

# DOG FOSTER CARE MANUAL



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# Welcome! - 101 for Doggie Fostering★

*Thank you for fostering with Animal Welfare League NSW. Fostering is a rewarding experience that helps us save thousands of lives each year and we could not do it without you!*

**This Dog Foster Care Manual provides also the helpful tips to ensure your foster success!**

- ★ Join our Foster Facebook Group
  - Search 'AWL Kemps Creek Foster Carers' on Facebook to join.
  - Post updates, ask questions and see what the other foster carers are up to.
- ★ Your Foster Care Officer is your first point of contact
  - They will help and support you on your foster journey.
  - They can be contacted during working hours, Monday – Friday, 8:30am-4:30-pm. **Please do not contact them outside of these hours, unless it is an emergency.**
- ★ In case of an emergency
  - CALL your Foster officer (do not SMS).
  - If a foster animal escapes or passes away, call the Foster Care Officer immediately.
  - In a **medical** emergency, call our vet clinic on 8777 4450 (or if out of hours contact hospitals listed in the “Medical” section of this manual).
- ★ Promote your foster dog
  - Use Facebook, Instagram etc and to family/friends (remember to include microchip number if promoting for adoption!).
  - If you're interested in adopting your foster dog or puppy, please advise the foster care officer as soon as possible to ensure it doesn't get advertised for adoption online.
- ★ On-leash only/walks
  - Dogs must be kept on leash at all times when outside the foster carer's premises.
  - All dogs and puppies are also not permitted to go to any dog parks.
  - No walks for the first week unless you have discussed with your Foster Officer.
- ★ No Sharing
  - Do not give a foster animal to anyone else, even to mind temporarily unless approved by the Foster Care Officer.
- ★ Returning the foster dog
  - Please contact the Foster Care Officer if you would like to return the animal to the shelter. **DO NOT** return the animal to the shelter without arranging with the Foster Care Officer first.
- ★ Payment reimbursement
  - Contact the Foster Care Officer to get approval in writing before purchasing anything that you'd like to get reimbursed for or you will not get reimbursed. **Note:** we will not reimburse carers for unapproved medical expenses. We also do not reimburse for basic care needs such as bedding, bowls and toys.

## What We Supply

AWL NSW supplies flea and worming treatment, all necessary medications, dog food, lead, collar with AWL NSW tag and a seatbelt clip.

Foster carers provide other items including toys, chews, treats, puzzle feeders/games, poo bags, water & food bowls and bedding.

If you'd like AWL NSW to provide any additional items, please ask the Foster Care Officer. Upon returning your foster animals, please return any items borrowed from AWL NSW.

If you need more supplies, please text the Foster Care Officer **at least 7 days** before you'd like to collect from the shelter or vet clinic. If you need more medication (including worming and flea treatment), please use the online form here [bit.ly/DogMedicationRequest](https://bit.ly/DogMedicationRequest) to order. It is essential you place an order **at least 10 days** before you will run out, especially if you require behavioural medication.

## Feeding

Only feed dog food provided by AWL NSW unless directed or discussed with your Foster Care Officer. Do not feed human food, or supermarket-bought pet food. Some human foods can be toxic to animals and supermarket pet foods can be low quality. Speak to your Foster Care Officer if you need guidance with feeding.

- For puppies, feed small meals 3-4 times per day (feed amount as per packaging unless our vet clinic or Foster Care Officer says otherwise).
- From 16 weeks of age and adults, feed twice a day.

If your foster dog is being fussy, you can request wet food from your Foster Care Officer or add plain cooked chicken (ensure has no seasoning).

If your foster dog is not eating, please contact our vet clinic and/or speak with your Foster Care Officer.

## Medical

- ❖ *Please do not self-diagnose or Google treatment options for your foster animal. Always speak to our vet clinic or Foster Care Officer before providing treatment or withholding treatment if you notice any health issues, no matter how minor the issue may be.*
- ❖ *Do NOT take an animal to a vet that isn't an AWLNSW approved vet. We are unable to reimburse vet bills to foster carers or other external vet clinics.*

### EMERGENCIES:

In a life-threatening emergency, call our Kemps Creek Shelter Vet Clinic immediately (8777 4450; 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat).

***If it is outside of opening hours***, you can contact Great Western Animal Hospital on 9631 9322 or Animal Referral Hospital, Homebush on 9758 8666, or the Veterinary Specialists of Sydney (VSOS) at Miranda on 8376 8767

The vets described above are our only approved after hours vets and we will not reimburse anyone for taking a foster animal to another vet. After the appointment, from 8:30am the next day text/call the Foster Care Officer to say what happened.

