog, once you've checked with the owner and made sure there's a grown-up who can watch you, you can follow the three W's of dog safety, named after me, Woody!

What do the 3 **W**s stand for when  
staying **SAFE** around dogs?

**W** \_\_\_\_\_ for the dog to come to you

**W** \_\_\_\_\_ for a

**W** \_\_\_\_\_

**Waiting for the dog come to you is the best thing to do** – even for a dog you know well. If they don't come, that means they would rather not play, so leave them to rest.



Activity 3 - Wait for the dog to come to you. Watch for a Wag.



## LEAVE ME ALONE – FOR YOU

How to show a dog you want to be left alone

What about if you want to be alone and do not want to play with a dog? If you are playing in the park and a dog tries to join in, what could you do?

**Stand like a statue!**

Stand like a statue and fold your arms. This will show the dog you do not want to play.

**Be a tortoise!**

If you are on the ground, the best way to show a dog you want them to leave you alone is to **be a tortoise!** Roll up in a ball and tuck your arms and legs in.

Can you **DRAW** someone standing like a **STATUE** and being a **TORTOISE** in the park so a dog will leave them alone?