

## **Kalamazoo Dog Park Guidelines**

- ❖ Owners are legally responsible and liable for their dogs and any injuries caused by them. Stay with dog at all times and monitor behavior. Keep dog's leash in hand while in the park so that you can immediately leash and remove a problem dog (aggression, mounting, etc.) from the park. Never leave your dog unsupervised in the park. If you leave, take your dog with you.
- ❖ No aggressive dogs. At the first sign of aggression, please remove your dog from the dog park. If your dog begins to get aroused, divert his/her attention before it escalates and if necessary, leave the dog park. Owners are encouraged to inquire about any unfamiliar dogs already in the park prior to entering.
- ❖ Dogs that show fear aggression (attacking other dogs because they mistakenly believe the other dog will attack them) should not be forced to play in parks with unfamiliar dogs. It will increase the fear and aggression. Some dogs are not suited for dog park playing, or need some work before introducing them to a group.
- ❖ Know the signs of aggression. There is a difference between rough play and fighting. Although difficult to define on certain breeds, the conflicted or overly confident dogs' ears are usually up and/or forward. They face and stare directly at the other dog or human with whom they are interacting. Eye contact is sustained hard and direct. Their brow is furrowed. The tail carriage is likely to be high up and arched over the rump. The (hackles) fur along their back stands up like a ridge and the chest and stance is forward. Dogs with shorter tails might have tails straight and wagging stiffly. Once the dogs have been separated after a confrontation, take yours away. If you suspect damage has been done to you or your dog, exchange vital information with all involved parties as you leave to get vet care.
- ❖ If your dog consistently harasses other dogs or people by intimidating, mounting, or annoying another dog, correct that behavior immediately. If it continues, please take your dog out of the dog park at least for a short time out.
- ❖ Do not keep your dog on a leash inside the park. If you need to keep your dog on a leash, you should, for your dog's own safety and comfort, not bring him or her into the park. Being kept on leash with other dogs that are not on-leash triggers aggression and creates tension and stress between the dogs.

- ❖ Do not bring dogs that are ill into the dog park. Dogs must be properly and currently inoculated, have no contagious conditions or diseases, and be parasite free, both internally and externally. Dogs in heat are not allowed in the park.
- ❖ No food, alcoholic beverages (soft drinks and water are allowed), strollers, bicycles, toys or rawhide treats are not allowed as dogfights could result.
- ❖ Spike, prong and head collars (Halti, Gentle Leader, etc.) should be removed before letting your dog loose in the park. Other dogs can get their teeth caught in the collar when playing and panic when stuck, causing injury to themselves and the dog wearing the collar. Dogs have suffered broken jaws and others have choked to death before they were able to be freed. A basic flat buckle collar with license, rabies and identification tags is recommended.
- ❖ Dispose of dog feces properly and immediately. It is unpleasant and unhealthy for dogs to play in a field liberally dotted with droppings. There are plastic bags available, if you forget to bring your own, and covered buckets for deposit. If an owner seems unaware of their dog's droppings, feel free to point it out to them.
- ❖ No Children under 12 years of age in are allowed in into the park. Children 13 – 17 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. Children should at no time be allowed to run with or chase after dogs – keep them under your supervision and within arms reach at all times.