

# School Dog Policy

## Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

### *Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?*

Yes there is, though there are a variety of accidents, which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out.

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head of School. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present.

## School Policy

The dog will be owned by a member of staff.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy, assistance dog or Dog Mentor Dog and the Head of School has been informed beforehand.
- The dog has been chosen because of its intelligence and that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, which sheds little hair and is very sociable and friendly.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. The Head of School has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill he will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.

- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on his/her body, chest, back and not by his/her face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to the dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head Teacher asap.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure.

### **Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head of School or a Deputy as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head of School.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

The Head of School is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

## **Appendix 1.**

### **Reasons to have a dog in school**

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:

- 1) Improve academic achievement
- 2) Increase literacy skills
- 3) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Help prevent truancy
- 8) Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

#### **Behaviour:**

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

#### **Attendance:**

Case study: Alice was a student with poor attendance and truancy. Alice was encouraged back into school using caring for Jock, a dog, as an incentive. By telling Alice that "if she didn't come to school to care for him, he wouldn't get walks, water or love," Alice came to school almost every day for the rest of the year, only missing two days.

#### **Education:**

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction.

Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also

provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.

#### **Social Development:**

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students.

With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

#### **As a reward:**

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem.

Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

<b>RISK ASSESSMENT</b>	Activity or location being assessed: School The Dog Mentor: Rafa The Dog Mentor registration number: DVID23947		
Establishment: Green Meadow Primary School	Assessment by: Jenny Duckworth	Date: 30/11/2023	
Review Date: Yearly	Approved by: Jenny Duckworth	Date: 30/11/2024	

**Dog Mentor Programme UK**

The use of dogs in school is part of the recognised 'Dog Mentor Programme UK'. The use of dogs in the schools is part of a recognised programme and more information can be found at <https://www.thedogmentor.co.uk>

The dog/s in school has/have undergone the Dog Mentor training and will work towards further awards within this programme. By working towards and gaining the awards the dogs are maintaining the high quality expected of Dog Mentors.

Sophie Desogus and Sally White undertook their training on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Risk ID	Description	Impact	Owner	Impact	Probability	Risk Rating (Value)	Mitigation Plan	Adj Impact	Adj Probability	Adj. Risk Rating	Contingency Plan	Status
1	Minor injury to pupil by dog (such as scratches)	Impact on the school, pupil, handler or dog	Dog Handler	select Low, Medium or high	select unlikely, likely, highly likely or certain	< 0.25 < Amber < 0.60 < Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog supervised at all times.</li> <li>• Educating pupils and staff on behaviour around dog.</li> <li>• Limiting tricks performed for smaller pupils (high five, etc).</li> <li>• Dog's claws trimmed regularly.</li> <li>• Dog on lead at all times or in crate /office when not being supervised by an adult. The door will be locked, or signs put on the door so that children cannot enter when the dog is on its own.</li> <li>• Supervising adult to ensure dogs are kept on a lead whenever they are around children. If dog has a 'right to roam' all stakeholders are informed of this. 'Right to Roam' means off lead but with owner and not left unsupervised.</li> <li>• Supervising adult to ensure dog is exercised away from children this can be on the field and/or playground when not in use. If in use dogs are taken off site to be exercised.</li> <li>• Monitoring Dog's health and temperament at all times.</li> <li>• Dog trained to not pull while on walking on lead. Smaller/younger children to have a second lead with adults hold's first/main lead.</li> </ul>	Low	Unlikely	< 0.25 < Amber < 0.60 < Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor first aid</li> <li>• Parents contacted</li> <li>• Risk assessment reviewed</li> <li>• Debrief from staff in attendance</li> <li>• Accident form completed</li> <li>• Adjustments made if appropriate</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
2	Serious injury to pupil by dog (such as biting or mauling)	Would require medical treatment (in school or at hospital) after assessment. Could also impact pupil confidence of working with dog/s in the future and being around other dogs outside school.	Dog Handler	High	Unlikely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervising adult to ensure dogs are kept on a lead whenever they are around children. If dog has a 'right to roam' all stakeholders are informed of this. 'Right to Roam' means off lead but with owner and not left unsupervised.</li> <li>• Supervising adult to ensure dog is exercised away from children this can be on the field and/or playground when not in use. If in use dogs are taken off site to be exercised.</li> <li>• Monitoring Dog's health and temperament at all times.</li> <li>• Dog trained to not pull while on walking on lead. Smaller/younger children to have a second lead with adults hold's first/main lead.</li> </ul>	High	Unlikely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First aid after in school or in hospital after assessment by first aider</li> <li>• Parents contacted</li> <li>• Risk assessment reviewed</li> <li>• Debrief from staff in attendance</li> <li>• Accident form completed</li> <li>• Adjustments made if appropriate</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
3	Other injuries	Trips, slips or falls not directly related to dog.	Dog Handler	Low	Likely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervising adult to ensure dogs are kept on a lead whenever they are around children. If dog has a 'right to roam' all stakeholders are informed of this. 'Right to Roam' means off lead but with owner and not left unsupervised.</li> <li>• Supervising adult to ensure dog is exercised away from children this can be on the field and/or playground when not in use. If in use dogs are taken off site to be exercised.</li> <li>• Monitoring Dog's health and temperament at all times.</li> <li>• Dog trained to not pull while on walking on lead. Smaller/younger children to have a second lead with adults hold's first/main lead.</li> </ul>	Low	Unlikely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First aid after in school or in hospital after assessment by first aider</li> <li>• Parents contacted</li> <li>• Risk assessment reviewed</li> <li>• Debrief from staff in attendance</li> <li>• Accident form completed</li> <li>• Adjustments made if appropriate</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place

