



## School Dog Policy

Document Name	School Dog policy	
Review cycle	1/2/3 years	
Reviewed by	SLT/HT/HOS/SENDSCO/SL	
Approved/Adopted by	FGB/Lead governor/Headteacher	Date: March 2020
Changes made in this review cycle		
Linked policies:	Attendance Policy Behaviour and Discipline Policy	
Signed	 Executive Headteacher  Head of School  Chair of Governors	Date: March 2020
Date of next Review	April 2022	

## **Rationale**

There is an increasing body of research to support the benefit of a dog in school. In schools across the country, Reading Dogs are being used to help children develop fluency in reading and Therapy Dogs provide comfort and reassurance to children with anxiety and self-confidence issues. Increasingly in schools, and certainly at Chiddingly, it is recognised that children's emotional wellbeing is at the root of positive behaviour and success with socialising as well as in the classroom. A dog can support children who are anxious about school and could be the reason that they want to come in every morning. Children with trouble managing their behaviour could learn to care for the dog and the dog could be helpful in de-escalating anger. Reading dogs can help boost children's confidence and fluency. Caring for an animal can help children to learn about responsibility and can help children to learn how to treat animals safely and with compassion. Dogs are great fun to have around and can bring a caring, family atmosphere to a school.

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

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

### Context:

- The dog will be owned by Mrs Vile – Head of School.
- Veterinary costs, insurance and any additional costs will be paid by the owner.
- The Leadership team, staff and Governors have agreed that a school dog would bring many benefits to Chiddingly Primary school
- Where there are any concerns or fears expressed by individuals, individual care plans will be set up
- The risk assessment (attached) is reviewed annually
- Visitors and students will be informed of the dog at reception.

## **Preparations for having a School Dog**

Having a dog in school is a big step and the arrangement needs to work for all groups in our school community. School leaders have taken advice from schools who currently have a school dog, Dogs' Trust and Pets as Therapy organisers, who have provided guidance about the necessary risk assessments and insurance that we will need to put in place, as well as practical guidance, such as allocating a dog toilet area well away from anywhere the children will access. In order to ensure that the dog would be beneficial to the children's learning and wellbeing and not be a distraction, we will plan when and where the children will interact with the dog.

If any child is allergic to dog hair, we make sure that they do not come into close contact with the dog if parents request it. Likewise, if a child has a phobia of dogs we will keep the dog away from them, or we can offer opportunities for the child to be slowly introduced to the dog, to reduce their fear. Parents are invited to contact the Head of School if either of these cases apply, so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

## **Lulu**

Our school dog is Lulu, who is also Mrs Vile's pet. Lulu is a Cocker Spaniel and was born on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010. Lulu had lots of early socialisation with children and other dogs at the home of her breeder, Mrs Vile's family and regular days working on a farm. Lulu is fully insured, which means she has public liability insurance. She has regular check-ups at the vet and has up to date vaccinations, flea and worming treatment. While Lulu is an experienced school dog, her interactions with children will be timetabled and supervised.

## **Guidelines to interaction with the School Dog**

Parents and carers are informed that there is a school dog and can request that their children do not have contact with the dog. There will always be a responsible adult in charge of the dog during interactions with children and this will be Mrs Vile.

Children and adults are required to adhere to the following:

- Always approach Lulu calmly and slowly
- Never run up to her
- Offer the back of your hand for Lulu to sniff when meeting her
- All interactions must remain calm with the authorised adult in control at all times

- Children must wash their hands before eating if they have been stroking Lulu.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *What will the school dog do on a day-to-day basis?*

The dog would be based in the Headteacher's office but will often be on the playground at the start and end of the school day, as well as some play and lunch times. Mrs Vile will take the dog in the afternoons to help with interventions (e.g. 1-1 sessions or group sessions) when appropriate. The dog may visit different classes to listen to readers with a member of staff or help with particular projects, such as learning about caring for animals. The children will be involved in walking her at lunch times and assisting with her care needs.

### *How do I know that my child will be safe around the dog?*

A risk assessment and policy are in place and available on the school website. These are both reviewed annually by the Head of School. The dog is covered by public liability insurance. Children will only have contact with the dog when supervised by an adult and with permission from their parents.

### *Will my child pick up infections from the dog?*

The dog will be fully vaccinated, treated regularly for worms and fleas and will be kept away from the school if it is ill. Children will be required to wash their hands if they have been stroking him. There will be a dedicated dog toilet area away from areas that children access and no child will be asked to pick up dog mess.

### *What if my child is allergic to dogs or afraid of them?*

Parents can request that their child has no contact, or restricted access to the dog in these situations. Please speak to Mrs Vile to discuss any concerns.

