



**TOPIC:** Provincial government ban of specific dog breeds

**DATE:** Oct. 19, 2021

---

**Email subject line:** Provincial government ban of specific dog breeds

Thank you for your email. This response is sent on behalf of Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and all Members of Council. **Enclosed is more information about the Ontario government's law that bans the ownership of specific breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls, and the steps the City continues to take to follow the provincial law and care for pets and pet owners' well-being.**

Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of Council know that a family pet is at the heart of every family. Several Members of Council are also pet owners and are sympathetic to the concerns of dog owners, in particular. Vaughan Animal Services (VAS) is dedicated to creating a safe community for pets and their owners. Services include dog and cat licensing, animal control by-law education, pick up of injured or sick dogs, cats and [wildlife](#) (and stray dogs), reuniting owners with lost pets and pet adoption.

In 2005, the Ontario government amended the [Dog Owners' Liability Act](#) to include new banned breeds of dogs. **Since the issue you are inquiring about is a provincial matter, should you have any questions or comments about this ban, please get in touch with your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). Click [here](#) to see who your MPP is and for their contact information.**

**VAS and the entire City of Vaughan must follow the provincial law that bans the ownership of specific breeds of dogs.**

There are different ways a potentially banned dog breed comes into possession of VAS. This can include By-law staff detaining a stray animal found wandering in the community during a patrol or when a member of the public contacts VAS about a sighting at a specific location and requests VAS to collect the animal.

When a dog that is perceived to be a banned breed is in VAS's custody, staff immediately investigate to determine whether the animal is banned from ownership – as defined by the province's law. The investigation includes a visual assessment of the dog and can also include reviewing medical records, among other steps. If an owner can be identified, VAS will contact them directly for additional information.

If the animal in custody is a banned breed, as defined by the provincial legislation, VAS actively works to arrange an adoption for the animal with an owner who resides in a province where the breed has not been banned.

**If the dog in the care of VAS is not a banned breed, VAS will reunite the dog with its owners or arrange adoption with new owners into a safe, loving home.**

As you are contacting the City about a specific animal in the care of VAS, we normally do not release details about animals in its care to anyone but the pet owner, including whether a specific animal is in their possession. Banned breeds of animals, and all animals in the custody of VAS, are shown compassion and given full care in the form of medical attention, nutrition and exercise.

VAS is committed to finding [lost pets](#). All stray pets found are posted on [PetHarbor](#), a pet recovery system that searches lost and found reports posted within the community and Ontario.

Please note that as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Vaughan Animal Shelter is closed to the public until further notice. Please contact us at (905) 832-2281 or at [animal.services@vaughan.ca](mailto:animal.services@vaughan.ca) for assistance during this closure.

Thank you again for contacting Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of Council.

Sincerely,  
City of Vaughan