

Longlands Primary School

School Dog Policy



Rationale and Aim of School Dogs

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 interactions with a dog. Research has shown the impact dogs in schools can be significant in terms of pupil progress, wellbeing and attitudes to learning. How the dog or dogs are used is dependent on the needs of the school, the personnel working with them and specific areas of development for the school.

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

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

There is a risk but it is a risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment is carried out on the school environment and the dog with measures clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Safety measures and procedures are put in place to keep the dog safe and ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school. Both school dogs have been trained to minimise risk.

The Benefits of Dogs in School Communities

In summary, having dogs working and helping in the school environment has been seen in other schools nationally to achieve the following:

- Improve academic achievement
- Increase literacy skills
- Calming behaviours and positive attachments
- Increase social skills and self-esteem
- Increase confidence
- Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- Help prevent truancy and improve attendance
- Motivate children who are often less attentive

COGNITIVE

Companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing.

BEHAVIOURAL

We would hope that by having a dog in school we would see a difference in the behaviour of pupils in terms of improved attitude toward school and learning, the ability of pupils to also become more confident and develop a sense of responsibility. If pupils can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, they then can better understand how other children may feel.

SOCIAL

A dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others. After experiencing unconditional love and trust from a dog, children are often seen developing enhanced relationships with peers and staff. Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools nationally are using dogs to help build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, teach kindness, responsibility, and boundaries. With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Involving pupils in the daily care of school dog is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care.

EMOTIONAL

A school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety. Pupils can learn how to express their feelings and enter into more trusting relationships. Pupils should be encouraged to gently pat or talk to the dog to teach sensitive touch and to help them to be calm.

ENVIRONMENTAL

A dog increases the sense of a family environment, being part of something, another purpose for coming to school and can therefore be seen to positively impact on attendance. Some of these benefits listed above will continue for the young person long after the school day is over in terms of how pupils reflect on their day and improve their own attitude to going to school and being part of the school community, also boosting the pupil's connection to the school environment.

ACADEMIC

Reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop their literacy skills and build confidence in reading. 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 practice reading aloud. This activity can create a calming effect on the pupil, as well the dog will listen to the pupil read with no judgement or criticism. Dogs make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. This, in turn, creates an environment where a pupil's enthusiasm for reading can grow alongside greater confidence in reading aloud. A school dog will be able to support reluctant readers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils can develop a sense of responsibility through having the opportunity to walk the dog on school grounds with supervision from the named member of staff. Again, this can have a significant impact on improvement in a pupil's attendance as they have a responsibility to the dog and need to be in school to undertake specific care of the dog in their view. It is also another reason for the pupil to want to come to school.

TRANSITION

A school dog can support the transition process. Pupils who find change difficult will benefit for time spent with the dog alongside Draw and Talk or other interventions as part of reducing anxiety and giving an opportunity for worries to be heard.

OVERCOMING PHOBIAS

Where there are pupils who have dog phobias, a school dog and careful de-sensitisation programme could be used to help reduce some of these fears.

Management

Clear messages will be given to all children and staff about the management of the dog which include:

- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Our dogs will have a safe space (office) where they will be placed when he needs to rest or when he needs to be kept away from people.
- A full risk-assessment will be taken to ensure the safety of humans and our dog, this will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- Children will only be able to pet or walk our dog, with adult supervision
- 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. Hands must be washed after coming in contact with the dog.
- 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.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head teacher ASAP. 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 named adult he is with at the time of an evacuation.

- 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 trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.
- Full veterinary and public liability insurance will be in place. The owner will pay for veterinary insurance and the school for extra public liability insurance.
- Where there are any concerns or fears expressed by individuals, a care plan will be set up.

SCHOOL DOG FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs):

Why are our school dogs Cockapoos?

The breed Cockapoo has been carefully selected as suitable for school.

Cockapoos are a cross between a poodle and a cocker spaniel

Cockapoos are known to be very good with children; they are loving, intelligent, active, friendly and outgoing.

Their coats are “hypo-allergenic” and shed very little fur, therefore reducing the risk of allergies.

By being in school from a young age, they will be used to the environment and to being with children.

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

The legal owner of the dog will be the member of staff. They will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

Will the dog be a distraction?

The dog will have access to quiet space. The dog will always be accompanied by an adult and will never be on his own with a pupil.

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

In the interest of health and hygiene, our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in a designated area of the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

How will the dog’s welfare be considered?

The dog will be well looked after. The dog will be fully vaccinated, will visit the vet regularly for all the necessary injections, as well as regular check-ups. He will also be regularly groomed and fully insured. If the dog is unwell for any reason they will not interact with pupils and stay separate. He will be walked, fed and hydrated during the day. He will have access to a quiet area where he will be able to have ‘quiet time’.

How will the situation be managed where children have allergies?

The school already manages a number of allergies and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Additional control measures will be put in place for individual allergies. Any breed of dog chosen is known for minimal moulting, is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

It is completely understandable that there will be some concerns about possible allergic reactions to a school dog.

My child is frightened of dogs; how will this be managed?

Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it. 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. Some children may have had upsetting or traumatic experiences and therefore be fearful of dogs (or indeed other animals).

