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Preface

Children in India frequently share space with free-ranging animals in streets, neighbourhoods, school surroundings, markets, parks, and residential communities. Many interactions are peaceful and uneventful. However, misunderstandings between humans and animals can sometimes result in fear, injury, or conflict.

This textbook has been written to help teachers understand:

- How animals communicate.
- How human behaviour affects safety.
- How children can navigate shared environments safely.
- How schools can reduce unsafe interactions.

The goal of this textbook is not to encourage children to handle animals or approach unfamiliar animals. Instead, it focuses on practical behavioural safety, calm decision-making, and conflict prevention.

This textbook is designed for:

- Primary school teachers.
- Teacher educators.
- School coordinators.
- Community safety trainers.

Table of Contents

Preface.....	1
Table of Contents.....	2
PART I	
Understanding Shared Spaces.....	3
Chapter 1: Humans and Animals in Shared Environments.....	4
Chapter 2: Why Animals React.....	6
Chapter 3: Understanding Fear, Distance, and Space.....	8
PART II	
Practical Safety Skills.....	10
Chapter 4: Moving Safely Around Animals.....	11
Chapter 5: What to Do When an Animal Approaches.....	13
Chapter 6: Safe and Unsafe Interactions.....	14
Chapter 7: What to Do If You Fall.....	16
Chapter 8: Situations to Avoid.....	17
PART III	
Understanding Animal Communication.....	18
Chapter 9: Animals Communicate Before Conflict.....	19
Chapter 10: Safe behaviours when animals ask for space.....	20
Chapter 11: Understanding How Animals Communicate.....	21
Chapter 12: Human Signals That Reduce Conflict.....	23
Chapter 13: Child-Friendly Safety Rules.....	24
PART IV	
Community and Public Health.....	25
Chapter 14: First Response After Injuries.....	26
Chapter 15: Vaccination and Sterilisation.....	27
Chapter 16: Building Safer School Communities.....	28
PART V	
Teacher Resources.....	29
Learning Games for Children.....	30
Rhymes.....	33
Posters for classrooms.....	34
Handouts to send home.....	38
Demonstration videos.....	40
Dog communication.....	40
Conclusion.....	40

PART I

Understanding Shared Spaces

Chapters

1. Humans and Animals in Shared Environments
2. Why Animals React
3. Understanding Fear, Distance, and Space



Chapter 1: Humans and Animals in Shared Environments

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Understand why humans and animals encounter each other frequently in Indian environments
- Recognise that shared spaces require safe behaviour
- Understand that conflict is often linked to misunderstanding and fear

Animals in Everyday Life

Many children in India encounter animals every day.

These animals may include:

- Dogs
- Cats
- Cattle
- Monkeys
- Rats
- Birds
- Snakes
- Some wildlife.



Because humans and animals often share the same spaces, it is important to understand how to move safely and calmly around them.

Why Do Conflicts Happen?

Many people believe that animals attack “without warning.” However, in many situations, animals react because they:

- Feel frightened
- Feel cornered
- Are surprised or startled
- Are protecting food
- Are protecting babies

Human behaviour also affects these situations. For example:

- Running may trigger chasing.
- Staring may feel threatening.
- Crowding animals may create panic.
- Sudden movement may startle animals.

Understanding behaviour helps reduce risk.

Shared Spaces Need Shared Rules

When we drive or walk on roads, certain behaviours keep us safe. These are taught to us as traffic rules. Similarly, when we live in shared environments with animals, be it in villages, cities or in jungles, certain behaviours keep us safe. Here, we will learn about several such safe behaviours.

Remember: Simple changes in human behaviour can reduce unsafe interactions.

Examples include:

- Remaining calm around animals.
- Moving in ways that give animals space.
- Avoiding startling or threatening actions or movements.
- Avoiding unsafe interactions, including unsafe touch.

Reflection Question

- Where do children in your community usually encounter animals?
- What unsafe behaviours do children commonly display?
- What might animals feel when they encounter such behaviours?
- How can knowledge of safe behaviours help children and their community members?

Chapter 2: Why Animals React

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Understand why animals may react defensively
- Understand the role of fear and stress
- Recognise that behaviour often serves communication purposes

Animals Try to Avoid Conflict

Actual fights and bites are dangerous for animals too.

