

Welcome to Take Five Dogcare's boarding experience! Ensuring every tail-wagging guest—and our dedicated team—has a safe and joyful stay is at the heart of what we do, whether your pup is a social butterfly or prefers a solo adventure. Our acceptance policy is designed to outline the behaviors and criteria needed for dogs to thrive in our care. For those furry friends joining in on the off-leash group fun, we have a few extra guidelines to consider. This initial screening helps us welcome new clients and make sure we're the perfect match for all dogs coming into our boarding family, ensuring everyone has a pawsitively great time!

Basic Requirements

Spay/Neuter Requirements: Spaying/neutering is not mandatory for dogs staying at our boarding 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 a minimum of twelve (12) weeks old and have received their first two series of vaccinations. At Take Five Dogcare, we understand that dogs at different life stages have unique requirements. Puppies benefit from structured play and rest schedules, while seniors appreciate a calm area away from high-energy companions to relax. While we strive to accommodate various age groups, we also recognize that some senior dogs might reach a stage where a boarding environment might not suit their comfort anymore.

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. **Oral & topical medications only.** It is important to note that we do not take diabetic pets at Take Five Dogcare.

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, personalized supervision, or leashed woods walks only, may be required to ensure the safety of all dogs in the facility.

Defining a "Good Fit" in the Boarding Facility

By considering these factors, a "good fit" dog seamlessly integrates into the routine of the boarding facility, contributing positively to the overall environment while enjoying their time.

1. **Social Compatibility:** Dogs that exhibit friendly, non-aggressive behavior towards humans, allowing the team to perform routine care and facilitating a harmonious social environment.
2. **Adaptability:** Dogs that demonstrate adaptability to new surroundings, routines, and people, displaying ease in transitioning into the boarding environment.
3. **Comfort with Group Dynamics:** Dogs that enjoy or tolerate being around other dogs in a boarding environment, engaging in social interactions with humans without causing disruptions or discomfort.
4. **Well-Managed Energy Levels:** Dogs with manageable energy levels that align with the activities and pace offered at the facility, balancing playfulness with the ability to rest appropriately.
5. **Stress Resilience:** Dogs that handle separation from owners without experiencing severe distress or exhibiting prolonged signs of anxiety.
6. **Engagement in Activities:** Dogs that actively participate in provided routine, such as potty time in our outdoor yard, on, or off-leash walks in our fenced in woods, displaying enthusiasm and enjoyment.
7. **Health and Hygiene:** Dogs that maintain good health, have no severe medical issues, and exhibit appropriate hygiene practices.
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 Others:** Dogs that contribute positively to the overall ambiance, spreading a sense of calm, joy, or companionship among other dogs (if appropriate) and staff.
10. **Comfortable Resting Habits:** Dogs that find comfort in their resting area, showing relaxation and contentment during downtime.

Behaviors That Indicate Red Flags

These behaviors indicate that a dog is not comfortable or might not be a good fit for our boarding 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 management exercises discretion in assessing and deciding whether a dog can be accepted or continue to stay at our boarding facility based on such behaviors.
 - a. **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.
 - b. **Lunging:** A sudden forward movement, often with an open mouth, directed toward a person, another dog, or an object. It's a strong aggressive signal indicating the dog's intent to harm or intimidate.
 - c. **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.
 - d. **Stiff Body Posture:** Dogs exhibiting stiffness in their body, rigid muscles, raised hackles (hair along the back), or a rigid tail might be showing signs of aggression. This posture indicates tension and readiness for confrontation.
 - e. **Prolonged Staring:** Staring without blinking or with a fixed gaze can be a sign of aggression or a challenge. It's an attempt to assert dominance or intimidate.
 - f. **Biting or Snapping:** Actual contact with the intent to harm or defend territory, resources, or oneself.
 - g. **Ignoring Commands with Aggression:** A dog may aggressively ignore commands or cues from a human as a way of asserting dominance or control, coupled with threatening postures or vocalizations.

- h. **Aggressive Resource Guarding:** Asserting dominance aggressively by guarding resources such as food, toys, or specific areas, showing possessiveness and aggression to prevent humans from approaching or touching those items.
- i. **Aggressive Blocking or Controlling Movement:** Dogs may aggressively attempt to block or control a person's movement, using threatening stances or behaviors to assert dominance.
- j. **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 humans.

Understanding and addressing these aggressive dominance behaviors is crucial to ensure a safe and harmonious interaction between dogs and humans in any setting. It's important to note that while these behaviors can indicate aggression, they might also result from fear, stress, or insecurity. Understanding the context, triggers, and body language cues is crucial in interpreting a dog's behavior accurately.

2. **Excessive Fear or Anxiety:** Dogs showing signs of extreme fear or anxiety may not be comfortable in a boarding setting. These behaviors can indicate discomfort or stress in the environment. Excessive fear or anxiety in dogs can manifest in various ways, and recognizing these signs is crucial in addressing their underlying stressors. Here are some common signs of excessive fear or anxiety in dogs:

- a. **Trembling or Shaking:** Dogs may shake or tremble uncontrollably in response to fear or anxiety, especially in new or stressful situations.
- b. **Panting or Excessive Drooling:** Rapid, heavy panting or increased drooling, even in cool conditions, can indicate stress or anxiety.
- c. **Avoidance or Hiding:** Dogs might try to escape from the situation by hiding, seeking shelter under furniture, or retreating to a secluded area.
- d. **Pacing or Restlessness:** Restlessness, repetitive movements, or pacing back and forth can indicate agitation or discomfort.
- e. **Excessive Barking or Whining:** Dogs may bark or whine excessively when they're anxious, seeking attention, or trying to express their unease.
- f. **Destructive Behavior:** Chewing on furniture, excessive digging, or destroying items can be signs of separation anxiety or stress.
- g. **Lack of Appetite or Digestive Issues:** Dogs might refuse food or exhibit digestive issues such as diarrhea or vomiting due to stress or anxiety.
- h. **Excessive Licking or Grooming:** Dogs might excessively lick their paws or other body parts as a self-soothing mechanism, leading to irritation or hair loss.
- i. **Calming Signals:** Submissive behaviors like yawning, licking lips, or tucking their ears back might indicate discomfort or anxiety.
- j. **Body Language Signs:** Raised hackles, pinned-back ears, lowered body posture, dilated pupils, or avoidance of eye contact can all signal fear or anxiety.

Understanding the circumstances in which these behaviors of excessive fear or anxiety manifest is crucial, particularly in a boarding facility setting. Identifying potential triggers causing distress in dogs is essential. While some of these behaviors might be manageable, there are instances where the management's discretion will determine whether the boarding environment suits the dog's needs adequately.

3. **Shut Down Signs:** A shut-down dog may display withdrawn behavior, avoidance of social interactions, or an overall lack of engagement with the environment. Such dogs may not benefit from a boarding environment.

Recognizing and observing these behaviors while dogs are staying in the boarding facility is crucial to maintain a safe and pleasant environment for all. Dogs demonstrating these behaviors may benefit from an alternate care option such as an in-home pet sitter.

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.