For more information: <https://www.learnwithdogstrust.org.uk/school-dogs/school%20dogs%20guide.pdf>

Risk Assessment

Significant Hazards and Associated Risks	Those who might be harmed	Residual Risk Rating	Control Measures:
Those hazards which may result in serious harm or affect several people	Persons at risk from the significant hazards identified	(H / M / L)	Controls, including relevant sources of guidance and actions to be taken to minimise risks.
Dog Handler not able to control dog	Child/staff	L	Dogs will only be handled by their named handler, in most cases this will be the dog's owner who will be able to control the dog and know behavioural signs of the dog. Only the named handler will make the decision whether another adult can handle the dog or supervise their dog in a classroom/playground/field setting. Named Handler: Alfie – Mrs. Allen/Mr. Allen Doug – Mr. Baines

<p>Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.</p>	<p>Child/staff knocked to ground</p> <p>Child/staff scratched by dog</p> <p>Child/staff bitten by dog</p>	<p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p>	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult who carries a lead when the dog is not on it. The dog will be on the lead whilst in the school building (the dog will be off the lead when in their 'safe space').</p> <p>Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.</p> <p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult.</p> <p>The dog will be trained not to jump up or bite the children. Children will be aware of how to signal the dog to not jump up and how to react (in a calm manner).</p> <p>Pupils will be taught how to read dog behaviour and the impact of their actions. Education of this nature will continually be given to children in whole school assembly, in class time and PSHE lessons (and where possible/when appropriate, specific workshops from outside professionals, including the Blue Cross / Dog Trust).</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still with arms crossed over their bodies – 'standing tall like a tree').</p> <p>The dog will attend the groomers regularly to make sure their claws are kept short and is also walked on concrete/tarmac to keep them trimmed.</p> <p>Dogs have been trained.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and know the expectations.</p>
<p>Keeping safe when dog walking.</p>	<p>Child/staff knocked to ground.</p> <p>Child/staff scratched by dog.</p> <p>Child/staff bitten by dog.</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Children may walk the school dog with a member of staff.</p> <p>The member of staff will pick up any dog excrement and will remind children of the importance of washing hands on return to school.</p> <p>Children will be given the choice if they would like to stroke the school dog and or feed the dog a treat and are shown how to do this safely with a flat hand. They will be reminded on return to school to wash their hands.</p>

<p>The dog being a tripping hazard.</p>	<p>Parent/visitor</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>The door to the office will have a stair gate to ensure he stays in. The dog will be on a lead whilst moving around the school.</p>
<p>The dog gets loose from their 'safe space' without an adult.</p>	<p>Child/staff knocked to ground</p> <p>Child/staff scratched by dog</p> <p>Child/staff bitten by dog</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>M</p>	<p>If the dog does get loose from their 'safe space' without their named handler, an adult teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in their 'safe space'.</p> <p>There are five members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if they need attention at any other time, they are:</p> <p>Mr. Baines (Head Teacher) – Alfie/Doug</p> <p>Mrs. Allen (Deputy Head Teacher) – Alfie/Doug</p> <p>Mr. Allen – Alfie/Doug</p> <p>Mrs. Short (Office Manager) – Alfie/Doug</p> <p>Mrs. Francis (SENCO) - Doug</p>
<p>Dog hair causing allergies</p>	<p>Children/staff have allergic reaction</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by the Principal/teachers and office staff.</p> <p>Staff members will also be asked to inform the Head Teacher of any allergies.</p> <p>Fully supervised, 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.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. Wounds on exposed skin will be covered.</p> <p>Flea treatment will be carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals.</p>

			<p>If the dog is sick he will not go near children until he is better.</p> <p>The dog will never go into a food preparation area and/or the kitchen.</p>
Children catching disease from the dog.	Children/staff contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	L L	<p>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. Poo bags will be carried by the staff member walking the dog.</p> <p>All immunisations will be kept up-to-date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and a register of this is kept by Mr. Baines for Doug and Mrs. Allen for Alfie.</p>
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day-to-day upkeep or medical bills	L	<p>The dog is the financial responsibility of the owner. They are financially responsible for all the care and day-to-day costs.</p> <p>The dog is the responsibility of Mrs. Allen/Mr. Allen (Alfie) and Mr. Baines (Doug) outside of school hours.</p>
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog	School not adequately covered financially	L	<p>The owners will insure the dog's medical needs. Liability insurance will be held and will be renewed annually. The certificates are kept in the school office.</p>
Fire Alarm	Who has responsibility to remove dog from the building	M	<p>Dog signed in as a member of staff so fire marshals know when he is onsite.</p> <p>Mrs. Allen/Mr. Allen responsible for evacuating Alfie Mr. Baines/Office Staff/Mrs. Francis responsible for evacuating Doug</p>
Noise / Barking	Pupils who will be distracted by the noise	L	<p>Cockapoos are bred to be sociable dogs and are often used as school dogs as they are known to be good with children. The dog has been introduced to the children from birth so is used to a noisy environment, therefore reducing the chance of barking.</p>
Dog Phobia	Distress caused by close	L	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with the dog.</p> <p>Parents will be offered a programme of support for child to help overcome aversion.</p>

	<i>proximity to the dog</i>		<p><i>Parents also offered the option of their child having no close contact. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by the office staff.</i></p> <p><i>Visitors will be advised that a dog is in the office.</i></p>
<i>Date completed:</i>	<i>September 2024</i>		
<i>Date to be reviewed:</i>	<i>September 2027</i>		