Injuries can:

- Cause pain
- Lead to infection
- Reduce survival
- Increase vulnerability

Because of this, many animals display signals before escalating to actual bites. Learning to recognise these signals can help us prevent these bites.

Animals give these signals in an attempt to:

- Increase distance between themselves and whatever they feel threatened by.
- Stop interaction they find unpleasant.
- Reduce threat.

These signals are defensive signals, not threatening signals.

Fear and Space

Animals often react defensively when they feel they do not have enough space.

For example:

- A sleeping dog startled suddenly may react.
- An injured animal may react defensively.
- A mother animal with babies may become protective.
- A dog that is eating may feel insecure if approached and may react defensively.

Distance is important in animal communication.

When animals show defensive behaviour, giving them space often reduces tension.

Human Behaviour Matters

Humans sometimes unintentionally increase risk.

Examples include:

- Teasing
- Chasing
- Throwing objects
- Trying to hug unfamiliar animals
- Cornering animals
- Surrounding them in groups
- Going close to animals that are eating, sleeping, injured, unwell or those that are nursing young ones.



Teaching children to avoid such behaviours is safer than teaching panic.

Sometimes the animals may be friendly on most occasions, but may still react defensively if:

- They are startled when they are sleeping.
- They are approached when they are eating.
- They are feeling unwell or have been injured and someone approaches them or tries to touch them.
- They are mumma dogs nursing a young litter and someone approaches the litter.

Group Activity

Consider the following situations:

- A child runs when a dog barks.
- A group crowds around a puppy.
- Someone walks too close to a sleeping/eating/injured animal.

Discuss:

- What might the animal feel?
- What safer alternatives exist?
- A friendly animal suddenly growls or bites! What may be the possible reasons?

Chapter 3: Understanding Fear, Distance, and Space

Learning Goals

Readers should be able to:

- Understand why distance matters
- Recognise the importance of calm movement
- Understand the idea of “giving space”

Distance Helps Reduce Conflict

Many animals prefer avoiding direct conflict. When animals are given enough space, they often:

- Move away
- Relax
- Stop displaying defensive behaviour

Problems often increase when:

- The animal feels cornered or trapped.
- The animal does not feel there is enough space to feel safe or escape.
- Movement becomes fast.

Personal Space Exists for Animals Too

Humans also become uncomfortable when strangers stand too close. Animals similarly use space to feel safe. Different animals tolerate different distances. Children should learn:

- Not to crowd or corner animals.
- Not to hug or hold animals, which can sometimes make them feel trapped.
- Not to block escape routes.
- Not to touch animals without adult supervision.

The Safest Goal

The goal is not to “control” animals. This can fail as animals can feel threatened when we try to control them. Instead, the goal is:

- Calm movement
- Safe distance
- Conflict prevention



Activity

Discuss:

- List down the feelings you feel when people come too close to you without your consent?
- Think of a time when you felt the need for distance or space from someone. What behaviour would you prefer from the other person?
- Discuss with your cohort and list down different scenarios where each of your need for personal space increases and you want more space than usual. Which of these may be applicable to animals too?
- How might children inadvertently violate the personal space of animals?

PART II

Practical Safety Skills

Chapters

4. Moving Safely Around Animals
5. What to Do When an Animal Approaches
6. Safe and Unsafe Interactions
7. What to Do If You Fall
8. Situations to Avoid



Chapter 4: Moving Safely Around Animals

Learning Goals

Readers should be able to:

- Move calmly around animals
- Use curving behaviour
- Avoid threatening movement patterns

Introducing Curving

Curving means walking in a gentle curve around an animal instead of walking directly toward it. It is a safer way to approach or walk past animals, instead of a head-on approach. This is a safer approach because:

- Direct approaches can feel threatening.
- Curved movement is less confrontational.
- It gives the animal more comfort and space.
- Animals use it with each other and hence they understand and appreciate it when we use it with them.

How to Curve Around an Animal

1. Imagine a bubble around the animal. You need to walk around that bubble.
2. Move calmly and slowly.
3. Avoid staring.
4. Turn shoulders slightly away from the animal.
5. Walk in a wide curve.

Example: If a dog is sleeping on the right of the road, cross over to the left or move to the left corner, turn your shoulders slightly to the left and walk past the dog calmly. Avoid eye contact if you do not want the dog to come towards you.

