



**FRESH START**  
RESCUE INCORPORATED

## **FOSTER CARER INFORMATION BOOKLET**

**Thank you** for volunteering as a foster carer for Fresh Start Rescue Inc. Fresh Start Rescue are dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing of dogs and cats in genuine need. We consider that the measure of our success in doing so can only be judged once our animals are happy, healthy and in suitable forever homes.

This can only be achieved with the dedication and love of our wonderful team of foster carers, which is why we also have a strong commitment to taking care of our carers! We strive to provide you with all the support you need to tackle your role as a foster carer with confidence, and will include you in all decisions relating to the animal's care and adoption.

Fresh Start Rescue Inc. includes a team of dedicated and passionate volunteers who are committed to putting the animals first! Our members come from all different backgrounds of animal welfare, rescue, training and enrichment. Every effort is made to match our cats and dogs with their perfect family and home, and all vet work is included in the adoption fee.

Please read the following information and if you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to send us an email – [contact@freshstartrescue.com](mailto:contact@freshstartrescue.com).

# Table of Contents

<b>The Basics</b>	3
Contacts	
Costs	
Vet work	
<b>Emergencies</b>	4
Escapees	
Veterinary emergencies	
Issues with your dog/s or members of your family	
<b>The Do's and Don'ts of Fostering</b>	7
DO vaccinate your own dog	
DON'T allow your foster cat outside	
DON'T take your new foster dog to a dog park	
DO use positive training techniques and	
DON'T use harsh or physical corrections on your dog	
DO be prepared for some training issues	
DO keep identification on your dog at all times	
<b>The Fostering Process</b>	10
Getting a foster dog	
<b>The Adoption Process</b>	10
<b>What to expect from your new Foster Dog / cat</b>	12

## THE BASICS

**CONTACTS:** We want you to feel like you have all the support you need, especially if you are new to foster caring. Like you, many of our behind the scenes coordinators have full time jobs, so we ask you to please be patient when waiting for an email response and return call.

Or email address is the preferred contact method: [contact@freshstartrescue.com](mailto:contact@freshstartrescue.com)

**Liz 0412 952 135**

**Claire 0413 922 700**

**Cheryl 0410 682 110**

**COSTS:** The financial costs of being a foster carer are not high. All vet work (see below) is paid for by Fresh Start Rescue Inc. When we receive donations of pet food, this is immediately made available to our carers however, in most cases it is expected that the carer will pay for food and treats, as well as providing an appropriate bed.

The carer is also expected to transport the dog to any vet appointments, although if this is logistically difficult we can usually find volunteers able to assist. When a dog or cat in care is diagnosed with a medical condition that requires treatment, the carer is NOT expected to pay for or even contribute to the veterinary bill.

**VET WORK:** All Fresh Start Rescue Inc. dogs and cats are provided with basic veterinary treatment as soon as possible after arriving in care, and certainly before they are adopted.

They will be:

- Vaccinated;
- Desexed;
- Microchipped;
- Wormed;
- Flea Treated; and
- Heartworm tested and treated.



They will also be given a full veterinary check-up and any other issues will be identified and treated as necessary. We have a number of vets located around Brisbane, so please discuss with your co-ordinator which location will be the most convenient and also provide an indication of when you will be available to take the animal to its appointment. The dog or cat will likely have an unknown vaccination history, so the sooner they have their vet appointment, the sooner they can get out and about!

**Aspley Veterinary Practice**

758 Zillmere Rd, Brisbane  
(07) 3263 3166

**Chelmer-Graceville Practice**

353 Honour Ave, Brisbane  
(07) 3379 9260

**Clontarf Veterinary Practice**

9 Elizabeth Ave, Clontarf  
(07) 3284 4262

Your foster pet will arrive into care freshly wormed and flea treated however it is best that the carer provide ongoing intestinal wormer, heart wormer and flea treatment.

## EMERGENCIES

The most common emergencies experienced in rescue are foster dogs escaping (usually within the first 24 hours); accidents or sudden illness; and animals not fitting into their foster families.

