Dogs in school policy

Linslade school

Approved by:	Governing Body	**Date:** Sept 25
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This policy can be adapted to cover a permanent school dog or visits by appropriately certified dogs from external organisations. Although the code of conduct is the same in both instances, a permanent school dog requires additional procedures and responsibilities to be put in place to ensure its welfare.

1. Aims and scope

This policy sets out the procedures and conduct required for interacting with dogs in school, such as during therapy or literacy sessions.

This policy is non-statutory.

It 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.

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 bringing a dog into a school environment?

Yes, there is, though there are a variety of accidents, which can happen with 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 and this is included in the document (**see appendix 3**).

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.

School Policy

The dog will be owned by Mr Gibbs, Head Teacher.

- 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 they are a known therapy dog or assistance dog and the Head Teacher has been informed beforehand.
- The dog is a Springer Spaniel chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, which sheds some hair and is very sociable and friendly.
- The Chair of Governors, … and the governing body agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Linslade Middle.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. Mr Gibbs, Head Teacher 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. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill, he/she will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around a 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 and should always approach it standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Everyone must wait until ….. is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
- 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 he/she monitors 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 the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he should immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on his/her body, chest, back and not by his back face of the top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing pupils access to the school dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head Teacher asap.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The owner, Mr Gibbs will keep up to date records of vaccinations and any medical details for the dog.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mr Gibbs or another trained member of staff.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher/SLT staff with responsibility for the dog

The headteacher/leadership team member with responsibility for the dog should:

- Ensure the purpose of the dog being in school is clear
- Ensure that the dog being used for the therapy/literacy session is appropriate for the age range of the pupils present
- Ensure all dogs used for therapy sessions are certified and appropriately trained
- Ensure the welfare needs of the dog are met
- Carry out a risk assessment for each interaction
- Consult staff in advance about any allergies or phobias
- Obtain parental consent before allowing any contact between pupils and the dog, and consult parents/carers on any allergies or phobias the pupils may have
- Ensure all staff and pupils have completed adequate training related to appropriate behaviour and conduct with the dog prior to any interactions
- Ensure staff and pupils are reminded of appropriate procedures and conduct prior to each session
- Put procedures in place for dealing with incidents, such as a dog bite
- Put clear hygiene procedures and responsibilities in place for cleaning up after the dog
- Ensure the measures set out in this policy are followed
- Ensure appropriate insurance cover is in place, whether through the school's/trust's policy or a third-party insurance policy
- Ensure that any dog on school premises is included in fire evacuation procedures, or any other evacuation or invacuation procedures, under the supervision of the dog handler
- Monitor and review this policy

2.2 Dog's owner M. Gibbs

The dog's owner and/or the organisation providing the dog should:

- Ensure the dog is fit and healthy prior to each visit, with confirmation from the dog's vet
- Ensure the purpose of the dog being in school is clear by having rules for staff and children to adhere to
- Ensure the welfare needs of the dog are met
- Ensure a space is allocated in school if the dog needs a child-free, quiet area to rest
- Make alternative arrangements for the care of the dog when the dog is unable to go into school [only required if the dog is a permanent school dog]
- Ensure the dog is supervised at all times on the school site
- Attend relevant training sessions with the dog as appropriate and ensure they and the dog are appropriately accredited
- Maintain a good understanding of dog communication and be able to quickly identify when the dog is showing signs of worry, stress or aggression
- Remove the dog immediately from any situation where the dog is displaying signs of worry, stress or aggression
- Keep the dog on a lead at all times when moving around the school site
- Ensure comprehensive insurance cover is in place that covers working dogs

2.3 Staff

Staff should ensure:

- Pupils are aware of and follow the pupil code of conduct set out in section 8 of this policy
- Pupils are adequately supervised at all times during sessions with the dog
- Pupils with relevant allergies/phobias are kept separate from the dog
- They have checked that consent has been obtained from pupils' parents/carers before pupils are allowed to attend any sessions with the dog
- They are aware of the dog's whereabouts and who is responsible for supervising the dog at all times
- They check the records of all pupils, staff and visitors known to have an allergy to dogs and take steps to make sure they do not go near the dog
- They are aware of and follow the dog bite procedure set out in section 5.4 of this policy

