



# Statement of Intent For The Mutt Hutt Dog Grooming Salon.

25<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Ever since starting my dog grooming career the physical and mental welfare of the dogs in my care has always come uppermost. In the years since I have developed my ethos to dog grooming in line with experience, personal observations and from listening to other groomers. This has now led to the point where I am now fully committed to what I term Consent and Trust Grooming.

Although nothing has fundamentally changed as to how I will groom your dog, this statement of intent is intended to formally layout for both new and existing customers what they can expect from The Mutt Hutt both for themselves and their dog going forward.

## Consent & Trust Grooming

Why do dogs sometimes snap and growl at the groomer? Why do they sometimes howl and whine? Why do they become reluctant to enter the salon? Do they seem lethargic and 'down' after the groom?

Let me take you on an imaginary journey.

You are put into a car where you cannot understand a word of what the driver is saying. You cannot tell them you are feeling travel sick, too hot or uncomfortable and your stress level starts to rise. When you reach your destination you are taken into a very loud room with overpowering smells and strange weird things you have never seen before. There may be others like you there who are shouting and crying. Your stress level increases. Your driver with whom you are very familiar leaves and a total stranger grabs you and again says things you cannot understand. They put you onto a table and strap you around your belly and neck to stop you from moving around. Your stress level is now very high. This stranger starts to pull at your hair with a brush and maybe snags a little painfully on some tangles you have. You are now at the point where your body is close to a flight or fight stage. You are grabbed again and placed into an enclosed tub where you have a jet of water directed onto you while the stranger starts to rub your body all over. Your brain tells you that enough is enough and the only way to get out of this is to fight. You turn around and snap at the stranger.

Is it your fault? Of course not. You were only doing what your brain and body have been programmed to do to defend yourself when pushed beyond your limits. This is what happens to many dogs who unfortunately become labelled as difficult or aggressive.

The whole point of Consent & Trust Grooming is that stress triggers are removed or reduced as much as possible and the dog is placed into a position where they can start to build trust in the groomer.

As an example; When a nervous dog comes into the Mutt Hutt I would start by leaving them on the floor giving them free roam around the salon. When the dog approaches I would do a bit of the groom such as a brush. If the dog has had enough they are free to wander off and I wouldn't do any more until the dog returns of its own accord. By doing this the dog has become in control and can take things at their pace becoming more confident and accepting of the grooming process as time progresses.

The above is just an example as, like us humans, each and every dog have different personalities and temperaments and each will require a different approach when being groomed. I will therefore tailor each session accordingly.

## What To Expect From The Mutt Hutt.

I will practice the principles of Consent and Trust Grooming and abide by the International Certificate of Master Groomers (ICMG) Code of Ethics.

At no point during the groom will any dog be forced into a position where they are either mentally or physically stressed.

Restraining a dog raises stress levels and will be uncomfortable (especially for older dogs or those with health issues). I will therefore not restrain a dog unless their safety is an issue (while on the grooming table for example) when a loose neck noose and/or belly strap will be used.

I put humanity above vanity and will cut short a grooming session if the dog becomes overly stressed.

In the initial stages and dependent on the nature of the dog, Consent and Trust Grooming may not lead to a perfect groom but I will endeavour to do the best possible for your dog.