

Dog Greeting Etiquette

The following rules allow safe dog greeting and promotes polite behavior from your dog. Everyone that greets your dog should follow these rules. Be ready to explain these rules to friends, family, or anyone that interacts with your dog. Do not allow people to greet your dog unless they can follow your instructions.

Rule #1 – Ask the dog’s owner for permission to greet their dog.

Rule #2 – Let the dog sniff the back of your hand.

Rule #3 – Pet the dog under the chin. You may also pet the dog on the neck or the chest. If the dog has no problem with this physical contact, you may then pet the dog gently on the head. If at any time the dog backs away or cowers, refrain from further physical contact at that moment.

Rule #4 – Do not hover or lean over the dog.

Rule #5 – Do not put your face near a dog’s face.

Rule #6 – Dogs that jump up on you are not greeted or petted. Remove all attention from the dog until all four feet are on the ground. Do not look at, touch, or say anything to the dog unless all four feet on the ground.

Rule #7 – If a dog is shy, cautious, or backs away from you do not move towards the dog. Instead, get a food reward, kneel down if you are able, extend your hand with the food towards the dog, and let the dog approach you. Continue to greet the dog in this manner until the dog shows he is comfortable with you.

Rule #8 – When greeting a shy or cautious dog, do not face the dog directly. Instead, turn your body at a 45 or 90-degree angle to the dog. Do not stare at a shy dog. Instead glance away frequently.

Rule #9 – It is acceptable if a dog does not want to greet you. The dog may be interested in something else at that moment. If the dog is in a new environment with lots of distractions, he may need time to feel comfortable in this new situation.