PROMISING PAWS INC
DOG RESCUE
Saving Lives, One Paw at a Time

ABN 37 573 350 235 | PO BOX 189, Laidley QLD 4341 | Ph: 0494 081 764
Website: www.promisingpaws.com.au
Email completed document to: promisingpawsforms@outlook.com

Adoption & New Owner Guide

Helping your new dog feel safe, supported and set up for success.

IMPORTANT: This guide supports your signed Adoption Agreement and Promising Paws policies. Where a contractual requirement applies, the signed agreement/policy takes precedence.

Congratulations on adopting from Promising Paws Inc. Bringing a rescue dog home is exciting, but it is also a major change for the dog. Even a confident, affectionate dog may behave differently while adjusting to a new environment. This guide is designed to help you give your new companion the best possible start.

1. The 3-3-3 Rule

The 3-3-3 Rule is a helpful guide to the settling-in process - not a deadline. Every dog is an individual, and some rescue dogs may need significantly longer to feel safe and fully settle.

First 3 Days

Your dog may feel overwhelmed, anxious, shut down, restless or unsure. They may hide, sleep a lot, test boundaries, have toileting accidents or behave differently from how they did in foster or kennels.

Next 3 Weeks

Your dog may begin learning the household routine, becoming more comfortable and showing more of their personality. New behaviours can also emerge during this period as they gain confidence.

Around 3 Months and Beyond

Many dogs are beginning to feel secure and bonded by this stage, but some take much longer. Continue with patience, routine, boundaries and positive reinforcement.

2. The First 3 Days - Decompress, Don't Impress

For the first few days, your dog's entire world has changed. Even if they appear happy and confident, they may still be experiencing stress. Your main job is to help them feel safe.

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- Keep life quiet, calm and predictable.
- Avoid inviting friends or extended family over specifically to meet the dog.
- Avoid parties, gatherings, cafes, markets, pet stores, dog parks and other busy environments.
- Do not feel you need to take them everywhere or immediately 'show them their new life'.
- Keep outings minimal. If the dog is comfortable walking, choose short, quiet walks close to home. Very nervous dogs may benefit from simply settling safely at home initially.
- Provide a designated safe space such as a bed, crate or quiet room and make sure household members leave the dog alone when they retreat there.
- Allow plenty of sleep and downtime.
- Do not force cuddles, handling or interaction. Allow the dog to choose to approach you.
- Keep feeding, toileting, rest and bedtime routines as predictable as possible.
- Introduce household members calmly and avoid everyone crowding the dog.
- Do not rush introductions with resident pets. Use separate spaces and supervise carefully.
- Feed animals separately and remove bones, chews, toys and other high-value items during early introductions.
- Keep the dog securely contained. Newly relocated dogs can be a significant flight risk even if they have never previously escaped.
- Do not 'test' the dog with cats, chickens, birds, reptiles, livestock or other small animals.
- Watch and learn their body language, triggers, likes and dislikes rather than testing boundaries.

The first three days are not about making your dog fit into your life. They are about showing them that their new life is safe.

3. Settling In & Building Routine

- Establish a routine: regular feeding, toileting, walks, rest and bedtime can help a dog feel secure.
- Use positive reinforcement: reward behaviour you want to see with food, praise, play or access to something the dog enjoys.
- Keep training consistent: use simple cues and ensure household members follow the same expectations.
- Avoid punishment-based methods. If behaviour is concerning, contact Promising Paws early for guidance.
- Provide appropriate exercise and mental enrichment without overwhelming the dog.
- Increase new experiences gradually as your dog demonstrates that they are comfortable and coping.

4. Introducing Resident Dogs & Other Pets

A successful first meeting does not guarantee that animals will immediately live together without adjustment. Resident pets may avoid, fear, dislike or feel unsettled by the newcomer initially. This does not automatically mean the adoption has failed.

- Keep initial interactions short, calm and supervised.
- Give each animal separate beds, feeding areas and safe spaces.
- Do not expect dogs to immediately share food, toys, beds, chews or personal space.
- Feed separately, particularly during the settling period.
- Separate animals whenever you cannot actively supervise until you are confident they are safe together.

