



79 Lincoln Street South Portland Maine 04106

Pet Owner Handbook

It's all about the dogs!

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Welcome to Mutty Paws!

Thank you for your interest in our services at Mutty Paws LLC. We provide a customized experience for every dog and their parents. Our skilled and dedicated staff gives your dog the highest level of care in a safe, fun, and interactive environment.

History of Mutty Paws

In 2007, upon relocating to Maine, Kris Klinges decided to pursue owning his own business. After working in law enforcement, technology, and in childcare industries, Kris decided to pursue a career in an area that he is truly passionate about: dogs! Kris toured several dog daycares across the country and observed different methodologies and practices. During this time, he also submerged himself in working at a local daycare to help him understand the ins and outs of the industry.

As Kris familiarized himself with the Southern Maine area, it became apparent to him how dog friendly this location is and he settled on this area to open his first deluxe facility. He pooled the ideas he had been observing over the previous four years with his own ideas, creating his own custom made facility. He spent three months converting an old garage into the beautiful space that would soon be the temporary home to many furry friends. Mutty Paws began operation in November of 2011 on Lincoln Street in South Portland.

Canine Culture at Mutty Paws

At Mutty Paws we treat all our guests as if they are our own. We focus on manners, reinforcing positive behaviors and discouraging negative ones. Dogs are asked to sit before going through doors, they are not allowed to jump on people, and digging is only allowed in appropriate areas, etc.

The staff plays games with the dogs throughout the day to stimulate them mentally as well as physically. There is plenty of wrestling, romping and ball play. We use positive reinforcement techniques and promote structured, appropriate play. Mutty Paws is committed to developing a partnership with parents. We will be honest and proactively communicate with owners about their dogs' behaviors and interactions during their stay with us. Dogs are like people and have good days as well as bad and we feel it's important for parents to know this.

Dogs are grouped according to a variety of factors including size, temperament, play style, and age. We keep our group sizes small, generally ten to twelve dogs per group. All play groups are supervised by group leaders and a floor manager who moves between groups. Our group leaders are singularly focused on the dogs in their care. Group leaders are in constant communication with the floor manager allowing for adjustments in the groups throughout the day. We maintain a ratio of Group Leaders to dogs in their care keeping the group sizes small and more manageable.

Our Facility

Our facility was designed primarily for the safety and comfort of the dogs, secondarily for ease of use, functionality, and cleanliness. Everything from the

bathhtub to the suites was designed to help the dogs feel safe and comfortable in their environment.

We have five play areas, two outdoor and three indoor. Our main indoor space comprises over 3,500 square feet separated into two play areas with waterproof, scratch resistant material on the walls (easy to clean and sanitize) and rubber flooring (providing grip for their feet and cushioning for their joints.) Also indoor is our "Behavioral Interview Room" which doubles as an additional play area when needed.

Outside we have over 5,000 square feet of space separated into two play areas. Six foot stockade fencing (topped with additional 2 foot inverted containment barrier) surrounds the play space with over ninety tons of rounded river rock (small rocks that have no sharp or jagged edges and are easier on the dogs' pads) coating the ground. Outdoor spaces also feature custom built agility/playground equipment that we chose for its confidence building attributes. When a dog has learned to use the pedestals, for example, they get a boost of self confidence which helps them with socialization and human interaction. We also have a sandbox for dogs that enjoy digging!

Our suites walls and doors are solid, constructed with a waterproof, scratch-resistant material that is easy to clean and sanitize. The suites provide the dogs with their own space while they stay with us and they are cleaned after each use. The dogs are able to smell and hear each other and get a sense of community but are not able to see each other or interact. Being able to see other dogs while not being able to interact can lead to negative behaviors in our furry friends, most notably **Barrier Frustration**. By creating a visual barrier we eliminate the potential barrier frustration and our dogs are noticeably more comfortable.

Our two gate system throughout our facility is an added safety measure, assuring that all dogs remain in the area that they are assigned to.

