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## Hip Hip Hooray!!

A BIG Happy Birthday to our current Healthcare members who will be celebrating in March:

Oscar - Happy 1st Birthday!!

Meg - 3 years old

Bill - 16 years old

Jessie - 13 years old

Kane - 14 years old

Tilly - 12 years old

MBVC Healthcare plans are available for cat and dogs of all ages! If you would like some more info on our Healthcare Plans please [Contact Us](#) or read more on our [website](#).

Here you will find how the plan could help you to provide comprehensive preventative healthcare for your pet, spread the cost and take advantage of special offers for Pet Healthcare Members.



## Puppy Pre School

Congratulations to the puppies who have graduated from the February Puppy Pre School Classes.

Class 1	Class 2
Douglas	Molly
Mack	Piper
Maggie	Sam
Quinn	Daisy
Teddy	Buffy
Ziggy	Odie

To view all the adorable graduation photos please visit our [website](#).

### What will my puppy gain from Puppy Pre School?

Your puppy will gain valuable social skills by simply interacting with other puppies and people. These skills the pup develops it will use for life. Your puppy will learn how to interact with lots of people, loud noises and children and even a visit to the vet will become fun rather than something to shake about. Your puppy will develop into a friendly, educated, confident adult dog.

### How will I benefit?

Owning a dog will be enjoyable rather than a chore. Having an obedient, well socialised dog is much more pleasant and stress free. You will also gain knowledge in all areas of pet care from dental, nutrition, solving behavioural problems, toilet training and lots, lots more. Weekly freebies and samples to take home for the puppy. For more information please visit our [website](#).



## Where to next?

Wondering where to go after Puppy Pre-School?

One of our lovely [Veterinary Nurse's, Kirstie Hancock](#) is qualified in animal behaviour with her Certificate IV in Companion Animal Services through the [Delta Society](#). She has lots of great tips and ideas when it comes to misbehaving pets. Keep an eye out for her monthly tips on our Facebook page. Also check out her own business [Facebook page - Positive Paws](#).



## Why puppy school is so important

When it comes to good behaviour, did you know that the most critical time in your dog's life is during their first four months of life? Socialisation with other dogs and experiences in the big wide world at this time are extremely important for a sociable and well-behaved pooch.

If you are caring for a puppy during this critical time you should think about the following:

- 1. Puppies have brains like little sponges.** A puppy's brain is ready to absorb and process everything they do and experience. The more they are introduced to during this period, the better as it helps them become a well adjusted and happier and dog in the future.
- 2. Puppy school is the first booking you should make on your dog's social calendar.** Puppy school is a great way for dogs to develop confidence and learn how to interact with each other and this helps with canine interactions in the future such as park plays and social gatherings. And don't worry, puppy school is a safe environment as all puppies must be up to date with their vaccinations. Ask us for more information.
- 3. Puppyhood is a good time to introduce your dog to different noises and experiences.** If they learn how to behave when the vacuum is going, when there are cats in the hood or around traffic and other people, it will help make future outings much more pleasant! Don't forget to also introduce your puppy to some longer stints at home alone. We can recommend some great boredom busters to keep your puppy stimulated when you head out as you want your dog to learn to be happy and feel safe during any 'alone time'.

And don't forget that good behaviour and training doesn't stop after the age of four months! It is crucial to continue with *positive reinforcement* and to reward your dog for good behaviour throughout their entire life.

**When it comes to pet behaviour, you should always ask us for the best advice - we are here to help.**

## Autumn shenanigans

Autumn is here and we've got a great video to share with you of a *Dog Named Stella* (from the northern hemisphere) who loves getting the most out of life! [Click here](#) to see her shenanigans on YouTube.





## Starting out on the right paw

You may not have ever thought about it but good behaviour really starts *before* you decide to get a new pet. It can be easy to rush the process meaning you are not prepared or properly equipped for the new arrival.