NEVER

- Run directly at animals.
- Walk straight up to any animal.
- Stare at animal.
- Run in the vicinity of animals, wildly flailing arms and screaming.

Respect the 'Invisible Bubble'



**Walk in a wide curve around the dog
instead of walking straight at it.**

Classroom Activity

Use chairs, bags or soft toys to represent dummy animals.

Demonstrate the difference between

1. walking straight towards “the animal”
2. curving away from “the animal”

Ask children to:

- walk the right way around animals (curving)

Discuss:

- Which movement gave more space?

Chapter 5: What to Do When an Animal Approaches

Learning Goals

Readers should be able to:

- Demonstrate “be a tree”
- Understand why calm behaviour is safer than panic

Be A Tree

If an unfamiliar animal approaches and you do not want interaction:

1. Stop moving
2. Look away slightly
3. Turn your body slightly sideways
4. Remain calm

We call this “be a tree”.

Stand still like a tree. Don’t move.

Look at your feet.

Wait for the animal to slowly move away.



Why Running Can Be Unsafe

Fast movement may trigger chasing behaviour in some animals. Running, screaming, and waving arms may increase excitement or fear. Calm behaviour is safer.

Practice Activity

Work in pairs. Ask one child to pretend to be an excited animal. Ask the other child to “be a tree”.

Ask someone to pretend to be an excited animal approaching you. Pretend to be a panicking child. Ask the children to identify what you are doing wrong and what you should do instead.

Chapter 6: Safe and Unsafe Interactions

Learning Goals

Readers should be able to:

- Distinguish between safe and unsafe ways of interacting with animals
- Understand why certain human behaviours increase risk
- Recognise the importance of supervision and calm movement around animals

Safe Behaviour

If you want to interact with an animal and keep yourself safe, consider the following:

- Always let animals approach you and ask for interaction. Never go towards an animal.
- You can invite the animal to come to you and then you must wait for them to come. If they do not come, they do not want to interact at this time. So let it be.
- Move slowly and calmly.
- Children should only touch animals with adult supervision.
- Only touch the animal on the shoulders.



Unsafe Behaviour

- Pulling tails or ears, poking, hitting or throwing stones.
- Hugging animals, touching them on the head or bending over them.
- Trying to touch eating, sleeping, unwell, injured animals or a mother with babies.
- Chasing or crowding animals.

Classroom activity

Use chairs, bags or soft toys to represent dummy animals. Demonstrate how to and how not to touch animals.

Role play as a child. Have someone pretend to be an animal. Show different interactions and ask children to identify what is safe and unsafe.



Chapter 7: What to Do If You Fall

Learning Goals

Readers should be able to:

- Demonstrate protective posture (“Be a rock”)
- Understand why remaining calm matters

“Be a rock” : Protect and Wait

If you fall near an animal:

- Curl into a ball,
- Protect your belly, neck and face
- Remain still
- Wait for help



We can call this posture “be a rock”. The idea is to curl into a ball like a spherical rock.

Large movements and kicking may increase risk of serious injury to vulnerable parts of the body.

Classroom activity

Demonstrate to children the posture.

Work in pairs, asking one child to pretend to be an excited animal and the other pretends to fall down. Ask them to show the right posture.

Discuss:

- What should they NOT do if they fall (expose belly, neck and face)

Chapter 8: Situations to Avoid

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Identify situations in which animals should not be approached or disturbed
- Identify environments and situations that may increase the likelihood of unsafe interactions

Children and adults should avoid interacting with animals that are:

- Eating
- Sleeping
- Injured or unwell
- Trapped or tied
- Fighting animals
- Animals caring for their babies

Extra caution is needed near:

- Garbage hotspots,
- Crowded feeding areas,
- Narrow spaces.

Stay Away from Puppies and Sick Dogs



Mother dogs are very protective, and unwell animals need quiet and space.

Sleeping or Eating Dogs



Dogs can be easily startled or protective when resting or having a meal.

Do Not Run, Scream, or Stare



Moving fast or staring can make a dog feel scared or excited.

