

Wellbeing Dog in Academy Policy

**Date policy reviewed: November 2023**

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| **Signed by** | **Date** |
| **Headteacher:** |  |
| **Trust:** |  |

**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

In addition to these benefits, children and adults take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

Our school dog is 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.

**Context**

* The dog is owned by Mrs Pointon and lives with her.
* Veterinary costs will be covered by Mrs Pointon.
* The dog has been fully trained to work with children.
* 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.

**Day-to-Day Management**

The dog will:

§ Not be allowed in school if she is unwell.  
§ Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk.  
§ Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times.  
§ Will be kept in Haven with a quiet area for resting.  
§ Have had all vaccinations, flea and worm treatments.

Our pupils will:

* Not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the dog.
* Always have a choice with regards to interacting with the dog.
* Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog every time they meet her:

Be asked to abide by the following rules;

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

**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

**Appendix 1 Risk Assessment**

**Wellbeing Dog Risk Assessment**

The value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the wellbeing of children (and staff) and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable, and less forbidding.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

§ For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.  
§ For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.  
§ To have a pet that the children could interact with, and be of benefit to, the children’s social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits.

Any parent who does not want their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to the Head of School and inform them of their wishes. There are no diseases

associated with the dog as her vet will be responsible for vaccinations completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of the dog’s health records

will be updated and kept in school. The dog will also be insured.

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

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| **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. | 2  4 | The dog will always be in the care of the designated handler or a “responsible adult”. “Responsible adult” shall mean any member of staff who has read the policy fully, received appropriate training and is aware of the risks and responsibilities to both children and staff.  The dog will never be left unattended.  The dog will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.  The dog must not be passed to any member of staff not deemed a “responsible adult” as defined above.  Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.  The dog will always be on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk by the designated handler or “responsible adult” while the children are in school.  Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions.  Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.  The dog as undergone intensive training at WKD dogs focused on working with children.  All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.  The designated handler will ensure the dog attends the vets regularly to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept short. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.  The dog is kept in a fenced area and children are educated not to enter without an adults permission. | July 2021 |
| The dog causing allergies. | Children or staff have an allergic reaction. | 1 | Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school.  If required, a list of children and/or staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept in school.  The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog under the supervision of the designated handler or “responsible adult” 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. |  |
| 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.  The dog is trained to defecate on walks before and after the school day.  All immunisations will be kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.  Flea treatment is carried out at 4-week intervals and is recorded.  The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times, and never in the food preparation area.  The dog will be regularly wormed. Evidence is recorded. |  |
| Noise/barking | Some children unable to cope with the noise. | 1 | The dog is being introduced into the school environment from an early age so will be used to a noisy environment so is less likely to bark.  Extra orientation sessions in place for specific children.  Ensuring some children have ear defenders if needed. |  |
| 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. | 3 | The dog will be insured by the school for Public Liability Insurance.  All veterinary fees are covered by ‘Pet Plan’ under the dog’s private insurance paid for by the Headteacher.  The school’s budget has been adjusted to include the costs of having the dog. |  |

**Key:**

1–Low Risk  
3 – Medium Risk

5 – High Risk