



## Dispute over dog attack where boy provoked animal

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A Hamilton mother says she will, fight a decision by the local council not to seize and destroy a dog which mauled her son.

Sam Stevens says the facial injuries to her three-year-old boy were serious and the dog shut be put down.

“I’m just absolutely shocked and appalled. I don’t know how any dog can live after inflicting such serious injuries on a human being,” says mother Sam Stevens.

However, the council says the animal should not be put be punished because the child provoked it by pull on its testicles.

Caine Stevens spent three days in hospital after being attacked by the Neapolitan Mastiff cross just before New Years Eve. His mother has photographs of the serious injuries the dog inflicted on the toddler.

The attack happened at a residential Hamilton address where another family member had taken Caine for a BBQ lunch.

The dog’s owner couldn’t be contacted today.

The Dog Control Act states that if a dog causes serious injury, the owner could face jail or the dog could be destroyed. But in this case, Hamilton City Council decided the injuries inflicted by the dog did not amount to an offence because of mitigating circumstances surrounding the attack.

The child had touched and grabbed the dog’s testicles.

The council says witnesses claim the boy had been warned not to provoke the dog and that earlier he had tried to harm another dog the same way.

“It is difficult for me to say whether the boy was at fault. It’s more for me to decide whether the dog was dangerous and we don’t believe so,” says a council spokesperson.

But Ms Stevens says the council has done nothing to stop a repeat attack.

“Caine is a little boy and he is curious and that is what they do. A good dog will not attack,” she says.

Ms Stevens says she does not blame those looking after Caine but still thinks the dog should be put down.

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