2.4 Pupils

Pupils should:

- Follow the code of conduct set out in section 8 of this policy

4. Pre-visit procedures

- Full parental consent must be received before allowing any contact between a pupil and the dog. Pupils whose parents/carers did not give consent are not allowed to attend dog therapy/literacy sessions
- Pupils and staff must attend a session to learn how to safely interact with the dog and read body language, prior to the dog starting at the school
- There must be appropriate insurance in place (owner and school) to cover any incidents/accidents that may occur
- The dog must be pronounced fit and healthy (both in relation to physical and mental health) by a vet before taking part in any activities within the school, including being fully up to date with any vaccinations

5. During the visit

5.1 Ensuring the dog's welfare

- The dog's welfare must be considered and carefully monitored throughout the dog's stay at the school
- The dog must be allowed some time to acclimatise to the school environment. This will allow the dog to get used to the busy atmosphere, smells and noise levels
- The dog must have appropriate access to food and water
- The dog must be able to express natural behaviours e.g. chew toys offered during breaks, time off lead, able to sniff
- There must be a suitable area away from pupils that the dog can use to rest when not taking part in activities
- When resting, the dog must be left alone and pupils must not touch or interact with the dog

- The dog must be walked regularly throughout the day and given free time outside of the sessions in a designated area to play and rest off lead
- The dog must not be forced to interact with pupils or staff, and must be allowed to move away
- If the dog shows signs that they are unhappy or uncomfortable (e.g. flattened ears, showing teeth, tail between legs, growling), the dog will be removed from the situation immediately and the pupils asked to give the dog space
- The dog must not need to attend school daily
- The frequency of visits will be determined with the dog's welfare as the primary consideration
- Sessions between dogs and pupils are kept to a maximum of 30 minutes each and limited to a total of 2 hours spread across the day

5.2 Supervision

- The number of children interacting with the dog at any one time should be kept to no more than 8
- For each session where the dog is present, there should be at least 1 other adult (as well as the owner/handler) present to ensure appropriate behaviour from the children
- The dog must be kept on a lead during sessions and when moving around the school site
- Pupils must never be left alone with the dog. There must be appropriate adult supervision at all times
- Provisions must be made for the dog to have a safe space and be supervised when the owner/handler isn't able to do so (e.g. toilet break)
- Person responsible for the dog must know its whereabouts and which staff are supervising the dog at all times

5.3 Allergies

Pupils, staff and visitors known to have an allergy to dogs should be kept away from the dog. A list of those with allergies is kept and updated regularly.

5.4 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:

- 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 Headteacher/Head of school will contact parents/carers immediately
- The [first aider / relevant member of staff] 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 a dog in school shall be reassessed by the headteacher

6. Grooming

There is no need to extensively groom the dog before each visit as depending on the frequency of visits this can have a significant impact on the dog's health and welfare. For example, dogs have sensitive skin and cleaning them too often can remove natural oils that will dry out their coat and can cause skin irritation.

We maintain the following grooming routine:

- Regular baths with appropriate shampoo every 1 to 3 months (depending on the dog's needs)
- Regular claw trimming
- Brushing of the coat to keep it tidy, remove knots and any dead hair/skin cells

7. Zoonotic disease prevention

Zoonosis is any disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

In order to minimise the risk of zoonoses, the school uses the following measures and procedures:

- All pupils and staff must wash their hands before and after interacting/touching the dog
- Avoid touching the face (especially mouth area) after touching the dog and before washing hands
- Prevent the dog from licking faces/hands and wash hands/faces immediately if this should happen
- Provide separate food and water dishes for the dog. Wash these daily and store away from dishes used by pupils, staff and visitors
- Wear gloves when picking up dog faeces. All waste material should be disposed of promptly and safely
- All dog faeces should be picked up immediately, double bagged and disposed of appropriately and promptly. Gloves should always be worn. Pupils should never be responsible for picking up and disposing of dog faeces
- If a member of staff has any concerns about the germs that dogs can carry and the potential impact of this on their health, they should raise this with the headteacher
- Arrange for the dog to see a vet promptly if showing any sign of illness
- The dog should receive a broad spectrum deworming product on a regular basis (as advised by a vet)
- The dog should receive flea and tick control products on a routine basis and preferably ones that also control skin mites (as advised by a vet)

8. Pupil conduct

In order to maintain both the pupils' and dog's welfare, 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.