<p>Conditions which may require emergency assessment and treatment are listed below. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and if you are worried about your pet's health you should call the vet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Snake bite or suspected snake bite</li><li>• Sudden collapse</li><li>• Unconsciousness</li><li>• Seizures</li><li>• Difficulty breathing</li><li>• Refusal to eat or drink for more than 24-hours</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vehicular trauma</li><li>• Ingestion of a poisonous substance</li><li>• Severe pain or lameness, including suspected fractured bones</li><li>• Severe bleeding or bleeding that lasts more than a few minutes</li><li>• Suspected over-heating or heat stroke</li><li>• Inability to urinate or defaecate</li><li>• Continued coughing, gagging or retching</li><li>• Ataxia or paralysis</li><li>• Continued vomiting or diarrhoea</li><li>• Difficulty whelping or giving birth</li><li>• Eye injuries</li></ul>
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### Non-Emergencies

If you are concerned about any medical problems with your foster dog, please call our Kemps Creek vet clinic (8777 4450) within operating hours (8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat).

You may be required to book an appointment and bring the animal in for assessment.

Some symptoms that are considered non-emergency and required veterinary advice include:

- A puppy that loses weight or weight plateau's in 24 hours
- Has vomited more than twice
- Has continuous diarrhoea for more than 24 hours
- Has a lack of appetite (eg. not eating in 18 hours or eating small amounts)
- Has a small amount of blood in the stool or urine, or is limping

- Is sneezing and/or has runny eyes, coughing, swollen limbs, is bleeding or losing weight.
- Has patches of fur missing, itching excessively, fleas, or has new or growing lumps
- Repeatedly shakes head and/or has blackish build-up inside ears
- Any other abnormal symptoms or signs of illness that is not life-threatening

### **What about other routine vet consults and surgeries?**

Your Foster Care officer will let you know if your foster dog is due for any vet appointment or procedure. You will then need to book your foster dog(s) in for the vet work discussed by contacting our Kemps Creek Vet Clinic on 8777 4450.

If the appointment is a vet consultation, you'll need to stay at the vet clinic for the appointment. Appointments are available every weekday and Saturday mornings.

Surgery days for foster animals are Monday-Friday and the animal(s) will need to be brought in at 8-8:30am (and not fed from 10pm the night before) on the day of the procedure.

### **Vaccination, flea treatment & worming**

- Puppies are vaccinated every 3 weeks, from 4 weeks of age (up to 16 weeks) then yearly.
- Dogs from 16 weeks of age receive 2 vaccinations 3 weeks apart then yearly.

Your Foster Care Officer will let you know when your puppy/dog is due for their next vaccination and how to book in with our vet.

- Puppies are wormed weekly and treated for fleas monthly from 4 weeks of age.
- Dogs are wormed and flea treated monthly with Advocate. This should be applied on the back between their shoulder blades, on 1st of each month.

***NOTE: If you live in a coastal or dense bush suburb, please let your foster carer know.***  
***You may need an additional parasite prevention treatment for your foster dog.***

### **Common diseases**

We receive dogs and puppies from many different places and situations. Sometimes they may come down with an illness. It is very important that you contact our vet clinic immediately if you notice that your foster dog is unwell.

Some common disease include:

- Kennel Cough
- Ringworm
- Diarrhoea
- Worms
- Carpal Laxity Syndrome

## Bringing your Foster Dog Home

***All foster dogs and puppies must ALWAYS be on lead when outside the carer's home premises and are not allowed in dog parks.***

***Do NOT walk your foster dog for the first week unless you Foster Care Officer has advised otherwise.***

### Puppy setup

Puppies: Ensure you have a puppy pen or crate (this can be provided by AWL NSW if needed), toys (with no buttons or small parts that could be swallowed), puppy pee pads, water and food bowl and a hot water bottle or heat mat. This space will be used to provide a safe location while you are not home or when you cannot supervise your puppy.

### Dog setup

Ensure you have a nice comfortable bed and/or crate with bedding in the corner of a room or in a separate room where the dog and rest (this should be a low-traffic area). Provide a water bowl at all times.

