

## 10-year-old girl mauled by bull terrier

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A GIRL had to have more than 100 stitches in her legs after being savaged by a dog.

Ellie Fitzgerald, 10, was riding the new bike she had for Christmas when she was set upon by the animal, believed to be a white English bull terrier-type dog.

After the mauling, the brave girl had to go through two operations. Her legs are now wrapped in bandages.

Mum Helena, of Barmouth Road, Rumney, Cardiff, said she was horrified at the attack, which happened outside a friend's house just around the corner in Caswell Road.

She arrived on the scene minutes after the dog had been prised off her daughter.

"The dog went absolutely ballistic," said Helena, 41. "She was lucky the damage is from her legs down. Nobody could get the dog off.

"We were in an absolute state of shock.

"Her legs are in a pretty bad state. She has had to have two operations.

"She is going to have bad scarring from it. The doctors say in a few years it will look better but it will never go away.

"She's a brave girl. But she's been having nightmares ever since. She wakes up asking if the dog is dead. She is going to be petrified to go out on her bike."

Ellie, a pupil at Rumney Junior School, described what happened when the dog went for her

on the afternoon of Thursday, December 27.

"It was frightening," she said. "Me and my friend were cycling around the block when we saw the dog. It started chasing her. I screamed at the dog and then it grabbed my leg and started pulling me. It was just biting me and I didn't know what to do."

Ellie, who was in hospital for three nights, was taken to the University Hospital of Wales, Heath, Cardiff, before being transferred to Morriston Hospital in Swansea.

The attack came the same week as a one-year-old boy from Wakefield, West Yorkshire, died when he was mauled by a Rottweiler.

And seven-year-old Kieran Rogers, from Cardiff, is recovering from serious hand and face injuries after being mauled by a dog in Merthyr Road, Whitchurch.

Ellie, who has a brother Liam, 14, had been given her new bike by dad Mark Richardson, who lives in Barry.

He said he believed the dog had been destroyed but police and Cardiff council could not confirm it.

"She's a little toughie," said the 39-year-old claims manager.

"She's had a lot of messages of goodwill from people living around her.

"I'm feeling absolutely devastated."

A spokesman for the Welsh Ambulance Service confirmed paramedics had attended the incident at 3.31pm, where a child was taken to hospital with suspected dog bites.

Our view: Page 32

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