Activity

Create a chart that illustrates situations that children must avoid. This chart can be

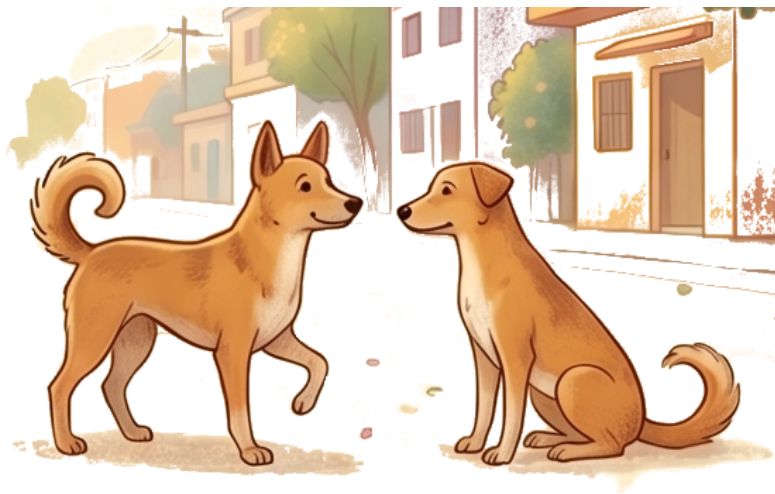
- put up in the classroom
- sent home for parents to become aware and reinforce at home

PART III

Understanding Animal Communication

Chapters

- 9. Animals Communicate Before Conflict
- 10. Signals Asking for Space
- 11. Understanding Dog Behaviour
- 12. Human Signals That Reduce Conflict
- 13. Child-Friendly Safety Rules



Chapter 9: Animals Communicate Before Conflict

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Understand that animals often communicate before conflict occurs
- Identify common warning and avoidance behaviours in animals

Signals animals use

Most animals have some signals they use when they feel threatened or defensive. Examples include:

- Snakes hissing
- Tigers roaring
- Some lizards expose a flap near their neck

Animals display these to make themselves look big and scary, in the hope that the threatening individual goes away from them, giving them space - creating distance.

In the case of dogs, we may see:

- Growling, showing teeth, air snapping
- Barking
- Freezing
- Moving away
- Tail tucked
- Ears back

These signals often mean: **“Please give me space.”**

Classroom Activity

Ask children to pretend to be different animals and show how they may ask someone to go away or give space.

Chapter 10: Safe behaviours when animals ask for space

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Identify human behaviours that may escalate or reduce tension
- Respond more safely to defensive or fearful animal behaviour

Safe Human Response

The ONLY safe thing to do when we see such signals is to increase space.

DO NOT:

- Gradually create space. Back off slowly, without big movements.
- **DO NOT EVER decrease space by going closer to threaten such animals or punish them.**
- Do not run away, scream or stare at such animals. It is very unsafe.

Classroom Activity

Discuss:

- What is the ONLY safe thing to do when you see such defensive signals from an animal

Role play in pairs, asking one child to pretend to be an animal showing such signals and the other to gradually increase space.

Chapter 11: Understanding How Animals Communicate

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Understand that dogs communicate through body posture, movement, facial expression, and vocalisation
- Identify basic signs of fear, discomfort, excitement, and stress in dogs
- Understand that behaviours such as barking or tail wagging can have multiple meanings

Signals animals use for communication

Most animals communicate with their body. Dogs in particular communicate through:

- Body posture
- Movement
- Facial expressions
- Vocalisations (bark, growl, whine, howl etc.)

Tail wagging does not always mean friendliness. Do not assume an animal wants to interact based on tail wagging.

Barking is not aggression. It is communication. Different barks may communicate different things, including:

- Excitement about their human and dog friends.
- Fear of being harmed.
- Alerting about an intruder in the community.
- Frustration at being tied or confined.

Dogs use more than a few dozen signals to communicate discomfort. These signals are often seen when they are uncomfortable with the interaction. If you see any of the following signals, immediately stop interaction with the animal.

- Yawning.
- Licking their lips.
- Turning their heads away and looking away.
- Attempting to walk away.
- Freezing.
- Moving in slow motion.

These signals do not mean the animal is dangerous. They are just a way for the animal to say, “I find that interaction a little overwhelming. Maybe calm down a little”. Hence these signals are sometimes called “Calming Signals”. The language of dogs is the language of peace.

