



School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment

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. Appendix B sets out further reasons for why the school feels it will be beneficial to have a school dog.

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

Of course there is, 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.

School Policy

The dog will be owned by Mrs Mace. The dog is a dachshund chosen for its very mild temperament and non-moulting coat. She will be responsible for Bailey's regular visits to the vets, injections and inoculations.

The Chair of Governors, and the Head Teacher have both agreed that the school can have a dog.

Staff have been informed, through staff briefing, that the school will have a dog. Parents have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. At the start of each academic year there will be lessons around the school dog and parents will be given an opportunity to speak to the head with regards to the school dog. The Head Teacher, Mrs Mace has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment is attached as Appendix A

In the event of an emergency evacuation the adult supporting Bailey, will accompany him to the Fire Evacuation point.

Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must remain at a manageable distance. Parents are able to inform the school of any allergies on admission/on being informed.

If the dog is unwell Bailey will not be allowed into school.

The dog will normally be kept on a lead and harness until fully trained when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.



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There may be occasions when the dog is working off lead, but this will only happen in an enclosed space and under the control of an adult. Before removing the lead, all present will be consulted.

Students must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with students.

Students should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Students 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. Students should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Students should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating. Students must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.

If the dog is surrounded by a large number of students, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.

Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring 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 should not feed or eat close to the dogs.

Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog. As a school we will provide anti-bacterial gel.

Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

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 and staff and children are required to abide by this policy.

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

Policy written Jan 2023

by Nikki Mace Head Teacher

Policy to be reviewed Jan 2024

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Appendix A Risk Assessment

Assessment conducted by: Nikki Mace	Job title: Headteacher	Covered by this assessment: Dogs brought in to school by staff to work with children
Date of assessment: Jan 2023	Review interval: Yearly	Date of next review: Jan 2024

Introduction:

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 well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. The team at Hamsey Green Primary School and Acorns Nursery) have been considering obtaining a dog as a school 'therapy' pet for some time and the decision was made at the end of 2022 to go ahead with the project.

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 also 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 Bailey is invited to write to the Head Teacher and inform her of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the puppy as his vet will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of Bailey's health records will be updated and kept in school. Bailey will also be insured.

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



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Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 - 5	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	<p>Child knocked to the ground.</p> <p>Child scratched by dog.</p> <p>Child bitten by dog.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead or carried when she is not in the school office while the children are in school.</p> <p>Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions.</p> <p>Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training from the age of (6months) with an experienced dog trainer. Selected children will be part of this process.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed as he progresses through his weekly training.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure he is in good health and that his claws are kept short.</p>	
Dog's welfare	Dog' health	2	<p>The dog has access to fresh, clean water at all times.</p> <p>The dog has access to a cool and quiet place where it can be left undisturbed.</p> <p>Pupils leave the dog alone when instructed by their teachers. The dog's welfare is considered as a priority when planning the activities that it will participate in.</p> <p>If an activity risks the dog's welfare, the activity is amended.</p> <p>Noise is kept to a minimum during the activities</p>	



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			<p>that the dog is participating in, e.g. if the dog is participating in assembly, the audience is instructed not to clap until the dog has left the stage.</p> <p>The headteacher ensures that the dog has adequate and frequent toilet breaks and any waste is appropriately disposed of.</p> <p>The dog is not over-stimulated, as this can lead to potentially dangerous behaviour.</p> <p>The dog is not made to participate in potentially distressing activities.</p> <p>The school complies with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.</p> <p>The dog is familiar with the members of staff and pupils who are participating in the activity with the dog.</p> <p>Flash photography is not used when the dog is present.</p> <p>The dog is given opportunities to exercise and move around independently in a secure area, e.g. the headteacher's office</p> <p>The headteacher ensures that the dog is fit to participate in specific activities and is not brought into the school if it is unwell.</p> <p>If the dog becomes unwell while at school, the dog's owner takes it home.</p> <p>Before any activity is carried out, the headteacher ensures everyone participating in the activity understands how to treat and behave around the dog, e.g. not using flash photography, not shouting or clapping and not running around.</p> <p>Activities do not cause harm, discomfort or stress to the dog</p> <p>On hot days, the handler ensures there are appropriate provisions in place to keep the dog cool and ensure the dog avoids too much activity during the hottest part of the day.</p>	
Dog's housing and equipment	5		<p>The headteacher ensures that the dog has housing that meets its physical and psychological needs.</p> <p>The headteacher ensures that the dog's housing is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secure, e.g. escape proof.- Clean and free from parasites and vermin.- Free from hazards, e.g. sharp edges.	