**ESCAPEES:** Animals escaping from their foster homes is much more common than most carers realize. A very recurring reason for dogs and cats ending up in shelters is because they are escape artists. Cats are to be kept indoors at all times and must not be allowed to roam. While we work very hard to ensure that dogs are placed in homes with suitable fencing, often we simply do not know what the dogs' escape tendencies are and a poor match can be made. They are also very adept at slipping through doors as you open them. Foster pets may be frightened or distrustful, and in the early days have no reason to consider your house their home. Hence, most escapes will happen in the first 24 hours, and this is why identification **MUST** be kept on your foster dog or cat at all times. You should also monitor your new foster dog closely and if you need to leave the dog unsupervised, it is best to lock them somewhere safe, like your garage, laundry or bathroom until you are confident that your fencing is adequate.



While there is no worse feeling than realizing that the foster you don't yet have a relationship with is gone, be assured it has happened many times before and will almost always end happily so long as you act promptly.

So, the first thing you should do when realizing that your foster animal has flown the coop, is to immediately check outside your home and in your neighbours' yards. Jump in the car and drive around your block, trying to cover at least a couple hundred metres in all directions. If you see no sign of them, return home and check your own yard and house to make sure they are not hiding. The reason we head out before checking more thoroughly at home is that the first few minutes of a dog or cat going missing is obviously the best chance of getting them back safely. While they may be hiding behind the shed in the backyard, you will discover this later, so just check outside the yard first.

If you have not found them, it is now a good time to call your co-ordinator! **Don't fret** - they will be supportive and understanding and will be able to advise you on what to do next and begin the formal process of finding lost dogs (contacting shelters, etc.). An alert will be posted on Facebook and in most cases volunteers will be found to join the search. You are not alone in recovering the foster, but your help, and most importantly your prompt action, is vital.

**VETERINARY EMERGENCIES:** In the event of injury or medical problem with the foster dog or cat, please contact your co-ordinator immediately. All vet appointments must be made by your co-ordinator. However, co-ordinators have lives too and you may not be able to contact them straightaway. In this case, if you have assessed it as an emergency, please seek veterinary advice. Fresh Start Rescue Inc. will support your decision if it is made in good faith. For cases where a vet has been consulted without a co-ordinators approval and it is not deemed an emergency, payment of veterinary bills will be the carers responsibility and they will not be reimbursed.

While Parvovirus is uncommon in rescue, it is a real threat to dogs that have been in shelters or with a large numbers of other dogs. Parvovirus is deadly and carers should always be alert for it, particularly in the first 7 days of the dog being in care. It will present as lethargy, diarrhoea, vomiting and general ill health. Time is critical with Parvo so if these symptoms present, immediately contact your co-ordinator. It is critical that your own dogs are up to date with their Parvo vaccinations. The vaccine has an almost 100% effectiveness. We are not aware of any cases where a carer's vaccinated dog contracted Parvovirus from a foster dog, however you should never accept a high risk foster dog into your home if you have a young pup less than 6 months of age or if your dog is behind in their vaccinations.

Kennel cough does occur much more frequently in rescue dogs. It is the canine equivalent of a cold and shelter dogs are vulnerable because they are often unvaccinated, they are kept in close confines with many other dogs and their stress levels are high and immunity low. It will present as a cough, anywhere from one or two coughs a day, to a severe cough. Let your co-ordinator know if you see these symptoms, but kennel cough is not considered an emergency and most dogs will fight it off within 3 - 7 days without veterinary interference. While your own dogs should be vaccinated for kennel cough, this does not guarantee their immunity as there are many different strains of the virus. However most carer's dogs are strong and healthy and will usually avoid contracting it. If you have an older dog, or one with a compromised immune system then you might be best to avoid foster dogs that are at high risk of kennel cough (i.e. shelter dogs) and consider focusing on private surrenders that are generally much lower risk.

Cat flu is very similar to Kennel cough in that the close confines of a shelter/pound means this highly contagious viral infection travels fast and infects many, especially in stressful environments. It is a common disease and although not usually fatal in previously healthy adult cats, it can cause death in kittens and immune-suppressed older cats. The most common signs of cat flu are sneezing and a runny discharge from the nose and eyes. Just like if you had the flu, a cat will generally lose their appetite and want to sleep it off. There is no cure for this viral infection however the cat can be kept as comfortable as possible by keeping it warm and treating the symptoms. Runny eyes and nose can be bathed in warm salty water regularly, and ensure the cat stays nourished and hydrated. For more severe cases, a vet may prescribe medication however please remember to call your co-ordinator first. Healthy cats can generally fight it off within 7 – 14 days.