When dogs are terrified, they may:

- Sit
- Lay down
- Show their belly
- Scream in fear
- Growl

Recollect: When animals want to approach each other, they will often do so in a curve, not in a straight line. If they want to avoid other animals or people, they will often curve, while also looking away.

It is useful to observe dogs to notice these subtle signals. Many animals use these signals, but dogs use them with humans too. So they can teach us about how all animals community. Observing dogs and learning their language can help us understand the animal world in general.

“If you talk to the animals they will talk with you
and you will know each other. If you do not talk to them
you will not know them, and what you do not know
you will fear. What one fears one destroys.”

-Chief Dan George

Suggested Group Activity

Observe videos of dogs or observe them when they are interacting with people. Make note of the signals you see. Discuss what the signals may mean.

Chapter 12: Human Signals That Reduce Conflict

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Practise behaviours such as curving, slowing down, and avoiding direct staring
- Apply conflict-reducing behaviours in everyday shared environments

How to “talk” to dogs

By observing how dogs use many of the signals dogs use, we can learn about signals we too can also use signals that appear calmer and less threatening.

These include:

- Curving
- Head turns
- Freezing

Avoid:

- Staring.
- Bending over animals.
- Direct head-on approaches.

Recollect:

- If we do not like what a dog is doing, we can freeze and look away.
- When approaching an animal, use a curve. Do not walk straight up to a dog.
- If we want to walk past a dog and do not want the dog to come to us, we can curve and turn our face and shoulders away from the dog.

Dogs use the above signals and we can also do so. Dogs understand this.

Suggested Group Activity

Observe videos of dogs or observe them when they are interacting with people. Make note of the above signals. Discuss how humans can use it and practise it with a dummy animal.

Chapter 13: Child-Friendly Safety Rules

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Recall simple child-friendly safety rules for interacting with animals
- Demonstrate practical safety behaviours such as “statue body” and curving
- Teach or reinforce these rules through repetition, demonstration, and classroom activities

Rule 1 — Be a Tree / Be a Rock

If you are standing, be a tree - Stop. Stay calm. Look away slightly.

If you fall down, be a rock - curl into a ball. Protect belly, neck and face.

Rule 2 — Give Space

Do not disturb eating, sleeping, injured, or frightened animals. Do not go near animals with small babies.

Rule 3 — Move in a Curve

Curve around animals, do not walk straight up to animals.

Activity Preparation

Make a rhyme or a chart with these three rules.

PART IV

Community and Public Health

Chapters

- 14. First Response After Injuries
- 15. Vaccination and Sterilisation
- 16. Building Safer School Communities



Chapter 14: First Response After Injuries

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Recognise the role of schools, caregivers, and healthcare providers in responding to injuries
- Identify the correct first-response steps following bites or scratches
- Recognise unsafe practices and common misconceptions related to wound care

Dos and Don'ts if bitten by an animal

The right first response can save lives. Teachers are community leaders who can play a significant role in ensuring the right response in the case of an animal bite. This can save lives.

If bitten or scratched:

1. Wash immediately with soap and water.
2. Take a picture of the bite, to show teeth marks. All species have specific bite patterns and it is important to identify the species. Incorrect identification can be dangerous.
3. Seek medical attention immediately.
4. Inform guardians of the children on the right first response.

Avoid:

- Home remedies.
- Delaying treatment.

Being prepared

Be prepared for bites. Make a list of the closest medical centers that you can recommend to students. Make a poster to distribute to children and their guardians on what one should and should not do in the case of a bite.

Chapter 15: Vaccination and Sterilisation

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Understand the role of vaccination and sterilisation in reducing the spread of zoonotic diseases
- Recognise how stable, vaccinated animal populations can contribute to public health safety
- Appreciate the importance of coordinated community-level approaches to public health and safety

Bio-buffers with dogs and cats

Vaccination helps reduce disease spread. Ensuring 70% of a population is vaccinated avoids diseases turning into epidemics.

Sterilisation programs may help stabilise animal populations over time, helping achieve 70% vaccination rates.

Not all animals can be vaccinated. For example, rats and snakes cannot be vaccinated. But animals like dogs can be befriended through feeding and it makes it easier to catch them for vaccination and sterilisation.

Vaccinated dog populations can crowd out other animals, thus creating a **bio-buffer** around humans. For example, a stable vaccinated dog and cat population keeps rat and snake populations low. This is safer for the community.

