

Wellbeing Dogs in School Policy



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1. Introduction

Children and adults can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility, and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable, calm dog. In addition to these benefits, children and adults take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. Our school dogs are well cared for and responsibly owned by the school, living with a member of staff.

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

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about school life with a dog and how, through careful management, there is a very low risk of harm.

2. Context

The dogs are owned by the Head and Proprietor and lives with them.

Veterinary and daily costs are covered by the Head and Proprietor

The dogs have been chosen for the general characteristics – great with children, sociable, and low shedding

The risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

Visitors and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival.

Public Liability Insurance will be covered by the school.

3. Day-to-Day Management

The dogs will:

- Not be allowed in school if they are unwell.
- Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk.
- Be always under the full control and supervision of an adult.
- Will be kept in their kennels with a quiet area for resting.
- Be fully trained to a crate or mat – including puppy training.
- Have had all vaccinations.

Our pupils will:

- Not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the dog.
- Meet the dog in a group of no more than three children, following 'approach, ask, pet, goodbye'.
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog every time they meet her:
 - Always remain calm.
 - Be gentle.
 - Do not put your face near the dog's face.
 - Do not disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping.
 - Always approach the dog standing up.
 - Do not feed the dog.

The pupils and adults will also learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicates that the dog feels threatened or angry. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining, or growling are signs

that the dogs are frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these signs, she should immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment.

4. Health and Safety Principals

Children and adults will always wash their hands or use hand sanitiser after handling the dog. Any dog excrement will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of the dog at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

Should a bite occur (even playfully):

- 1) Parents will be contacted immediately.
- 2) The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing.
- 3) The child/adult will be released for medical attention.
- 4) All staff will be informed.
- 5) A full investigation will take place.
- 6) The suitability of having a dog will be reassessed by the Headteacher

5. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years with the risk reduction plan monitored annually.