

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS -- DOG DAYCARE**

**What are the requirements to attend daycare?**

In order to attend daycare, your dog must be all of the following:

* At least 16 weeks old
* Dogs over 16 weeks of age must be pre-socialized, daycare is not an environment for dogs that have not been socialized. Socialization can include but is not limited to group training classes with off leash exposure, dog parks, private play groups, and more.
* Spayed or neutered (if older than 9 months)
* Non-aggressive to dogs and humans
* Up to date on vaccinations for Bordetella, Rabies, and DHPP (it is your responsibility to keep us updated with this information)
* Bordetella is required to be given every 6 months. We will give you a 30 day notification via email prior to the expiration date we have on file so you can get in with your vet. Otherwise, we can give the intra nasal vaccine on site if you choose.
* Attend daycare on a consistent basis, defined as a minimum of once per week.
* Willing to approach, be approached, and comfortably handled by strangers
* Protected from fleas on a monthly, year-round basis (oral or topical treatment)
* After 6 months of absence, all dogs must re-trial. This may be subject to a waitlist if applications are closed.

To sign a new dog up for daycare, please follow these steps:

1. Create an account by going to our website bluecollardoghouse.com and follow the instructions under the daycare tab.
2. Sign the daycare agreement under the ‘agreements’ tab in the portal, and read through our FAQs page in our daycare tab.
3. Use the link provided under the daycare tab to fill out your daycare application.
4. Make us a copy of your vet records showing proof of all required vaccinations.
5. Upload your vaccine records in your customer portal created during your application (gingr).
6. Wait for our call to schedule your daycare trial. We cannot schedule your trial until all your paperwork is received and reviewed. Please allow up to 7 days after submission for us to reach out to you.

**How do we evaluate dogs during their daycare trial?**

The first phase (5-10 minutes) of your dog’s trial is spent ensuring he does well being handled by our staff. We spend this time with all dogs individually to evaluate their comfort level accepting petting and being grabbed and held by the collar. This gives our staff the chance to start building a positive relationship. Your dog must pass this handling phase to continue on. In the second phase, we introduce him to a few dogs of different sizes, breeds, genders, and temperaments, one-by-one. We watch for any body language signals of fear, stress, or aggression. Some dogs start off shy and timid; this phase gives us a chance to gauge whether your dog is ready to join the pack, or needs a little more time to acclimate. When he begins to show more interest, he is allowed full access to our daycare room and outside yard. It is not uncommon for dogs – especially younger puppies with no group play experience – to spend their trial watching from the sidelines. Others join the play right away. And some tell us through their behavior that daycare is just not the right setting for them. Trial dogs must be picked up by 11 am, but if your dog is struggling, we may contact you for earlier pickup. The cost of the daycare trial is $20; if your dog fails the trial, you will not be charged.

**My dog passed their trial, what is next?**

Once your dog has passed their trial, you will be free to drop your dog off with us Monday through Friday between the hours of 7am and 2pm. We do not take drop offs after 2pm as many of the day stayers are tired and ready for an afternoon nap. Our latest pick up is at 7pm however, we ask that you pick up by 6:30 if possible, to allow us time to disinfect and close the daycare area. Unless otherwise specified, you will be asked to do a few mini visits (90 minutes and under) to integrate your dog into daycare. Often, dogs being left for multiple hours on their first few days can cause an increase in anxiety and be detrimental to their success in daycare. Once your dog is settled, we can start extending their visits. We often have specific recommendations for each dog and kindly ask that you follow them as we have years of experience creating successful daycare dogs! Unless we have specifically told you that you can leave your dog for an extended period directly after their trial, please expect that at drop off, we may tell you the stay must be kept to a specific duration.

**Why do you require dogs to come on a consistent basis (minimum of one day per week)**

Our daycare community loves our drop in concept, for years we have been able to operate without requiring reservations! Unfortunately, when we get clients who bring their dogs on an intermittent basis, it makes it hard for us to manage the expected number of dogs. We open and close our daycare for new applications based on our weekly average of daycare dogs. Without consistency, we are unable to get an accurate average and run the risk of being understaffed.

