



Park Hill Thorns Primary Federation

Successful, confident learners. Responsible, compassionate individuals.

Therapy Dog Policy

Written November 2022

Review: November 2025

Agreed by governors: December 2025

Next review November 2028

Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a suitable, calm dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. By having a school dog we want to encourage those children who are vulnerable, or those less confident at reading to have a friendly audience and look forward to reading as a treat. The cross breed of a Cavapoo, is carefully selected as suitable for this type of environment. The school dog is well cared for and responsibly owned by Mrs Buckley (Class Teacher).

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

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about school life with a dog and how, through careful management, there is a very low risk of harm.

Context

- The school dog will be owned by a member of staff (Mrs Olivia Buckley)
- Veterinary costs will be covered by the owner
- The dogs are chosen for their very mild temperament and low to non-shedding coat. Both school therapy dogs are mostly hypoallergenic dogs.
- The risk assessment (attached) will be reviewed annually
- A sign will be displayed at reception, informing visitors that we have a school dog.
- A sign will be displayed to show when the dog is in a specific room in school

Management day-to-day.

The school 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
- Be fully trained to a crate or mat
- Be kept up to date with vaccinations
- Attend dog training

Pupils will:

- NOT have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with the dog
- Meet the dog in small groups
- 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
 - Do not disturb the dog if he is eating or sleeping
 - Always approach the dog standing up
 - Do not feed the dog
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicates that the dog feels threatened or angry. 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 signs, he should immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment.

Health and Safety Principles

Children will always wash their hands or use alcohol gel after handling the dog.

Any dog foul 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.

Should a bite 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. All staff will be informed
5. A full investigation will take place
6. The suitability of having a dog will be reassessed by the Headteacher.

Insurance

The school RPA insurance will cover will provide:

- an indemnity if the school is legally liable to pay compensation in the event of third party death/injury or third party property damage caused by an animal that is owned by or under the control of the school.
- Unless covered under a more specific pet insurance policy, the RPA will also provide an indemnity under the Third Party Liability section if an animal brought into school for educational or therapy/wellbeing reason, causes any third party property damage or injury to a third party (including pupils) to the extent that the school is legally liable to pay compensation or damages to the claimant.
- The Employers Liability section will provide an indemnity to the school if the school is legally liable to pay compensation to damages to an employee injured by an animal on school premises in the course of the employee's employment with the school.
- The RPA would not provide an indemnity to the individual owner of the animal for their legal liability.
- The RPA rules do not exclude damage to the school property caused by the animal but cover for Material Damage claims are subject to the member retention (excess) of £500 per loss reducing to £250 each and every loss for Nursery and Primary schools.
- To confirm the RPA would not compensate the school if an animal dies or is stolen, and will not provide cover for vet fees if the animal becomes ill or is injured therefore separate insurance would be required if needed.

Mrs Buckley has additional private insurance for the therapy dog.

This policy is reviewed annually by the School Business Manager, in consultation with the Head Teacher.



Risk Assessment Form



SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD				
	VERY UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	LIKELY	HIGH LIKELY	ALMOST CERTAIN
NEGLIGIBLE	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
MINOR	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
SERIOUS	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
SEVERE	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
VERY SEVERE	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

Risk Assessment for (Activity/Process/Operation)

Therapy dog in school

Service	Team / Section	Review Date	Reference Number
Assessment Date	25/11/22	25/11/23	020

What are the hazards (i.e. what can cause harm)	Who might be harmed and how? (e.g. employees, pupils, members of the public, etc. and the significant risk(s))?	What existing control measures are in place to reduce / prevent the risk? (i.e. what are you already doing?)	Considering existing controls, what is the current risk level (i.e. high, medium or low – use the matrix above)	Further Action to be taken to control the risk? (i.e. only record action/additional controls measures you are going to implement)	Assigned to	Completed by whom & when
Slips, trips and falls. The dog therapy session in school has the potential to cause a hazard in the school environment. Ease of escape in an emergency	Children/ handler/ school staff Injury may be caused by new hazards in school environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet spot to be selected by school for therapy sessions which will not cause obstructions to walkways or emergency exits. Handler to be aware of emergency procedures Handler and other staff to ensure no bags, resources 	L		OB	

		etc. cause a trip hazard				
Child Safety Ensuring children are kept safe and well during sessions	Potential to cause stomach upsets, infections and/or toxocariasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher/ teaching assistant to be present at all times during the visit • Dog has completed temperament assessment to ensure they are suitable for the task • Handler aware of who safe guarding lead is and how to speak to them if needed • Dog's temperament is suitable • Dog handler present at all times • Session to be stopped if there are concerns about dog's well-being or safety of child is compromised • Children to clean hands after each session (soap and water or anti bac) • Staff and handler to maintain good communication during session to ensure session runs efficiently and safely • DBS check to be carried out for visiting handler 	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to receive assembly on basic dog behaviors to help ensure they don't stress dog during visits • All parents informed that a therapy dog will be visiting the school • Permission to be sought from parents/ carers for children who will be having individual or school group sessions • Parents to inform of any allergies 	OB	
Dog Safety Out of control dog causing undesired event while working with children or in school environment	Children /handler/ school staff Dog bite, abrasions and bruising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog has completed assessment and testing to ensure they are suitable for the task • Dog's temperament is suitable 	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any signs of distress or undesirable body language from dog the session must end immediately 	OB	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog handler present at all times • Dog to be kept on lead if not in session with child • Physical contact with children during session must be under full guidance of the handler • Dog in full health at time of session • Session to take place in quiet, calm area 				
Staff/ handler welfare	<p>Children/ handler/ school staff</p> <p>Potential for negative on persons health if welfare isn't protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any relevant policies and emergency procedures communicated to handler • Regular breaks to be taken throughout the session for toilet and water • Handler to guide session duration 	L		OB	
Fire/emergency procedure	<p>children/ handler/ school staff</p> <p>Handler</p> <p>Serious or fatal injury may occur</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any relevant policies and emergency procedures communicated to handler • Teacher/teaching assistant to be present at all times • Staff and handler to maintain good communication during session to ensure session runs efficiently and safely • Session to take place in a quiet environment away from busy areas without causing obstructions to walkways or emergency exits 	L	<p>Handler to be given full induction on emergency procedures</p>		
Control of Substances Hazardous to health (COSHH) regulations	<p>Children /handler/ school staff</p> <p>Dog waste/ faeces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All dog waste to be bagged appropriately and disposed of adequately • Dogs to be kept up to date with vaccinations 	L			

being excreted on site while welfare breaks are taking place Pathogenic organisms being transmitted from dog to environment or person – increased hazard following dog's consumption of raw food diet	infections and/or toxocariasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular worm/flea treatment to be given to dog • Dog to be taken to an area away from children to excrete waste • All children/ staff to wash/anti bac hands after session and ensure good hygiene methods are practiced • Do not allow children to touch any part of their face with hands before handwashing • Visiting dogs are not fed raw food diets • Dog to have regular veterinary checks • Dog to be groomed regularly 			
Allergies	Pupils/staff/visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents will be informed a dog will be visiting school • Dog will not come into contact with children who have allergies • Dog kept clean and groomed • Dog is cavapoo so low chance of allergic reaction • Dog mat kept clean 			

Name of Assessor		Signature	
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Name of Manager responsible for activity / process		Signature	
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