**ISSUES WITH YOUR FOSTER & / OR FAMILY:** Our co-ordinators do everything they can to ensure that your foster dog / cat will be a good fit. Obviously if we know they aren't good with kids then we will not place them with children, or if we know they don't get on with male dogs we won't place them in a home with male dogs; however sometimes these things aren't revealed until the animal is in the home.

With this in mind, please understand that if you already have pets, there will likely be some change in the dynamics, and possibly even some harsh words spoken! Most likely these interactions or 'spats' will consist of a whole lot of noise and a whole lot of nothing which will all settle down within a few days or even just a few hours. However, occasionally animals just do not get on and these fights might be more serious.

A common challenge that often presents with rescue dogs is *resource guarding*. This is a perfectly natural dog behaviour that consists of the dogs guarding a valuable resource, by growling, snarling or even snapping/biting. Most commonly dogs will guard food, but it might also



extend to toys, a favourite bed or even you. Usually the dog will only guard these resources from other dogs, but sometimes they will also guard them from you or your family. While this is a natural behaviour for dogs, it is a socially unacceptable one for us, and can be dangerous.

To avoid issues altogether, foster dogs should be fed separately to your own dogs (ideally they should be crated) and high value items like bones should also be given separately. This allows the foster dog and your dogs to enjoy their dinner or treat in peace without feeling like they need to defend or guard it. If a resource is never actually threatened then in most cases this behaviour will disappear. If however, you feel that your foster dog has a strong resource guarding behaviour, or if it extends to non-food items particularly people, please talk to your coordinator who can give you some ideas for dealing with it in a non-confrontational way.

Importantly, you should NEVER attempt to remove a valued resource from a dog who is resource guarding. While some traditional trainers will recommend regularly removing a dog's dinner when they are halfway through to 'assert your dominance and your right to take it', in fact all this does is prove to the dog that their suspicions were right and people are likely to remove their dinner at any time! It never solves the problem and in fact has been known to *create* resource guarding behaviours in dogs that never exhibited them! So rather than challenge this behaviour, it makes far more sense to convince the dog that they have nothing to worry about by giving the dog an extra resource rather than taking the one they are guarding away. So for example, rather than approaching the dog and taking their dinner away, it makes more sense to approach them and actually throw a treat in their bowl. This way, they start to anticipate people approaching them in a positive way.

While your coordinator can help you with ways to manage and solve such behavioural issues, ultimately no foster carer is expected to live with animals that they are scared of, either for their own safety or that of their own pets or family. In the event that your foster is not fitting into the family, you need to contact your coordinator immediately and allow them sufficient time to find another foster carer to look after the dog or cat. If required, keep the pet or children separate, until a suitable alternative has been arranged.

# THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF FOSTERING...

**DO VACCINATE YOUR OWN PET:** To minimize the risk of transferring any serious illnesses from your foster animal to your own pet, please ensure that your pet/s are fully vaccinated. Puppies and kittens under 6 months of age should have received an initial vaccination and two boosters; adult dogs and cats should have had a booster within the last 18 months to be considered 'current', or have been titre tested to ensure they have sufficient immunity. While we endeavour to ensure that animals with communicable illnesses are not placed in the homes of our carers, very occasionally it does happen. Kennel cough, cat flu and parvovirus are communicable but all can be vaccinated for. The parvovirus vaccination is almost 100% effective so if your foster dog does contract it, provided your dogs are vaccinated they will be safe. The kennel cough and cat flu vaccines are less effective, but present much less seriously when contracted. While a coughing dog or sneezing cat (the primary symptoms) sounds unpleasant, the experience of most animals is much like a common cold for a child.

Please be vigilant for signs of ill-health in your foster pets, especially in the first 7 days and notify your coordinator immediately if you are concerned.

