

The selection criteria and behavior standards for dogs accepted into Take Five Dogcare's grooming facility are crucial for ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all dogs and our team members. This initial screening is our first opportunity to assess a new client's suitability for our grooming services. The criteria have been carefully designed to identify dogs that can be comfortably managed in the grooming setting and to avoid accepting dogs that may not be well-suited for the grooming process at Take Five Dogcare. This ensures a positive environment for everyone involved, promoting a stress-free experience for the dogs in our care.

Basic Requirements

Spay/Neuter Requirements: Spaying/neutering is not mandatory for dogs visiting our grooming facility. However, we do not accept female dogs in heat. This policy aims to maintain a comfortable environment for all guests and minimize potential disruptions during their stay.

Age Requirements: Puppies must be at least fourteen weeks old and have received their first series of vaccinations to be groomed at Take Five Dogcare. We recognize that dogs at different life stages have distinct needs. Puppies often require a balance of gentle handling and rest during their grooming sessions, while senior dogs benefit from a calm, quiet environment away from the bustle. Our grooming services are tailored to accommodate the varying needs of different age groups. Although we strive to welcome dogs of all ages, it's important to note that some senior dogs may find the grooming environment less comfortable as they age, and alternatives may be more suitable for their well-being.

Breeds: While we don't discriminate based on breed, we carefully evaluate each dog's temperament and behavior rather than imposing breed-specific restrictions.

Health Requirements: Dogs staying at our boarding facility must be up-to-date on vaccinations, Rabies and Canine Distemper (DHPP) are **required**. Bordetella (also known as Canine Cough) is **strongly recommended**. We also require flea and tick prevention and any other health-related necessities.

Minimum Time in Home: We believe in the Rule of Three when it comes to dogs and the acclimation period they need in their new home. The 3-3-3 rule refers to the first 3 days of feeling overwhelmed and nervous, 3 weeks of settling in, and 3 months of building trust and bonding with you. Although we strongly recommend 3 months, we are open to welcoming dogs that have been in their new homes for 3 weeks based on the dog's individual demeanor throughout the acclimation period.

Fence Jumpers and Escape Artists: If a dog is known to, or is identified as a fence jumper or an escape artist, additional measures such as higher fences or additional locks on enclosures may be required to ensure the safety of all dogs in the facility.

Defining a "Good Fit" in the Grooming Facility

By considering these factors, a "good fit" dog seamlessly integrates into the routine of the grooming facility, comfortably adapting to the environment and experiencing a positive grooming session. This approach ensures each dog receives personalized attention and care tailored to their needs, promoting a stress-free experience.

1. **Social Compatibility:** Dogs that exhibit friendly, non-aggressive behavior towards humans, allowing the team to perform grooming tasks and facilitating a peaceful environment.
2. **Adaptability:** Dogs that demonstrate adaptability to new surroundings, routines, and people, displaying ease in transitioning into the grooming environment.

3. **Comfort in Individual Settings:** Dogs that can be managed in a one-on-one grooming session, with groomers ready to adapt their approach or employ enrichment techniques as needed. While not all dogs may initially be calm or cooperative, a "good fit" includes those that respond positively to tailored adjustments that enhance their comfort and cooperation during grooming.
4. **Well-Managed Energy Levels:** Dogs with energy levels that can be moderated to suit the calm pace of the grooming process, balancing patience with the ability to relax appropriately. For high-energy pups, a half day of daycare (after a required evaluation) is often beneficial. This allows them to expend excess energy before grooming, ensuring they are more relaxed and manageable during their grooming session.
5. **Stress Resilience:** Dogs that handle separation from their owners without experiencing severe distress, with special accommodations available such as calming scents, enrichment options, or gentle handling techniques to ease anxiety. Familiarizing dogs with our facility through brief, positive visits can also significantly improve their comfort level, as it helps them adjust to the environment and staff, reducing stress during actual grooming sessions.
6. **Engagement in Activities:** Dogs that respond well to the grooming process, showing patience and tolerance for various grooming tasks such as bathing, drying, and clipping.
7. **Health and Hygiene:** Dogs that maintain good health, have no severe medical issues, and exhibit appropriate hygiene, making them suitable candidates for grooming. While we can manage a certain level of matting, we strongly advise establishing a regular grooming routine to prevent severe matting and discomfort in the future. Regular grooming not only maintains your pup's cleanliness and overall health but also ensures a more comfortable and stress-free experience during each visit.
8. **Respectful Behavior:** Dogs that display respectful behavior towards staff, following basic commands, and responding well to guidance or redirection when necessary.
9. **Positive Impact on the Environment:** Dogs that contribute positively to the overall ambiance of the grooming facility, spreading a sense of calm and cooperation. For dogs that may find it challenging to stay quiet or relaxed in holding quarters, such as those who bark frequently, we will strongly encourage enrichment add-ons, like stuffed Kongs. These enrichment options help mitigate stress and enhance the overall environment, promoting calm and helping every pup enjoy a more peaceful grooming experience.