A Typical Day at Mutty Paws

We start by taking the boarding dogs out for bathroom breaks/playtime while we clean their suites and begin intake for daycare and boarding. As dogs come in, they are placed in appropriate groups for playtime. We bring the boarding dogs in for breakfast and allow an hour for their stomachs to settle before we add them to our existing groups for playtime. Throughout the day the dogs are rotated between our indoor/outdoor playgrounds as well as taking periodic breaks in the suites. It is important for dogs to have periods of play and periods of rest. We will also implement breaks to lower arousal levels of high energy dogs that play to their own detriment. Around midday, we feed any dog that has lunch and after they have eaten and their stomachs have settled we add them back into the group rotation. As daycare dogs depart we condense our groups and clean the vacated playgrounds. In the evening we again feed the boarding dogs, allow their stomachs to settle, and then bring them out for bathroom breaks/playtime before going to bed for the night.

Your Dog's First Day

We ask that all new registered dogs begin their first day after 9 am so that most of our incoming dogs have already arrived. When you arrive, we will review your paperwork and have a brief discussion about your dogs' individual needs. We will then take your dog into our behavioral interview room and slowly introduce them, one by one, to dogs of different sizes and play styles. We are trying to get a

sense of the group in which they will be the most comfortable and have the most fun. We evaluate your dogs' behavior, body position, signals, and how well they read/interact with other dogs. We let your dog "tell" us that they are comfortable before adding other dogs and before adding them to a group. Once they are comfortable we will add them to their group for a fun day. If they are not comfortable we will make recommendations to help them become more comfortable that may include training or short "acclimation" sessions. It is important to note that some dogs are not daycare candidates. We will always recommend what is best for your dog. You are welcome to watch this process on our closed circuit television monitors in the lobby. Depending on the dog, we will recommend the duration of their stay: hourly, half day, or full day.

What should you bring for your dog?

Daycare Only

- 1.** Your dog (of course)
- 2.** Collar and Leash - Our policy is that all dogs arriving and exiting the building remain under leash control. We discourage any interactions between dogs in the lobby and ask that parents honor this policy by keeping dogs under leash control until turned over to a Mutty Paws employee. Collars and leashes left with your dog for the day will be stored in lockers until pickup.
- 3.** Food (optional) - dogs are often more active at daycare than in their day to day life outside of daycare. For this reason, some parents choose to bring food for their pup. For parents that would like to try this, we suggest bringing $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of a normal meal amount. Any dry food that is left in the dogs bowl after lunch will be returned to the parents upon pick-up. All food **MUST** be in an air-tight container.

Boarders

We ask that all items be labeled with the dogs first and last name with a type of permanent labeling such as permanent marker. If items are received unlabeled, staff will label the personal belongings with permanent labeling.

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- 2.** Collar and Leash - Our policy is that all dogs arriving and exiting the building remain under leash control. We discourage any interactions between dogs in the lobby and ask that parents honor this policy by keeping dogs under leash control until turned over to a Mutty Paws employee.
- 3.** Food - Our recommendation is to keep your pet on the same diet they have at home but in the event that you wish to purchase food from us, we offer a high quality menu. We ask that food be either 1) brought in bulk with specific feeding instructions including times, amounts, special instructions, etc, or 2) individually portioned containers for each meal with instructions on times of feedings, special instructions, etc. See #3 in the *Daycare only* section above for additional information on food. All food **MUST** be in an air-tight container.
- 4.** Bedding - if desired, parents can bring specific bedding. Otherwise, our own bedding will be provided.
- 5.** Toys - all toys and comfort items will be inspected by staff and only allowed with dogs if it's determined that they are safe to use unmonitored. Raw Hide is not accepted.
- 6.** Un-laundered article of clothing with family members scent - Often this

will help dogs feel close to their owners and more comfortable while spending time in their suites.

Note: Any clothing or accessories worn by your dog will be removed prior to your pup joining a group unless previously discussed with a Mutty Paws employee.

Medications

We are happy to administer any medications that your dog requires (including injections) at no additional cost. Please discuss your dogs medication needs with us prior to his/her stay.