Pupils must:

- Not interact with the dog until invited to do so by the dog's owner/ supervising member of staff
- Follow all instruction given to them while interacting with the dog
- Only stroke the dog on its body, chest, shoulders, and the top of the head, not on the face or tail (including putting hands in the dog's mouth)
- Wait until the dog is stationary – standing, sitting or lying down – before touching it

- Remain calm around the dog
- Place school bags out of reach of the dog
- Wash their hands before and after interacting with the dog

Pupils must not:

- Kiss the dog
- Feed the dog, or taunt the dog with food
- Approach or disturb the dog whilst it is resting, sleeping or eating
- Force the dog to interact with them
- Attempt to play rough with the dog (this can over stimulate them)
- Eat during interactions with the dog

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.

9. Links to other policies

- Health and safety policy
- First aid policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by governing board, or when a significant change occurs (e.g. a new dog is brought into school).

Appendix 1

Template letter to parents/carers

Dear parent/carer,

I am writing to let you know that the school will be taking on a school dog / bringing in a visiting therapy/literacy dog.

Pupils will be invited to take part in sessions with the dog.

The dog has undergone the appropriate medical checks and training to work as a therapy/literacy dog in a school.

If your child has a dog-related allergy or suffers from any kind of apprehension/fear of dogs, please let us know and we will keep them away.

Please get in contact if there is any other information we should know related to your child before arranging for your child to participate in the dog therapy/literacy sessions.

*Please indicate below whether you give consent by deleting **I do/do not** as appropriate, and sign and date the form before returning it to school.*

Name of pupil: .....

I do/do not (delete as appropriate) give consent for my child to participate in sessions with the school dog / visiting therapy dog

Name and relationship to pupil: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Appendix 2

Appendix 2. **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 Mr Gibbs he will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept in the office area. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog and a reputable dog behaviourist.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will taken for an extensive walk before each school day begins, and will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds during the day. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the admin area/HT office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. 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.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children 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 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 breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, he is 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 dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. 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.

Appendix 3: **Risk Assessment**

Hazard	Risk	Risk Category 1-5	Likelihood	Controls in place

Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child scratched by dog Child bittern by dog	3 2	2 4	• The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training. • Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. • The dog will always be on a lead when he/she is out of his/her pen / the Head's office / Main office. • The dog will be trained regularly by experienced trainers. • Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, class time and PSHE lessons. • Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around him. • The dog will receive ongoing training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment. • Training with support working towards a Pets As Therapy Test and support calm behaviours to facilitate reading or nurture intervention, therapies, training and scent games. • Pupils and adults will be reminded not to touch the dog's mouth, head and rear end and to stand, turn and say "whoops / Oh dear" if he/she attempts to jump up or mouth. • ALL staff given permission to handle the dog will be given strict instructions to follow and appropriate training. • The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure he/she is in good health.

The dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	Child scratched, or bitten by dog	1	2	• The dog's pen in the Head's office can be used to keep the dog safe and he/she will also roam free in the office. Staff will be alerted with signage and pupils only allowed in with supervision. • Children and staff are taught not to tease him/her or taunt through the window. • Office staff will ensure the reception window at the hatch is always left closed. • If the dog does get loose the office staff or designated handler will call for support from trained members of staff who will come and put the dog back on his lead and in the Head's office or his crate. There are four members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if he needs attention at any other time, they are: Mark Gibbs, Mel Norman Donna Allen, • Office staff will support the safe containment of the dog within the office when he is present. • The dog will always be on his/her lead when out of the offices or when trained adults are in strict supervision.

Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	• All parents of existing/new pupils to provide school with allergy information for their child. School to keep records of all pupils with any pet allergies and to manage interaction with school dog. • Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies would be able to opt out of interaction. • Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	• Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. • All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet

				Passport scheme and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this. • Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals. • The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen or the cooking room.
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	1	1	• The school has public liability insurance. The policy covers the dog in school and Mr Gibbs has further insurance outside of school hours. • Mr Gibbs aims to have the dog assessed as a Pets as Therapy dog once his training and adolescence are completed. This will greatly reduce the cost of insurance.