**DON'T ALLOW YOU FOSTER CAT OUTSIDE:** Foster cats are to be kept indoors at all times. Cats are natural explorers and predators; they absolutely love all the exciting sights and sounds of the outdoors, especially in their new neighbourhood. If your foster cat was to go out exploring in its new, unknown neighbourhood, chances are that it would not be able to find its way back to you (or necessarily want to!). In case of accidents where a cat sneaks out an open door or window, we ask you to always have some form of identification on your foster cat. An outside cat darting across the street is a perfect target for a moving vehicle, and cats that are hit by cars rarely survive. There is also the risk of territorial cat fights, encounters with dogs and the cat hunting wildlife and becoming a nuisance.

**DON'T TAKE YOUR NEW FOSTER DOG TO THE PARK:** When you welcome a foster dog into your home it is quite natural and expected that you will be excited. You will want to show them off to your friends, and to 'get them out there' to help get them a home. You also will be itching to give them some positive experiences, especially if the dog has been abused or neglected. Hence, many carers are tempted to take their foster dogs to the dog park, the beach, or to family events. However, in most cases the dog will have an unknown vaccination history, so taking them anywhere that other dogs have been, especially dog parks and beaches, is putting them at a very high risk of infection as parvovirus particularly is prevalent within outdoor environments.

Importantly, you are also risking other people's dogs, as your foster dog may be carrying viruses such as Parvovirus or kennel cough, even if symptoms have not presented and might be shedding these viruses wherever they go. Parvo remains in the soil for up to 12 months, so taking a non-vaccinated dog to places where other dogs visit is extremely irresponsible. The vaccine is not effective until 14 days after it has been administered so at a minimum your foster dog should be kept away from such places for at least 2 weeks after they receive their vaccination.

The other issue to consider is that your foster dog may not be *emotionally* capable of such experiences. Timidity and fear are common in rescue dogs, who are often un-socialised or even abused. If a foster dog is fearful around other dogs then the absolute last place it wants to be is a dog park. Some dogs may never be emotionally capable of visiting dog parks. Moreover, if your foster dog is frightened of people, then taking it to the family BBQ to meet everyone will not only distress your foster dog, but may also result in a fear bite if it does not cope.

So, please do not flood your dog with these types of experiences. If you take your dog anywhere in public, please observe their behaviour and if they seem overwhelmed then remove them from that situation. While building up their ability to cope is important, it should only be done in small doses and never over the dog's ability to cope. The following are signs of stress that should be monitored closely whenever you are exposing your foster dog to something new, or placing it in a highly stimulating environment:

### ***Signs of stress in dogs***

Yawning;	Slow or little movement;	Excess salivation;
Dilated pupils;	Not eating;	Cheek puffing;
Lip licking;	Can't settle or pacing;	Pronounced muscle ridges
Stretching;	Tucked tail;	around eyes or mouth;
Stiff Posture;	Low body posture;	Ears pinned back (bunny ears).
Trembling;	Increased respiration;	
Excessive Shedding;	Sweaty paws;	

Please talk to your coordinator if your foster dog is timid and fearful and they will help you to develop a strategy to build up its confidence.

**DO USE POSITIVE TRAINING TECHNIQUES AND DON'T USE HARSH OR PHYSICAL CORRECTIONS ON YOUR DOG:** At Fresh Start Rescue Inc. we believe that every dog deserves to be treated with love, kindness and respect, and that the only acceptable way of training a dog, is through positive, reward-based training techniques. There is considerable evidence that dogs learn best when rules and boundaries are communicated in a kind and patient manner, and that little genuine learning takes place when a dog is intimidated or scared.

Hence we insist that all dogs in care are trained using positive training methods. Positive training methods are those methods based on rewarding the dog when they do the right thing and ignoring or diverting undesirable behaviours. Harsh or *aversive* training methods are those that require physical corrections, loud voices, or scary noises.

Many traditional dog trainers prescribe to dominance theory; this is a system of behavioural training that requires the trainer to 'show the dog who is boss' by using methods that are designed to intimidate the dog and mimic so-called 'natural' dog behaviours. Some of the more common methods are rolling the dog onto its back and pinning it to the ground, or scruff shakes. Such methods almost never actually solve the problem (hence why you see people who use them having to do it over and over again over the course of the dog's life) and often lead to a fear-based or adversarial relationship between the dog and its trainer.



