

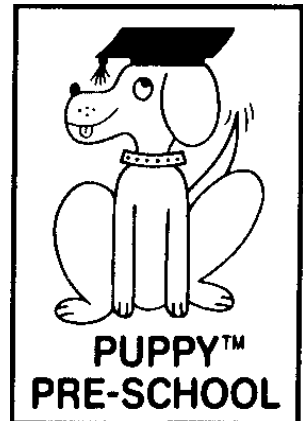


Puppy Preschool

Owning a puppy is very exciting - they're sure to be a bundle of energy and lots of fun! They also bring some responsibilities, and it's very important that they get off on the right paw. As a new member of your family, they need to be taught the rules of the household right from the start. That's why we have puppy preschools - to teach puppies good manners and socialisation from an early age and to educate owners on responsible pet ownership. Teaching them good manners as a puppy enables them to grow into confident, friendly and socially acceptable adult dogs.

Puppy Preschool aims to:

- 1) Socialise your puppy – with other dogs (young and old), people and even cats;
- 2) Teach your puppy good manners, basic commands and obedience training;
- 3) Educate you, the pup's owner, on puppy development and basic pet care. This also includes learning what is normal dog behaviour and how to recognise behavioural problems in your dog before they get out of control;
- 4) Be fun, and help your pup to enjoy coming to the vet! (which can otherwise be quite stressful for them).



Why do puppies need to go to preschool?

Puppies have a sensitive period of development called the socialisation period. It occurs from about 4 - 14 weeks of age, and any experiences the puppy has during this time can affect later behaviour. Dogs that are isolated during this time are more likely to become hyperactive, aggressive, difficult to train, antisocial and fearful. To develop into normal, friendly and confident adults, puppies need to be regularly handled and need to socialise with other puppies, so that they learn how to communicate. They need to be exposed to new experiences in a non-threatening way, whilst avoiding the disease risks of mixing with other dogs in public places.

Puppies (and their owners) also need to learn what is acceptable sociable behaviour. Something that's "cute" now may not be when your dog is bigger! It is important to start off on the right paw, as it is much easier to teach the puppy the correct behaviour first, rather than try and correct bad behaviour later, when the pup has had 6 months or more to learn it. We can help you to recognise potential behaviour problems before they get out of control.

Puppy Preschool is a **safe** way to **socialise** your puppy, and start them off on the basics of training. They will learn good manners, which includes **basic obedience** commands such as "Come", "Sit", "Drop", "Wait", "Stay" and "Heel". All training is reward-based or motivational. There are also lots of play sessions. Your puppy will actually want to come to the vet! But Puppy Preschool is **not** simply an obedience course for young dogs.

The course will also cover such things as:

- Dog behaviour and the "family pack"
- Puppies and children.
- Handling your puppy, grooming, pill giving, nail clipping and dental care.
- House-training
- Behaviour problems: jumping, biting, mouthing, chewing, digging, barking & aggression.
- Disciplining your puppy.
- Health care including nutrition, vaccinations, heartworm prevention, worming and flea control (information that is often too much for you to take it all in at your pup's first visit to the vet!)

Our courses run for one hour each week for 4 weeks here at our hospital. Only a small number of puppies will be admitted to each course, so there will be plenty of time for our instructors to give individual attention to each puppy.

It is essential to book in advance to ensure a place.

Puppies must be aged between **7 and 12 weeks** to start the course. They must of course be healthy, vaccinated and wormed.

What do you need to bring?

- Current vaccination certificate,
- A lead and flat collar or harness for your dog, - no choker chains please
- We provide cat biscuits and Vet's Best Rewards for use in training exercises but you can bring your own small food treats if you prefer.
- Make sure your dog is **not** fed before coming to the course each week (except for Staffies!)
- Children are welcome to come to the course but must be accompanied by an adult, and we ask that you let us know in advance how many people will be coming as our space is limited.

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