



Welcome to The Bark Yard!

Thank you for your interest in joining our Bark Yard community- we're so excited to get to know you and your dog.

It's our joy to provide a loving, fear-and-force-free experience for every dog that comes through our doors.

Our trained and dedicated staff is here to give your dog the most trusted, enriching, and safe experience in a fun and interactive environment that is created and maintained for your dog's enjoyment.

History of The Bark Yard

After owning a dog rescue for over 5 years, owners Britt and Sully noticed widespread shortages of safe, trustworthy, fear-and-force-free training, day care, and boarding in their local community.

Not only did we want to create a new resource in our growing dog community, but we also were deeply concerned about the lack of positive, fear-and-force-free trainers available to dog owners, and also noticed that many dog people weren't aware of the importance of positive-only training and care for their dogs.

Britt's background in business coaching and consulting for women, combined with Sully's ability to deal with complex financial and real estate paperwork, as well as his ability to plan and build spaces...

...led to the dream that became a business plan...

...that became a funded business...

...that almost two years later became The Bark Yard in South Portland.

We prioritize enriching the lives of the dogs in our care...
...focusing on mental enrichment for clever doggy minds...
...physical and social enrichment without overwhelm...
...and a stress-free learning environment so we can give dogs a happy, enjoyable experience when they can't be home with you.

The Bark Yard team is trained in helping your dog develop and further their confidence, understanding what we're asking of them, and being a happy and healthy member of your community.

We use kibble and other training treats to reward appropriate behavior and achieve training goals.

The staff plays games with the dogs throughout the day to stimulate them mentally as well as physically.

There is also plenty of play in **small groups** of dogs that are familiar to your dog whenever possible. We use positive reinforcement techniques only and promote structured, appropriate play.

The Bark Yard team knows that in order to support our dog clients, a relationship with parents is also necessary. To this end, we're honest and will proactively communicate with you about your dogs' behaviors and interactions during their stay with us.

Dogs are like people- they have good days as well as bad and we feel it's important for you to know how your dog is doing and what kind of a day they had.

Except for dogs that are 25 lbs. and under, who are segregated into their own groups, dogs are grouped according to a variety of factors including temperament, play style, and age.

At 5 dogs per playgroup, we keep our group sizes MUCH smaller than average to allow for more individualized attention, less stress, and a more enjoyable play time for your pup.

We practice a balance of play, rest, and enrichment philosophy. Dogs spend approximately 30 minutes playing at a time, and then have rest, enrichment, and training if you choose to add that into their daycare day.

Given the educational component of our mission, it's important for dogs to have these rest periods to keep their minds fresh for learning.

Any training you choose to have for your dog during their day with us is supervised by trainers and is supplemented by counselors and additional support staff who move between groups.

Evaluations

An evaluation is necessary before a student can attend TBY to determine whether we are a good fit for your dog.

Before we can evaluate your dog, we require a non-refundable deposit for evaluations at the time of scheduling as well as proof of vaccinations, completed application, a signed medical release, and signed pet care agreement *which can be found on the REGISTRATION page on our website: <https://thebarkyard.me/registrations/>*

After we've received all of the above, we'll reach out to schedule your evaluation.

When you arrive, we'll have a brief discussion about your dogs' individual needs, and what support would be most helpful from us.

Then we'll take your dog for their interview 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 language, signals, and how well they read/interact with other dogs.

We let your dog tell us that they are comfortable every step of the way, as that's our biggest focus.

Once the group portion of the evaluation is completed, we bring your dog to one of our suites to evaluate their comfort in that space.

This is vital as we practice a balance of rest and play so it is essential that dogs are comfortable in their suites whether they attend for daycare or boarding.

Then we'll come back to you to discuss our observations.

If for any reason, they are not comfortable in our environment we'll make recommendations for next possible steps for you and your dog.

It is important to note that our daycare program is not the right fit for all dogs. That doesn't mean they aren't great dogs and is no reflection on their owners- we'll always recommend what we feel is best for your dog.

If the evaluation goes well and we have space that day, your pup will be welcome to stay with us for the day.

7-Day Daycare Policy

We do not allow dogs to attend daycare or boarding if they have attended at another daycare facility within 7 days for health precautions.

