

Two-year-old girl attacked by dog in St Paul's Cray

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A MOTHER and father have spoken out after their two-year-old daughter was mauled by a dog.

Jenna Coughlin, 22 and Ben Mewton, 24, say their daughter Tia Kennedy, who was rushed to King's College Hospital and given 17 stitches, is scarred for life on her face following the attack.

Her parents, of Whippendell Way, St Paul's Cray, say she was bit by an American Bull Dog.

Tia, who has the surname of her father's stepfather, may need plastic surgery when she is older.

Mother Jenna Coughlin described what she saw as something from a horror movie.

She said: "I was horrified, I feared for her life.

"The bite took a big chunk out of her face, but because she's still young, her cheeks are quite chubby and the bite did not go through her nerves or muscle, which I think is really lucky."

Tia is on the road to recovery but is already showing a fear of dogs.

Her mother said: "When we were at the doctor's to give her a tetanus jab, she was reading a book and saw a picture of a dog which made her freak out.

"She threw the book on the floor and said 'Get it away from me.'"

Tia's father Ben Mewton says the dog is dangerous and should be put down.

Under the Dangerous Dogs Act, police can only take action if a dog attack happens in a place the animal is not allowed to be in.

Mr Mewton, a supervisor at a garden centre, said: "At the end of the day my daughter has been attacked and I can't do anything about it.

"How long will this go on for with people getting attacked by dogs in homes?"

Bromley police Chief Inspector Ian Gallehawk said: "Legislation relating to dogs being dangerously out of control deals with dogs in public places or in private places, where they are not permitted to be.

"Therefore, a dog bite in a house, where the dog lives, is not covered by the criminal law.

"Victims can however seek redress through the civil courts.

"Responsible dog ownership is important for the safety of everybody.

"If you believe a dog has a tendency to bite, always think about safety not just of adults but of children as well."

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