



St Herbert's RC Primary School

DOGS IN SCHOOL POLICY

Approved by Governors on: 06.07.22

Date to be reviewed: Summer 2024

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body: *P Devine (Chair)*

OVERVIEW

This policy is set within the context of the School Mission Statement:

“Strong in Faith, Hope and Love, for the Common Good”

and the School Ethos:

“By loving one another as God loves us, we can achieve spiritually and academically”

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 and this is included in this document (see Appendix 2).

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher. 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 the Headteacher.

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 or assistance dog, and the Headteacher has been informed before hand.

The dog is a Goldador (a Golden Retriever/Labrador cross). He is a dog who is sociable, patient, calm, adaptable.

The Governing Body were consulted and fully agreed that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of St Herbert’s RC Primary School.

Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school, and have been given the opportunity to comment. The Headteacher 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. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.

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. Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.

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 body, chest, back and not by his 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 Headteacher as soon as possible.

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 under the supervision of the Headteacher/ SENDco.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher or the Deputy as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to in line with the complaints policy and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

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

The Headteacher 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 behaved and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Reasons to have a dog in school

In summary, academic research (see Appendix 3) 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) Motivate children who are often less attentive

Behaviour

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students.

Education

Reading programmes with dogs can have a huge impact on student progress. 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. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. 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 proven 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. With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. 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 with the dog.

Appendix 1

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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

A The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Milligan (Headteacher); she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog. School's only financial obligation is the school insurance for a therapy dog on site.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents have been seen, both are kennel club registered, and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept in the Headteacher's office and will initially come to school to become familiar with the noise/setting. Once the dog has been trained fully, he will then be introduced gradually to the children. The office areas are separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure he only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

The dog will also have a space to spend time in other areas of the school where children can interact safely with him, once fully trained.

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.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A The Headteacher will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for the dog's training.

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, away from school play areas.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time. He will only be in school for short periods of time. The dog will be carefully monitored 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, 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.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. 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 Who will look after the dog when the Headteacher is otherwise engaged?

A Nominated trained staff will supervise the dog, when the Headteacher is in meetings etc. The dog will be based in the Head's office when the Headteacher is otherwise engaged, and not carrying out his therapy work.

Q Will the adults supervising the dog receive any training?

A Yes. Training for the dog will also take place in school with designated members of staff.

Appendix 2

Risk Assessment

<u>Hazard</u>	<u>Risk</u>	<u>Risk Category</u> <u>1-5</u>	<u>Likelihood</u> <u>1-5</u>	<u>Controls in place</u>
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child scratched by dog	4	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training. Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, class time and PSHE lessons. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around him. Risk of scratching and biting will reduce as the dog receives training and matures. The dog will undergo formal training at the age of 12 weeks with the Headteacher. He will also undergo further training with school staff who will take responsibility when carrying out therapy tasks. The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school environment. This training will ensure his use in the future as a therapy dog. Pupils and adults will be reminded not to touch the dog's mouth, head and rear end. The dog will attend the vets regularly to make sure he is in good health.
	Child bitten by dog	3	2	
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school system. Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies would be able to opt out of interaction.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will be taught to wash their hands after active touching the dog.
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A member of staff will clear up any mess immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area where children have no access to. All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this. Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals. The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times.
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has public liability Insurance.

Appendix 3

BBC Reports/Articles

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

Every school should have a dog or another pet to reduce stress in the classroom, says Sir Anthony Seldon.

The University of Buckingham vice-chancellor says it is "a powerfully cost-effective way of helping children feel more secure at schools".

Sir Anthony was speaking at a conference about the need to improve young people's sense of wellbeing.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds says more schools seem to have "wellbeing dogs" and "the pets can really help".

Dog helps pupils with reading at primary school in Somerset

<https://textbookteachers.co.uk/how-therapy-dogs-are-supporting-school-wellbeing/>