

School Dog Policy

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?

There is a risk, 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). 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.

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- The dog will be owned by Mrs Simmons.
- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- The dog is a Cavapoo chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, which sheds little hair and is very sociable and friendly.
- The Chair of Governors and the governing board agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff at St Peter's Catholic School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed that the dog will be in school. Mrs Murphy, Headteacher has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their child to access the dog.
- Any people known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed 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, it will be under the control and supervision of a trained adult.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog; there must be an appropriate adult present at all times.
- The trained adult must ensure that the dog does not feel threatened or overwhelmed by the children.
- 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.
- 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.

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- 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 must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Children should not eat near the dog.
- Children will be monitored when stroking the dog. They must stroke the dog's body, chest or back – not by her face or head.
- Children should pay careful attention to hygiene, they must wash their hands immediately after stroking the dog.
- Any dog foul must be immediately disposed of.
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and notified of which staff will be supervising the dog.
- The fire evacuation procedure will include the dog.

Reasons to have a dog in school:

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:-

- 1) Improve academic achievement.
- 2) Calming behaviours.
- 3) Increase social skills and self-esteem.
- 4) Increase confidence.
- 5) Teach responsibility and respect to all life.
- 6) Help prevent truancy.
- 7) Motivate children who are often less attentive.

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

Behaviour:

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students.

Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries.

As a reward:

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

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Roles and Responsibilities

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

The Head teacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

Appendix

General:

The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Simmons; she will bear the cost of purchasing the dog. The school budget will support insurance and training costs.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

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

Q Where will the dog be kept:

The dog will be kept in Room 30. This is a supervised study area for Y13 students. The dog will only come into contact with students who have parental permission, this will be under strict supervision.

The dog will have space to spend in Room 30, Pupil Support, the playground and the Prayer Garden where children can interact safely, with trained members of staff.

The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

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.

Q Who is responsible for training?

Mrs Simmons will be the legal owner of the dog and will be responsible for training the dog. Appropriate professional training will be obtained and the dog will work towards being trained as a school dog through a training company with advice from the Pets As Therapy charity.

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

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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?

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 be kept in Room 30/Pupil Support 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?

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 and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

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.

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Appendix

1. Identification of Significant Hazards and Risks: <i>Those hazards and risks that may result in serious harm or affect several people</i>	2. Risk	3. Control Measures: <i>Those hazards and risks that may result in serious harm or affect several people</i>
Dog getting over excited when Interacting with children.	Child scratched by dog Child bitten by dog	<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. • The dog will always be on a lead when she is out of her pen / Room 30 / Pupil Support. • The dog will be trained regularly by experienced trainers. • Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around him. • The dog will receive ongoing formal training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment (using staff from a reputable dog behaviourist company) • Training with support working towards a Pets As Therapy Test and support calm behaviours to facilitate reading or nurture intervention, therapies, training and scent games. • Pupils and adults will be reminded not to touch the dog's mouth, head and rear-end. • ALL staff given permission to handle the dog will be given strict instructions to follow and appropriate training. • The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure she is in good health.
The gets loose from her pen or from her lead.	Child scratched or bitten by dog.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog's base in Room 30 can be used to keep the dog safe. Staff will be alerted with signage and pupils only allowed in with Supervision. • Children and staff are taught not to tease him or taunt through the window. • If the dog does get loose the designated handler will call for support from Mrs Simmons, who will come and put the dog back on his lead. There are four 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, they are: 1. Sharon Simmons (Cover Manager). 2. Emily Heslop (Teacher). 3. Elizabeth March (Pupil Support) 4. Kerry McDonnell (Office Manager). • The dog will always be on her lead when out of the offices or when trained adults are in strict supervision.
Dog hair causing allergies	Allergic reactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. • 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. • Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.

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Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	<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 and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this.• Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out• at 3 monthly intervals.• The dog 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.	<p>The school has public liability insurance and should acquire specialist working dog insurance via Pets in Business (cost covered by school). The policy covers the dog in school and Mrs Simmons has further insurance outside of school hours.</p> <p>Mrs Simmons aims to have the dog assessed as a Pets As Therapy dog once his training and adolescence are completed. This will greatly reduce the cost of insurance.</p>