



Bum Sniffing

This is how dogs say hello and learn important information about one another, much like how humans introduce themselves by shaking hands or saying 'hello'. It is a completely natural and polite dog greeting, so it is best to let them sniff for a few seconds rather than pulling them away.



Nose Greeting

A quick polite nose sniff is often a brief interaction that allows the dogs to exchange information about where the other dog has been or what they have been doing.

If your dog approaches another with a soft, wagging tail and a relaxed body, this is their way of saying a gentle 'hello'.



Shake Off

A 'shake off' is when a dog vibrates their body from head to tail, this is their way of resetting themselves after excitement or stress. Think of it as a physical 'reset button' that helps them shake away any tension so they can feel calm again. This is often seen after meeting another dog or person.



Yawning

When a dog yawns, they aren't always tired; it is often a sign that they are feeling a bit overwhelmed, stressed, or unsure about a situation. It is a subtle way for them to calm themselves down or tell others that they need a little more space. Think about allowing your dog a quiet break.



Sneezing

Sneezing can be a 'displacement behaviour' when a dog feels stressed. It can be a way to calm themselves down when they feel uneasy. Always check the context: if the dog is loose and playful, the sneeze is likely friendly; if they are stiff or anxious in a busy environment, they might be stressed and need space.



Sniffing

When a dog intently sniffs the ground during an interaction, they are often using it as a 'displacement behaviour' to calm themselves. If they aren't actually investigating a scent, they are likely feeling overwhelmed, avoiding eye contact, and asking for some space and a break.



Pee Break

Sometimes, a dog will urinate during a social interaction to relieve stress. It is a displacement behaviour used to break tension and create distance. This is a clear signal that they feel overwhelmed and need a break. If you notice this, calmly move them away to help them reset.



Licking & Kissing

Licking or 'kissing' can mean two very different things.

Pay attention to everything to stay safe.

Affection, if your dog's body is loose and relaxed, they are likely showing love.

Stress, if they are stiff, panting, or avoiding eye contact, they are using 'appeasement' to ask for space.



Turning Head Away

When a dog turns their head away from you or another dog, they are using an 'appeasement' signal to lower tension. It is their way of saying, 'I am not a threat', or 'I would like some space, please'. If they do this, it is best to respect their wish and give them a little more room to feel comfortable.



Excited & Interested

You will see a relaxed, loose posture, often with a gentle tail wag that involves their hips, soft eyes that blink frequently, and a slightly open mouth with the tongue lolling out. This is the classic picture of a dog feeling safe, content, and ready to engage with the world in a positive way.



Playful & Relaxed

When a dog rolls onto their back with a loose body, a lolling tongue, and soft eyes, they are feeling relaxed and comfortable. This is a classic invitation to play or a sign that they will enjoy a belly rub. Unlike a 'submissive' roll, which often looks tense or stiff, and could mean that your dog doesn't want to be touched.



Zoomies

These are a sudden burst of energy where your dog runs around frantically, often with their rear tucked and body loose. They are usually a sign of pure joy or a way to burn off pent-up energy. While it might look wild, your dog is typically just having fun. Just ensure they have enough room to do some safe zoomies!



Play Bow

The 'play bow', where a dog lowers their front end while keeping their rear in the air, is the universal invitation to play. It signals that the dog is friendly and wants to engage, effectively saying, 'I am just playing, no matter what I do next!'



Cowering

Cowering, where a dog lowers their body, tucks their tail, and flattens their ears, indicates they feel fearful or overwhelmed. They may even move backwards. This is a clear signal that they feel threatened. Please move your dog away or give them space so they can feel safe again.



Worried Look

When a dog has a 'worried look', their brow is often furrowed, eyes look round with the whites visible (sometimes called 'whale eye'), and their mouth is tightly closed. This indicates they are feeling anxious or uncertain. It is a sign to stop what you are doing and give them space.



Head Tilt

A head tilt often means your dog is listening intently, trying to understand a sound, or is simply curious. It is a sign of engagement and focused attention. It is a charming way they show they are processing what you are saying or doing.



Paw Lift

A paw lift can be a sign of slight uncertainty or tension. The dog is literally "pausing" to assess a situation before deciding whether to move forward or retreat. It is a subtle hint that they are feeling a bit unsure and may need more space.