

School Dog Policy & FAQ



Date: September 2022

Review Date:

School Dog Policy

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.

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

Yes, 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. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out. 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. We also believe the benefits outweigh the risk.

School Policy

The dog will be owned by Mrs Hine

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless the Head Teacher has been informed beforehand.
- The dog is a Working Cocker Spaniel, chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, have short hair and is very sociable and friendly.
- The Chair of Governors and the governing board agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of St John's Middle School.
- Staff, parents and children will be informed by letter that a dog will be in school.
- The school has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog.
- If the dog is unwell he will not be allowed into school.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there should always be appropriate adult supervision.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should wash/ sanitise their hands after handling a dog.

- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs Hine.
- Actions if someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher or a Deputy as soon as possible.

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.

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A: The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Hine; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance.

Q: Will the dog be from a reputable breeder? A: Yes. The dog was purchased from a reputable breeder. Mrs Hine visited the puppies in their home and both parents were seen. This puppy was specifically chosen for its temperament.

Q: Has a risk assessment been undertaken? A: Yes, a full risk assessment is in place, which will be reviewed regularly. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

Q: Who is responsible for training?

A: Mrs Hine will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its initial training.

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

If the dog does toilet on school grounds, this will always be immediately cleared. The staff in charge of the dog will ensure that this is cleared away appropriately, leaving no trace on the ground.

Q: How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A: The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. The dog will have its own space in Mrs Hine's office where it will not be disturbed by students. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered and remove the dog from the school environment if we don't feel it is happy.

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

A: Students will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for students 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. Any students with allergies to dogs will be built into the risk assessment as they are made known to the school.

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

A: Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it if this has been expressed by parents. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

Q: Will other school dogs be allowed in school? A: Allowing a dog onto the school site can only be approved by the Headteacher and for educational purposes. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.