- Watch for stiff posture, freezing, staring, guarding, avoidance, growling, lip lifting or escalating arousal and create distance before conflict develops.
- Contact Promising Paws early if introductions are not progressing well.

5. Cats, Poultry, Reptiles, Livestock & Small Animals

A dog's behaviour around another species can change in a new environment. Previous exposure to cats, chickens, birds, reptiles, livestock or other small animals is not a guarantee of future behaviour.

- Never assume a newly adopted dog is safe with another species.
- Use controlled, gradual introductions and secure physical barriers.
- Do not leave the dog unsupervised with small animals unless you have established that it is safe to do so.
- Prey drive may not be obvious immediately and can emerge as the dog becomes more comfortable.
- Chasing, stalking, intense staring, trembling, fixating or inability to disengage should be taken seriously.
- If you are concerned about prey drive or safety, separate the animals and contact Promising Paws for advice.

6. Children & Visitors

- Actively supervise interactions between children and a newly adopted dog.
- Teach children not to climb on, corner, hug, chase or disturb a dog that is eating, sleeping, chewing or retreating to its safe space.
- Do not allow visitors to crowd the dog. Let the dog choose whether to approach.
- If the dog appears uncomfortable, create distance and allow them to retreat.

7. Food, Bones, Chews & Resource Guarding

We recommend using caution with bones and other high-value chews, particularly during the settling period. Resource guarding can emerge after adoption even when it was not observed while the dog was in care.

- Feed dogs separately and give them space while eating.
- Do not allow dogs to compete over food, bowls, bones, chews or high-value toys.
- Avoid giving bones or high-value chews when multiple animals are together.
- If you choose to give a chew, use an appropriate product for your dog and supervise.
- Avoid suddenly changing diet or introducing large amounts of rich food or table scraps.
- Do not punish growling. Growling is communication and should be treated as a warning that the dog needs space. Seek behavioural advice if guarding occurs.

8. Walking, Leads & Off-Leash Safety

- Use a correctly fitted collar and/or harness and secure lead.
- Newly adopted dogs can be flight risks. Check equipment before every outing.
- Start in quiet areas and increase stimulation gradually.
- Avoid dog parks and busy off-leash areas during decompression.
- Do not allow your dog off lead until they are settled, have demonstrated excellent reliable recall and you are in a location where off-leash activity is legally permitted.
- Do not force a frightened dog to continue through an environment they are struggling to cope with. Create distance and return to an easier situation.

9. Secure Fencing & Escape Prevention

- Check fences, gates, latches and gaps before allowing the dog unsupervised yard access.

- Consider digging points, objects near fences that can be climbed, and whether the dog could jump or squeeze through a gap.
- Do not assume that because a dog did not escape from its previous environment it will not attempt to escape from a new one.
- Ensure identification details remain current and the dog wears an ID tag where appropriate.
- If your dog escapes, goes missing or is impounded, contact Promising Paws immediately.

10. Health, Veterinary Care & Preventatives

- Provide fresh water and a balanced diet appropriate to your dog's age and health needs.
- Arrange routine veterinary care and seek prompt veterinary attention for illness or injury.
- Maintain vaccinations and appropriate flea, tick, intestinal worm and heartworm prevention as advised by your veterinarian.
- Do not delay emergency veterinary treatment while attempting to contact Promising Paws.
- Consider pet insurance or another financial plan for unexpected veterinary expenses.

11. Behaviour Can Change After Adoption

Information provided about a dog's temperament and behaviour is based on what Promising Paws, foster carers and/or previous carers have observed at that time. A dog's behaviour can change in a different environment and no assessment can guarantee how a dog will respond in every future situation.

- Fear, separation distress, reactivity, resource guarding, prey drive, escape behaviour or other behaviours may only become apparent after the dog begins settling.