**Why do you not take dogs who are not socialized, isn’t this what daycare is for?**

Actually, it is quite the opposite! Unless your dog is in their key socialization window (under 16 weeks) where they are truly learning how to play, daycare is meant for dogs who are familiar with group settings. If your dog has never experienced off leash group play, there is no true way for you to determine that your dog does not have any undesirable behaviors for a daycare setting. Our daycare is a busy service full of dogs that want to play play play, now imagine dropping off your dog who has no experience with this environment AND you will not be there to ‘protect’ them. Dogs often depend on their owners to decide if the situation is safe, without you there, this experience can be very scary and overwhelming. If you have reached this point in your application and your dog is not socialized, please work on this before formally submitting and application.

**What are the daycare hours? Do I need to reserve a spot?**

Our daycare facility is open Monday through Friday, from 7 am to 7 pm, once your dog has passed the trial, **you do not need reservations.** You may drop him off any time after 7 am, but no later than 2 pm. If your dog is new, nervous, or prone to separation anxiety, we do suggest arriving and departing earlier in the day. The heavy stream of departing dogs in the late afternoon and evening can be very stressful to those personalities. Please aim to pick up your dog by no later than about 6:45 pm, to help us clean and close the facility on time. If your dog presents anxious behaviors that we feel a specific drop off or pick up time may help, we will let you know. If this is the case and you are unable to drop off or pick up in our recommended time frame, it is possible we will need to excuse your dog from daycare. Our daycare is not meant for dogs with high anxiety as it is a stress to them, the other dogs, and our staff.

**Anything else I need to know when I come to daycare?**
Our lobby can be very congested, and not every dog you encounter will be friendly. Please look through the door before you come inside to avoid any unnecessary confrontations. Your dog must always be leashed, and you must always be holding that leash. (Please lock retractable leashes to a short length.) For the safety of everyone, you should not allow your dog to greet other dogs in the lobby. Please also make sure your children know to ASK FIRST before approaching strange dogs. To minimize potential entanglement during play, all dogs in daycare must wear a well-fitting, quick-release collar. These collars snap open and closed, and are much easier to get off, in an emergency. If you do not have a quick-release collar, you may purchase one here or elsewhere. If your dog does better in a harness, please bring him inside with his harness on. During daycare play, only a collar is permitted along with a jacket if you are ok with it getting dirty! We kindly ask that you remove any harness and keep that along with your leash with you. It can be tricky having 40-50 leashes in one area, which is why we feel it is safer in your hands! We do have cubbies available for you to leave them if you must!

**How much does it cost?**

Daycare rates are shown on the table below. You can purchase individual visits as you go, or receive a discounted rate by purchasing multi-day packages in advance. Please note that all packages are **NON REFUNDABLE AND EXPIRE AFTER 6 MONTHS**. If you’re not sure your dog will be coming with some regularity, purchasing a prepaid package can be risky. We advise you to wait for new dogs to comfortably transition into the pack – typically four to six successful visits - before buying packages. Dogs from the same household can share packages, but only households with two+ active daycare dogs can purchase the Family Packs. Packages expire if your dog is absent for more than a year in between visits.

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| **DAYCARE**  | **Rate** |
| Daycare Trial\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | $20\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  Mini Visit (< 90 minutes) | $20 |
|  Single Visit, Half Day (< 5 hours) | $40 |
|  Single Visit, Whole Day  | $50 |
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|  Package of 10 Full Days  |  $450  |
|  Package of 20 Full Days |  $850  |
|  |   |
|  Package of 10 Half Days |  $360  |
|  Package of 20 Half Days  |  $680  |
|   |   |

**What happens if I’m late picking up my dog?**

We have a very strict late policy. You will be charged a $20 late fee if you do not pick up your dog by 7:10 pm. After 7:10 but before 7:20 you will be charged $30; after 7:20 but before 7:30 you will be charged $40; and any time after 7:30 you will be charged $50. We understand there are emergency cases, and will work with you as best we can.

