

# Broughton Fields Primary School



## Dogs in School Policy

**March 2025**

Next Review Date March 2027

## Introduction

Children and adults 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 and adults take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

Our school dog is well cared for and responsibly owned by Miss Hughes. She is responsible for its day to day care and ensuring that all vaccinations, flea and worm treatments are up-to-date. A record of the administration of these will be kept in school.

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

It is impossible to eliminate all risk in school. 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. Our risk assessment is attached to this policy, it is regularly reviewed.

## Context

- The dog is owned by Miss Hughes, Deputy Headteacher and lives with her.
- Veterinary costs will be covered by Miss Hughes.
- The dog has been chosen for the general characteristics of its breed - great with children, easy to train, very sociable, unaggressive and low shedding.
- The risk assessment will be reviewed annually.
- Visitors and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival.

## Day-to-day management

The dog will:

- Not be allowed in school if it 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
- Will be kept in the management area with a quiet area for resting
- Be fully trained to a crate
- Have had all injections

Our pupils will:

- NEVER have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the dog
- Meet the dog in a group of no more than three children, following 'approach, ask, pet, goodbye'
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog every time they meet her
- Always remain calm
- Be gentle
- Not put their face near the dog's
- Not disturb the dog when it is eating or sleeping
- Always approach the dog standing up
- Not feed the dog anything other than food/treats agreed with an adult

The pupils and adults will also learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring 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, it should immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment.

#### Health and Safety Principles

Children and adults will always wash their hands or use hand-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 will never 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 Head.

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### **Introduction:**

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. There are no diseases associated with the dog as her vet will be responsible for vaccinations completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of the dog's health records will be updated and kept in school. The dog is insured for its own health needs and additional insurance has been taken out by school to cover public liability.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff.

Hazard	Risk	Risk Low-High	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground.  Child scratched by dog. Child bitten by dog.	Low  Medium	The dog will always be in the care of the owner or a "responsible adult". "Responsible Adult" shall mean any member of staff who has read the policy fully, received appropriate training and is aware of the risks and responsibilities to both children and staff. The dog will never be left unattended. The dog will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.	March 2025

			<p>The dog must not be passed to any member of staff not deemed a “responsible adult” as defined above.</p> <p>Children will never be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk by the owner or responsible adult while the children are in school.</p> <p>Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions.</p> <p>Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training with an experienced dog trainer. Evidence will be recorded and kept in school.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as she progresses through her weekly training. Evidence must be recorded and kept in school.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>The owner will ensure the dog attends the vets &amp; groomers regularly to ensure it is in good health and that its claws are kept short. Evidence will be recorded and kept in school.</p>	
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The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	Low	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies.</p> <p>A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept in school.</p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog under the supervision of the owner or responsible adult and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	March 2025
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	Low	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way.</p> <p>She will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All vaccinations will be kept up to date in accordance with vet guidance. Evidence will be recorded and kept in school.</p> <p>Flea &amp; worm treatment is carried out at prescribed intervals.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times; and never in the food preparation area.</p>	March 2025
Noise/barking	Some children unable to cope with the noise	Low	<p>The dog was introduced into the school environment from an early age so will be used to a noisy environment so is less likely to bark.</p> <p>Extra orientation sessions in place for specific children.</p> <p>Ensuring some children have ear defenders if needed.</p>	March 2025

Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	Medium	<p>The dog will be insured by the school for Public Liability Insurance.</p> <p>All vets costs are covered by the owner unless they relate to an incident that has occurred in school.</p> <p>The school's budget has been adjusted to include the costs of having the dog.</p> <p>School will pay for additional items to ensure the dog feels "at home" in school such as a crate, feeding bowls, toys, blanket, leads/harness etc. The owner will pay for the equivalent items for home.</p>	March 2025
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