Mass removal of dogs and cats can increase the population of other animals like rats and snakes, thus increasing disease risk to humans. Hence ensuring a stable and vaccinated population of dogs and cats is very useful to ensure one-health of the community.

Community Activity

Communities can benefit from doing a census of the dogs and cats and ensuring they are all sterilised and vaccinated. Talk to parents of children about this topic and educate them on the concept of a bio-buffer.

Chapter 16: Building Safer School Communities

Learning Goals

By the end of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Understand the role schools can play in improving safety around animals
- Identify practical ways schools can reinforce behavioural safety in everyday settings

Community safety is a shared responsibility

Teachers are community leaders. Teachers can take a lead role on educating the community, via the students and their guardians on how to ensure community safety.

Key points to remember:

- Teach children safe interactions.
- Educate guardians on first response.
- Discuss with the community the concept of how vaccinated and sterilized dog and cat populations create a bio-buffer around humans, that keeps away other species like rats and snakes that cannot be vaccinated and are less tolerant of human interactions.

Recommended School Programs on Safety around Animals

- Teach safety regularly, both to students and their guardians.
- Display posters in schools and in communities. Send materials home for guardians to understand and practise
- Reinforce rules during assemblies.
- Practise calm behaviour around animals.

PART V

Teacher Resources

Chapters

- Learning Games for Children
- Rhymes
- Posters for classrooms
- Handouts to send home
- Demonstration videos
- Dog communication



Learning Games for Children

Moving Safely Around Animals

Activity 1: Animal Bubble Game

- Use chairs, bags or soft toys to represent dummy animals.
- Ask children to imagine a large bubble around the animal.
- Demonstrate walking straight towards the animal that “bursts the bubble” and curving around the bubble.
- Ask children to make a loud bubble bursting sound if you don’t curve and ask them to growl at you if you are not calm.

Make it fun by having different gaits like walking wobbly like a drunk person, arms flailing in the air, skipping along etc.

Activity 2: Repetition

- Use chairs, bags or soft toys to represent dummy animals.
- Draw a chalk bubble around the animal.
- Ask children to walk without bursting the bubble.
- Repeat by creating a “train” where all the children walk in a train around the bubble.
- Then ask them to do it without the chalk circle, with an imagine circle.

Praise and reward the right movement. Gently correct the wrong movement and ask them to repeat till they get it right.

IMPORTANT: DO NOT ask children to walk the incorrect way, as they will learn that.

What to Do When an Animal Approaches

Activity 1: Be A Tree Game

- Children work in pairs.
- One child pretends to be an excited animal.
- The other child will “be a tree”.

REMEMBER: Reward the right posture. Gently correct the wrong response. Repeat till they get it right.

TIP: Make it funny by asking them to be different trees. Example : Be a mango tree. Be a jackfruit tree.

Activity 2: Don’t Be A Silly Shrilly

- Ask someone to pretend to be an excited animal approaching you.
- Pretend to be a panicking child.
- Ask the children to identify what you are doing wrong and what you should do instead.

Make it funny by having different panic reactions and acting very silly or ask the children to bark and jump like an animal. They can try different animals like dogs, cats, cows, horses, donkeys etc.

Safe and Unsafe Interactions

- Use chairs, bags or soft toys to represent dummy animals.
- First demonstrate how to and how not to touch animals.
- Role play as a child.
- Have someone pretend to be an animal.
- Show different interactions and ask children to identify what is safe and unsafe.

Make the unsafe interactions silly and funny.

What to Do If You Fall

Activity 1: Be A Rock

- First demonstrate to children the posture.
- Work in pairs.
- One child pretend to be an excited animal
- The other pretends to fall down.
- Ask them to show the right posture.

Remember: Reward the right posture. Gently correct the wrong posture. Repeat till it's right.

Activity 2: Don't Show Your Belly

- Ask someone to pretend to be an excited animal approaching you.
- Pretend to be a child that has fallen. Show exposed belly, neck and face.
- Ask the children to identify what you are doing wrong and what you should do instead (be a rock, curl up and protect your belly, neck and face).

TIP: Make it memorable by repeating a rhyme suggested below or something you make up.

