



# King's Cliffe Endowed Primary School

## Therapy Dog Policy

### Introduction

A variety of animals, including dogs, are becoming a popular and worthwhile addition to schools across the country. 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. We value the development of children's well-being along with their spiritual, moral and social education as highly as we value academia. We believe having a dog visiting the school will be a unique way to enrich all areas of the children's wider education, skills and well-being.

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 trained, accompanied dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed.

### Reasons to have a dog in school

There are numerous benefits to having a dog in school.

- A dog being brought into school enables children to put our school important values into practice: from friendship to patience, respect and responsibility, love and happiness.
- With the UK dog population reaching 8.5 million, children and adults are bound to come into contact with dogs at various points in their lives. Children without pet dogs have the opportunity to learn valuable life skills at school about how to safely interact with dogs when they are out and about.
- With a dog to consider, children are more mindful of their behaviour. Incidents of running and shouting unnecessarily are reduced; they are generally more aware of the impact of their behaviour and choices.
- One of our current school priorities is to help children to develop a growth mindset: to be resilient learners who aren't afraid to make mistakes and persevere to acquire new skills. A dog is an excellent role model for this as training dogs takes time and repetition.

- Some students will find it easier to focus on their work if they have the calming influence of a dog to turn to on occasions. The presence of a calm and well-trained dog, can help students find social support and develop their peer interactions.
- As a focus or context for learning, the dog can provide an excellent resource and tangible motivation for children in all subject areas.
- Dogs provide confidence to children as they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Dogs can work with students on a one to one basis and will especially help those students who are feeling vulnerable, going through upsetting/difficult times or even those who are scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and is happy to provide plenty of hugs to the Pupils they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.
- Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching social skills and responsibility. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Schools use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students.
- Dogs can be a great way to help students to interact with members of the wider community. For example, students may accompany a member of staff to take the dog for walks, or in training, or to visit other schools, hospitals or care homes and help others to benefit from this therapeutic support.

## **School Policy**

- This policy applies to the regulated dog only. It does not affect the school's right to prohibit other dogs on school property. No other dogs, except service dogs and police dogs, are allowed on the premises.
- The dog will be owned and looked after by Mrs Bowyer the Headteacher
- All stakeholders have been consulted about the intention to have a school dog before it comes to school. Copies of the dog policy and risk assessment will be available for parents to view on the school's website and within school.
- Parents/carers have the right to withhold consent for their child to have any direct contact with the dog. Any such wishes will be respected and upheld by the school.
- Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs should not go near the dog, a list of staff and pupils with allergies will be kept with the dog owner at all times as per the Risk Assessment.
- The dog's health and well-being are prioritised along with that of the children and staff.
- The dog will be insured. All vaccinations, worming treatments and vet checks will be up-to-date. If the dog is ill, she will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving outside the owner's workspace or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.
- The dog will not be allowed to enter the school kitchen or go into the hall during meal times.
- The dog will be trained to use a designated, external toileting area. If any 'accidents' occur in areas where children have access to, appropriate measures will be taken to disinfect the affected site.
- Children will never be left alone with the dog and it will be under the supervision of an adult at all times when the dog is present with pupils.
- Notices will be displayed to inform children, staff and visitors of the fact that a dog is onsite.

- Students should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog.
  - Students should remain calm around the dog.
  - Students should speak to the dog's owner first and ask permission to approach the dog.
  - Students must not encourage the dog to jump up – four paws must stay on the floor at all times.
  - Students should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog.
  - Students should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
  - Students should never go near or disturb the dog when she is sleeping or eating.
  - Students must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
  - Students should take it in turns to pet the dog. If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated.
  - Students should not feed or eat close to the dog.
  - Students should always wash their hands after handling a dog. Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.
- An adult must ensure that she monitors the situation when a student is with the dog.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring 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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy and risk assessment for dogs in school.
- The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.
- The dog's owner is responsible for the welfare of their dog.
- Teachers and staff are required to abide by this policy.
- The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

### **Dog's Job Description**

- To greet students as they arrive at school (where appropriate)
- To provide comfort to individual students who need soothing during the school day
- To provide comfort, spread happiness, and improve wellbeing
- To enhance the family atmosphere in the school
- To listen to students or adults who need someone to listen



### **Health and Safety Principles**

Children will always wash their hands after handling the dog.

Children must never be allowed to clean up after the dog has been to the toilet.

Should a bite occur (even playfully):

- parents will be contacted immediately
- the wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing
- the child/adult will be released for medical attention
- all staff will be informed
- a full investigation will take place
- the suitability of having a dog in school will be reassessed by the Head teacher

Headteacher:	Lynda Bowyer		Date: 10.06.2021
Chair of Governors:	Suzie Julien		Date: 10.06.2021
Date Reviewed:	June 2021		
Next Review:	June 2024		
Policy available on Website?	Yes		