REINFORCEMENT

What makes behaviour more likely to happen again

Reinforcement is anything that makes a behaviour more likely to happen again.

YOUR DOG CHOOSES WHAT'S REINFORCING

A reinforcer only works if it increases behaviour. Your dog decides what it values, so what one dog loves, another may not.

REINFORCEMENT CAN BE:



Food



Toys



Play



Affection



Attention



Movement



Sniffing



Access to something they want



Going outside



Anything else that individual dog values

TIMING MATTERS

For clear learning, reinforcement should happen quickly after the behaviour.

Aim for 1–2 seconds

USE A BRIDGE

If you can't deliver the reward instantly, use a bridge.

REWARD OR REINFORCEMENT?

A reward is something we give. Reinforcement is what makes behaviour more likely to happen again.

Not every reward is reinforcing.

LEARNING HAPPENS ALL THE TIME

Dogs learn from consequences every day. If a behaviour works, it is more likely to happen again.

CONTEXT MATTERS

What your dog values can change with the environment, their needs, and how they are feeling.



SMALL STEPS COUNT

Reinforce small steps to build more complex behaviours over time.

Example:
Look at mat → move to mat → step on mat → settle on mat