

Village Infant School

School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment



The aim of introducing a school dog

Children and adults can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable dog. In addition to these benefits, children and adults take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

Benefits of having a school dog:

- Pupil wellbeing
 - Children can empathise with animals in a way that they can't always with other humans and this develops their emotional well-being
 - Spending time with an animal improves self-esteem and lifts mood
 - Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety
- Physical
 - Improved behaviour and concentration
 - Reduced stress and improved self-esteem
 - Increase levels of dopamine and serotonin
 - Interaction with dogs reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, gives motivation to move and improves fitness and stimulates the senses
- Social
 - A dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion
 - Encourages responsibility
 - Improves wellbeing and boosts interaction with others
 - Supports the development of cooperative play
 - Teaches children to nurture and respect life
- Academic
 - Companionship with a dog stimulates memory & problem-solving
 - School dogs have been proven to improve attendance
 - Motivating pupils to think and to learn, as most children have a high level of natural interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals
 - Reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect the dog's presence has on children as well as the fact that a dog will listen to children read without being judgemental or critical. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence to read aloud.

It is accepted that interacting with a school dog is not appropriate for all children, including those with allergies or a phobia of dogs. We also understand that some parents may prefer for their child not to interact with the school dog. Please notify the office if this is the case.

School Policy

At Village Infant School we will always prioritise the safety of pupils, staff and animals by:

- Considering the needs of pupils as a priority at all times - ensuring our pupils' physical safety and emotional wellbeing is prioritised when considering any interaction with the school dog
- Managing any risks associated with a school dog through a thorough risk assessment which identifies a list of control measures taken to limit risks (see below)
- Ensuring animal welfare is maintained at all times

Context:

- The school dogs are owned and cared for by Ms Cattle and Ms Joy.
- All costs associated with caring for the school dog will be covered by these people
- The dogs are working cocker spaniels. Working cocker spaniels are an intelligent breed that respond well to training. They have gentle temperaments and are known to be good with children and are very sociable and friendly. They have fairly short hair and do not moult excessively.

Day-to-day Management

The dog will:

- Not be allowed in school if he is unwell
- Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk
- Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
- Will be kept in Ms Cattle and Ms Joys offices
- Sometimes Sunny be invited to visit a classroom under direct supervision from Ms Cattle
- Sometimes children will be invited to visit Sunny under direct supervision from Ms Cattle

Our pupils will:

- Not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the dog
- Not bring food into the dog's vicinity
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog every time they meet him:
 - Always remain calm
 - Be gentle
 - Do not put your face near the dog's face

Health and safety principles

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. When completing risk assessments, we consider if the benefit outweighs the risk and due the integration plan, socialisation and training measures put in place, we consider the school dog to be very low risk. The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.

Children and adults will always wash their hands or use hand sanitiser after handling the dog.

Any dog excrement will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of the dog at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

In the very unlikely event that a bite should occur (even playfully):

- 1) Parents 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) Relevant members of staff will be informed.

5) A full investigation will take place.

6) The suitability of having a dog will be reassessed by the Headteacher.

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.
- The children will be supported in learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Frequently Asked Questions

We hope that the FAQs below will help to answer some of your questions.

The school has a 'no dogs' policy

Our school does have a 'no dogs' policy and dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site, this is because the school does not know the temperament, training or history of these dogs and they may react adversely to the busyness of drop off and pick up times. However, there is a risk assessment in place for Sunny and Jasper and the school has a policy specifically for them. They have undergone training and will be on a lead or under control at all times when moving around the school property. They will always be accompanied by an adult who knows them well and children's time with them will be carefully monitored

Safety around the dog

Children will only have contact with the dogs with a supervised adult. They will generally be in Ms Cattles or Ms Joys office which is restricted to children. When moving around the school, they will be under strict control or on a lead.

What about the children who have allergies around a dog?

Sunny and Jasper are a cocker spaniels which is a low moulting breed. Parents and staff will be asked to inform the school if their child is allergic and if so we will work with the family to ensure that the child doesn't have contact with him if this is their wish.

What about the children/ staff who have a fear for dogs?

