



DOGS IN SCHOOL POLICY

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This policy has been put in place to cover a permanent school dog or visits by appropriately certified dogs from external organisations. Although the code of conduct is the same in both instances, a permanent school dog requires additional procedures and responsibilities to be put in place to ensure its welfare.

1. Aims and scope

This policy sets out the procedures and conduct required for interacting with dogs in school, such as during therapy or literacy sessions.

This policy is non-statutory.

It aims to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils and staff. It also aims to ensure that the dogs involved in such sessions are healthy and happy, and treated with respect.

It is the school's policy not to allow dogs on site unless it has been agreed and cleared with SLT, ensuring that risk assessments are in places, the dog has been fully vetted as suitable to be on site including an assessment of the temperament, full records showing worming, flea treatment and annual immunisation. In addition, a school dog requires additional insurance cover which needs to be provided by the owner.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher/SLT staff with responsibility for the dog

The headteacher/leadership team member with responsibility for the dog should:

- › Ensure the purpose of the dog being in school is clear
- › Ensure that the dog being used for the therapy/literacy session is appropriate for the age range of the pupils present
- › Ensure all dogs used for therapy sessions are certified and appropriately trained
- › Ensure the welfare needs of the dog are met
- › Carry out a risk assessment for each interaction
- › Consult staff in advance about any allergies or phobias
- › Obtain parental consent before allowing any contact between pupils and the dog, and consult parents/carers on any allergies or phobias the pupils may have
- › Ensure all staff and pupils have completed adequate training related to appropriate behaviour and conduct with the dog prior to any interactions
- › Ensure staff and pupils are reminded of appropriate procedures and conduct prior to each session
- › Put procedures in place for dealing with incidents, such as a dog bite

- › Put clear hygiene procedures and responsibilities in place for cleaning up after the dog
- › Ensure the measures set out in this policy are followed
- › Ensure appropriate insurance cover is in place, whether through the school's/trust's policy or a third-party insurance policy
- › Ensure that any dog on school premises is included in fire evacuation procedures, or any other evacuation or invacuation procedures, under the supervision of the dog handler
- › Monitor and review this policy

2.2 Dog's owner

The dog's owner and/or the organisation providing the dog should:

- › Ensure the dog is fit and healthy prior to each visit, with confirmation from the dog's vet
- › Ensure the purpose of the dog being in school is clear by having rules for staff and children to adhere to
- › Ensure the welfare needs of the dog are met
- › Ensure a space is allocated in school if the dog needs a child-free, quiet area to rest
- › Make alternative arrangements for the care of the dog when the dog is unable to go into school [only required if the dog is a permanent school dog]
- › Ensure the dog is supervised at all times on the school site
- › Attend relevant training sessions with the dog as appropriate and ensure they and the dog are appropriately accredited
- › Maintain a good understanding of dog communication and be able to quickly identify when the dog is showing signs of worry, stress or aggression
- › Remove the dog immediately from any situation where the dog is displaying signs of worry, stress or aggression
- › Keep the dog on a lead at all times when moving around the school site
- › Ensure comprehensive insurance cover is in place that covers working dogs

2.3 Staff

Staff should ensure:

- › Pupils are aware of and follow the pupil code of conduct set out in section 8 of this policy
- › Pupils are adequately supervised at all times during sessions with the dog
- › Pupils with relevant allergies/phobias are kept separate from the dog
- › They have checked that consent has been obtained from pupils' parents/carers before pupils are allowed to attend any sessions with the dog
- › They are aware of the dog's whereabouts and who is responsible for supervising the dog at all times
- › They check the records of all pupils, staff and visitors known to have an allergy to dogs and take steps to make sure they do not go near the dog
- › They are aware of and follow the dog bite procedure set out in section 5.4 of this policy

2.4 Pupils

Pupils should:

