

NATION NEWS

Barbados 'no place for Akitas'

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LACK OF SOCIALISATION and the eye contact level between the Akita dog and two small children have been blamed for the animal's vicious attack last Monday in a St Michael district.

Wayne Norville, senior inspector with the Royal Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals (RSPCA), also said Barbados' warm climate was not the right weather for the Akita, and reckoned this might have also triggered the animal's behaviour that left four-year-old Darrell-Ann Jones with a fractured skull and partially severed ear, while six-year-old brother Darian suffered a bite to the hip.

Jeffrey "Top Cat" Walcott was also bitten on the right hand and shoulder after attempting to rescue the two Deacons Primary School students from the dog's attack.

Norville told the **SUNDAY SUN** that the mother's motion to protect her children from the animal, moving them from side to side, also might have irritated the dog which interpreted this action as being confrontational.

Noting that the dog measured about 30 inches from its shoulder, the RSPCA inspector said the small stature of the two children could have made them appear as a quarry in the mind of the full-grown Akita.

"The dog became agitated by the mother's shifting her children from side to side and they (children) were staring directly into the dog's eyes," he said.

Norville also said investigations revealed the dog lacked socialisation with human beings since, besides the owners, it never had any other contact with the public.

He also noted the background of Akita dogs, which were developed for colder climates – hence their thick hair.

"These dogs were also bred to fight bears and there are very few human beings who would be able to fight off an attack by an Akita that intended to go after them.

"People see these dogs as cute, cuddly animals but don't realise how quickly they grow," he said.

"They are not like everyday dogs. They have very low tolerance. Barbados is too hot to bring dogs like that here. It is unfair to the dog."

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