



We See Jesus In Everything We Do

SCHOOL DOG POLICY & RISK ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child's sugar is low, and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life in a wide variety of ways:

1. **Dogs teach children responsibility.** Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.
2. **Dogs teach children patience.** Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!
3. **Dogs teach children compassion.** Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
4. **Dogs teach children about socialisation.** Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park (pun intended).
5. **Dogs are fun.** Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.

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

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

We have taken advice from The Dogs' Trust to gain an insight into the benefits and responsibilities of having a School Dog. They will be coming into school to deliver an assembly and workshops. The assembly will be led by staff at the Trust which focusses on how dogs may be feeling by their body language.

The risk assessment (attached) will be reviewed annually and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the SENDCo and shared with governors.

CONTEXT

Dougie lives with our Headteacher Mrs Matthews and her family. Dougie is a very caring and well behaved dog who has the right temperament to become a real asset to St Edward's First School. Dougie's mother is ½ poodle and ½ bichon frise and his father is a cavalier spaniel— this mix is known as a Cavapoochon. Dougie regularly visits the vet for check-ups. Whilst he is there they administer worm and flea treatments as well as make adjustments to his food intake to ensure he remains a healthy weight.

RATIONALE

As a 'Reading Dog', Dougie will enable those children who are less confident at reading to have a friendly, audience; as a 'Therapy Dog' Dougie may listen to any little worries and will be a soft cushion to sit alongside. He might be taken for walks to calm those pupils who need a bit of space and may be a gentle companion to sooth away any tears. There will, of course, be lots of times when Dougie will simply provide treat time and friendship for those pupils who are in need.

Improving 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. It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer.

Dougie will be used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a calm and well-trained dog, children find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have children read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children, as they do not make fun of them when they read, but make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proven that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in interpersonal skills among the children they mix with.

Social Development:

Dougie will be take part in short 'Dougie Time' therapy sessions, supported by the school SENDCo who has received training in Animal Assisted Therapy.

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. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students. With a dog in school, children have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. Researchers report that involving children in the daily care of school dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The children also learn about responsibility, caring and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

Rewards:

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. 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, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities children 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 work with pupils on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied or are experiencing upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the children they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the children they are spending time with. Children who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Area: Interaction with pupils and staff				
Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
School dog biting a child or adult	Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	The school dog is being trained not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger. The school dog lives with the headteacher who ensures that he is used to interaction with children	Low	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way
Jumping up / scratching	If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that he could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	The temperament of The school dog and the agreed training programme has involved not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful. New parents are requested to inform the school if are unwilling for their child to have contact with The school dog. Parents are asked to share their wishes to their child and ask them not to approach the dog if they do not want any contact	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision. The school dog will be enclosed in HT office when people come to interact with him or on a lead and controled by an authorised adult
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose he could hurt children/adults or damage property	The school dog will be contained at all times either in an office behind a gate or on a lead	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective
Direct interaction with children/ staff	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/ staff could be scratched	No interaction is allowed without authorisation. Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour. Rewards/praise will be given to the dog to reinforce the desired behaviour	Medium	Ensure that the dog is approached in the agreed manner

Destruction of materials	If allowed the school dog may chew/destroy some school materials/resources	The school dog will be contained at all times. The school dog will have his own toys to play with and normal school resources will be removed	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective
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Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog				
Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with dog	If a child/adult interact with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way this will affect the school dogs training and have a negative impact on future interaction	Agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog. There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation	Medium	If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped
Use of rewards/treats	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward or treat. Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats.	Alcohol gel will be available to all adults (and children with written permission from parents) Treats will only be given to the school dog under supervision	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands/use alcohol gel after handling treats. Treats to be locked away to ensure they are only given with authorisation and under supervision.
Pupil & Staff knowledge of how to interact with dog	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could cause harm to themselves or to the dog	Dogs Trust will be asked to visit and conduct a 'Be Dog Smart' workshop with the children	Medium	There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dog.

Area: Hygiene / Health				
Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog do not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Worms / fleas	If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans	The school dog will be treated monthly at a local vets to ensure he is correctly treated for worms and fleas	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet
Faeces	If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	The school dog will only be walked under supervision. No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision	Low	If a child finds faeces on the school field/playground they will report it to an adult
Allergies	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	Children will not be in contact with the school dog if we have received a negative response form from parents/guardians. If a child has an allergy the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child	Medium	
Children's access to school dog's resource	If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some they could become unwell	All of the school dog's resources will be locked away. No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation	Low	Remind children not to enter area
Contact with food preparation areas	If the school dog enters a food preparation area this could be unhygienic	The school dog will be in a contained area or supervised at all times around school. He will never enter the school kitchen	Trivial	
Cleaning hands after interaction with the dog	If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell.	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the dog.	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands.

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking				
Reason: To ensure that the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Walking the dog on and off the site	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed.	Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a	Medium	Careful consideration needs to be given to the

		walk If the school dog is taken off site normal risk assessed procedure will take place. No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk offsite unless authorised to do so by accompanying adult.		amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes
Visits to classroom	If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure he may become over excited.	The school dog will only make classroom visits with Mrs Matthews or another adult. The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop	Medium	Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant
Being fed	If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating he may respond aggressively	No child will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when he is eating. Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards). All feeding will be supervised	Low	Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when he is eating
School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed he may become aggressive or boisterous	The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and he will be under the control of a supervising adult	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction to school events. If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog might not attend school on that day
Other dogs (on and off the site)	If the school dog is overwhelmed he may become aggressive or boisterous	No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises	Low	Monitor the school dogs reaction when out walking may become aggressive or boisterous At no time will the school dog be walked by a child without an adult and as a result if another dog is seen this will be dealt with by the supervising adult

Reviewed:	Head Teacher	November 2021
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Signed by Chair of Governors		
Signed by Head Teacher		