- › Follow the code of conduct set out in section 8 of this policy

4. Pre-visit procedures

- › Full parental consent must be received before allowing any contact between a pupil and the dog. Pupils whose parents/carers did not give consent are not allowed to attend dog therapy/literacy sessions
- › Pupils and staff must attend a session to learn how to safely interact with the dog and read body language, prior to the dog starting at the school
- › There must be appropriate insurance in place (owner and school) to cover any incidents/accidents that may occur
- › The dog must be pronounced fit and healthy (both in relation to physical and mental health) by a vet before taking part in any activities within the school, including being fully up to date with any vaccinations

5. During the visit

5.1 Ensuring the dog's welfare

- › The dog's welfare must be considered and carefully monitored throughout the dog's stay at the school
- › The dog must be allowed some time to acclimatise to the school environment. This will allow the dog to get used to the busy atmosphere, smells and noise levels
- › The dog must have appropriate access to food and water
- › The dog must be able to express natural behaviours e.g. chew toys offered during breaks, time off lead, able to sniff
- › There must be a suitable area away from pupils that the dog can use to rest when not taking part in activities
- › When resting, the dog must be left alone and pupils must not touch or interact with the dog
- › The dog must be walked regularly throughout the day and given free time outside of the sessions in a designated area to play and rest off lead
- › The dog must not be forced to interact with pupils or staff, and must be allowed to move away
- › If the dog shows signs that they are unhappy or uncomfortable (e.g. flattened ears, showing teeth, tail between legs, growling), the dog will be removed from the situation immediately and the pupils asked to give the dog space
- › For school dogs (not visiting therapy dogs), the dog must not need to attend school daily
- › The frequency of visits will be determined with the dog's welfare as the primary consideration
- › Sessions between dogs and pupils are kept to a maximum of 30 minutes each and limited to a total of 2 hours spread across the day

5.2 Supervision

- › The number of children interacting with the dog at any one time should be kept to no more than 8
- › For each session where the dog is present, there should be at least 1 other adult (as well as the owner/handler) present to ensure appropriate behaviour from the children

The dog must be kept on a lead during sessions and when moving around the school site

- › Pupils must never be left alone with the dog. There must be appropriate adult supervision at all times
- › Provisions must be made for the dog to have a safe space and be supervised when the owner/handler isn't able to do so (e.g. toilet break)
- › Person responsible for the dog must know its whereabouts and which staff are supervising the dog at all times
- ›

5.3 Allergies

Pupils, staff and visitors known to have an allergy to dogs should be kept away from the dog. A list of those with allergies is kept and updated regularly.

5.4 Dog bite procedure

In the event of a dog bite, staff should follow our standard first aid procedure, in accordance with the first aid policy:

- Parents/carers should be informed of the dog bite and the surrounding circumstances without delay
- The closest member of staff present will assess the seriousness of the injury and seek the assistance of a qualified first aider, if appropriate, who will provide the required first aid treatment
- The first aider should refer to [NHS guidance](#) on animal bites when assessing and treating the injury
- The first aider, if called, will assess the injury and decide if further assistance is needed from a colleague or the emergency services. They will remain on the scene until help arrives
- The first aider will also decide whether the injured person should be moved or placed in a recovery position
- If the first aider judges that a pupil is too unwell to remain in school, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child. Upon their arrival, the first aider will recommend next steps to the parents/carers
- If emergency services are called, the staff will contact parents/carers immediately
- The first aider will complete an accident report form on the same day or as soon as is reasonably practical after an incident resulting in an injury
- Following a dog bite incident, an investigation into the circumstances shall take place and the suitability of having a dog in school shall be reassessed by the headteacher

6. Grooming

There is no need to extensively groom the dog before each visit as depending on the frequency of visits this can have a significant impact on the dog's health and welfare. For example, dogs have sensitive skin and cleaning them too often can remove natural oils that will dry out their coat and can cause skin irritation.

Grooming routines will be dependent on the specific dog's needs and related to the type of dog – the following are guidelines only.