Parents can notify the office if they do not want their child having any 1:1 interaction with Sunny and Jasper. It may be that your child has a phobia but over time would like to have some interaction. If so, we can be aware and work with parents/children to build up their confidence so that they feel safe. Pupils are always asked first before any interaction takes place.

Hygiene

There will be a designated area for the dog to toilet if necessary, which will be away from the children. The staff in charge of the dog will ensure that this is cleared away appropriately. If the school dog toilets when out on the school site, staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. If children have stroked the dog, they will be taught to wash their hands afterwards.

Risk Assessment

This risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

Step 1 Identify the Hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 Control measures - What are we doing to minimise the risk?	Step 4 Member of staff responsible for control measure	Risk rating Low/Medium/High
Allergies	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	<p>If a child has an allergy the school dog will not come into contact with that child</p> <p>The school dog is low shedding, limiting the allergens</p> <p>Medical records used to list pupils identified as having an allergy and not to have contact with dog</p> <p>Children to wash hands after contact with dog</p> <p>Dog bedding regularly washed to reduce dust</p> <p>Visitors advised dog is in the school and removed if requested</p> <p>All parents aware dog is in school</p>	Office team (responsible for allergy information) and supervising adult	Low
Jumping up/scratching	If a dog becomes excited there is a danger that they could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	<p>Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision</p> <p>Dog kept on lead and harness at all times, outside of office areas</p> <p>When people come to interact with him or under lead control by an authorised adult</p> <p>Dog trained not to jump up</p>	YC and SJ or a designated adult.	Low

School dog biting a child or adult	Child or adult could be hurt if a dog bites	<p>The school dog is a friendly, sociable breed.</p> <p>The school dog is trained not to bite.</p> <p>When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger.</p> <p>If the school dog were to bite anyone, the school dog would no longer visit the school site and have interactions with pupils.</p>	YC and SJ or designated adult.	Low
Dog Phobia	Pupils and staff who are afraid of dogs becoming distressed by being in proximity to the school dog	<p>Parents will be asked to inform the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with the dog.</p> <p>Parents also offered the option of their child having no close contact. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by the office staff.</p> <p>Staff will also have the option to 'opt out' of any interaction with the dog</p> <p>Contact with dog will always be made clear that it is optional</p> <p>Visitors will be advised that a dog is in the school.</p> <p>Staff to supervise dog at all times and be sensitive to all children's reactions</p>	YC & SJ & Office team	Low
Dog pulling on lead	<p>Pupils / staff</p> <p>Someone being pulled over</p>	Adult supervision at all times	YC & SJ or a designated adult.	Low
Noise - barking	<p>Disruption to lessons</p> <p>Pupils who cannot cope with noise</p>	Dogs have been trained not to bark. If the dog begins barking, pupils will be removed and dog will have a chance to rest quietly.	Supervising adult	Low
Fire drill -	Member of staff, dog	The school dog will be under	Supervising	Low

evacuation of dog		the supervision of a member of staff at all times - supervising adult will accompany dog to gathering point on field Drills carried out so the dog is used to the alarm and evacuation procedures.	adult	
Hygiene - cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog. Anti-bacterial gel available in all classrooms, offices and staffroom.	Supervising adult	Low
Use of rewards/treats	Children and adults could be harmed if a dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat	Adults and children are reminded to wash their hands. Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation	YC & SJ or a designated adult	Low
Worms/fleas	If a dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans	The school dog will be treated monthly for worms and fleas	YC & SJ or a designated adult	Low
Faeces	If a child/adult come into contact with dog faeces some germs could be transferred	The school dogs will be 'taught' to go to the toilet off the school site. Faeces safely disposed of in bags. The school dog will only be walked under supervision	YC & SJ or a designated adult	Low
The dog gets loose from office area, his crate or from his lead.	Injury to children or adults, destruction of property, pupils frightened	Supervising adult will immediately retrieve dog. Dog trained to have good recall and be gentle when interacting with children.	Supervising adult	Low
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day-to-day upkeep or medical bills	The dogs are the financial responsibility of Ms Cattle and Ms Joy They are financially responsible for all his care and day-to-day costs. The dogs are the responsibility of Ms Cattle and Ms Joy outside of school hours.	YC & SJ or a designated adult	Low