

## **Dropping Off and Collecting Your Dog**

As a dog owner, we must help our dogs avoid developing separation anxiety by making our entries and exits as calm and uneventful as possible. As we see dogs as part of our families, we often feel guilty and sad when we must leave them. Many owners will overcompensate by prolonging their farewells, especially when it is for a significant period. Likewise, when we are reunited with our beloved friends, it is tempting to smother them with all the affection they missed out on while we were separate. Unfortunately, extended goodbyes and excited greetings can leave your dog (and yourself!) much more stressed than they need to be. This is because these periods of extra attention further highlight your absence and increase your dog's feeling of loneliness. This feeling of loneliness will develop into separation anxiety and in turn lead to new undesirable behaviours such as barking, destruction and inappropriate urination/defecation. If, however, every exit and entry you make is calm and boring, there will be a much lower contrast between those times and the period for which you are away, thus allowing your dog to be completely relaxed while you are away.

### **The appropriate way to drop off and collect your dog**

Please be patient with our driver during all deliveries and collections of your dog.

When leaving your home, treat it as if you're going to put the rubbish out, and not like you are going away for a long time. When you arrive at The Dog Bus, do not pay your dog attention if they demand it. Do not prolong your goodbye or in any way overcompensate for leaving your dog(s). Simply give your lead to our handler and allow them to get your dog settled.

REMEMBER – dogs are very good at sensing our emotions if you are anxious or worried, your dog will pick up on that and will often become anxious too. If you are relaxed, your dog will be far happier, and even excited to board the bus. On collection, the same rules apply. Though you may feel like exploding with happiness and affection, it is best to ignore your dog until they are calm. This creates a much better balance between togetherness and separation and so lessens that feeling of loneliness. The more uneventful greetings you have, the quicker your dog will calm, therefore, promoting comfort for both you and your dog.