
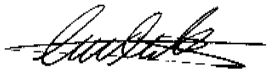


Dogs in School Policy 2024 - 2025



Governor Committee Responsible:	GSG	Staff Lead	Mr. G. Mills
Status	Non-statutory	Review Cycle	Annual
Last Review	September 2024	Next Review Date	June 2025

Designation	Name	Date	Signature
Chair of Governors	Mr. R. Ellis	03.09.24	
Head Teacher	Mr. G. Mills	03.09.24	

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. There is a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment but this needs to be managed appropriately. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this is included in this document (see appendix 3).

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher. This includes social events and parent's evenings. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present.

School Policy

This policy relates solely to the dog 'Betsy' (the school dog), owned by the member of staff, Sarah O'Leary.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to any dog.
- Only the school dog is 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 given specific permission beforehand.
- The school dog is a Boxer chosen because it is known to be good with children and is very sociable and friendly.
- The Governing Body agree that a school dog may benefit the children and staff of Swindon Village Primary School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by email that a dog will be in school. The Headteacher 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 she will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept in the Inclusion Office and there will be a stair gate over the entrance to prevent the dog from roaming round the school on her own.
- If there is no-one in the Inclusion Office the dog will be kept in the Business Manager's office.
- 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 an 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 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 and should always approach it standing up.
- 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.
- 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 she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke Betsy on her body, chest, back and not by her mouth.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog faeces should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their child access to the dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Headteacher as soon as possible.
- 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 dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Sarah O'Leary, Louise Brown or Vikki Tarling.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to 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 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 dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Appendix 1.

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) Improve academic achievement
- 2) Increase literacy skills
- 3) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase 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

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

Behaviour:

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. 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 participating students declined and general aggression went down. 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:

Case studies have shown that dogs can improve the attendance of students and increase their time in school.

Education:

Reading programmes with dogs are extremely beneficial 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 student 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 intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.

Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching student's social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students. With a dog in school, 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 loving, 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 may 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-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 has the ability to bring joy and help to pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to those they spend time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

Appendix 2

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- Who is the legal owner of the school dog and who pays for its costs?
 - The legal owner of the school dog is Sarah O'Leary; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.
- Is the dog from a reputable breeder?
 - Yes. The dog has been rehomed through Cotswold Boxer Rehoming. Her father is owned by the woman who runs Cotswold Boxer Rehoming and she personally knows the home Betsy has come from. She vouched for Betsy's temperament.
- Will the dog be a distraction?
 - The dog will be kept in the Inclusion Office, which 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 may spend pre-arranged times in classrooms, the Woodland Room and in the playground where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.
- Has a risk assessment been undertaken?
 - 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.
- Who is responsible for training?
 - Sarah O'Leary will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for Betsy and any necessary training.
- How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?
 - In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog 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, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.
- How will the dog's welfare be considered?
 - 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. The dog will be kept in the Inclusion Office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children

and visitors. The dog will have unlimited access to water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

- How will this be managed where children have allergies?
 - Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. 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, she is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.
- My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?
 - 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 for a Dog in School

Hazard	Risk	Risk Category High, Medium or Low	Controls in place	Risk after Controls put in place High, Medium or Low
Dog getting overexcited when interacting with the children.	<p>Child scratched or bitten by dog</p> <p>Dog jumps up at a child and knocks them over</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p>	<p>Betsy will always be in the care of a responsible adult.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with Betsy at any time.</p> <p>Betsy will always be on a lead when out of the Inclusion office.</p> <p>In school training will be provided and followed</p> <p>Children will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around her.</p> <p>Betsy will receive ongoing formal training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment (using staff from The Dotty Behaviourist (https://thedottybehaviourist.co.uk) a reputable dog behaviourist company in Cheltenham</p> <p>Children and adults will be reminded not to touch Betsy's mouth, head and rear end and to stand, turn and ignore her if she attempts to jump up or mouth.</p> <p>ALL staff given permission to handle Betsy will be given strict instructions to follow appropriate training.</p> <p>Betsy will attend the vets' regularly to make sure she is in good health.</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>
The dog gets loose from her pen or lead	<p>Child scratched or bitten by dog</p> <p>Betsy gets lost</p> <p>Betsy gets into the playground and gets overexcited</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Betsy will be kept in the Inclusion Office or in the Business Manager's Office.</p> <p>There will be a stair gate over the door.</p> <p>The following adults will be alerted if Betsy is loose in school:</p> <p>Sarah O'Leary Louise Brown Vikki Tarling Geraint Mills</p> <p>Betsy will be kept on her lead at all times when she is out of the offices mentioned.</p>	<p>L</p>
Dog hair causing allergies	<p>Children or adults experience allergic reactions to Betsy's hair</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Email has been sent to all parents asking them to inform school if their child has an allergy to dogs. These children will not interact with Betsy.</p> <p>Children will be asked to wash their hands after touching Betsy.</p>	<p>L</p>

Children catching germs from the dog.	Children / staff will contract disease after being in contact with Betsy	M	Betsy will have regular check ups at the vets (6 monthly minimum or as required) Betsy will not go into any area where food is being prepared or consumed Betsy will have anti worming, fleas and tics tablets as required Any faeces will be collected immediately by a responsible adult and disposed of appropriately. The area will be cleaned with disinfectant if necessary	L
Claim is made against the school about the behaviour of the dog	The school is not adequately covered by insurance	M	The school has public liability insurance up to XXX	L