**What type of dogs do best in daycare?**

Truthfully, some dogs are just not made for daycare. A typical daycare can be quite boisterous at times, which can be overwhelming for dogs that are shy, insecure, old, or socially inexperienced. Many dogs enjoy daycare while they’re young, but lose interest when they’re older. Some are overwhelmed at the beginning, but then settle in. We like to give all dogs adequate time to adjust. But if your dog doesn’t seem to benefit from daycare, it’s best (and safest) to respect his/her choice. In general, sporting breeds tend to do well. Herding breeds and terriers can really go either way, the constant motion and crowding may be too stimulating to their natural instincts. Dogs with high prey drives, low bite thresholds, dominant personalities, separation anxiety, toy/space aggression, incessant barking, behaviors, or inadequate social skills may also be unsuitable. If your dog is so afraid of people that it won’t willingly come to us, we can’t turn it loose in our daycare yard.

**Will my dog get dirty?**

Maybe. We’re located in a low-lying area close to the Sound and adjacent to a marsh. Fluctuating tides and heavy rains, combined with a high water table, can make our yard wet and messy in the fall and winter. And in the summer, the hose, sprinklers, and swimming pools are in heavy use. We advise you to keep towels or blankets in your car, just in case. There is also a free drying service done by our staff. Please give us a 15 minute heads up via text so we are able to start drying your dog, this helps avoid having multiple clients waiting for this service in the lobby at once. This is a quick blow dry to help get the fur unsoaked, they will likely still be a bit wet. Also, understand that large and overly fluffy dogs take our bathers 45-60 minutes to dry after a bath so please manage your expectations of an after daycare blow off. If you arrive before 5:30 pm and don’t require assistance from our staff, you can also use our self-wash tubs for a discounted rate of $10. Or ask us how to save even more money by joining our Daycare Self Wash Membership Club. We think the benefits of a tired dog trump the hassles of a dirty dog. But if you don’t agree, please don’t bring your dog to daycare in wet weather.

 **How many dogs do you typically have? Do you have a separate area for small dogs?**

We are fortunate to have one of the largest daycare spaces in the area, including a huge 10,000sq/ft outdoor yard. On average, 40-50 dogs attend our daycare each day. Our staffing levels are at their highest during the busiest hours (typically, between 9-5), and decrease in the evening, as dogs start to go home. Our yard is separated in half which allows us to separate by play style and energy levels, we do not separate by size.

**How will I know how my dog is doing?**

Feel free to ask us how your dog is doing, at any point. As time permits, we may also send you emailed Report Cards to communicate issues, concerns, and general progress. Report Cards are not always indicative of bad things! You might get a Report Card just to say ‘all is well,’ or to share a cute story, photo, or video. If we notice undesirable behaviors but they don’t represent a safety risk, we may send you Report Cards alerting you to our concerns and what steps we’re taking to work on them. While we wish we could have all of these conversations in person, it is not always feasible and we rely on these report cards for effective communication. If you find yourself with questions, please ask to speak with a daycare supervisor. We use Report Cards to maintain an open dialogue with you, but we can’t predict everything that may go wrong. We reserve the right to dismiss your dog from daycare on any day that we witness behavior that presents a risk to safety, even if we have not previously seen or documented that behavior via Report Cards.

**Do the dogs ever fight?**

Yes, but it’s quite rare. Our trial process screens out the vast majority of dogs that are not suitable. After that, it’s a matter of diligence and experience on the part of our staff. Dogs in a pack will naturally seek order amongst themselves. Minor disagreements resulting from over excitement, shared resources, challenges to the pecking order, and other breakdowns in dog communication are perfectly normal and acceptable, as long as they follow basic rules of good canine conduct. Although these spats can look and sound ferocious to the untrained eye, the overwhelming majority end without bloodshed in a matter of seconds. Our daycare employees are taught to recognize and redirect any behaviors that could escalate into a fight. We’re probably stricter about some of these behaviors than you need to be at home, simply because we have so many dogs.

