



SCHOOL DOG POLICY

JULY 2017



School dog policy			
Review frequency:	At least annually	Review date:	July 2018
Governing committee responsible:		Pupils, Strategy & Resources committee	
Governor approval:	November 2016	Website:	Yes
Staff responsible:	Miss R. Spencer	Date produced:	July 2017

Background

The Governing Body, Senior Leadership Team and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at Clarbrough Primary School, have considered the possibility of having a school dog from September 2016, to June 2017. The underlying reason for considering this was led by the school Bursar, who having read articles regarding school dogs in the Times Educational Supplement and then undertaking independent research, found that there could be considerable benefits and advantages to both pupils and the wider school community. Her findings were that schools that have a School Dog, find that they assist in:

- Teaching responsibility and respect;
- Teaching empathy, non-violence and in some cases how to love and have patience;
- Motivating children who are not that attentive;
- Increasing social skills and self-esteem;
- Increasing confidence around dogs and in general;
- Improvement in attendance rates;
- Helping to calm behaviour down – both in classrooms and in a1:1 situation;
- Increasing literacy skills – children begin to enjoy reading and want to read aloud.

Governing Body approval was gained in November 2016, as was support from both the school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and a Health and Safety Advisor at Nottinghamshire County Council. A sample group of parents and staff were consulted from November to July 2017, with the whole school community being informed at the end of July 2017.

It is recognised that animals are not generally allowed in either the school building or grounds, unless a full risk assessment has been undertaken, that takes into account the behaviour and characteristics of the animal(s). This is the reason why dogs belonging to parents and carers are not allowed on the school site. A full risk assessment has however been undertaken for the School dog/puppy and is attached to this document. This will be reviewed when the puppy is introduced to school, and then again on a regular basis.

It is accepted that interacting with a dog may not be appropriate for all children, but that for the majority it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent or carer who does not wish their child to interact with the dog/puppy will be asked to inform Miss Spencer of their wishes. She will then ensure that this is taken into account and that these children do not have any contact with the dog at any time. A list of these children will be kept in the school office.

Context

The dog will:

- Be owned by Miss Spencer and her family.
- Be introduced to school as a puppy and will 'grow' up with Miss Spencer in school.

- 'Live' in the back office area of the admin office, where it will have its bed, water, etc.
 - Always be kept on a lead when moving around school.
 - Have a dedicated area to relieve itself in an area that children do not access.
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- Costs associated with the dog, including veterinary costs will be covered by Miss Spencer.
 - Visitors and pupils will be informed of times when the dog will be present.
 - Parents and carers will be asked whether they wish their child(ren) to have contact with the dog. A list of children who do not wish to interact with the dog will be kept by Miss Spencer.

The role of the school dog

First 6 months

- During this time, the dog will be socialised by Miss Spencer and will learn basic commands through positive reinforcement training.
- At the same time, Miss Spencer will run an education programme for the children in year 1 upwards, during which she will teach them how to interact with the school puppy and dogs in general. This will extend to teaching the children how to 'read' the body language of dogs and the golden rules to apply when meeting dogs.
- Those children that have been given permission by their parents, may as the dog gets older have basic interaction with the dog, albeit constantly supervised. This may form part of a reward system, or if an entire class has permission to spend time with the dog, Miss Spencer may visit their classes occasionally.

6 to 12 months

- Miss Spencer may run a lunch/breaktime club where a handful of children will be allowed to walk with her and the dog (although the dog will have relieved itself prior to the walk). She would ensure that all children who would like to do this are given a 'fair' opportunity to do so.
- The dog will begin its more intensive training with Miss Spencer. With the aim of hopefully joining the Attending School dog programme with the charity Dogs Helping Kids.
- The dog will visit Dogs Helping Kids in Devon to be assessed by Tracey Berridge (dog behaviourist), to assess its suitability for their training programme. The first visit is to look at the temperament of the puppy, the second assessment is to see how training is progressing.
- Representatives from Dogs Helping Kids will undertake a welfare assessment of the environment that the dog is in and assess interactions between the dog and pupils.