We maintain the following grooming routine:

- Regular baths with appropriate shampoo every 1 to 3 months (depending on the dog's needs)
- Regular claw trimming
- Brushing of the coat to keep it tidy, remove knots and any dead hair/skin cells

7. Zoonotic disease prevention

Zoonosis is any disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

In order to minimise the risk of zoonoses, the school uses the following measures and procedures:

- All pupils and staff must wash their hands before and after interacting/touching the dog
- Avoid touching the face (especially mouth area) after touching the dog and before washing hands
- Prevent the dog from licking faces/hands and wash hands/faces immediately if this should happen
- Provide separate food and water dishes for the dog. Wash these daily and store away from dishes used by pupils, staff and visitors

- Wear gloves when picking up dog faeces. All waste material should be disposed of promptly and safely
- All dog faeces should be picked up immediately, double bagged and disposed of appropriately and promptly. Gloves should always be worn. Pupils should never be responsible for picking up and disposing of dog faeces
- If a member of staff has any concerns about the germs that dogs can carry and the potential impact of this on their health, they should raise this with the headteacher

8. Pupil conduct

In order to maintain both the pupils' and dog's welfare, it's important that all pupils who may come into contact with the dog understand how to interact with the dog safely and maintain positive dog welfare.

Pupils must:

- Not interact with the dog until invited to do so by the handler / dog's owner/ supervising member of staff
- Follow all instruction given to them while interacting with the dog
- Only stroke the dog on its body, chest, shoulders, and the top of the head, not on the face or tail (including putting hands in the dog's mouth)
- Wait until the dog is stationary – standing, sitting or lying down – before touching it
- Remain calm around the dog
- Place school bags out of reach of the dog
- Wash their hands before and after interacting with the dog

Pupils must not:

- Kiss the dog
- Feed the dog, or taunt the dog with food
- Approach or disturb the dog whilst it is resting, sleeping or eating
- Force the dog to interact with them
- Attempt to play rough with the dog (this can over stimulate them)
- Eat during interactions with the dog

Pupils who struggle to follow the rules will be removed from the session. They will be given an opportunity to learn why they were removed and what they can do to interact more positively with the dog.

If pupils are deliberately violent or threatening towards the dog this will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy and may result in fixed-term exclusion.

9. Links to other policies

- Health and safety policy
- First aid policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the trust or when a significant change occurs (e.g. a new dog is brought into school).

Person responsible for updating this policy

Chief Operating Officer

Appendix 1

Template letter to parents/carers

Dear parent/carers,

I am writing to let you know that the school will be taking on a school dog / bringing in a visiting therapy/literacy dog. (delete as appropriate)

Pupils will be invited to take part in sessions with the dog.

The dog has undergone the appropriate medical checks and training to work as a therapy/literacy dog in a school.

If your child has a dog-related allergy or suffers from any kind of apprehension/fear of dogs, please let us know and we will keep them away.

Please get in contact if there is any other information we should know related to your child before arranging for your child to participate in the dog therapy/literacy sessions.

*Please indicate below whether you give consent by deleting **I do/do not** as appropriate, and sign and date the form before returning it to school.*

Name of pupil:

I do/do not (delete as appropriate) give consent for my child to participate in sessions with the school dog / visiting therapy dog

Name and relationship to pupil:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix B – School Dog Risk Assessment Hazard

At risk

Existing Control measures

Students

Staff

Visitors

Animal behaviour

Medium

Medium

Medium

Staff, pupils or visitors could be injured if the school dog is not comfortable in a specific school environment and reacts badly, including bites or scratches

1 The dog will receive ongoing formal training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment

2 The dog will be certified by Pets As Therapy before commencing therapy and reading sessions

3 Pupils and parents are warned of the hazard before therapy sessions with the school dog and take part only with consent

4 Students are taught appropriate behaviour around the school dog, what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around her

5 Students are closely supervised by an adult during dog therapy sessions

6 Students are never left with the dog unsupervised

7 The school dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training

8 If the school dog exhibits any warning behaviours such growling or lowered ears she will be removed immediately from students

9 The school dog resides in the office of the xxx and is not out in the school community outside of designated therapy, reading and reward sessions

10 The dog will always be on a lead when they is out of the xxx office. Signage will indicate that pupils are only allowed in this area with staff supervision.

