



## **GERMAN SHEPHERD RESOURCE AND RESCUE CENTER**

### **Dog Park Policy**

---

GSRRC does not allow dogs in our care to play at dog parks.

While dog parks may seem like a great idea and they very well may be for some dogs, we at GSRRC feel that dog parks are not the best place for German Shepherd Dogs.

Here are the pros to dog parks:

- Provides a great way for dogs to learn appropriate dog to dog behavior
- Provides a great way to exercise your dog
- Provides an environment for your dog to run off leash
- Provides an opportunity for humans to observe dog behavior and learn from more experienced dog owners.

Here are the cons:

- Potential danger from more aggressive dogs to humans and dogs
- Dogs may never have learned proper dog etiquette which can trigger fights
- Intact dogs may create problems
- Potential for parasites and disease
- Potential for serious injury to smaller dogs when large dogs and small dogs are allowed to play together

While many dog owners do a good job policing their dog's behavior at a dog park, the fact is, many others do not. And many owners are just not adept enough at reading their dog's body language when the dog is clearly telling them "get me out of here". How many times have you met a fellow dog owner on the street that insists "their dog is wonderful with other dogs" and then the dog turns out to be "Cujo" and lunges at your dog. The same mentality can occur at a dog park.

For a dog that has never been dog reactive and has never been attacked by a dog or in a fight, an incident at a dog park can have an extremely negative and lasting effect. This is particularly true for young dogs when their experiences at a young age can mold what type of dog they become.

The fact is that GSD's are sometimes recognized, unfairly, as a "dangerous" breed. If a German Shepherd gets into a fight with a dog at a dog park, regardless of which dog was the aggressor, the GSD will get blamed almost every time.

For these reasons, GSRRC has made a decision to err on the side of caution and not allow dogs in our care to play at dog parks.

There are other things you can do with your GSD instead:

- Play fetch in a fenced in back yard, field or tennis court
- Go for a long walk, jog or hike
- Take an obedience class or try another activity like agility
- Take your dog swimming

There may be instances where dogs that are usually great with other dogs, may for whatever reason, just not get along with a particular dog. And that's okay. We as humans don't like everyone we meet and dogs don't have to all like and want to play with each other either!