12 to 24 months

- The dog will have to sit and pass an entry test, in order to continue with Dogs Helping Kids.
- Undertake 3 assessments at increasing difficulty.
- Begin interactive work with pupils, listening to readers etc.

24 to 36 months

- Undertake a further 3 assessments.
- Hopefully become a certified Dogs Helping Kids dog!

It will be a requirement that the dog:

- Is regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.
- Is diagnosed and treated by a vet if it is ill
- Receives regular inoculations.
- Is wormed at the interval recommended by the Vet.
- Has its claws trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches.

- Be exercised before being allowed to work with children.

Management day to day

It will be a requirement of the handler/owner to ensure that:

- The dog is physically fit before visiting the school environment;
- The dog is kept on a lead when moving through the school or school ground during school hours. The dog may be taken off the lead whilst in its penned area and during direct training with the handler;
- They remain with the dog at all times when it is not in its crate, or penned area;
- The dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking;
- The dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not muddy, wet etc.
- Natural relief for the dog is taken in the designated area only, where pupils do not access (round the back of the shed by the bins). Waste will be disposed of by the handler, in bags deposited in a designated bin.

Pupils will:

- Never have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with the dog;
- Directly 'work' or interact with the dog in a group of more than 3 children;
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog as part of an education programme run by Miss Spencer. Appropriate behaviours are:
 - Always remain calm around the dog
 - Don't make sudden movements and be gentle
 - Always approach the dog standing up
 - Do not approach the dog when it is sleeping or eating
 - Don't put your face near the dog
 - Don't stare into the dog's eyes as this can be interpreted as a threat
 - Do not eat close to the dog and never feed the dog.
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicated that the dog is feeling threatened or angry. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling being signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog ever displays these warning signs it will immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment;
- Be informed of the following health and safety principles:
 - Always wash their hands and/or use anti-bac gel after handling the dog
 - Any dog 'mess' will be cleaned up immediately by Miss Spencer. This must never be done by children.

Should a bite (even playful) ever occur:

1. Parents or carers 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. The dog will be removed from direct contact with any child pending the outcome of the full investigation and reassessment.
6. A full investigation into the circumstances will be led by the Head Teacher.
7. The suitability of the dog will be re-assessed by the Head Teacher, Governing Body and if appropriate dog behaviourist Tracey Berridge from the Dogs Helping Kids charity, to which the dog will be working towards accreditation with.

Specific Risk Assessment for Attending School Dog

Hazard	Risk	Risk (prior to controls) 1-5*	Like-likelihood 1-5*	Controls put in place	Risk after control
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children	Child knocked to ground	1	2	<p>The breed of dog that has been chosen by Miss Spencer is one that has a very calm, sensitive and reliable temperament. They are known to be very good with children and other animals. The breed has been chosen asking seeking advice from Tracey Berridge BSc(hons), MSc, M.A.P.D.T., who is a dog behaviourist with over 25 years' experience and is the founder of the Dogs Helping Kids. As well as Sian Ryan of Developing Dogs who also has an MSc in Clinical Animal Behaviour.</p>	1
	Child scratched by dog	3	2	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will not be allowed to freely roam the school premises during times when there is a risk that pupils will be present.</p>	1
	Child bitten by dog	4	2	<p>Children will never be left with the dog unsupervised. Children actively involved with the dog will be from year 2 upwards, as younger children may be more prone to act unpredictably and therefore pose a greater risk.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead when it is out of its pen, except when it is undergoing structured training with its handler.</p> <p>The dog will be trained to not jump up, or mouth anybody.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature will be continually given to the children and often to the whole school during assemblies or PSHE sessions.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them, for instance: stand still and cross their arms.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training. This will start with puppy socialisation classes as soon as the puppy has had its inoculations, followed by formal clicker training by Sian Ryan (of the BBC show 'Me and My Dog'), through her dog training classes at Developing Dogs near Ely. As the dog becomes older and is assessed by the charity as being suitable to work with pupils, it may (with parental consent), become involved with this training, in particular should the dog be taught to be a 'Reading dog'.</p>	1