Animals Communicate Before Conflict

- The teacher pretends to be the animal.
- Ask children to pretend to be different animals and show how they may ask someone to go away or give space.
- Other children guess the animal based on the action.

You can have a lot of fun with this because there does not have to be right and wrong here.

Safe behaviours when animals ask for space

- The teacher pretends to be the animal.
- All children stand in a circle.
- The teacher acts like a dog that is just casually walking around, licking his “paws” (hands) and then suddenly gives a signal like a growl or hiss or snarl (this is like a common statue game children play).
- All children have to freeze, look away and slowly take a step back. Very slowly.
- Then the entire class can repeat a rhyme or just repeat “The safest thing to do when an animal asks for space is to slowly move back”.
- Repeat a few times

Rhymes

Rhymes on “What to Do If You Fall”

Don't show tummy, don't show face,
Curl up small and stay in place!
Protect your neck, protect your side,
Like a rock, curl up and hide!

Be a rock, don't wiggle away,
Curl up tight and safely stay!
Hide your tummy, hide your face,
Stay still in your little space!

Tummy in! (*children curl*)
Head down! (*protect face*)
Stay still! (*freeze*)
Safe and sound!

If I fall, I know the way,
Curl up tight and safely stay.
Tummy hidden, face tucked in,
Like a rock until help comes in!

Teacher: What do we do when we fall down?

Children: Curl up tight and don't look round!

Teacher: What do we hide?

Children: Tummy, neck and face inside!

Rhymes on “Safe Behaviours When Animals Ask for Space”

If it growls, if it snaps,
Take a step back, perhaps!
Give it space, walk away,
That's the safest thing today!

Growl or hiss? Don't stay in place!
Turn and give the animal space!
No touch, stare, chase or race,
Just calmly make some space!

Growl, hiss, bark, or snap? That's a "please step back" map! Give some space, don't debate, Moving away is really great!	Growl means space! Hiss means space! Snap means space! Back up, just in case!
Teacher: What do we do when animals say, "I need space today"? Children: We move away and give them space, Calm and slow, with a smiling face!	

Posters for classrooms

You can use the following posters as is, or have the children make posters based on these ideas. Download links are provided with each poster. The three main topics covered:

1. Be a Tree & Be a Rock
2. How to safely interact with animals
3. Community animal care



Stay Safe with Street Dogs: Be a Tree & Be a Rock!



How to Move Safely



Be a Tree

Stand still, tuck in your arms, and look down at your feet.



Be a Rock

If you fall, curl into a ball to protect your neck and belly.



The Wide Curve



Walk in a wide bubble-shaped curve around a dog rather than straight toward it.



When to Give Dogs Space

Never Approach

Sleeping or Eating Dogs



Dogs can be easily startled or protective when resting or having a meal.

Stay Away from Puppies and Sick Dogs



Mother dogs are very protective, and unwell animals need quiet and space.