- Changes in behaviour do not necessarily mean the dog is 'bad' or that the adoption cannot work.
- Contact Promising Paws early if you notice concerning behaviour. Early support is usually easier than waiting until the situation reaches crisis point.

12. Your Responsibilities as a Pet Owner

- Provide adequate food, fresh water, shelter, exercise, enrichment, companionship and veterinary care.
- Maintain secure containment appropriate for the individual dog.
- Keep identification and contact information current.
- Comply with your local council's registration, animal limits, permits, leash requirements, nuisance rules and other applicable requirements.
- Provide appropriate supervision and management to protect the dog, other animals and people.

13. Desexing Requirements

Where a dog is adopted before desexing, the adopter must comply with the signed Desexing Agreement and Promising Paws' Responsible Rehoming and Mandatory Desexing Policy.

- Desexing must be completed within the timeframe specified in the signed agreement unless an approved medical delay applies.
- Where a delay is requested for medical reasons, appropriate veterinary evidence may be required in accordance with Promising Paws policy.
- Promising Paws will pay the desexing amount charged by its preferred veterinary providers where arranged under the adoption agreement. If an adopter chooses another veterinary provider, Promising Paws may contribute/reimburse only the amount it would ordinarily pay at its preferred provider, with any difference payable by the adopter, where this is provided for in the signed agreement.

- Where applicable, microchip transfer may be completed after the desexing requirement has been fulfilled in accordance with the adoption agreement.

14. Promising Paws Adoption Policies

Health & Behaviour

Promising Paws is not responsible for health, behavioural or temperament-related problems that may emerge after adoption, subject to the terms of the signed Adoption Agreement and applicable law.

Right of Return / No Private Rehoming

- If you can no longer keep the dog, contact Promising Paws as soon as possible.
- The dog must not be sold, given away, advertised for rehoming, transferred, abandoned or surrendered to another shelter, pound, rescue or individual contrary to the signed Adoption Agreement.
- Promising Paws will work with you to arrange a safe return based on urgency, available capacity and the terms of the Adoption Agreement.
- Unless Promising Paws advises otherwise, the adopter remains responsible for safely caring for and containing the dog until an agreed return arrangement is made.

Missing, Lost, Impounded, Bite or Serious Incident

Contact Promising Paws immediately if the dog is missing, lost or impounded, or if there is a serious bite, attack, escape or other significant safety incident.

Euthanasia & Veterinary Emergencies

The dog must not be euthanised contrary to the signed Adoption Agreement. In a genuine veterinary emergency, treatment must not be delayed while trying to contact Promising Paws. Where a veterinarian determines that emergency euthanasia is medically necessary to prevent unreasonable suffering, the adopter should notify Promising Paws as soon as reasonably possible and retain veterinary documentation.

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Right to Reclaim

Promising Paws reserves any rights contained in the signed Adoption Agreement where adoption conditions are breached or an animal is mistreated, neglected or used for a purpose inconsistent with the agreement.

Refunds

Refunds and forfeiture of adoption monies are governed by the signed Adoption Agreement and Promising Paws policies. Contact Promising Paws in writing if you believe exceptional circumstances should be considered.

15. Please Contact Us Early

If you are experiencing settling, behavioural, safety or compatibility concerns, please contact us early. We would much rather help before the situation reaches crisis point.

Returning a dog can sometimes be necessary, but many early difficulties can improve with decompression, management, training and appropriate behavioural support. Please reach out before making a final decision wherever it is safe and practical to do so.

16. Local Council Regulations

Rules vary between councils and shires. It is the adopter's responsibility to research and comply with registration requirements, animal limits and permits, leash/off-leash laws, fencing or containment requirements, and noise or nuisance regulations.

17. Contact Information

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Phone	0494 081 764
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Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and read this Adoption & New Owner Guide. I understand that it provides practical guidance and does not replace the terms of my signed Adoption Agreement or other Promising Paws policies.

New Owner Name	
Signature	
Date	
Promising Paws Representative / Witness	
Signature	

Thank you for choosing to adopt and for giving a rescue dog their second chance.

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