Please note We require an evaluation and one full day of daycare prior to any boarding stay. We have found it can be overwhelming for a dog's first visit to be overnight.

By completing one full day of daycare, your pup will have a chance to acclimate to our facility and feel more comfortable before they board.

What should you bring for your dog?

Daycare Only

1. Your dog 😊
2. Leash and collar – All dogs arriving and exiting the building must remain under leash control. We discourage any interactions between dogs and between parents and unfamiliar dogs in the lobby. We ask that parents honor this policy by keeping dogs under leash control until turned over to a Bark Yard Academy employee. As a safety precaution all collars and leashes are removed and will be stored until pickup.
3. Lunch for puppies (under the age of 6 months). If your dog is over the age of 6 months, a veterinary note will be required to continue administration of lunch meals. Without a veterinary note, a \$2.00 fee will apply for preparation and administration of the meal.

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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3. Food – Our recommendation is to keep your pet on the same diet they have at home but if you wish to purchase food from us, we do offer a high-quality menu.

We strongly prefer that food be provided in individually pre-portioned containers for each meal with instructions on times of feedings, special instructions, etc. In the event that a parent is unable to pre-portion the food, it can be brought in bulk with specific feeding instructions including times, amounts, special instructions, etc.

4. Comfort item – We recommend an un-laundered article of clothing (t-shirt, sweatshirt) with family members scent – often this will help dogs feel close to their owners and more comfortable while spending time in their suites.

Please note

- In the best interest for the dogs in our care, we only offer boarding for ‘regular’ daycare dogs. Regular daycare dogs attend at the minimum 2 days per month. We have found dogs who attend on a regular basis have an easier and more comfortable transition to boarding. Familiarity breeds comfort!

- We do not accept bedding as we provide warm comfortable blankets and cots to all boarding dogs. Any clothing, except for coats/jackets/sweaters in the cold weather months, or accessories worn by your dog will be removed prior to your pup joining a group unless previously discussed with a Bark Yard Academy team member. We are not responsible for any damage that may occur if belongings are left.

Medications: We are happy to administer oral and topical medications that your dog requires with no additional cost.

Injections can be given for a small fee.

Please discuss your dog’s medication needs with us prior to his/her stay.

Supporting your dog after coming home from Daycare/Boarding:

During their stay, 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 ask parents to allow dogs to acclimate with some exposure to our environment prior to any stay by requiring your dog to attend at least one day of daycare prior to a boarding stay.

We will recommend additional exposure if we feel that it will give your dog a happier boarding stay.

Eating habits can change when staying away from home and dogs will often eat food differently. They may eat all their food and put on a few pounds. Some dogs lose weight even though they are eating well or lose weight by not eating enough.

Time spent at The Bark Yard can be very exciting, and some dogs lose weight from exercise as they run, wrestle, and play 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 shortly after pick-up.

Help prepare your dog for daycare by establishing a routine on daycare days and remember to provide water, food, and allow them to rest when they get home from their busy day.

Monitor their food and water intake. Too much of either can cause problems.

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 Bark Yard team member.

Grooming

We offer the following grooming services booked in advance:

- Bath
- Nail trim
- Ear cleaning
- Tooth brushing
- De-shedding brushing
- Blow-out

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

Please note

We do not force grooming services for the best interest of the dog as we want to remain a positive environment. We are happy to attempt any service that we can provide without upsetting your dog. Payment will be expected for all attempts.

Training

The Bark Yard promotes fear and force free training for all dogs that attend, because a well-trained dog is a happy dog with a happy hoo-man!

In addition to our daily basic obedience, group training classes (check website for current offerings!), and private 1:1 sessions and packages, we offer two different training options for your dog during the day.

- We offer a **Day Care + Training** option for dogs that benefit from individualized training and mentally stimulating activities.
- We also have a **2-week Sleep Away Camp**, which is our fear and force free board and train option.

Please inquire with us for details, or check the services section of our website.

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 in any facility are susceptible to "bugs" that make 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 canine communicable disease. We do more to combat the spread of airborne illness than anyone else in the industry.

Our air BioOx system uses natural enzymes to neutralize harmful airborne pathogens and toxins.