4	Allergic Reaction	Allergic reaction to dog. Deterioration of healthy child/adult.	Dog Handler / Head of School	High	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All pupils to have completed consent form indicating any known allergies. Pupils with severe allergies to not work directly with dog.</li> <li>All pupils to follow hygiene controls to minimise risk of affecting other pupils seek medical advice on pupils who may experience serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) as pupil's status becomes clear to school to enable additional controls to be put in place.</li> <li>A letter about the dogs will be put in all 'welcome packs' so children and families new to the school will have the information.</li> <li>Dog will be chosen which is low/non mouthing resulting in low risk of allergic reaction.</li> <li>Ensure that in line with school asthma and allergy policy, pupil medication is always carried with/near to the child.</li> </ul>	High	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If dog comes into contact with pupil who has allergy, remove pupil from environment and seek medical advice if symptoms arise.</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
5	Illness transferred from dog to pupil	Pupil could become unwell after infection requiring treatment and/or time off school. Examples are worms, rabies, fleas, etc	Dog Handler	Medium	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog to be inoculated against all recommended diseases as per recommended schedule and vaccinations/treatments to be kept up to date.</li> <li>Worm and flea treatment to be carried out by handler regularly.</li> </ul>	Medium	Wont Happen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog has up to date medical history from vets. Flea and worm treatment carried out monthly.</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
6	Dog excrement	Hygiene issues within school. In extreme cases, fleas can cause a disease which can cause blindness.	Dog Handler	High	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any excrement or urine will be cleaned up immediately and thoroughly disposed of responsibly and hygienically by the owner or adult with responsibility at the time of the incident. Member of staff who cleans away the waste will have undergone Hazardous waste training</li> <li>If indoors, the immediate area will be sprayed with a pre-atory disinfectant spray and any children will be removed from the area until it is cleared up</li> <li>Member of staff who cleans away the waste will have undergone Hazardous waste training</li> <li>The dog will be taken outside throughout the day by an adult. This will be before the start of the school day and every 2 hours and more if needed</li> <li>All dogs are toilet trained and will use known strategies to alert staff member if they need to go to the toilet</li> <li>Poo bags will be placed in an external bin where the children do not go (where all school rubbish is disposed of)</li> </ul>	High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate action to completely clean area, all waste disposed of in correct manner</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place

