


Dog Socialisation

Socialisation with other dogs

Dogs commonly enjoy interacting and playing with each other, which can be a great source of emotional fulfilment throughout their life. Play can help to improve motor and social skills and can be a highly rewarding experience that positively impacts welfare and emotional wellbeing¹. But for these interactions to be enjoyable and safe, your dog must learn good social manners with other dogs.





A well-socialised dog is also more likely to express natural canine behaviours and engage in positive interactions with other dogs rather than be overwhelmed with fear, anxiety or paralysing excitement

Setting up for success

Even if your dog is the only dog at home and doesn't like to play with other dogs, they will inevitably cross paths with another dog at some point in their life whether at the veterinary clinic or during a walk around the neighbourhood. Setting your dog up for success by socialising them appropriately with as many different dog types as possible, including dogs of various breeds, sizes, sexes, appearances, and temperaments will help ensure your dog matures into a well-adjusted individual who is neither afraid, anxious nor aggressive around others.

See top tips on p.4, p.5 and [Introduction](#) for more information about dog-dog interaction and body language.

Dogs interacting

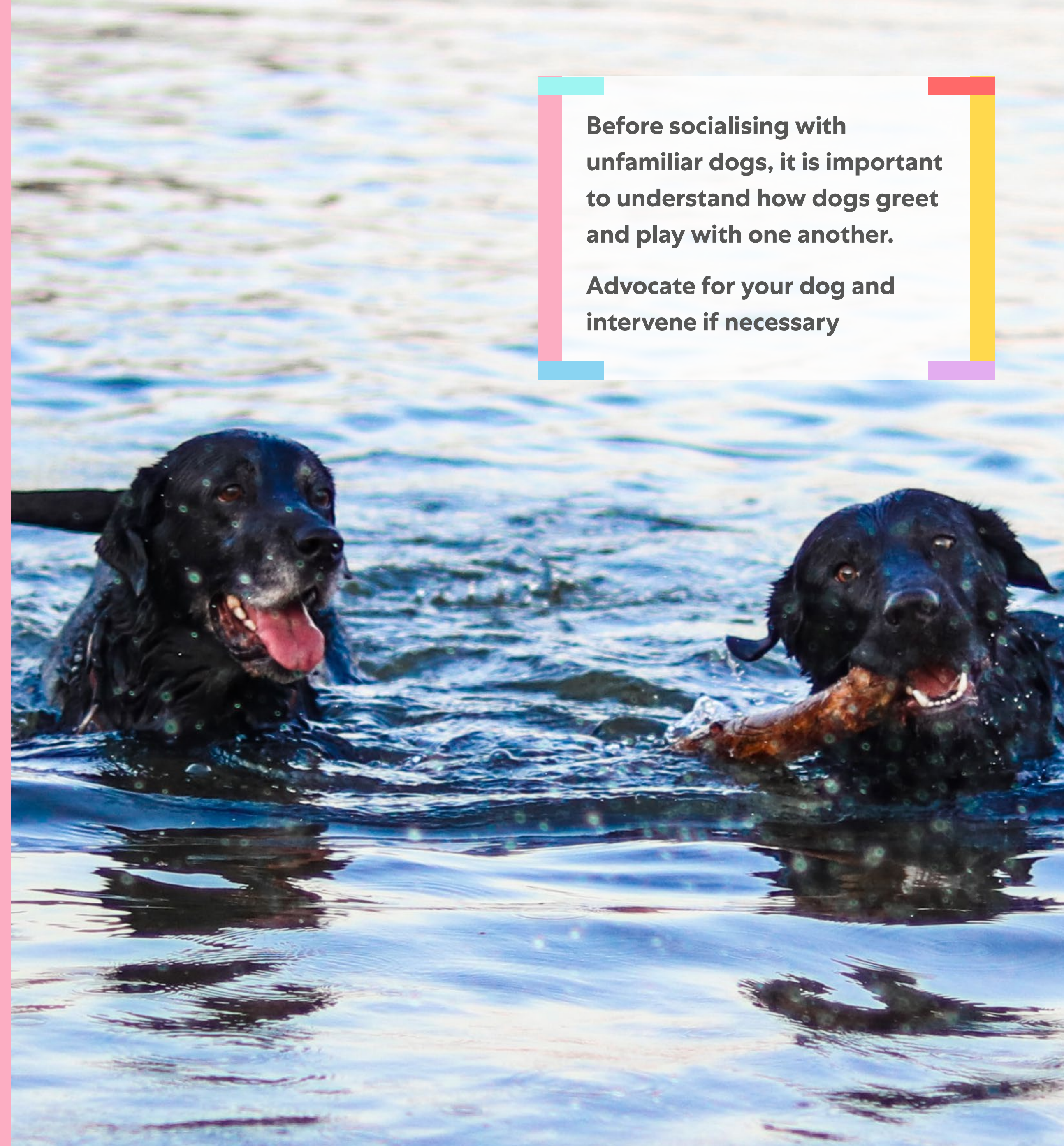
If you are unsure whether a dog is enjoying themselves, restrain the other dog and observe the dog you are unsure about. If the dog in question readily approaches the other dog and solicits an interaction, it is clear they wish to continue to engage. If however, they walk away and commence another activity, then they are telling you that they do not wish to interact with the restrained dog. Be respectful and prevent the other dog from approaching.