## **Reasons to have a dog in school:**

Reading confidence: Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders 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 students 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 students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. With a dog in the classroom, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking, grooming and their daily care. 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, will 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 will 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 to one basis and will especially help those students who have been going

through upsetting or difficult times or even nervous of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find an assuring friend in a dog.

Attendance: Many schools have reported improved attendance of their children and families as the children are keen to meet the dog on the playground. Some schools are also using dogs to improve behaviour difficulties by promoting positive behaviour in students.

**Approval of this School Dog Policy -**

**James Procter**

Executive Head teacher

Signature: 

Dated:

**Kayleigh Vile**

Head of School

Signature: 

Dated:

**Alan Brundle**

Chair of Governors

Signature: 

Dated:

<u>REVIEW DATE</u>	<u>ANY AMENDMENTS?</u> <u>Which pages?</u>

## SCHOOL DOG RISK ASSESSMENT

<b>Workplace</b>	Chiddingly	<b>Likelihood (L)</b>	X	<b>Severity (S)</b>
<b>Department</b>	N/A	Almost Impossible	1	Insignificant (minor injury, no time off)
<b>Risk Assessor</b>	Kayleigh Vile	Unlikely	2	Minor (injury and up to 7 days off)
<b>Room/Area</b>	Whole school	Possible	3	Moderate (injury causing more than 7 days off)
<b>Activity/Task</b>	School pet – therapy/reading dog.	Likely	4	Major (death or serious injury)
<b>Date</b>	<b>March 2021</b>	Almost Certain	5	Catastrophic (multiple deaths)
<b>Benefit of activity</b>	Nurture, intervention, well-being, therapy, reading, attendance.	Low = 1-8	Medium = 9-14	High = 15-25

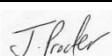
	What are the significant, foreseeable, hazards? <i>(the dangers that can cause harm)</i>	Who is at Risk?	Current control measures <i>(What is already in place/done)</i>	Risk Rating			What additional control measures can be put in place to reduce the risk further?	Revised Risk Rating		
				L	S	R		L	S	R
1.	Unsuitable animals being brought into/kept at school		The dog has been in the care of the HoS since January 2011. She is a trained gun dog and has a nature specifically chosen for its calm and gentle nature in comparison to others viewed.	2	2	3	Pupils are encouraged not to bring animals found in the wild (alive or dead/injured) into school. If school dog attempts to do this, dispose of in humane and ethical manner.	1	1	1
2.	Neglect of animals and their welfare	Pupils Staff Volunteers Visitors	Head of School owns the dog and is in the care of family when she is not in school. She lives in the HOS's house. Dog is walked twice daily and has constant access to fresh water. The RSPCA's 'Animal Friendly Schools' guidance is followed to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and best practice <b>Do not allow dog to wander unsupervised around classrooms – she is in the heads' office.</b> The dog will be introduced in staggered method to ensure chn and dog are not anxious and build up trust. If dog shows signs of anxiety (whining, barking, tail between legs, ears flat, cowering etc) she will be removed from the situation that is making her nervous. During school holidays, the dog continues to live with HOS as a pet.	2	3	6	School policy written detailing rationale, advice, requirements and procedures for having the dog in school. Animals must be properly housed – lives with HOS and has own bed/water bowl in office.  Visits to classrooms/busy places kept short (20mins max.) and with owner or staff member.	1	3	3

3.	Animal waste/food; poor hygiene	Hygiene procedures are in place and pupils supervised to ensure they happen e.g. after touching the dog, pupils wash their hands with soap and warm water under adult supervision Dog's bedding is washed fortnightly. <b>Safe storage of dog food to prevent unauthorised access and vermin – food and treats to be in the head's office securely stored.</b> Dog is not be allowed to lick pupil's faces and undergoing training to ensure he does not do this. The dog will be taken for toilet breaks in an area not used by children and properly cleaned up after. When walking the dog, chn and adults will change into suitable shoes and hands should be washed after the footwear is changed	2	2	4	After accidental contact with faeces or urine it is washed off immediately  Dog is fully house trained but any accidents will be immediately cleaned up with proper cleaning products (COSHH compliant).	1	2	2
4.	Lack of awareness of pupils/staff with allergies	All dog food is nut and allergen free. Chn with allergies do not come into close contact with dog. Procedure in place to ensure that affected pupils/staff are not exposed to known allergens e.g. the protein in a pet's dander, saliva or urine	2	4	8	Permission gained for all chn to work with the dog. Dog is groomed every 2-3 months professionally. Dog's fur is brushed <b>weekly</b> to keep maintained.	2	2	4
5.	Sharp claws/teeth	Pupils are instructed in the safe handling of the dog to avoid injury.	2	2	4	Teeth and claws are regularly checked by the vet (twice annually) to ensure they are safe.	2	1	2