**Can my dog get hurt while playing? What happens then?**

Yes. Active play can result in injuries, for any species. Most daycare injuries are superficial wounds that do not require a veterinarian. These may include stiffness or minor limping from running and jumping; broken, split or blistered pads, toenails or dewclaws from turning and twisting on pavement; and skin tears, scratches or minor punctures from over-exuberant play. If your dog gets injured in daycare, we will immediately isolate him from the pack to assess the severity of the injury. If it appears to be superficial, we may clean the wound, monitor him closely from that point forward, and discuss it with you at pickup. If we believe your dog should see a veterinarian, but it doesn’t appear to be an emergency, we may call you to arrange early pickup and a visit to your own veterinarian. For true emergencies, we may decide to transport your dog to the closest veterinarian (Edmonds Westgate Veterinary Hospital). As soon as your dog is safely there, we will call you. We expect you to immediately contact the veterinarian and to take responsibility for treatment decisions and provide full payment. You are responsible for your dog’s veterinary bills.

**Can my dog also get a bath or haircut on a daycare day?**

You can schedule grooming services in advance, if you’re looking for a specific day. You can also take your chances by asking upon arrival if there are any grooming slots available that day. Your dog can play in daycare before and/or after his grooming appointment. (But if you choose to let him play afterwards, we can’t guarantee he’ll stay clean and dry.)

**Why can’t I go through the door into the daycare hallway or watch my dog play?**

The door/window to the daycare facility is the equivalent of your own front door. What happens when a stranger knocks on your door or enters your house without warning? Your dog goes ballistic, right? Now imagine multiplying that noise and excitement level by 40-50 dogs. Our top priority is to protect the safety of all dogs in our care. We accomplish this by controlling excess excitement and territorial behavior. The barking and leaping frenzy that erupts when strangers enter the daycare or stand peering into the window can quickly escalate into bad behavior or even a fight as dogs jockey for position and release pent-up frustration. **Please understand this also includes peering over the fences in our parking lot.** We are not trying to hide anything and if this is your concern, daycare might not be a good option for you. We ask clients to avoid peering into the yard as it often creates great excitement from your dog (and even others). Once those dogs get excited and begin running to the gate, it can often create target behavior or cause redirection of anxiety or excitement onto other dogs in their space. This is purely an issue of safety and we ask that all clients understand and respect this.

**Do you have any breed restrictions?**

We reserve the right to refuse daycare services to any dog, for any reason. However, we determine a dog’s suitability for daycare based on his behavior, not his breed. If you’re not comfortable having your dog around any specific breed, you should not bring him to our daycare. With that said, we recognize that some breeds are genetically inclined to be dog aggressive, once they reach sexual maturity. And certain other breeds have a personality and/or playstyle that can be problematic in a large pack. All dogs will be evaluated for temperament and appropriate social behavior, during their daycare trial, and throughout their enrollment.

**Do you restrict certain behaviors?** While this is a complex question, the short answer is yes. If you have a dog who exhibits excessive barking, herding, resource aggression/anxiety, or other behaviors that could be problematic in a group setting, please understand that this is not the best environment. While games of fetch are endless, daycare is meant for dog-to-dog socialization. This means that if your dog lives to fetch and does not appreciate other dogs in their space during this time, daycare may not be the best place for your pup. Now, if your dog loves to fetch and remains calm and polite in between throwing, this is fantastic and easy to accommodate!

**Do you recommend a certain frequency for daycare?**  Absolutely! We find that infrequent visits to daycare can be detrimental to a dog’s success. Due to this, we recommend not enrolling your dog into daycare unless you truly need it on a consistent basis. The pack dynamic changes frequently and each dog works to find their place in the group. If your dog comes less than once a week, it is as if they do this all over again each time they come in. We also find this to worsen separation anxiety as they are unable to really find a good groove or play partner to become more comfortable here. With this, our recommendation is for your dog to come a minimum of once a week. However, if your dog can come less frequently than this and still have successful visits, we are happy to have them!