Ensure you can provide one of three self-soothing activities for your foster dog:

1. Chewing
2. Licking
3. Sucking

Eg, Chews, Kongs, deer antlers, goats horns, bones, lick mats, soft toys etc

After 1 week of foster contact your Foster Care Officer to discuss if the dog is ready for their first walk.

### Introducing to your house

Bringing a dog or puppy home from the shelter is a day for celebration! However, from the dog's point of view, they have just left the shelter, travelled in a car with people they don't know, to a place they have never been to and may be very scared or anxious. For the first few days the dog will likely show anxious behaviour such as pacing, mouthing, restlessness and chewing. This is a normal coping strategy and should ease with time.

A common mistake people make is to 'hype' the dog up or do lots of activities on the first few days. This may create further anxiety in your foster dog because you are adding stimulus to what is an already stressful time and driving the dog into an overwhelm state.

It is best to give the dog relaxing time, allow them to explore your home and garden with plenty of reassurance and support. Note that this is also an important time to provide plenty of sleeping opportunities and self-soothing activities (as described above).

After three days, if the dog still exhibits restless behaviour, contact your Foster Care Officer.

- Check out this great video on How to Greet a Dog – Do's & Don'ts.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bu1n1mPCCOo>
- This is also a great video to get you started on reading your foster dog.  
<https://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com/video/dog-body-language-101/>

## Walking and Behaviour

### Walking your Foster Puppy & Socialisation

Puppies must have had their first vaccination before they are able to leave the home. If they have had one vaccination, they are allowed to go on very short walks but are not allowed to meet other dogs.

After their second vaccination, puppies can meet other dogs ONLY if

- a) the other dog is fully vaccinated AND
- b) the other dog is known to be comfortable with puppies.

Taking a puppy out to explore the world is an important part of their development but must be done carefully to ensure all experiences are positive.

It may take time and patience for puppies to learn and understand how to walk on lead, make this positive by going slow and providing lots of treats. It's also an idea to attach a leash to pups collar at home in the house or backyard, to begin their training. Using a treat to lure the pup to you will begin them on their leash-walking journey.

- Check out this video to help explain.

<https://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com/video/training-and-socialization-101/>

### Walking your Foster Dog

Adult foster dogs must **not** go on any walks for their first week in foster (unless it has been discussed with your Foster Care Officer). This is because it usually takes one week for a dog to process the change of environment, routine and new human family. Adding walks on top of this already overwhelming time, can result in behaviour problems and accidents.

After the dogs first week in care and discussions with your Foster Care Officer, your foster dog can go on their first walk.

Depending on the dog, this may be a short walk into the front yard, just up/down the street or maybe around the block. Observe the dog's body language closely. If you notice any signs of discomfort or worry, bring them home immediately.

Your Foster Care Officer can provide guidance with this process and extra training recommendations where needed.

Check out these great videos:

[https://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com/kit/dogs-101/#video\\_link1](https://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com/kit/dogs-101/#video_link1)

<https://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com/video/dog-body-language-101/>

***Do not introduce your foster dog to other dogs*** until you have discussed with your Foster Care Officer. Dog-to-dog introductions are best done while moving (not standing still) on a walk. Some dogs do not like other dogs and can be reactive or over-stimulated. They also may not have appropriate greeting or social behaviours and approach dogs in a way that makes the other dog uncomfortable or defensive.

## **Behaviour problems**

There are a few common behaviour problems in dogs that you may see while fostering. These are often issues that can be resolved or managed with training, support and guidance from your Foster Care Officer.

General Anxiety – As explained earlier this can happen when your foster dog is first adjusting to your home. Be patient, provide sleeping opportunities and self-soothing activities.

Reactivity on walks – When a dog is scared or over-aroused by a stimulus (that may be another person, dog, cat, bike etc) their body may react with a stress response. This may come in the form of Freeze (not moving), Fight (reacting. eg, barking or lunging) or Flight (running away). If you see an unwanted reaction from the foster dog, try to avoid that stimulus as much as possible and contact your Foster Care Officer about reactivity training.

Separation anxiety – This is when your dog panics when they are left alone. This can be treated with dedicated training. Contact your Foster Care Officer if you believe your foster dog is uncomfortable being left alone.

Resource Guarding – When an item, person or even area is so valuable to a dog that they are worried about it being taken away and feel that they must protect it. Be careful not to make your foster dog feel as if they need to protect their food:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9p-lWXC7Ud4>

Contact your Foster Care Officer if you believe your foster dog is showing some resource guarding.