Help your dog recover from Daycare/Boarding

While with us, your dog will likely be very active and stimulated both mentally and physically. This increased stimulation can sometimes cause stress for your dog. Stress can be both positive and necessary for development, or negative and have the potential to suppress the immune system, causing temporary behavior changes and/or increased arousal. Temporary behavior changes can occur as a result of unfamiliar surroundings. We mitigate issues by asking owners to allow dogs to acclimate with some exposure to our environment prior to any long term stays. We will recommend the duration of the exposure that we feel is best for your dog.

Eating habits can change when staying away from home and dogs will often eat food differently. They may eat every morsel and put on a few pounds. Some dogs lose weight even though eating well or lose weight by not eating enough. Time spent at Mutty Paws can be very exciting, and some dogs lose weight from exercise as they run, wrestle, and bark with the other dogs, having a great time. Boarding dogs often leave the facility exhausted but happy, and sleep a lot the first couple of days they are home. Daycare dogs, though super frisky when they see you, often are fast asleep in the car by the time you drive out of the parking lot.

Help prepare your dog for daycare by establishing a routine on daycare days. Help them recover by providing water, food, and allow them to rest. Monitor their food and water intake. Too much of either can cause problems.

Help prepare your dog for boarding by getting them acclimated to our facility. Depending on the dog, we will recommend the duration. Maintain your routine on the day of drop off as much as possible. Bring the dog in first and then bring his/her belongings once they are released to a Mutty Paws employee. Plan your packing in advance so as not to break out the suitcases the day before your trip. Help them recover by providing water, food, and allow them ample rest. Monitor their food and water intake. Too much of either can cause problems.

Grooming

We offer the following grooming services every day:

- Bath
- Nail trim (Pawdicures)
- Ear cleaning

- Tooth brushing
- De-shedding brushing

You may schedule these services in advance or let us know when you drop off your dog. We will ask for a pick up time when you schedule a grooming service to ensure that your dog gets the most playtime prior to his/her grooming service.

We also offer full grooming services on Wednesdays: haircuts, glands, etc. These services are by appointment times of 9am, 10am, 11am, 12pm, and we can schedule a small dog at 1pm. Prices vary depending on the size of the dog and the cut requested. Please give specific instructions regarding the style of the cut to the staff member or directly to the groomer.

Our bath tub is also available for Self-Washes any day except for Wednesday.

Training

Mutty Paws promotes training for all dogs. A well-trained dog is a happy dog. In addition to our daily reinforcement training, we host local trainers that offer a variety of classes as well as individual sessions. For parents that don't have time to do the follow up work, Mutty Paws provides this service while dogs are attending daycare or boarding in our facility. Please inquire with us for details or check our Facebook page for current offerings.

Health Concerns

While doggie daycare has great benefits for your dog, there are some health concerns that you should be aware of. Just like in a child's daycare, dog's that attend daycare or board here at Mutty Paws are susceptible to "bugs" that are making the rounds in our area. While the vaccinations that we require your dog to have do well to protect your dog from the more serious illnesses, dogs will occasionally pass along Bordetella (Kennel Cough) or Giardia. Naturally, dogs that are socializing have a greater risk of catching a common canine communicable disease. It should be noted that while we take great care in maintaining a clean/disease-free environment, parents should be aware of the risk.

All dogs attending Mutty Paws must be free of fleas and we highly recommend that dogs be on a monthly flea and tick preventative. If fleas are evident upon intake, we will provide a flea bath at the owner's expense.

We highly recommend having a yearly fecal exam to check for parasites, worms, etc. If we observe worms in a dog's stool, we will collect a sample, isolate the dog, and notify the parents immediately.

Please inform us of ANY allergy your dog might have, be it food, environmental, or topical. We will discuss exposure procedures with you.

Some dogs have sensitive pads on their paws that can become irritated by either the rocks outside or from skidding on the rubber inside. While most dogs acclimate quickly some pads do get red or sore and require "maintenance": a protective coating of a non toxic wax product is applied to their pads. On rare occasions dogs may develop a "blister" or some tearing of the pad. This typically heals quickly with restricted activity. Please feel free to consult your Veterinarian.