Behaviors That Indicate Red Flags

These behaviors indicate that a dog might not be comfortable or could be a poor fit for our grooming environment at Take Five Dogcare:

1. **Excessive Aggression Towards Humans:** We evaluate each instance of aggressive behavior individually to determine its impact on safety. Our groomer exercises discretion in assessing and deciding whether a dog can be accepted or continue to stay at our grooming facility based on such behaviors.
2. **Snapping:** A quick and sudden attempt to bite without making physical contact. It's a clear warning that the dog is feeling stressed or provoked.
3. **Lunging:** A sudden forward movement, often with an open mouth, directed toward a person. It's a strong aggressive signal indicating the dog's intent to harm or intimidate.
4. **Showing Teeth (Snarling):** Baring teeth along with a wrinkled nose can indicate aggression. This display is meant to intimidate and warn others to stay away.
5. **Biting:** Actual contact with the intent to harm or defend territory, resources, or oneself.
6. **Ignoring Commands with Aggression:** A dog may aggressively ignore commands or cues from the groomer as a way of asserting dominance or control, coupled with threatening postures or vocalizations.

7. **Aggressive Blocking or Resource Guarding:** Asserting dominance aggressively by guarding resources such as specific areas, showing possessiveness and aggression to prevent the groomer from approaching them.
8. **Aggressive Initiating Physical Contact:** Initiating physical contact aggressively, such as forcefully nudging, pawing, or using mouthiness in a way that feels intimidating or threatening to groomers.
9. **Excessive Fear or Anxiety:** Dogs showing signs of extreme fear or anxiety may not be comfortable in a grooming setting. These behaviors can indicate discomfort or stress. Recognizing signs like trembling, panting, avoidance, pacing, or excessive barking is crucial for addressing their needs. We offer enrichment add-ons, such as stuffed Kongs, to help alleviate these anxieties and make the grooming experience more positive.

It's essential to understand and address these aggressive dominance behaviors to ensure a safe and harmonious interaction between dogs and humans in our grooming setting. While our groomers are trained to work with some of these challenging behaviors, they will always use their discretion to determine their level of comfort and the safety of proceeding with grooming services. This approach helps tailor our response to each dog's needs, ensuring that both the grooming experience and the environment remain secure and positive for everyone involved. Dogs demonstrating these behaviors might benefit from customized grooming strategies or alternative care arrangements.

Matted Coats

While we can manage a certain level of matting, severe cases can cause significant discomfort for the dog and may require special care. In instances where the matting is extensive and could potentially harm the dog's health or well-being, our groomer will advise the client to seek veterinary care for safe mat removal. We strongly encourage a regular grooming schedule to prevent severe matting and ensure the dog's ongoing comfort and health. This proactive approach helps maintain the dog's quality of life and avoids the need for more drastic interventions.

Our Commitment

The safety and well-being of every dog in our boarding facility remain our paramount concern. We recognize that dogs, like humans, can exhibit changes in behavior influenced by various factors, including health, environment, and social dynamics. Therefore, our commitment to continuous monitoring and understanding the nuanced signs of stress, discomfort, or behavioral shifts is unwavering. By staying vigilant and attuned to these factors, we ensure a proactive approach in maintaining a harmonious and safe boarding experience for all our four-legged guests. Our ongoing dedication to learning and adapting allows us to provide the best possible care and support to every dog entrusted to our facility, fostering a positive and enriching experience for all.