Whereas traditional HVAC systems just move air around, our BioOx system actually decontaminates the air, by capturing particles within a specialized all-natural enzyme and microbe solution, rendering contaminants like dust, ammonia, formaldehyde, bacteria and viruses harmless.

We thoroughly disinfect every kennel, class area, and playroom in our facility every night, however, just like in a child's daycare or work place, dogs are susceptible to bugs that make their

way through doggy facilities. While we take great care in maintaining a clean/disease-free environment, parents should be aware of the risk.

All dogs attending The Bark Yard 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, roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, giardia, coccidia, and tapeworm, etc. If we observe worms in a dog's stool, we will collect a sample, isolate the dog, and notify 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.

When dogs play during the day, 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, though occasionally there will be a disagreement or altercation.

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

The Bark Yard requires that all adult dogs' vaccinations be up to date (copies need to be provided at the time of scheduling an evaluation) for:

- 1) Rabies
- 2) Full series of Distemper
- 3) Bordetella
- 4) We require dogs to be neutered or spayed by 6 months with exclusions. If your dog is over 6 months and is not neutered or spayed, please be aware that based on their evaluation, we may not be able to have them attend until they are.

Please note - females in season cannot attend group play.

Please speak with a Bark Yard manager to discuss further.

Lobby Hours

Monday-Friday

6:30 am – 10:00 am (Drop off/Pick up)

3:00 pm – 7:00 pm (Pick-ups, ONLY)

Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays

8:00 am – 10:00 am (Drop off/Pick up)

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm (Pick-ups, ONLY)

The Bark Yard observes the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.

Scheduling

Our preferred method for reservation requests is to register via 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 usernames and passwords are not capitalized and are case-sensitive.

We do have a daily capacity that we 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 that you're 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.

Pricing:

We offer discounted daycare pricing for all registered clients, and all rates are on our website.

These clients will receive a daily rate for 1, 2 or 3 days a week, and a further discounted rate per day for 4+ days registration.

To register, parents are required to commit to the same days every week.

Payment will be charged to a credit card automatically at the beginning of each registration week and charged regardless of whether the pup will be in attendance, including holidays and storms.

Days may not be moved or switched from the committed day.

This is the best way to guarantee your dog a spot for daycare on a weekly basis and breed familiarity among the dogs.

Registration may be terminated with seven days advance notice, but may not be re-enrolled for a minimum of 30 days.

Pups who are NOT registered (drop in pups) pay for daycare each day of attendance and are welcome to schedule and change their scheduled days as needed, depending on availability.

Drop-in spots are not guaranteed.

This means, if another dog enrolls for a day that a drop-in dog is scheduled for or a boarding is requested, the drop-in dog may lose their spot.

TBY will notify the drop-in dog's family at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled day if the drop-in dog's spot has been lost.

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

***Please see the "services" page for pricing!**

<https://www.thebarkyard.me/services>

Early drop-off/late pick-up & no-show fees

Arrangements can be made in advance for early drop-off (7:00 am – 8:00 am on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) or late pick-up within a 30 minute window for an additional \$10.00 fee.

Please speak with a Bark Yard team member 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 them to boarding for the night.

You will be assessed a "No-Show" boarding fee of \$25.00 and the food cost (if not provided) in addition to the normal boarding fees.

Additionally, without acceptable documentation for no-show, your enrollment will be evaluated for possible termination.

Daycare No call/No show Fee

We require all dogs to be dropped off by 10:00am. If we are not notified that your dog will not be attending by the end of business THE NIGHT PRIOR and your dog has not arrived by 10:00am, we will charge a no call/no show fee equaling the daycare service for that day.

Boarding Deposits

We ask for a boarding deposit of \$45.00 per dog when scheduling boarding. Deposits will be applied to your TBY account if the boarding is canceled more than 2 days prior to arrival. If the boarding stay is canceled less than 2 days prior to arrival, it will not be retained by The Bark Yard.

For example, if your dog is scheduled to board on Wednesday, you would need to cancel by close of business on Sunday to be able to use the deposit for future services.

Parental Acknowledgment

Please redirect to the "registration" page to under 'medical release' to sign this form and acknowledge that you read and understand the information and the policies contained herein.