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-ventilated. - Sheltered from extreme weather. - Set at a suitable temperature, humidity and light level. - Sheltered from noises that may upset it. - Capable of providing a darkened sleeping area. <p>The headteacher ensures that the dog's housing has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A comfortable resting area. - A suitable amount of clean bedding material. <p>The headteacher ensures that the dog is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lie fully stretched out. - Turn around without touching either the walls or the ceiling. - Stand in its natural posture. - Move in its natural manner. - Rest comfortably. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All dog's bedding/housing is checked for defects on a weekly basis by the Headteacher. - All dog equipment is stored in the headteacher's office when not in use. - The dog's food and water bowls are kept out of the path of people to avoid any trips. - Any spillages from the dog's bowls are wiped up immediately. - The dog is trained to not pull on the lead or jump up at people. 	
<p>The dog causing allergies.</p> <p>Infection Control</p>	<p>Children or staff have allergic reactions</p>	1	<p>The headteacher informs parents that the dog will be present on the school's premises.</p> <p>Parents are informed of the activities that the dog will be participating in, e.g. the dog will be performing in a school production or used as a therapy dog</p> <p>The headteacher has given parents a chance to opt out their child for them to be in proximity with, or to handle, the dog</p> <p>Parents are informed if they are likely to come into contact with the dog, e.g. at a school performance</p>	



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			<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school.</p> <p>A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will kept in school.</p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog only with parental permission and as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. No child will be forced to interact.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p> <p>If the Bailey is not behaving appropriately during an activity, e.g. he is barking excessively or running away, the headteacher remove him and a contingency plan implemented. For example, a toy dog used instead.</p> <p>The dog is not allowed to lick or give 'kisses' to any individuals.</p> <p>Individuals who are, or have been, displaying symptoms of coronavirus do not come into contact with the dog until they have fully recovered.</p> <p>Individuals who have weakened immune systems are advised to stay away from the dog; however, if contact is necessary, they wear a face covering at all times.</p> <p>Alternative activities are provided in a separate room for those with phobias or allergies</p>	
Phobias	Children or staff	3	<p>Pupils and staff known to have a phobia of dogs are given restricted access to the dog.</p> <p>The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the handler</p> <p>During busy times, such as breaks, the dog is kept in a safe and secure area away from any commotion</p> <p>Alternative activities are provided in a separate room for those with phobias or allergies</p>	



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Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	<p>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.</p> <p>He will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes; and never in the food preparation area.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Bailey's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	<p>The dog is ultimately the responsibility of (Mrs Mace) both in a well-being and financial aspect.</p> <p>Bailey is insured by the school, for Public Liability Insurance.</p> <p>All vets costs are covered by and insured by Mrs Mace</p>	



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Hygiene	Health and safety for pupils and staff spreading diseases	1	<p>All faeces are immediately picked up by the handler, using a clinical waste bag, and disposed of into a clinical waste bin.</p> <p>The handler immediately washes their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces.</p> <p>Any soiled dog bedding is immediately disposed of in sealed clinical waste bags and placed into a clinical waste bin.</p> <p>The handler takes the dog's bedding home regularly to wash it. Any pupils, staff and visitors who touch the dog are advised to wash their hands afterwards, and sufficient hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school.</p> <p>Anyone with an exposed wound who touches the dog has the wound suitably covered.</p> <p>If the dog is ill with an infection or a disease, it does not return to the school until it has recovered.</p> <p>Hand sanitiser is provided for anyone who touches the dog.</p> <p>The dog's lead, collar, harness and other supplies are disinfected regularly.</p> <p>Items that are usually handled by multiple people, e.g. toys and blankets, are not used during sessions or visits</p> <p>Individuals are not permitted to handle objects that could go in the dog's mouth, e.g. treats or toys.</p>	
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KEY: 1- Low risk

2

3 -Medium risk of injury

4

5-High risk of injury



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Appendix B

Reasons to have a dog in school

Behaviour

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 students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students 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.

Attendance

Children can be encouraged back into school using caring for a dog as an incentive

Social Development

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, with a dog in the classroom, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility, caring and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

As a reward

Dogs will be gentle and living, 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, may be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support Dogs can work with students on a one to one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog. Each class will be able to have a story session with Bailey each half term.

Reading

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. 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," students find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have students 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, 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 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 students they mix with.

Bullying can be a problem in all schools with students anxious about school for fear of taunting and abuse. But in some schools dogs are making a difference in the fight against bullies. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participation students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%

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Appendix C

Dear Hamsey Green and Acorns pupils, parents and carers

We are really excited to share the good news with you! Over the last year, we have been discussing how much we missed having a dog for the children to read to and the positive effects that having a dog come to school had for the children. There are many great reasons for having a school dog – which are listed below.

We would very much like to welcome a new member to Hamsey Green and Acorns! He is called **Bailey** and he is a miniature Dachshund puppy!



He will be coming on site each day with Mrs Mace and the children will meet him gradually as he gets used to his new surroundings. He will always be on a lead or held and will be controlled under the supervision of a nominated adult. The children will be reminded of being calm around dogs, not to feed or offer him food, and that if he (or they) get over excited that they will be removed from the session.

We understand that there maybe some children who are nervous or have allergies and we are asking all parents/carers to give their consent for their child have contact with him below. Please be reassured that no child will be expected to and this will be down to their wishes too.

Please click the forms link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=B8AwOD58skqJqlhUuk3pN0_Hcq28wORKjJ0CDee8v8BURFRMNvJFRzY4TE41OUZST05NRUdPSDFZVS4u&sharetoken=pNKotY9h40lqmLd7Gj2D

My child does/does not have an allergy to dogs.



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My child is/is not nervous around a dog.

I give/do not give consent for my child to have contact with the school dog.

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