At Fresh Start Rescue Inc., we do NOT subscribe to this understanding of dog behaviour and instead look towards non-confrontational ways of living with our foster dogs. This does not mean that the dog gets to do whatever it wants; in fact, positive training methods rely heavily on rules, boundaries and *structure*. The guiding principle is that a dog is happiest when it knows exactly what is expected of it. The following article describe dominance training theory and why there are better ways to live with dogs: <http://www.apdt.com/petowners/choose/dominance.aspx/>

The second article highlights the most common behavioural problems, describes why dogs do them, and provides brief tips on how to solve them using positive training techniques: <http://www.apdt.com/petowners/choose/dominancemyths.aspx>

If these techniques are new to you, please discuss with your coordinator and they will help get you started. They can be used to address any and all behavioural or training issues from toilet training, to jumping, resource guarding, barking and fear-based reactivity (often labelled aggression).

Please note: Under NO circumstances is an electronic training device to be used on a Fresh Start Rescue Inc. foster dog, including bark collars or electric fencing. Other devices used to prevent barking (e.g. Citronella collars, limited jaw movement collars etc) should also NOT be used. If you believe your foster dog requires a muzzle, please contact your coordinator to discuss.

**DO BE PREPARED FOR SOME TRAINING ISSUES:** Rescued animals often have troubled pasts. They may have been neglected or abused, un-socialised and un-trained. Of course there are many exceptions and animals frequently come into care that are very obedient and social. However, many dogs are surrendered because no one took the time to teach them basic social skills i.e. those behaviours which are actually unnatural for dogs but which we humans insist on – like not jumping up on people, not pulling on the lead, sitting quietly when greeting people, toileting in designated places (not just wherever you happen to be at the time!), not chewing the furniture, and not barking. As you can see there are a lot of NOT'S in the average dog's life!

Some dogs come into care with just one of these unlearned behaviours, and some dogs have them all... While we try and place the latter with experienced foster carers, as a foster carer you will need to be prepared to work through some training issues. You are not alone, your coordinators are there to help you, and if at any time you find you are unable to cope, please let us know and we will arrange to have the dog shifted, or for you to receive help from a professional dog behaviourist who uses positive training techniques.

**DO KEEP IDENTIFICATION ON YOUR DOG AT ALL TIMES:** Dogs and cats can be very good at making themselves go missing! And in fact for many foster animals, it is precisely this skill that landed them in foster care to begin with! Hence, it is absolutely critical that foster cats and dogs have identification on them at all times. Even if the animal is microchipped, collar identification is still necessary, partly because it takes up to 6 weeks for a microchip application or change to be finalised, and also because not everyone who finds a roaming animal knows to take it somewhere to have to scanned. So the quickest way to get your foster back is to have identification on its collar.

## THE FOSTERING PROCESS

**GETTING A FOSTER PET:** Once you have completed the foster carer form and have spoken to one of the Fresh Start Rescue coordinators, then you are ready for your first foster! There are a number of ways that we communicate with carers; the most common is to post animals needing care on our Facebook page. If you are able to help, please let us know. You may also receive an email regarding dogs and cats that need foster homes or you may be called by a Fresh Start Rescue coordinator.

While we do our best to contact carers we think are suitable, only YOU are in a position to determine whether you are comfortable and happy to look after that particular dog or cat, and whether you think it will be a good fit. So please do not feel like you have to take an animal if you do not think it will work; there will almost certainly be another one needing care!

Your new foster will probably be dropped off by your coordinator, who will then talk you through the process, help you to introduce your dogs where necessary, and answer any of your questions. However, on rare occasions you might need to pick the animal up from a shelter, another carer, or a private surrender. In these cases, please advise your coordinator if you think you will need assistance introducing the foster to your own pets.

While the dog/cat is in your care, you are expected to provide all its basic needs for water, food, exercise, shelter and love. As you get to know the pet – its personality, likes, dislikes, fears, training challenges, exercise requirements, whether they are cat, dog or child friendly etc. – let your coordinator know as these traits are what will determine the sort of home your foster will need.

## THE ADOPTION PROCESS...

While your coordinator will manage your foster's adoption, you also have an important role to play.