7	General Hygiene	Germs could be spread between dogs and humans.	Dog Handler / Head of School	Low	Highly Likely	Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff and pupils to wash hands/use hand sanitiser after coming into contact with dog</li> <li>Keep dog away from all food preparation areas and away from pupils during times when they are eating</li> <li>The dog will be fed in the owners office</li> <li>The dog will be groomed every 6-8 weeks and have additional baths if required throughout the week</li> <li>Grooming will also involve nail clipping</li> <li>Bedding in the dog crate will be taken home and washed on a regular basis</li> </ul>	Low	Unlikely	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No contingency plan</li> </ul>	Handler to request that handwashing is put in place or introduction of some other method such as alcohol gel or wipes.
8	Impacts on Dog from other animals	If other animals such as dogs, cats or foxes are around in the school grounds, the dog could be attacked or chased which could adversely impact both the dog and/or pupils and staff. The dog/s could react adversely to other animals in school.	Dog Handler	Medium	Unlikely	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog to be kept under control at all times.</li> <li>Handler to be aware of environment at all times.</li> </ul>	Low	Unlikely	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog training and control is required to reduce impact and likelihood of occurrence</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
9	Minor injury to dog	Intentional injury to dog by pupil who is showing uncontrollable or unreasonable behaviour. This could also result in injury to pupil if dog reacts adversely. Environmental risks exist where dog could get injured (e.g. open stairways, heavy doors or gates or roads near to school).	Dog Handler	Medium	Likely	Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handler to be aware of situation at all times.</li> <li>Pupil's temperament to be monitored.</li> <li>Pupils showing unacceptable behaviour will not be allowed to work with dog.</li> <li>On open stairways, dog to be walked on wall side.</li> <li>Handler to always follow training methods on movement around school.</li> <li>The dog should be kept on a lead while inside and outside. Site has been assessed by The Dog Mentor programme.</li> </ul>	Low	Unlikely	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handler to intervene if risk is realised. Pupil or dog to be removed from environment.</li> <li>First aid may be required</li> <li>Separate first aid kit should be kept on site for dogs.</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
10	Major injury to dog	Intentional injury to dog by pupil who is showing uncontrollable or unreasonable behaviour. This could also result in injury to pupil if dog reacts adversely. Environmental risks exist where dog could get injured (e.g. open stairways, heavy doors or gates or roads near to school).	Dog Handler / Head of School	High	Unlikely	Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per minor injury risk above</li> </ul>	High	Unlikely	Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handler to intervene if risk is realised. Pupil or dog to be removed from environment.</li> <li>First aid to be administered and then taken to vet.</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place



11	General welfare of dog	If overworked, dog could become tired and may display unwanted behaviour or become ill.	Dog Handler	Medium	Likely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handler to be aware of dog's characteristics.</li> <li>Provide dog with regular breaks and access to water.</li> <li>Limit the number of pupils working with dog at one time to reduce chance of dog being overwhelmed.</li> <li>Dog's to work according to their established/agreed timetable.</li> </ul>	Medium	Unlikely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extended rest period for dog</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
12	Noise, barking	Could cause alarm to children/staff/visitors.	Dog Handler	Medium	Likely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the dog barks at unknown adults- this will be managed by close instruction and positive reinforcement.</li> <li>Key word to be used to help calm the dog 'settle' if they do become agitated e.g. handlers to address behaviour and seek advice from The Dog Mentor if it continues.</li> </ul>	Low	Unlikely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No contingency plan</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
13	Training the dog	Dog being over stimulated or not responding to instructions given during training.	Dog Handler	Medium	Unlikely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The training of the dog will always be supervised by a trained adult.</li> <li>Pupils will be told how to feed the dog 'treats- on an open hand- The dog will not be made things to do things it doesn't want to do.</li> <li>If the dog shows any distress the training will stop immediately.</li> <li>Pupil will be reminded to wash their hands after training.</li> </ul>	Low	Unlikely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No contingency plan</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
14	Fire drill and evacuation	Dog being left in building unattended following evacuation. This would be against the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 2016 and would cause undue distress for the dog and place it at considerable risk of harm.	Dog Handler	High	Likely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual supervising the dog/young person will be responsible for safely leading the dog and others in their charge from the building to a place of safety.</li> <li>The supervising adult will ensure the dog is placed on a lead if they aren't already.</li> <li>Dogs should be signed in and out of school so that staff know when they are on site.</li> </ul>	Medium	Likely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No contingency plan</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place
15	Canine related diseases and parasites	Germ's could be spread between dogs and humans.	Dog Handler	Low	Likely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dog has regular vet checks.</li> <li>The dog will not come to school if poorly or has an injury.</li> <li>Dog to have necessary and current vaccinations before coming into school. Vaccinations and other medical treatment are the responsibility of the owner- see above for dates.</li> <li>Dog to have regular veterinary checks.</li> </ul>	Low	Likely		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No contingency plan</li> </ul>	Mitigation actions are all in place

									<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog to be bathed and groomed regularly- see above for dates</li> </ul>						
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**REVIEWS:**

To be reviewed in (DATE) or if any changes occur to the school community (pupils individual needs) or the dog.

**DATE OF REVIEW:**

**REVIEWED BY:**

**COMMENTS:**

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**The Dog Mentor**

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

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