



# School Dog Policy

<b>Responsible Staff</b>	CPA
<b>Governors Committee Responsible</b>	N/A
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## School Dog Policy

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### 1. Introduction

Contact with a dog can benefit children educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog. Older pupils can learn valuable life skills and skills for employment.

#### **Is there a risk bringing a dog into a school environment?**

As with any activity in school there is always a level of risk attached, however with appropriate measures, risks are minimised. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out.

Dogs have access to school site to facilitate and support pupil learning.

This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog(s) to be present. Where reference is made to a dog this could be more than one dog.

### 2. School Policy

The school policy aims to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils and staff. It also aims to ensure that the dogs involved in such sessions are healthy and happy, and treated with respect.

The dogs working with children in school will be owned and managed by a suitably qualified member of staff. These are referred to as school dogs.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dogs.
- All dogs have been behaviourally assessed for the specific roles they may perform.
- Only school dogs are allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has been informed and agreed beforehand.
- The dogs have been selected because they respond well to training and are known to be good with children and are very friendly.
- The school will work within animal welfare guidelines on having dogs in school to ensure the needs of the dogs are always being met.
- The Chair of Governors, and the Governing Body agree that having dogs in school will benefit the children and staff at Exhall Grange Specialist School.
- Staff, parents and children will be informed that a dog might be in school.
- A risk assessment has been produced and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog and must report their allergies/phobias to the main office.
- If a dog is ill, they will not be allowed in school.
- The dog will be supervised at all times whilst on school site and will be kept on a lead when on a walk, unless they are participating in planned activities where the dog will be off lead.
- Children under 16 must never be left alone with the dog without suitable adult supervision.
- Staff are aware of and follow the dog bite procedure set out in this policy

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### 3. Pupil Conduct

In order to maintain both the pupils' and dog's welfare, as taught in dog training lessons, it's important that all pupils who may come into contact with the dog understand how to interact with the dog safely and maintain positive dog welfare.

- Not interact with the dog until invited to do so by the handler / dog's owner/ supervising member of staff
- Follow all instruction given to them while interacting with the dog
- Pupils will 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's face and should always approach calmly.
- Pupils should never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating. The exception to this is pupils who are undertaking the dog training qualification.
- Pupils must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Pupils should not eat close to the dog.
- Pupils should be careful to stroke the dog on their body, chest, back and not by their face or top of head.
- Place school bags out of reach of the dog
- Wash their hands after interacting with the dog
- If a dog is surrounded by many pupils, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that they monitor the situation.
- 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 a dog is displaying any of these warning signs, they should be immediately removed from that situation or environment.
- All pupils in Post 16 will have the opportunity to achieve a qualification in Dog Husbandry.
- Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of the adult in charge.

Pupils who struggle to follow the rules will be removed from the session. They will be given an opportunity to learn why they were removed and what they can do to interact more positively with the dog.

If pupils are deliberately violent or threatening towards the dog this will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy and may result in fixed-term exclusion.

### 4. Dog Bite Procedure

In the event of a dog bite, staff should follow our standard first aid procedure, in accordance with the first aid policy:

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- Parents/carers should be informed of the dog bite and the surrounding circumstances without delay
- The closest member of staff present will assess the seriousness of the injury and seek the assistance of a qualified first aider, if appropriate, who will provide the required first aid treatment
- The first aider should refer to NHS guidance on animal bites when assessing and treating the injury
- The first aider, if called, will assess the injury and decide if further assistance is needed from a colleague or the emergency services. They will remain on the scene until help arrives
- The first aider will also decide whether the injured person should be moved or placed in a recovery position
- If the first aider judges that a pupil is too unwell to remain in school, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child. Upon their arrival, the first aider will recommend next steps to the parents/carers
- If emergency services are called, the Health Care Team at school will contact parents/carers immediately
- The member of staff responsible for the dog at the time of the event will complete an accident report form on the same day or as soon as is reasonably practical after an incident resulting in an injury
- Following a dog bite incident, an investigation into the circumstances shall take place and the suitability of having that dog in school shall be reassessed by the headteacher

### **5. Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with a school dog, this information must be passed to a member of staff on the Senior Leadership Team.

### **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

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

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

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

The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dogs. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained, and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside of school.

The owner is responsible for the wellbeing of their dog(s) and will ensure that if there are any behaviour changes with any dog that they will no longer come into school. The owner will have public liability insurance as a dog owner.

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### **7. 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) Improved academic achievement
- 2) Increase in literacy skills
- 3) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase in social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Help prevent truancy
- 8) Motivate children who are often less attentive
- 9) Increases communication at home.

#### **7.1 School Dog Club: Years 8-11**

The school club promotes young people's behaviour around dogs in their daily lives. National bites statistics show that children are most vulnerable to dog bites and that education is the key to changing these statistics. Participation is by choice and the course lasts for six sessions and take place at lunch time.

The below research has been sourced from other schools who use this information in their policies and research articles. Exhall Grange Specialist School has undertaken school specific research which is available to be viewed and supports the benefits of having a dog in school.

#### **7.2 Behaviour:**

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that pupils can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating pupils declined by 55 %, and general aggression went down 62 %. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in pupils. In a controlled study, pupils were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Pupils' behaviour improved toward teachers, and pupils also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

#### **7.3 Education:**

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some pupils. 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. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," pupils benefit from social support and peer interaction.

Dogs can be incredibly calm and happy to have a pupil 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

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they are non-judgemental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that children who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the pupils they mix with.

### **7.4 Social Development:**

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

With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for an animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving pupils in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The pupils also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

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### School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Q Who pays for costs and training of the dogs?**

A The legal owner of the dogs will bear the costs associated with owning and training the dogs and have Public Liability Insurance.

**Q Will the dog(s) be a distraction?**

A The dogs will be based in Post 16 Centre. The dogs will have their own space when spending time in classrooms and during outside activities.

**Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

A The dogs will be based in Post 16 Centre. All adults who work with the school dogs will read and sign the risk assessment. The risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dogs 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.

**Q How will the dog(s) welfare be considered?**

A The dogs will be walked regularly and given free time outside. The dogs will be kept in the designated Post 16 area and will only have supervised contact with children and visitors. The dogs will be carefully trained over a period and will have unlimited access to water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

**Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?**

A Children will not need to touch the dogs, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage several allergies in 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 dogs are given a high-quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

A Access to the dogs is carefully managed and children do not need to have close contact with them. We will work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.