*Screening* – Fresh Start Rescue promote our dogs and cats for adoption primarily through the internet. Hence, we receive electronic applications for our animals, where applicants are expected to answer a series of questions about their lifestyle and the sort of home they will provide for their rescue pet. Any applications that we receive for your foster dog or cat will therefore be screened by your coordinator. If the applicant appears suitable (according to their answers) your coordinator will contact them, ask them for further information and just assess their general 'vibe'. If they still appear suitable, your coordinator will contact you and ask that you arrange a meet and greet with the applicant, at your own convenience.

*Meet and Greets:* When you arrange a meet and greet with the applicant, as a general rule it is not appropriate to take pet to the applicant's home. There are exceptions to this, but for the most part the applicant should be excited about meeting this potential new family member and therefore be only too happy to meet you wherever is convenient to you. Usually this is at the carer's own home, (especially with cats) but if you are uncomfortable about having strangers in your home, or simply feel that the dog would be better off meeting on neutral territory (for example, if they are bringing their own dog along) then a local park or other suitable area should be found.

If your foster dog is always happy to meet new dogs, then we advise that if the applicant has another dog that they bring it along. However, if there is likely to be issues on first meeting then it is usually a better idea for the humans to meet the dog first and then set up a second greet for the dogs. This way, if you or the family don't feel the dog is a good match, then the dog meet does not even need to happen as it will only create stress for everyone involved! The best way to introduce dogs is to take them for a walk together, starting out a little distant to each other and gradually getting closer.

During the meet and greet, we encourage you to ask lots of questions of the new family. YOU are your foster pet's best advocate, so any information you can gather will help to determine the family's suitability. Whilst every effort has been made by your coordinator to ensure a good match, you are the one who knows your foster best.

The most satisfying foster care experiences end with the pet finding a home that you are 100% happy with; otherwise it is a disheartening and upsetting experience. At Fresh Start Rescue Inc., we are committed to rehoming dogs and cats with the full involvement of their foster carers so if you have any doubts about an applicant, please speak to your coordinator. You might consider them great dog owners but for some reason not suitable for this dog; if this is the case just let your coordinator know and they will explain it to the family. If however, you think they are perfect, then please let your coordinator know and they will contact the lucky new family and begin the adoption process.

Please be aware that dogs are never allowed to join their families, however perfect they might be, the same day as a meet-and-greet. We ask that everybody take at least a night to think about so that we can be assured that all parties are happy with the adoption.

If at any time you realise that you would like to adopt your foster dog or cat yourself, please contact your coordinator. Lots of rescue pets are adopted by their foster families and are affectionately known as 'foster failures'! Adoption fees and conditions still apply.

Congratulations and thank you, you have now joined a very elite group of people who have saved an animal's life! 😊

# “What to expect from your “new” Dog / foster dog for the first two weeks”

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FIRST BRING YOUR NEW DOG HOME

### *Introductions to Other Animals in the House*

- Meet your new dog with your current dog outside of your home. Let them sniff each other and then take them for a 30 minute walk on neutral territory. This will get the dogs used to each other and then introduce them together when you get home. Always let your foster dog go in first and let him off lead to sniff around the back yard whilst your dog is on lead. After a few minutes let your dog off lead. This lets your new foster dog to have time to have a sniff of their new surroundings before being interrupted with your own dog.
- Ensure you have worked out in advance where you wish your new dog to sleep and that they have appropriate bedding. Make sure they know where they can get fresh water from and have a bowl and food available.
- It is for everyone’s best interest to ensure that when you first bring your new dog home to ensure that it has an area it can go that is separate from other dogs and animals of the house. Always introduce new animals in the morning or when you have the time to introduce them correctly and observe their behaviour and reactions to each other. This is for several reasons being:
  - When first entering your home your new dog will be in a highly aroused state of mind. This means that his/her adrenalin will be high, their ability to check their behaviour very low and if they are nervous dog they will be on their highest point of stress. This is a new home to them and it holds a lot of new smells, people and other animals, sounds etc. which means that they cannot always control their behaviour in these new surrounds.
  - Other animals in the house will be in the same state due to a new animal being in their territory. Even the most amicable pet can become defensive or over excited in the presence of a new dog to the house. So it is best to keep this in mind as well.

