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## DOGS IN SCHOOL PROCEDURES

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DATE: January 2026

REVIEW: Annual (or upon change to the procedures)

## **Dogs at drop off and pick up**

- Dogs are not permitted beyond the EYFS gate (on the playgrounds).
- In the waiting area (between the pavement gate and the EYFS gate), dogs are only permitted if they are carried in their adult owner's arms, and kept under control, at all times.
- Dogs which are unable to be carried will need to remain on the pavement outside the school grounds; when handling your dog near to school, please be mindful that some of our children may be frightened of dogs, and your dog may become frightened / threatened by the behaviour of children.

## **Dogs loose on the grounds**

The school site is adjacent to many residential gardens; as such, dogs who have 'escaped' sometimes end up on our grounds.

The children have all taken part in assemblies where they are reminded of the rules should this situation arise:

- ✓ Stand still.
- ✓ Fold your arms.
- ✓ Look down, not at the dog.
- ✓ If the dog sniffs / licks / jumps up at you, try to stay calm and still – it is probably just exploring.
- ✓ Wait for an adult to contain and remove the dog before carrying on playing.
- ✓ If you have touched the dog, wash your hands with soap and water.

## **Dogs in school**

**Only service dogs (e.g. guide dogs) and dogs specifically authorised by the Headteacher are allowed in school.**

### **Benefits & Rationale**

*"The quickest and biggest hit that we can make to improve mental health in our schools and to make them feel safe for children, is to have at least one dog in every single school in the country."*

Sir Anthony Seldon, Vice-Chancellor, University of Buckingham  
Founding Director of Wellington College Education

### **Why Have a School Dog:**

*There is a growing amount of research that supports the idea that a carefully planned school dog programme can bring benefits to many learners. These benefits can include:*

1. *Emotional Support: School dogs can help reduce anxiety and stress among children (and teachers and parents!), providing a calming presence by providing emotional support and comfort. Stroking an animal can decrease levels of cortisol, the hormone responsible for stress, in humans. Dogs bring a comforting presence and unconditional acceptance, making students feel safe and secure.*
2. *Improved Learning Environment: Dogs can motivate reluctant readers and improve focus during lessons. For example, children often feel more comfortable practicing reading skills with a non-judgmental audience like a dog, and may better regulate their behaviour in the presence of a dog.*
3. *Encouragement of Positive Social Behaviour: Interacting with dogs can promote communication skills, empathy, compassion, and responsibility in children, fostering positive peer interactions. Dogs provide companionship and offer positive social interactions between individuals who struggle to find friends in traditional classroom settings*
4. *Mental Wellbeing: Dogs can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and support overall mental and emotional wellness in both children and staff.*
5. *Increased confidence: Dogs can help some children build confidence in themselves and their academic/ social abilities*

6. *Physical Benefits: Dogs encourage physical activity, which can have a positive effect on children's overall well-being, from regular walks to simple interactions that keep both children and dogs active and engaged.*

National School Dog Alliance

### Procedure

- Initially, any authorised dog will be kept contained in the Headteacher's Office behind a gate. It will not move around the rest of the school building until all parties have become familiar with the presence of the dog in school, and staff / owners feel confident with this. At this stage, this procedure document will be updated.
- The dog will remain supervised by an adult.
- Children will be appropriately supervised when they are near the dog, and they will never be left alone with the dog.
- Children will have frequent reminders about appropriate behaviour around the dog.
- Children and visitors to school will be informed if there is a dog on site.
- The dog will not toilet on the playgrounds or field, and any foul will be cleared up and disposed of immediately.
- Children who have touched the dog will be reminded to wash their hands afterwards.
- Children who are frightened of dogs will never be forced to go near it.
- Children who are allergic to dogs must avoid touching or going near the dog.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of the adult he is with at the time of an evacuation.

### Risk Assessment

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

Yes, there is: it is a risk that needs to be managed.

Our rules for keeping safe when there is a dog on the playground / field:

- ✓ Stand still.
- ✓ Fold your arms.
- ✓ Look down, not at the dog.
- ✓ If the dog sniffs / licks / jumps up at you, try to stay calm and still – it is probably just exploring.
- ✓ Wait for an adult to contain and remove the dog before carrying on playing.
- ✓ If you have touched the dog, wash your hands with soap and water.

Our rules for keeping safe and happy around dogs in school:

- ✓ You will never be alone with the dog without an adult.
- ✓ If you don't want to go near the dog, you do not have to and no-one will force you.
- ✓ Tell an adult if you are feeling frightened of the dog.
- ✓ The dog will stay in Ms Penkett's office behind a gate.
- ✓ You will be told if there is a dog in school that day.
- ✓ Remember to stay quiet and show calm behaviour (such as no running or sudden movements) when you are near the dog so you don't surprise or frighten it.
- ✓ Don't put your face too near the dog, especially if you have food round your mouth!
- ✓ Do not disturb or distract the dog while it is sleeping or eating.
- ✓ Do not hold or eat food near the dog.
- ✓ If you stroke the dog, remember to stroke on the dog's back, neck or belly, not on the face or top of head.
- ✓ After you have finished stroking the dog, remember to wash your hands with soap and water.
- ✓ If the dog makes a growling noise, calmly step away from it. The dog may be feeling worried by you, or think you are too close to it.

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
1 - 8	9 - 17	18 - 25

This risk assessment will be monitored and adjusted as necessary.

Hazard	Likelihood 1 - 5	Impact 1 - 5	Risk L x I	Controls in place
Child knocked to the ground by dog.	1	2	2	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead or carried when she is not in the school office while the children are in school.</p>
Child scratched by dog.	2	3	6	<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>
Child bitten by dog.	1	4	4	<p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure she / he is in good health and that claws are kept short.</p>
Allergic reaction to dog.	2	4	8	<p>Parents will inform the school of any known allergies, with any prescribed medication kept in school (as with all prescribed medication).</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 as they wish 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>
Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	5	5	<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 manner.</p> <p>The dog 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 immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.</p> <p>Flea / tick / worming treatments carried out at appropriate intervals.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes; and never in any food preparation area.</p>
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	1	1	1	<p>The dog is ultimately the responsibility of its owner both in a well-being and financial aspect.</p> <p>All vets costs are covered by its owner.</p>