



# SCHOOL DOG POLICY

Date

Chair of Governors

Date

Headteacher

# **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 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 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 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 drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the dog to be present on the school premises

## **School Policy**

The dog is owned by Mr Pickles.

- 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 or assistance dog and the Principal has given prior permission.
- The dog is a Tibetan Terrier chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to positive training and which is known to be good with children, does not shed hair and is very sociable and friendly.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. Mr Settle, Principal, 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 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 will not be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog.
- 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 Eddie 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 that s/he monitors the situation.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog via an opt out agreement.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay

visitor issues to the Head of relevant department asap.

- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mr Pickles, Mrs Robinson or Mrs Ainsworth

## **Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School. The Principal 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. 1) Improve academic achievement
2. 2) Increase literacy skills
3. 3) Calming behaviours
4. 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
5. 5) Increase confidence
6. 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
7. 7) Help prevent school refusing
8. 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 by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. 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 study: Mandy was a student with poor attendance and anxiety. Mandy was encouraged back into school using caring for River, a dog, as an incentive. By telling Mandy that "if she didn't come to school to care for him, he wouldn't get walks, water or love," Mandy came to school almost every day for the rest of the year, only missing two days.

**Education:** 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 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, emergent 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 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, 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-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 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 a reassuring friend in a dog.

## **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 Pickles; he will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will not be required to make any costs towards insurance etc.

**Q *Is the dog from a reputable source?*** Yes. The dog is a pedigree Tibetan Terrier. Eddie is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for his temperament. Eddie is accustomed to being handled by children from birth and has lived with children every day of his life.

**Q *Will the dog be a distraction?*** The dog will be kept in Mr Pickles' office. 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 small soft play area where children can interact safely.

**Q *Has a risk assessment been undertaken?*** Yes, a full risk assessment is attached to the policy.


**Q *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 outside of school. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

**Q *How will the dog's welfare be considered?*** The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside when children are in lessons. 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 lunchtime. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the Headteachers 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?*** 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 not shedding hair, 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?*** Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with Eddie. 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.

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Activity/Environment Description:  Risk Assessment for Eddie	Date of Assessment:  20 <sup>th</sup> June 2020  Written by:  Jonathan Pickles	
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Ref No.	Possible hazard	Who is at risk?	Control Measures
1	Dog getting overexcited when interacting with children leading to a child being scratched/bitten.	Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eddie will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training.</li> <li>• Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.</li> <li>• Eddie will always be on a lead when he is out of his crate / the Head's office.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around him.</li> <li>• Pupils and adults will be reminded not to touch Eddie's mouth, head and rear end and to stand , turn and say "whoops / Oh dear" if he attempts to jump up or mouth.</li> <li>• ALL staff given permission to handle Eddie will be given strict instructions to follow and appropriate training.</li> <li>• Eddie will attend the vets' regularly to make sure he is in good health.</li> </ul>
2	Eddie getting loose from his lead.	Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dog's crate in the Head's office can be used to keep Eddie safe. Staff will be alerted with signage and pupils only allowed in with supervision.</li> <li>• Children and staff are taught not to tease him or taunt through the window.</li> <li>• If Eddie does get loose the office staff or designated handler will call for support (listed below) 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: 1.</li> </ul>

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			Jonathan Pickles (Head Teacher). 2. Amy Robinson (Teacher) 3. Rachael Ainsworth (Office/Hub Lead) 4. Vicki Farrell (Bursar). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eddie will always be on his lead when out of the offices or when trained adults are in strict supervision.</li> </ul>
3	Dog hair causing allergies	Children Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies.</li> <li>Children will have the opportunity to interact with Eddie as they wish and those with allergies would be able to opt out of interaction.</li> <li>Children will be taught to wash their hands after touching Eddie.</li> </ul>
4	Children getting germs from Eddie	Children Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
5	School property may become damaged as a result of chewing.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eddie will be contained at all times and will have his own toys etc to chew on.</li> </ul>
6	Children's access to the Eddie's resources.	Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eddie's treats and toys will be kept securely in the Headteachers office to prevent children from accessing them and potentially eating them.</li> </ul>