- If you have children they can become overwhelming to the new dog, so please monitor closely how your new dog is reacting around your children at all times. This is not because they may have aggression issues, but simply a good practice to have in teaching your children suitable behaviour around a strange dog and allowing the dog breathing space.

### ***Introducing New Animals***

It is always best to introduce animals gently and slowly. If you are introducing your new dog to another dog more please follow these guidelines.

- If at all possible, introduce the dogs on neutral ground ie. a dog park. This allows the dogs to get to know each other without territorial issues. Keep this meet and greet as happy and relaxed as possible. If you cannot do a dog park then walk them and get them to meet and walk with each other.
- If possible allow your dog to investigate your house and yard without your current dog present. Sometimes it is beneficial for your current dog/s to be taken for a walk so that your new dog is free to investigate.
- Before bringing the dogs all back together, ensure there are not toys, food, chews etc around that they may compete for.
- Always watch for any tell tale signs of problems i.e aggressive behaviour, one dog trying to jump on the other or hump the other day etc. If this is happening distract them, if distraction is not working please separate them and give them time out and then try again after at least 30 minutes waiting period.
- Most importantly when introducing dogs to each other is to make sure you are at all times completely calm and relaxed. Any stress you are feeling will be immediately picked up by the dogs and they will react to that if nothing else.
- Take the dogs for short walks and play time together, always ensuring that you hand out high value treats for good behaviour.
- Be careful about letting them interact freely until you are sure that they enjoy each others company;
- If you are introducing your new dog to another animal i.e cat, chickens, horses etc please ensure that they are on a lead so that you can control them if they react. Hold the lead at first and if they appear to be no problems after the first 15 mins you can drop the lead but still keep an eye open for any misbehaviour. For cats it is best to introduce them whilst the cat is in a crate so that your dog can smell them first and you can watch for any reactions. Once you think it is safe to introduce them without the crate, ensure your new dog is on a leash and your cat has a known escape route/safe place they can go to urgently if needed.

### ***Feeding your new Dog***

Please ensure that for the first couple of days you feed your new dog separately to your current dogs.

This is because most of our dogs come from pound environments where they may have been strays for a period of time before coming into care and have developed some food aggression behaviours. These behaviours usually settle in the first couple of weeks once they realise their food is coming regularly.

- Ideally feeding them with a screen or safety gate in between and slowly bring the bowls close together, keeping a close eye on their behaviour, will eventually lead to them being able to be feed in the same room together. There is no rules that says dogs must eat together and there is nothing wrong with feeding one inside and one outside or spare rooms etc.

### ***How to introduce your dog to your Children***

Children should never be left alone with any dog unsupervised especially children under the age of 13. Children under this age act very similar to prey with screaming, crying, squealing, running behaviours which can excite any dog too much and have it behave inappropriately.

Teach your child to know how to read dog behaviours. Eg if a dog is baring its teeth at your child and low growling it is time for your child to walk away watching the dog at all times as it does so. This is a warning from the dog that they have had enough and want to be left alone.

### ***What NOT to expect***

Do not expect all the dogs to get along straight off. There are processes happening between all parties that we as people do not necessarily understand or can detect. It is always best to remember to not push their friendship and allow them to work it out under supervision.

If there are any problems between your new foster dog and your current dog, just separate and take things more slowly between them. Never forget to give your current dog as much attention as you are giving your new dog and vice versa. Always reward good behaviour. A pat, good dog, food treat etc are highly valued by our dogs.

Do not expect them to know your house rules. This is something that you will need to teach them with consistency and instruction and most of all patience.

Do not expect them to come to you by calling their name. In most instances they come to us without a name and are given one as they come into our care. This is something we need to teach them and hopefully by the time you have received them from us they do know their name.

### ***What you CAN expect***

- You can expect your dog will be trying to gain your love and attention
- you can expect a thank you that you have given them a forever home and a new life
- You can expect love and happiness
- Most of all you should expect to feel FANTASTIC knowing that you...YES YOU...chose a rescue dog to share your home and to love ....that feeling is PRICELESS.

### ***Dog Parks***

Some people love them and some people hate them.

Before taking your new dog to park, ensure that you both have trust in each other and that they will return when called.

A lot of fights can break out in a Dog Park if you do not have control over your dog.