Here are some tips to help start you off on the right track:

- 1. Choose a pet appropriate for your lifestyle.** We cannot stress this enough. Problem behaviour is generally not as common for pets kept in the right environment. Ask yourself some honest questions such as: Are you home enough to appropriately care for a pet and give them the attention and love they need and deserve? How much exercise will you be able to give a dog and do you have the time to do this? Would a cat be a more suitable choice? And would rehoming a more mature pet be more sensible? Puppies and kittens require lots of time not to mention patience!
- 2. You need to plan!** The first few months are critical when starting out. This is a key time to help your pet adjust to your lifestyle and family. Will you have time to put in essential training such as puppy school? Are you and your family going to be able to be consistent with training? Have you got a plan in place for your pet when you go away?
- 3. Are you in a position to care for a pet?** Are you going to be able to provide your pet with essential health care, parasite prevention, a premium quality diet and necessary grooming to make their life happy and comfortable?
- 4. If you are getting a puppy or a kitten, check out their relatives.** Ask to meet Mum and Dad to see how they interact with other pets and people and try to choose a confident and friendly puppy or kitten if possible.

**We are always here to help you and can answer any questions you might have about choosing the right pet for your family, just ask one of our friendly team today.**



## Calm cats

Many people put off bringing their cat to the vet as they feel it is just too stressful. As a result, we don't get to see your feline friend as often as we should and unfortunately, this means many health problems may go undetected. Dental disease, heart disease and kidney disease can sneak up on your cat slowly, often without you noticing.

With this in mind, we would like you to know that there are a few ways we can help reduce the stress associated with vet visits. Our first option is a pheromone spray that you can use in the cat carrier to enable your cat to feel more safe and secure. The pheromone spray is the same pheromone cats release when they feel happy and relaxed. We also recommend you spray it on a towel and use this to cover the cat carrier. This may help your cat feel safe and avoid them making eye contact with patients of the canine variety.

For cats that need some extra help to reduce their anxiety, we do have a medication available that we can give you to administer to your cat before their visit. We just need to have examined your cat within the previous six months - ask us for more information and how we can assist you with this.

When your cat arrives to see us we can move them into an area away from any dogs and will always work closely with you and your cat to reduce any stress associated with a vet visit.

**If you have any questions or concerns about your pet's veterinary visit you should ask us for advice.**



## When good behaviour goes bad

When it comes to pet behaviour, there's a saying we use in the veterinary world: "There's no such thing as bad behaviour, it's just normal behaviour in an inappropriate setting." Put simply, this means what you may perceive as "bad behaviour" such as barking at the doorbell, is a normal response for a dog who is trying to alert you to the fact that someone is at the door (it's just not desirable from a human's point of view).

In some cases, 'bad behaviour' may actually be a symptom of something else that is wrong in your pet's world (such as a medical problem or pain).

When it comes to dealing with some of these issues, we are the best people to talk to. A behavioural consultation and exclusion of other medical issues are essential. We will be able to put together a plan for your pet and make some recommendations to deal with inappropriate behaviour. Here are just a few of the more common behavioural problems we discuss with our clients on a daily basis:

### CATS

**Spraying:** This problem is frequently reported to us by cat owners. It looks a bit weird but usually involves cats backing up against a vertical surface (such as curtains) and urinating. The behaviour is typically brought on by stress and territorial issues.

**Scratching:** Scratching is normal cat behaviour and is used to communicate or mark territory. It's something they must do and it can be easier to direct their scratching towards an acceptable surface, especially in the early stages, rather than trying to stop the damage later. Ask us for more advice.

### DOGS

**Barking:** It's important to understand that barking is a normal way that dogs communicate. Dogs might bark to get attention, during play, hunting, territorial defence, and in fearful and anxious situations. We can help you identify the reason your dog is barking and provide advice about how to control it.

**Destructive behaviour:** Dogs do not destroy things vindictively and there are many other reasons your dog may be destructive including separation anxiety, boredom, inadequate exercise, investigation, fear or phobias. We'll try to determine the cause of your dog's destructive behaviour and what to do about it.

**If you have a question about your pet's behaviour, we are the best people to ask.**