

Proposed Marble Hill Dog Walking Code of Conduct

We welcome dogs at Marble Hill Park, a precious green space where dogs can stretch their legs and run free.

We have a responsibility to ensure that all of our 650,000 park visitors are able to enjoy a clean and safe space.

We are lucky to share the grounds with a predominance of conscientious and courteous dog owners and walkers. They help us to ensure that the enjoyment of park visitors is not compromised by aggressive dog behaviour and they clear up after their dogs. There is a small percentage who are less careful.

We'd like to encourage all dog owners and walkers to share in the responsibility for making Marble Hill Park a welcoming, safe and clean place for everyone. We are keen to work to encourage dog- friendly and family friendly spaces throughout the park.

We commit to:

- Open communication through signage and regular interaction with our team.
- Fostering of controlled, calm and positive dog behaviour in line with the Kennel Club Bronze Citizen award.
- Creating and supporting a cohesive Marble Hill network of dog walkers who meet regularly through specific events and network mechanisms although we acknowledge there are a number of groups already that exist informally.
- Development of a Professional Dog Walker's licence for Marble Hill, allowing the PDW to walk up to 4 dogs at one time unless otherwise agreed by English Heritage. Requests for a licence for 6 dogs will be considered upon special request.
- A clean park policy in which dog owners are encouraged to scoop any mess.

EXPECTATIONS

1. You and your dog

For the safety of your dog and others, they should not be allowed in the park without you. Any dog in the park must wear the name and the address of the owner either inscribed on the collar or name or plate attached to it. This will help us find you should your dog get lost.

All dogs should always be accompanied and should wear the name and address of its owner

2. Other park users

Marble Hill Park is a special place for many people for many different reasons. Please help us to ensure that it can be enjoyed by everyone. Not everyone is comfortable with dogs; some may dislike even a friendly approach from a dog.

Some dog owners keep their dogs on a lead in a public space for a reason. Please respect other dog owners and their dogs and not allow your dog to approach.

Please keep close control of your dog – and do not allow it to become a nuisance to people and other dogs.

3. Wildlife, plants and trees

Our team of staff and volunteers work throughout the year to ensure the park looks its best, protecting the ecology for future generations.

Please ensure your dog does not damage the plants or trees, or frighten the wildlife.

4. Keeping things clean and safe

The park is used by many children and for sports activities. Be mindful of legislation regarding dog fouling in your area. Dog fouling is unpleasant and can be dangerous to humans. It alters the nutrient levels of soils and can affect the survival of rare flora and fauna.

Please clear up after your dog in all areas of the park.

5. Our neighbours

We have lots of neighbours who live close to the park, remember that continual barking can be a nuisance to others.

Please be considerate of our neighbours

PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKERS

There is currently no policy for professional dog walkers in Marble Hill Park. It has been suggested by some of the dog walking community and also the wider community that we should evaluate our policy and licensing to ensure that we fall in line with the local areas so we show commitment to the safety of dogs and also all park users.

The surrounding parks in Richmond have recently reduced the number of dogs that can be walked by one person from six to four, in addition to this Richmond Council introduced a limited number (18) of licences for professional dog walkers and general dog walkers who want to walk up to six dogs in the borough. The Royal Parks manage professional dog walkers in their parks by issuing licences outlining criteria which must be met by the professional dog walkers.

By implementing a licensing scheme at Marble Hill Park we will ensure:

- Safe access to and use of the park is maintained for all visitors for both dog walkers professional or otherwise and non dog walkers
- Commitment to the protection and conservation of wildlife within the park
- Health and safety and legislative compliance of professional dog walkers for the good of both the dog walking professional and indeed other dog walkers.
- All professional dog walkers are fully insured and hold liability for participant's safety
- Professional activities that are undertaken in the park help contribute to the costs of running and maintaining the beauty and care of the park for all users.

Policy for professional dog walkers at Marble Hill:

Marble Hill, in accordance with the local authority will therefore issue professional dog walking licences each year. Licensees must meet our criteria and a professional code of practice.

Marble Hill will therefore commit to ensuring the following steps are taken to roll out this policy in consultation with the dog walking community.

Marble Hill will:

Advertise online and in the park for Professional dog walkers to apply for a licence.

Upon successful application of the licence, Marble Hill will Issue registered PDW with tags to be worn on the dogs collar while they are using the park

Implement a licence fee of £250.00 per year.

Maintain a maximum number of four dogs walked by one person unless otherwise agreed.

PDW shall not walk with other Professional Dog Walkers in the park or non commercial dog walkers which results in a group of dogs of more than six. Large numbers of dogs together can be intimidating to other park users

We hope that along with the Marble Hill team, we will work with the Marble Hill dog network to self-manage those who do not adhere to the policy guidelines

Park Rangers will issue the licences and monitor code of practice. If people do not adhere to the code of practice they will have their licence removed.

Our commitment to implementation of this policy is to ensure that we fall in line with the local authority and look after the safety of the dogs, the people and the wildlife of our beautiful park so that we can all enjoy it and safe guard the grounds and the ecology for the future.

COMMUNICATION AND SIGNAGE

Implementing well defined and simple messaging on site and on the Marble Hill webpage will set out clear expectations in relation to dog walkers and what other visitors should expect when they visit the park. Specific, credible and regularly updated information will promote responsible behaviour.

We are committed to better open communication with our valued Marble Hill dog network. We ask for your commitment to this and have created the following email marblehillpark@english-heritage.org.uk for you to be able to alert the ranger team, park management and volunteers on dog behaviour, health and safety or any concerns you may have about the park.

Park information boards situated at the car park and River gate will be used to display expectations as detailed above. Clear signage will help us to promote positive behaviours rather than policing poor behaviour.