School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment

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. Appendix B sets out further reasons for why the school feels it will be beneficial to have a school dog.

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

Of course 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.

School Policy

The dog will be owned by Miss Parker, the dog is a Yorkipoo chosen for its very mild temperament and non-moulting coat. She will be responsible for Trixie's regular visits to the vets, injections and inoculations.

The Chair of Governors, and the Head Teacher have both agreed that the school can have a dog.

Staff have been informed, through staff briefing, that the school will have a dog. Parents have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. At the start of each academic year there will be lessons around the school dog and parents will be given an opportunity to speak to SEND CO/ Miss Parker with regards to the school dog. E Parker has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment is attached as Appendix A

In the event of an emergency evacuation the adult supporting Trixie- will accompany her to the Fire Evacuation point.

Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must remain at a manageable distance. Parents are able to inform the school of any allergies on admission.

If the dog is unwell, she will not be allowed into school.

The dog will normally be kept on a lead and harness until fully trained when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.

There may be occasions when the dog is working off lead, but this will only happen in an enclosed space and under the control of an adult. Before removing

the lead, all present will be consulted
Students must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with students.
Students should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Students should remain calm around the dog. Students should not to put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Students should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating. Students must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.

If the dog is surrounded by a large number of students, 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 baring 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 feed or eat close to the dog.

Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog. As a school we will provide anti-bacterial gel.

Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

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 and staff and children are required to abide by this policy.
The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

Policy written

Policy to be reviewed

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The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

Hazard	**Risk**	**Risk 1 - 5**	**Controls in place**	**Review date**
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground. Child scratched by dog. Child bitten by dog.	1 3 3	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises. Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog. The dog will always be on a lead while moving about the school. Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of potentially over exciting the dog. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through and PSHE sessions. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. The dog has had training with an experienced dog trainer- general training is always maintained. Dog lives in a household with two children and is very child friendly. All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog. The dog will be groomed regularly to ensure claws are short.	
The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	1	The dog is hypoallergenic Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will kept in school.	

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			The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog- hand sanitiser will be available to all.	
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. She will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required. All immunisations are kept up to date and available to be seen. Flea/worming treatments administered monthly The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes; and never in the food preparation area.	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Miss Parker both in a well-being and financial aspect. All vets' costs are covered by Miss Parker	
School emergency evacuation (including drills)		2	The school dog is accompanied by an adult at all times. In the event of an emergency evacuation, immediately proceed to the nearest fire exit (dog can be picked up to avoid being trampled) snf proceeds to the normal evacuation area. 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 evacuation, the adult must still evacuate immediately and notify staff outside of the dog's absence.	

KEY: 1- Low risk
2
3 -Medium risk
4
5-High risk

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<u>Reasons to have a dog in school</u>
Behaviour

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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
Children can be encouraged back into school using caring for a dog as an incentive

Social Development
Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, with a dog in the classroom, 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 living, 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, may be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilites 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 to 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.

Reading
Reading programs 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 students 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 interpersonal skills among the students they mix with. Bullying can be a problem in all schools with students anxious about school for fear of taunting and abuse. But in some school dogs are making a difference in the fight against bullies. 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 participation students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%