When dogs play at Mutty Paws, they wrestle, run, jump, and chew on each other and generally "rough-house." Nicks, cuts, scrapes, and errant tooth punctures may happen during this play. We take great care in grouping dogs so they will all get along, as mentioned in the "Canine Culture" section, though occasionally there will be a disagreement or fight. Our staff is trained on how to safely and quickly diffuse and separate dogs in that situation to limit injury. If your dog is involved in an altercation or injured, we will provide care for your dog immediately and inform you as soon as we are able.

If you notice your dog is not feeling well please keep them home from daycare, away from other dogs, and notify us. Help us maintain a disease-free environment.

Dogs exhibiting obvious signs of illness on arrival will be refused service.

Requirements

Mutty Paws LLC requires that all dogs' vaccinations be up to date for (Copies need to be provided on or before the dogs' first day):

- 1) Rabies
- 2) Distemper
- 3) All dogs must be spayed or neutered at 1 year of age. Depending on the dog we may recommend spaying/neutering prior to 1 year (please consult your Veterinarian about when to spay/neuter.)
- 4) All pets need to be under leash control in the lobby and we discourage any interactions in the parking lots or lobby.

We also highly recommend the **Bordetella, or Kennel Cough Vaccine, as well as a Fecal Exam** (to check for roundworm, hookworm, whip worm, giardia, coccidia, and tapeworm) and flea and tick preventative maintenance.

Lobby Hours

Monday-Friday 6:00 am - 7:00 pm
Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Mutty Paws is open from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm on the following holidays: *New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day*

Scheduling

There are several ways that you can make reservations for your dog at Mutty Paws. Our preferred method for reservation requests is via email sent to info@muttypaws.net or through our website, www.muttypaws.net/reservations.php Please include your phone number, the date and time of drop off and pick up, duration of stay, names of pets, and the owner(s) names.

You can always call us directly at (207) 210-6592 to make reservations.

Another way to make reservations is to request a *user name* and *password* to our online system, PetExec. This way you can conveniently make reservations from your

desktop computer, Smartphone, or tablet. *Please note: When logging in with your tablet or Smartphone be aware that often the first character is automatically capitalized. Our user names and passwords are not capitalized and are case-sensitive.*

We do have a daily capacity that we strictly adhere to in order to maintain our small playgroup size for the safety and well-being of the dogs and employees alike. If our capacity has been reached on a day you are trying to make a reservation the system will not allow the reservation to be placed. If this is the case, call or email us; we may still be able to make the reservation.

We are also able to enter standing reservations (IE. every Mon & Wed). We can schedule these for as far in future as you like. This is the best way to guarantee your dog a spot for daycare on a weekly basis.

We also maintain a waiting list for daycare spots on days that are fully booked.

If you cannot bring your dog on a day that you have reserved, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can give your spot to someone else. A fee of \$20 will be charged to your account if you do not cancel a reservation prior to the day of service without an explanation.

Early Drop-off/Late Pickup, No-show Boarding

Arrangements can be made for Early Drop-off/Late pick-up within a reasonable time window for an additional \$10.00 fee. Please speak with a Mutty Paws Representative to schedule. If you fail to pick up your dog by closing and we are unable to contact you we will feed your dog and move it to boarding for the night. You will be assessed a "No-Show" boarding fee of \$10.00 and the food cost in addition to the normal boarding fees.

Holiday Boarding

Due to increased demand for boarding over Holidays and School Vacations we will ask for deposit equal to one day and one night's stay for your pet. Deposits will be applied to your account if the boarding is cancelled more than 5 days prior to arrival. If the boarding stay is cancelled less than 5 days prior to arrival, it will not be refunded.

Fostering

Mutty Paws works closely with several local rescue organizations including Almost Home, Lucky Pup, and Fetching Hope. We promote adoption through these rescues and work with them to foster dogs while they wait for their forever home. If you are looking for a new pet, we highly recommend these organizations.

If you would like more information, please contact us.

Parental Acknowledgment

Please sign and return this form to us acknowledging that you have read and understand the information and the policies contained herein:

Dog's/Dogs' name:

Client's Printed Name:

Client's Signature:

Date: _____