

Minding manners

TELEVISION personality Steve Austin joined Perth canine consultant and trainer Kathy Kopellis McLeod in giving an educational talk on dog safety to primary school students last Thursday.

Austin, from the veterinary show *Harry's Practice*, had to settle for a supporting role as two siberian huskies took centre stage at Scarborough Beach Primary School.

The dogs were there to help the Year 4 students increase their knowledge of canine body language and proper greeting behaviour.

Ms Kopellis McLeod said the purpose of the talk was to make dog encounters a pleasant experience for children. She said the tips offered at the information session were potentially life saving.

"Children need to understand what to do and what not to do when interacting with dogs," Ms Kopellis McLeod said. "Particularly when interacting with strange dogs.

"There are inappropriate expectations of how much a dog should and will tolerate from children.



Kate Johnston and James Davis with Chilli the siberian husky.

Picture: Dominique Menegaldo

Unfortunately this is often reinforced with the family dog through inappropriate play in which the dog is encouraged to use its teeth when interacting."

Mr Austin said children should be aware the way they act around

their own dog was not always safe around other canines.

"In providing these free lessons we hope to increase their understanding of dog behaviour and reduce the chance of a potentially dangerous scenario," he said.