## **Children and foster dogs/puppies**

Whilst fostering a new pet is a very exciting event for children, their enthusiasm must be supervised and controlled. It is essential that the new dog/puppy is not crowded by children or forced to interact with them, especially until the stress of being somewhere new has worn off.



Initially, ensure the interaction is with one child at a time in the room. Have the child sitting still with a small treat on the palm of an open hand. Let the dog come to them and when this happens, teach the child the correct way to gently pat and stroke the dog (not on top of the head, instead along the body or chest).

Even the friendliest dog may defend themselves if pushed or pulled too much, so be sure to teach them that the dog is not a toy. Avoid letting children pick up, sit on or lie on your foster dog. Babies and young children should NEVER be left alone unsupervised with any animal.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bu1n1mPCCOo>

## Foster Dog Involved in a Bite/Attack/Accident

Call the Foster Care Officer immediately if a foster dog bites or attacks a person or pet (or gets attacked by another animal), fill out our Incident Report Form and send to the Foster Care Officer ASAP. Download the form here -> <https://bit.ly/AWLIncidentReport>

## Foster Care Resources

In addition to our Foster Care Manual, we have over 20 helpful guides for our foster carers. Go to [www.awlnsw.com.au/foster-resources](http://www.awlnsw.com.au/foster-resources) and click 'View Resources' to see them. It includes information on crate training, separation anxiety and lots more!

## Adoption FAQ

### Can I promote my foster dog on social media for adoption?

Yes, we encourage you to do this! There may be some rare cases where we don't allow this (you'll be told at time of fostering) but in most cases, it is encouraged. When promoting an animal for adoption, it is a legal requirement to include the microchip number which can be found on paperwork given to you each time you collect animals from the shelter.

### Can I give feedback to the shelter staff about my foster dog for their adoption?

YES definitely! Fill out the Foster Animal Information Form [bit.ly/fosteranimalinfo](http://bit.ly/fosteranimalinfo) at least 3 days before returning the foster dog. This will help us promote the dog more accurately and we can also give the form to the new owner when the dog gets adopted so you can get updates.

### How much is the adoption fee?

Adoption includes desexing, microchipping, vaccination (up to the adoption date) and up-to-date flea/worming treatment.

#### Dog & puppy adoption fees

<7 months: \$590

7 months to 8 years: \$440

8 years and over: \$290

### Can I adopt my own foster pet?

Yes, in most cases but contact the Foster Care Officer to confirm. The animal may still need to be desexed or have other vet work done. **Let your Foster Care Officer know ASAP if you are thinking about adopting.** If someone else sees your foster animal on our website and contacts our shelter wanting to adopt, they will have first preference. Our standard adoption fee will apply. If you adopt, you may be unable to foster more (depending on the animal).

### What is the adoption process and does my animal have to go back to the shelter?

To be made available for adoption, all dogs must be medically and behaviorally cleared by the AWL NSW staff.

1. When a dog is made available for adoption they will be advertised.
2. Interested people/adoptioners will discuss the dog with our friendly staff at our shelter.
3. If the adopter is appropriate for the dog, our shelter team will contact the foster carer to organise a time for the dog to come in for an adoption appointment.
4. The foster dog comes back to the shelter to meet their potential adoption family.
5. If adoption family is happy and the staff have approved the adoption, then paperwork can be completed and adoption payment processed.

6. The foster carer may talk to the adoption family about the dog and exchange details if both parties are comfortable.

### **What if family/friend wants to adopt?**

1. They're encouraged to meet the animal at your home.
2. They must also call our shelter on 8777 4445 for information about the history of the animal, check to see if the animal may be suitable and to confirm that the animal is still available.
3. If everyone is happy for the adoption to go ahead, contact the Foster Care Officer to arrange a day/time to come to the shelter to process the adoption.

### **Family/Friend wants to adopt but also has another dog?**

This needs to be done at the Kemps Creek Shelter to ensure dog interactions are safe and well managed by our trained staff.

### **What do I say to an enquiry from a member of the public?**

Refer all enquiries to our website.

- ❖ *All animals fostered for Animal Welfare League NSW (AWL NSW) are microchipped to AWL NSW.*
- ❖ *All ownership rights and decision making of the animals, adoption process and veterinary needs will be made by the legal owner which is AWL NSW.*
- ❖ *If you wish to adopt your foster animal, advise the Foster Care Officer ASAP. Once the animal is made available for adoption to the public online, the public will have first priority to adopt the animal if deemed suitable.*