11 In the event that a student, staff member or visitor is bitten or scratched (even if only a “play” bite) a First Aider will inspect and assess the injury. The suitability of the school dog will then be reassessed by the xxx

Disease, Illness & Allergic Reactions Medium

Medium

Low

1 All immunisations (including rabies)

Staff, pupils or visitors could suffer ill health if they come into contact with animal feces or urine or have an allergy to dogs

vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and xxx is responsible for keeping a register of this.

2 Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals

3 The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen or the cooking room.

Animal Phobias

Medium

Low

Low

Staff or students could suffer distress themselves or distress the school dog if they become scared or upset around the school dog

1. Student are encouraged but never forced to take part in dog therapy or reading sessions.

2. Where there are pupils with phobias, every effort is made to segregate the school dog from those with phobias – this may mean moving a student to another room until a therapy session is over.

3. Outside of therapy or reading sessions the school dog is kept in the xxx office and enters and exits the building outside or break

School emergency evacuation (including drills)

Medium

Medium

Low

The dog could become distressed by the evacuation and behave in an unexpected way, e.g.

become defensive or try to escape.

and lesson changeover periods.

4. Therapy, reading and reward sessions will take place only in specific areas of the school (e.g. the library, xxx, xxx) where students can avoid contact with the dog if desired.

1. The school dog is accompanied by a trained adult at all times. In the event of an emergency evacuation, immediately proceed to the nearest fire exit and then the adult walks as far as possible from other people evacuating whilst maintaining a safe distance from the building.

2. Where possible, the school dog to be present for sounding of the alarms outside of school hours to observe their response.

3. If the dog manages to escape from an adult during the xxx evacuation, the adult must still evacuate immediately and notify staff outside of the dog's absence.

Claim is made against school

Low

High

Medium

A parent or visitor could make a claim against the school relating to the behaviour of the dog.

1. The school has public liability insurance which covers liability for a working therapy dog with certification.

2. The school dog will be assessed as a Pets As Therapy dog once her training and adolescence are completed prior to working in therapy sessions with students.

Appendix C: School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – to publish to parents

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A The legal owner of the dog will be xxx. She will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support liability insurance and staff training costs only where appropriate.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

Q Will the dog be a distraction to students' learning?

A The dog will be kept in the xxx office area. The dog will only spend time in classrooms, the library and the xxxx at specific planned sessions where students can interact safely outside of lesson times and therefore the dog will not be a distraction to students during lessons. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A xxxx will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for her training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained and the dog will work towards being trained as a school dog in dog training classes with advice from the Pets As Therapy charity. The school will have the dog assessed and certified as a therapy dog by Pets As Therapy before she begins therapy and reading sessions.

Q How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks outside the school by staff members. The dog will not be allowed in the main playground at any time.

Q What if my child is scared of dogs? Will they be forced to be in the same room as the dog?

A The dog will be kept in the xxx office area. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area which will ensure the school dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision of a trained member of staff.

The school dog will not be allowed into the main playground area and will only visit the xxxx for short supervised interaction with students. Therefore a student will not be forced to be in contact with dog at any time against their wishes. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward.

The dog will be kept in the xxxoffice area with it's legal owner, xxxx, and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained

over a period of time and will have appropriate access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children will not need to touch the dog or be in the same room as the dog at any point which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. The school dog was specifically chosen for being a breed known for sociable dispositions and minimal moulting, she will be given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

Appendix D: SLT Agreement to allow dogs in school

School:			
Dog:	Therapy Dog (PAWS)	School Dog	Delete as applicable
Temperament Tested:	Yes	No	If no, dog is not allowed on school site
Evidence Seen:	Yes	No	Attach copy
Completed PAWS Training	Yes	No	Attach copy
Insurance	Yes	No	Attach copy
Policy read and understood by dog handler / owner	Yes	No	Confirm via email and attach
Days on site agreed	Yes	No	Confirm which days

Advice on School Dogs

The Dogs Trust – School Dogs

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/factsheets-downloads/school%20dogs.pdf>

The Kennel Club – Bark and Read

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>

BBC News – “Every school ‘needs dog as stress-buster”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47655600>