Do Not Run, Scream, or Stare

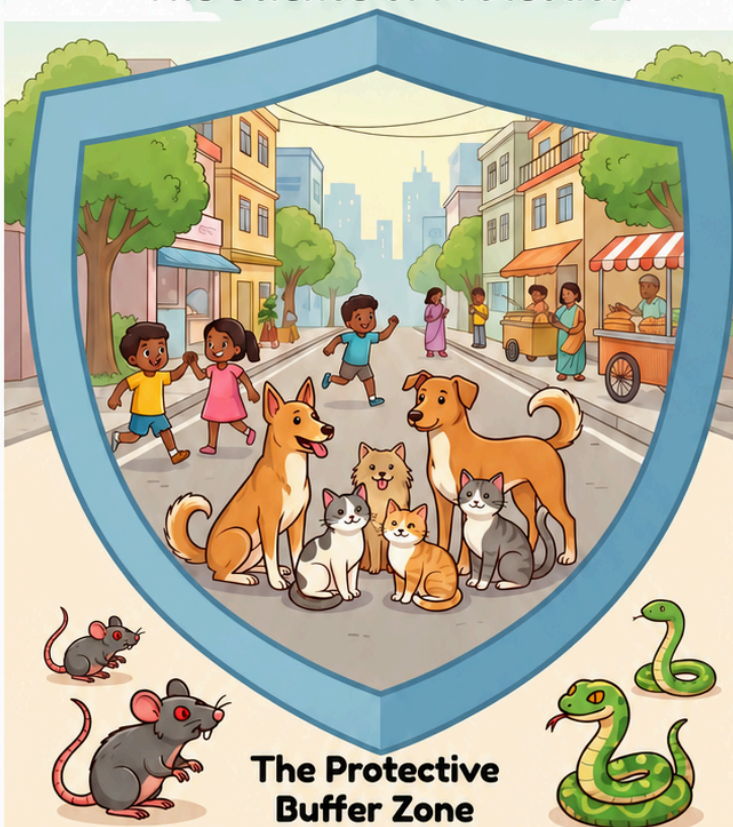


Moving fast or staring can make a dog feel scared or excited.



Our Four-Legged Neighbors: The Science of Living Together

The Science of Protection



The Protective Buffer Zone



The 70% Vaccination Rule

Community dogs and cats keep rats and snakes away from our homes.



Why Dogs and Cats?

Unlike rats or snakes, we can vaccinate and care for dogs and cats!

A Happy, Healthy Neighborhood



Population Control (Sterilisation)

'Fixing' animals keeps their population stable, healthy, and manageable for the community.



Peaceful Coexistence

Learning safe ways to interact reduces bites and helps everyone live happily.



Shared Kindness

Caring for animals is a community job that teaches us empathy and kindness.



BHARCS



BHARCS

Handouts to send home

Safe and Unsafe Interactions with Animals

Your child has learnt about safe and unsafe interactions with animals. We request you to reinforce the same at home.

If you want to touch an animal

- Always do it in the presence of an adult.
- Smile at the animal and wait for the animal to approach you. If the animal is okay to be touched they will approach you. If not, let them be.
- The safest place to touch an animal is on the shoulders, not over the head.

If you do not want to interact with the animal

- Walk in a curve around an imagine bubble around the animal. Turn your shoulders away and look away.
- If an animal approaches you, stand still, look away and wait for the animal to walk away. We call this “be a tree”
- If you fall on the ground, curl up into a ball, protecting your neck, shoulders and bell. We call this “be a rock”.

NEVER

- Run and scream around an animal.
- Do not poke an animal, pull ears and tail or hurt the animal.
- Do not approach animals that are sleeping, eating, injured, unwell or nursing babies.

Community Safety

Dogs and cats create a buffer zone around humans. If we have dogs and cats in the community, they keep rat and snake populations under control.

Rats and snakes cannot be caught and vaccinated. Dogs and cats can. Take advantage of this, so that the vaccinated dogs and cats in the community crowd out other animals that can pose a threat to community members, especially children.

Teach children safe interactions around dogs and cats.

Sterilise dogs and cats, so that their population is stable and your community can collectively aim to vaccinate 70% of these animals.

70% vaccination coverage ensures that diseases do not become epidemics in the population.

Dogs and cats play a very important role in urban ecosystems and within the community. Manage their population scientifically, through sterilisation and vaccinations. Learn safe interactions to reduce bites.

If a dog or cat is biting, engage animal behaviour experts to address the issue.

This helps the community peacefully co-exist with animals. Care for community animals is a shared responsibility of the community that keeps everyone safe and fosters empathy and kindness in children. This is our responsibility as adults.

What to do in case of bites

1. Immediately wash with fresh clean water and soap.
2. Take a photo of the bite, so that the exact nature of the bite can be determined based on the bite pattern of the species.
3. Rush to the hospital immediately.
4. Animal borne diseases can often be dangerous but can be entirely avoided with timely care. Timing is critical!
5. Engage a species-specific animal behaviour experts to address the issue (Ex: Call a snake expert in case of snake bites and dog expert in case of dog bites)

Demonstration videos

- Curving (COMING SOON)
- Safe and unsafe touch (COMING SOON)
- Be a tree & be a rock (COMING SOON)

Dog communication

Tedx talk titled “**The fascinating dialogue that animals want to have with us**” :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLot7DmLKMo>

Conclusion

Safety around animals is not achieved through fear, punishment, or panic.

It is improved through:

- Understanding behaviour.
- Maintaining calm movement.
- Respecting space.
- Teaching children practical skills.

Small behavioural changes can significantly reduce unsafe interactions and help communities navigate shared environments more safely.

End of Textbook