

The Daily Post

Dog attacks three pupils

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By ALISON BROWN

A dog has attacked three young primary school pupils out jogging in Rotorua's Fordlands suburb.

The Australian cattle dog-cross locked its teeth on to an 8-year-old girl's arm and bit two of her Sunset Primary School schoolmates as they ran along Wrigley Rd about 9.30am.

Animal control staff caught the dog shortly after. The dog's fate is unknown until an investigation into the attack is finished.

Its owners could face charges. Two of the children suffered minor "nips" to the waist and leg.

However, the 8-year-old has puncture wounds and bruising to her arm.

She received first aid at school.

During the attack, a local resident heard the children's screams and rushed out to help, yelling at the dog to let go.

It ran away and was caught outside a nearby house. Police spoke with its owners immediately after the attack.

They also interviewed witnesses, including teachers on the daily run.

Animal Control supervisor Kevin Coutts said staff were investigating the attack which was "minor".

He could not comment on whether the dog was under control before it rushed at the children.

"I'm not sure if it jumped a fence to get to them or not at this stage."

Sunset Primary School principal Niels Rasmussen said about 200 pupils ran along Wrigley and Ford Rds every morning.

The daily run was implemented about four years ago as part of the school's health curriculum.

Residents were familiar with the school run and dog owners in the area had previously been asked to check their sections were fenced.

He said the pupils' route would be changed to avoid the property where the attack occurred.

"Kids knew the dog and sometimes played with it. It may have thought the children running past was a game."

The attack comes three days after two-year-old Aotea Coxon was mauled at Christchurch park, suffering serious injuries to her face.

The dog has been put down, with the permission of the owner.

It has reignited the debate over dangerous dogs, including what can be done to protect the public from menacing breeds.

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