



School Dog Policy

Version:	1
Date Issued:	10.07.25
Date of Previous Issue:	N/A
Approved by:	Governing Body
Date Approved:	10.07.25
Review Date:	10.07.26

Signatures:

	Name	Signature
Chair of Governors:	Mr David Meredith	<i>D. Meredith</i>
Headteacher:	Sarah Court	<i>S. Court</i>

Status	Approved
Date of Issue	10.07.25
Date of Previous Issue	N/A
Approved by	YGPyF FGB
Formal Review Date	10.07.26

Introduction

A variety of animals, including dogs, are becoming an ever-popular and worthwhile addition to schools across the country. 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.

We value the development of children's well-being along with their spiritual, moral and social education as highly as we value academia. We believe a school dog will be a unique way to enrich all areas of the children's wider education, skills and well-being.

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 trained, accompanied dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed.

A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this has been included within this document. Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher. This will include drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to present.

School Policy

This policy applies to the regulated school dog only. It does not affect the school's right to prohibit other dogs on school property.

The dog/s is owned by Mrs S. Court (Headteacher)

- Parents/Carers will be informed of the intention to have a school dog before it comes to school.
- Copies of the dog policy and risk assessment will be made available and this will be reviewed annually.
- The dog will have received appropriate training to be a school dog.
- Notices will be displayed to inform children, staff and visitors of the dog's presence.
- Parents/carers have the right to withhold consent for their child to have any direct contact with the dog. Any such wishes will be respected and upheld by the school.
- Staff, visitors and pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs should not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in the school.

- Anyone with a fear of dogs will be respected and never be forced to interact with the dog. They can receive coaching in a controlled environment with the dog to help them overcome their fears if they so wish.
- The dog's health and well-being is prioritised along with that of the children and staff.
- The dog will be insured.
- All vaccinations, worming treatments and vet checks will be up-to-date. If the dog is ill, he will not be allowed into school.
- If the dog is unwell then they 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 an adult.
- Children will never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with pupils.
- Pupils 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 to 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 too 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 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.
- The dog will not be allowed to enter the school kitchen or go into the hall during meal times.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.
- The dog will be trained to use a designated, external toileting area that is out-of-bounds to the children. If any 'accidents' occur in areas where children have access to, appropriate measures will be taken to disinfect the affected site.

- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedures and will have a designated adult.
- The school have informed Powys County Council on (to be confirmed once agreed) that there is a school dog on the premises
- The school has clarified with the Local Authority insurance team that Powys insurance will cover the liability aspect of having a school dog. This was done (to be confirmed once agreed)
- If someone reports an issue regarding the school dog, this must be passed onto the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Headteacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy and risk assessment for dogs in school. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy. The Headteacher may delegate this responsibility to the Deputy Head. Teachers and staff are required to abide by this policy.

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

Reasons to have a dog in school

Below, are listed numerous benefits to having a dog in school:

- Improve academic achievement
 - Increase literacy skills
 - Calming behaviours
 - Increase social skills and self-esteem
 - Increase confidence
 - Teach responsibility and respect to all life
 - Help improve attendance
 - Motivate children who are often less attentive.
- A school dog enables children to put our school values into practice: from friendship to patience, respect, love and happiness; each one of our values can be developed through and alongside a dog.
 - Children with low attendance can be encouraged to come to school with the incentive of a meet and greet from the school dog.

- With the UK dog population reaching 8.5 million, children and adults are bound to come in to contact with dogs at various points in their lives. Children without pet dogs have the opportunity to learn valuable life skills at school about how to safely interact with dogs when they are out and about.
- With a dog to care for, children are more mindful of their behaviour. Incidents of running in corridors and shouting unnecessarily are reduced; they are generally more aware of the impact of their behaviour and choices.
- One of our current school priorities is to help children to develop a growth mindset: to be resilient learners who aren't afraid to make mistakes and persevere to acquire new skills. A dog is an excellent role model for this as training dogs takes time and repetition.
- 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 and reluctant writers to read aloud what they have written. With the presence of a calm and well-trained dog, students find social support and peer interaction.
- As a focus or context for learning, the school dog can provide an excellent resource and tangible motivation for children in all subject areas.
- Dogs provide confidence to children as they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who are feeling vulnerable, 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.
- Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching social skills and responsibility. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Schools can use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students.
- With a dog in the 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 school 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 pupils. 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, can be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. 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.
- Dogs can be a great way for to help students to interact with members of the wider community. For example, pupils may take the dog to visit other schools, hospitals or care homes and help others to benefit from this therapeutic support.

Appendix A

Appendix A - 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 S. Court; he/she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance (Dogs Home) and staff training costs where appropriate – this will not be applicable.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

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

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept in the headteacher office area. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it 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 classrooms, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely.

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 and a reputable dog behaviourist. Within the cluster, schools have shared their journey of having a school dog, training and policies in place.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Mrs S Court will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained.

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 in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

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, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will have one-to-two working school days away from school for its own wellbeing. This is an addition to weekends.

The dog will be kept in the admin area/HT office 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 unlimited 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. The breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, he is given a high-quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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.

Appendix 3 – Risk Assessment for School Dog

Hazard	Risk	Risk Category 1-5	Likelihood 1-5	Controls in place
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child scratched by dog	3	2	<p>The School Dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. • The School dog will be on a lead when he is out of his pen / the Head's office / Main office. • 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. • The School Dog will receive ongoing formal training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment. • Pupils and adults will be
	Child bitten by dog	4	2	

				<p>reminded not to touch the School Dog's mouth, head and rear end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL staff given permission to handle the School Dog will be given strict instructions to follow and appropriate training. • The School Dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure he is in good health.
The dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	Child scratched, or bitten by dog	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog's pen in the Head's office can be used to keep the School Dog safe and he will also roam free in the office. Staff will be alerted with signage and pupils only allowed in with supervision. • Children and staff are taught not to tease him or taunt. • If the School Dog does get loose the office staff or designated handler will call for support. <p>Members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if he needs attention at any other time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office staff will support the safe containment of the School Dog within the office when he is present. • The School Dog will be on his lead when out of the offices or when adults are in strict supervision.

Dog hair causing allergy	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will have the opportunity to interact with the School Dog as they wish and those with allergies would be able to opt out of interaction. • Children will be taught to wash their hands after active
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"> • Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. • All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) 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 monthly intervals. • 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.
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 and specialist working dog insurance (cost covered by school). The policy covers the School Dog in school and

				(owner) has further insurance outside of school hours.
In the event of an incident	There is an incident of aggression with the School Dog	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of an incident, the school dog will be brought to the Headteacher's office where he will remain safe. • The school will notify the Local Authority and report an incident in relation to Health and Safety. • The school will notify parents of the incident. • The School Dog will be removed from the school site with imminent effect.