				<p>The puppy will undergo continual assessment by Tracey Berridge BSc(hons), MSc, M.A.P.D.T. Tracey is a dog behaviourist with over 25 years' experience and is the founder of the Dogs Helping Kids charity. She will assess the puppy to see if it has the potential to be an Attending School Dog and to check temperament. There are then two other assessments in the first year, as the puppy matures and training progresses to assess continued suitability. At the end of the first year the puppy then takes an entry assessment to see if it is suitable to go on the full Attending School Dog programme run by the charity.</p> <p>If accepted on to the programme, the puppy then has to pass a further 6 assessments before being allowed to 'work' with pupils as a fully certified Dogs Helping Kids dog. This can take a further two years. Once certified the dog is then re-assessed annually.</p> <p>The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment. This area of training will allow for the dog to potentially be able to provide assistance during reading intervention and classroom support during PSHE sessions and will lead to the dog being involved in the classroom environment (under constant supervision and only if all children in that class are happy for the dog to be there) in a calm manner.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce as the puppy matures, so the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through its training programme. Direct contact with pupils will only ever be with parental consent and will be minimal until the temperament of the dog is known and their behaviour more predictable.</p> <p>All staff will be introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don'ts) of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure its claws are kept short and that it is in good health.</p>	
Dog getting loose from its pen or from its lead	As above	1	2	<p>The dog will have the 'back office' area at the front of school for its use. This will be a secure, gated area, with a soft bed and water. There will be an additional gate across the door to the 'front office', which can be secured when the puppy is in the school if it is appropriate for it to have use of this area also.</p> <p>If the dog gets loose from the back office, and the front office area then the handler Head Teacher or Admin Assistant will be informed immediately. There will be four members of staff who can be called upon to help with the dog at any time. They are: Miss Spencer, Mr Bunn, Mrs Goad and Miss Green.</p>	1
Allergic reaction	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	<p>Parents will be asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to the introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school system and in the folder containing all of the school dog paperwork.</p>	1

				<p>Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt of out interaction if they wish to do so.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. Younger children will be supervised when doing this. There will also be wipes available for use.</p>	
Children getting germs from the dog	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site Miss Spencer will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner (in a designated bin). This will be in the area to the back of the bins where children never go. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupil's do not have access to on a regular basis. If required, the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant.</p> <p>All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) will be kept up to date in accordance with the European Vet guidelines,</p> <p>Worming treatment will be carried out in line with European Vet guidelines and the puppy will also undergo treatment to prevent lungworm.</p> <p>The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times, nor will it enter the school kitchen or medical room.</p>	1
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills	1	1	<p>The dog will be the responsibility of Miss Spencer and she will be financially responsible for all its care and day to day costs.</p> <p>The dog will also be the responsibility of Miss Spencer outside of school hours.</p> <p>The training costs for activities involving the pupils will also be paid for by Miss Spencer. Miss Spencer may (with SLT support) undertake fundraising activities to help supplement this significant cost, should she be accepted onto the full training programme. All obedience training will also be funded by Miss Spencer.</p>	1
Claim is made against school re: the behaviour of the dog	School not adequately covered financially	1	1	<p>Miss Spencer will insure the dog, through Pet Plan insurance initially and should she be accepted on to the full training programme through the Dogs Helping Kids charity.</p> <p>The insurance will be renewed annually and the certificate will be kept with the other school dog paperwork and would be available to be seen upon demand by any parent/carer or staff member.</p>	1

Emergency plan in case of incident or accident	<p>Plan for children and staff</p> <p>Any accident or injury to any child or adult in school will be dealt with in accordance with the schools existing Health and Safety policy and procedures.</p>
Emergency plan in case of incident or accident	<p>Plan for the dog</p> <p>Any accident or injury that results in an injury or trauma to the dog, will be dealt with according to the dog's immediate needs. Miss Spencer will have the final say with regards to any action required and the dog would be taken to it's registered veterinary practice by Miss Spencer.</p>

Key to risk: 1: low risk 3: Medium risk of injury 5: High risk of injury