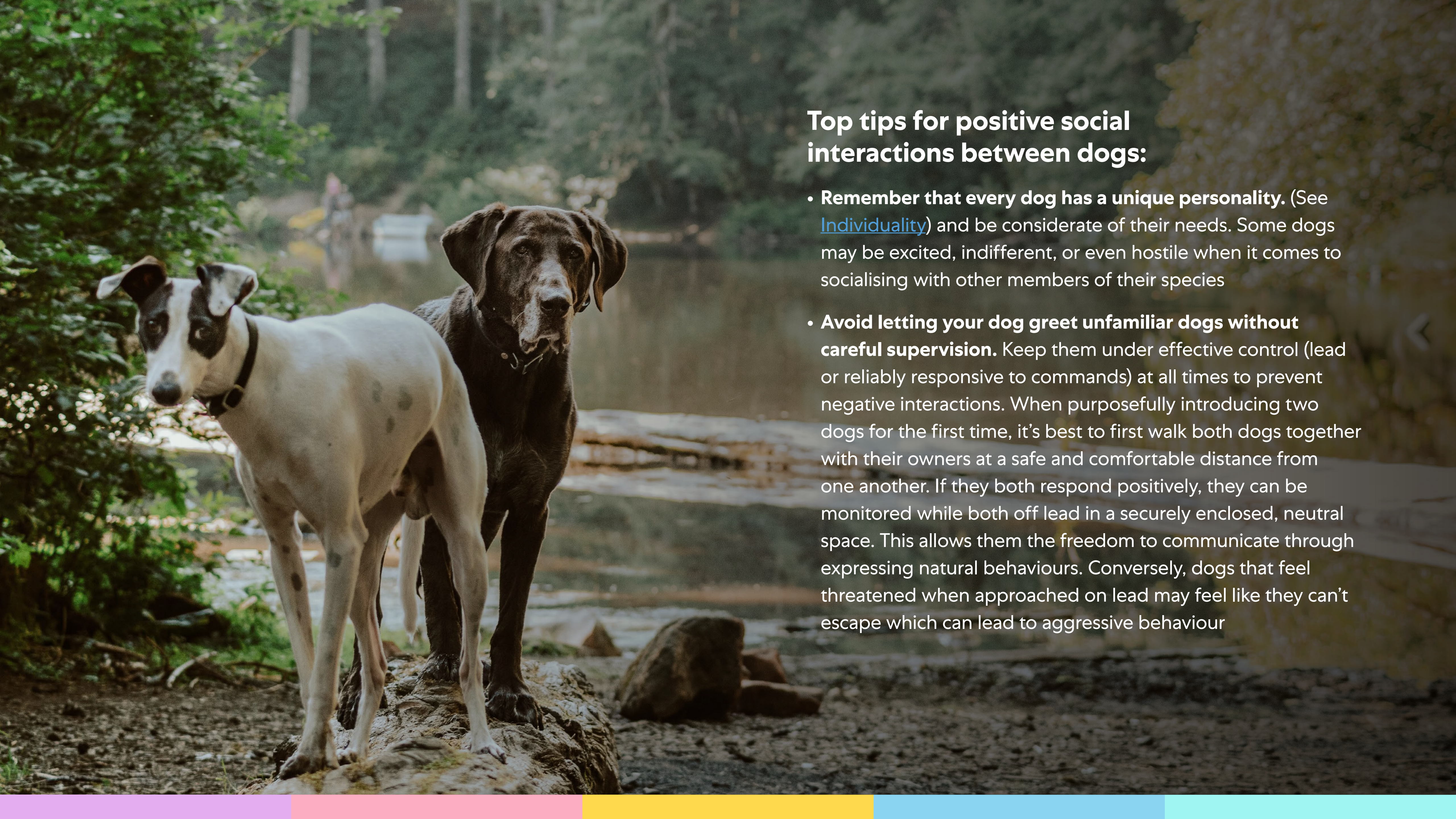
Don't be afraid to remove your dog from a situation or request that the other dog be secured to prevent problems from arising. It is important to protect your dog from negative interactions which may result in your dog being fearful of other dogs in future. This is very important, especially when your dog is young and has not previously had many experiences with unknown dogs.

You can also find more information about how dogs communicate with each other [here](#).

Before socialising with unfamiliar dogs, it is important to understand how dogs greet and play with one another.

Advocate for your dog and intervene if necessary





Top tips for positive social interactions between dogs:

- **Remember that every dog has a unique personality.** (See [Individuality](#)) and be considerate of their needs. Some dogs may be excited, indifferent, or even hostile when it comes to socialising with other members of their species
- **Avoid letting your dog greet unfamiliar dogs without careful supervision.** Keep them under effective control (lead or reliably responsive to commands) at all times to prevent negative interactions. When purposefully introducing two dogs for the first time, it's best to first walk both dogs together with their owners at a safe and comfortable distance from one another. If they both respond positively, they can be monitored while both off lead in a securely enclosed, neutral space. This allows them the freedom to communicate through expressing natural behaviours. Conversely, dogs that feel threatened when approached on lead may feel like they can't escape which can lead to aggressive behaviour

- **Let your dog play and interact with other similar, friendly dogs.** Similar energy levels, ages and play styles can help prevent possible conflict (see [Individuality](#)). However, they should also meet a variety of dogs of different breeds, colours, ages, sexes, and sizes during their sensitive period and throughout their life
- **Remember puppies can exhibit behaviour that may be irritating to some dogs.** If a less tolerant adult dog terrifies or hurts them, it can have a long-lasting negative impact on the puppy
- **During the sensitive period, puppies should attend socialisation classes**
- **Be mindful of body language.** Make sure your dog is comfortable, confident and calm when interacting with other dogs. Learn more about how to recognise when the interaction is not going well, and how to intervene or stop the interaction safely [here](#)

Learn more about socialisation and emotional wellbeing for your pets at [shine.waltham.com](https://www.shine.waltham.com)