**Action Plan (when will the above additional control measures be implemented and by whom?)**

Action	By Whom?	Deadline	Date Completed
Reminders in assembly and introductions with new children taken place.	Kayleigh Vile	19/4/21	
Updated school policy written and shared with stakeholders.	Kayleigh Vile	19/4/21	

**Signature and review**

<b>Name of Manager:</b>	Kayleigh Vile - HOS	<b>Signature of Manager:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	11/3/21
<b>1<sup>st</sup> review undertaken on:</b>	12.3.21	<b>Signature of Manager:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	12.3.21
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> review undertaken on:</b>		<b>Signature of Manager:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	07/09/20
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> review undertaken on:</b>		<b>Signature of Manager:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

## SCHOOL DOG WALKING RISK ASSESSMENT

Workplace	Chiddingly	Likelihood (L)	X	Severity (S)
Department	N/A	Almost Impossible	1	Insignificant (minor injury, no time off)
Risk Assessor	Kayleigh Vile	Unlikely	2	Minor (injury and up to 7 days off)
Room/Area	School Field	Possible	3	Moderate (injury causing more than 7 days off)
Activity/Task	Walking school dog	Likely	4	Major (death or serious injury)
Date	March 2021	Almost Certain	5	Catastrophic (multiple deaths)
Benefit of activity	Nurture, well-being, therapy, attendance.	Low = 1-8	Medium = 9-14	High = 15-25

What are the significant, foreseeable, hazards? <i>(the dangers that can cause harm)</i>	Who is at Risk?	Current control measures <i>(What is already in place/done)</i>	Risk Rating			What additional control measures can be put in place to reduce the risk further?	Revised Risk Rating		
			L	S	R		L	S	R
1. Safety and handling of the dog	Pupils Staff	Two leads will be used so an adult always has overall control of the dog. Staff member will always have overall control of the dog. Staff member will be familiar to the dog. If dog unwell, he will not be in school. Dog well socialised so used to interacting with other dogs on walks. Dog will be put onto the lead if other dogs are on a lead. Recall of the dog is good.	2	2	4	Dog is trained to walk appropriately on and off the lead. Dog will be checked over after each walk to ensure no injuries sustained. Dog trained to leave cyclists/other walkers alone <b>The dog will only be let off the lead if there are no livestock in the vicinity. Route is decided upon what time of year it is (e.g. if the field is too muddy, or there are livestock in some of the fields).</b>	1	2	2
2. Cleaning up after the dog		No child will ever clean up dog mess. Staff member present will do this.	1	1	2				

3.	Safety of the children	<p>Consent forms for children will be obtained.  The route will be familiar one to the adults walking. Or they will use the school field.  Ratio of adult to child will be appropriate for age group of children. <b>For Year 3, this is 1:6 and for Years 4 – 6 this is 1:15. The adult to child ratio will be determined by the group of children walking – sometimes another staff member will accompany walks as an extra adults but sometimes this will just be Mrs Vile.</b>  Children will cross the road in front of the school to enter the field and be reminded of rules of safe crossing before going each day.  Only children in KS2 will be involved in walking to ensure they can complete the route in half an hour.  The children will all change footwear and have appropriate clothing.  In very heavy rain or strong winds, the children will not accompany the dog.  <b>Children walking the dog will be from the same 'bubble'.</b>  <b>Walks will be on a rota to ensure no mixing of children and that the dog only walks with one 'bubble' per week.</b></p>	2	2	4	<p>All children and staff to wear Hi-vis vests.  Staff member to take <b>mobile phone</b> so can be communicated any time.</p>	1	2	2
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**Routes** (to be decided on a day-to-day basis depending on the weather and season):



**Action Plan (when will the above additional control measures be implemented and by whom?)**

Action	By Whom?	Deadline	Date Completed
School familiarisation for Lulu during the Easter holidays..	Kayleigh Vile	April 2021.	

**Signature and review**

Name of Manager:	Kayleigh Vile - HOS	Signature of Manager:		Date:	19.3.21
1 <sup>st</sup> review undertaken on:	12.3.21	Signature of Manager:		Date:	30/11/19
2 <sup>nd</sup> review undertaken on:		Signature of Manager:		Date:	
3 <sup>rd</sup> review undertaken on:		Signature of Manager:		Date:	