

Mason Moor Primary School



School Dog Policy

School Dog Policy

Approved by: Governing Body Approval date:

Last review date: Contact: info@masonmoorprimary.co.uk

Next review date: Approvers signature:

School Dog Policy

Introduction

Children 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 take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. By having school dogs, we want to encourage those children who are vulnerable, or those less confident at reading to have a friendly audience and look forward to reading as a treat. The breed of Cocker Spaniel is carefully selected as suitable for this type of environment. The dogs will be well cared for and responsibly owned by Mrs Ashbolt-Smith (St Mary's Partnership Deputy Head, Inclusion). School Dogs Dave and Bryn have previously been based in a school environment. Dave started his life as a working dog in October 2019 and Bryn in December 2021.

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

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.

The Chair of Governors and The Executive Head Teacher have agreed that the school can have a dog(s). Parents have been informed by letter and during show round visits with potential new parents that the school will have a dog(s).

Reasons to have a School Dog

Numerous research studies have shown the benefits of dogs in schools. Dogs have been working in schools for over 10 years across the UK with several integrated very successfully in Southampton special schools. Dogs have been commonplace in schools in the USA and Australia for many years.

Evidence indicates that benefits for children include:

- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing. Reading to a dog can be very beneficial as dogs give unconditional acceptance and are non-judgemental. Dogs make amazing listeners.
- Social – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others. Attendance for some pupils has improved because of a school dog.
- Emotional – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach empathy, compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety. This has been known to reduce the percentage of violent or aggressive behaviours in school.
- Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses.
- Environmental – a dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.

Context

- School dogs Dave and Bryn will be owned by Davina Ashbolt-Smith,
- Veterinary costs will be covered by the owner,
- The dogs are both Cocker Spaniels, chosen for their mild and “happy temperament” *, as well as being “popular as a family pet” *(* as cited on The Kennel Club’s website),

- The risk assessment (attached) will be reviewed annually
- Visitors and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival (through the means of posters positioned in the Reception Area).

Cocker Spaniel Characteristics

- A medium dog,
- Happy Temperament.

Day to day Management

The dogs will:

- Not be allowed in school if unwell,
- Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk,
- Be always under the full control and supervision of an adult,
- Be fully trained to a bed,
- Have had all injections and these will be maintained annually,
- Be wormed / flea-ed as per veterinary advice.

School Pupils will:

- NOT have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with the dog,
- Meet the dog in small groups,
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog every time they meet him,
- Always remain calm,
- Be gentle,
- Be told not to “put your face near the dog’s face”,
- Be told not to “disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping”,
- Not feed the dog,
- Never tease the dog,
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through body language. Growling or baring of teeth means that the dog feels threatened or angry. If the dog is displaying any of these signs, they will be removed from the situation immediately.

Health and Safety Principles

- Children will always wash their hands or use alcohol 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 must never be allowed to do this.

Concerns

Our school does have a ‘no dogs’ policy, however these dogs will be the “school dogs” and will be in school for a specific purpose. They will be on a lead when moving around the school (corridors/classrooms) and will always be accompanied by an adult. The dogs will also be fully insured by Davina Ashbolt-Smith to carry out their role thus allowing them to be on the school site.

Some children may have had upsetting experiences and thus have a fear of dogs (or another animal). The dogs will be calm and gentle around children; they have a very loving and gentle nature. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

It is understandable that some parents may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. The dogs will be subjected to a thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. They will be regularly professionally groomed (approx. every 3 months). We will ask parents who are concerned to make the school aware if their child has an allergy.

Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog is invited to write to Mrs Ashbolt-Smith to inform her of their wishes.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by Mrs Ashbolt-Smith.

The impact of having a dog in school will be monitored by the SLT.

Document Control

Revision History

Version	Revision Date	Revised By	Revision
1.0	January 2024	Davina Ashbolt-Smith	Policy written as a draft

Signed by

	Name	Signature	Date
Executive Head Teacher	Mr Constable-Phelps		
Chair of Governors	Amanda Humby (VPS) Lisa Benham (MM)		

Distribution

Version	Shared with	Date
1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff via school drive• Parents via Website• Governors via school drive	

Review

Date for next review
January 2025

Risk benefit assessment and management record					
Establishment:	VPS/MM/SM Southampton		Location/Purpose: School Dog		
Benefits (aims, objectives, intended outcomes...) Please see introduction section of School Dog Policy.					

Identifying the hazards – assessing the risk		Control measures – reducing the risk	
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children Child knocked to the ground Child scratched by dog Child bitten by dog	risk rating med med med	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises.</p> <p>Children are not left with the dog unsupervised and children will be reminded that they are not to run around the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead when he is in school (classrooms/corridors).</p> <p>The dog will be trained not to jump up or mouth the children.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Risks of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through his weekly training programme.</p> <p>All staff will be introduced to the dog and the expectations (do's and don't) of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vet's/groomers regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and that he is in good health.</p>	risk outcome Low Low Low Low Low Low Low Low
The dog gets loose from his crate or from his lead Child knocked to the ground Child scratched by dog Child bitten by dog	med med med	<p>The dog's crate is big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to disturb him or tease him whilst he is in there. There will be a locked door (fobbed) on the SLT office.</p> <p>If the dog does get loose from the SLT Office the designated staff member will come and put him back in his crate/office.</p> <p>There are three 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Mrs Ashbolt-Smith (DHT Inclusion/Owner) 2.) Mr Benfield (AHT/SENCo) / Mrs Hutton (Behaviour Lead) at VPS 3.) Mss Brooks (DHT) / Miss Kennett (AHT/SENCo) at MM 	Low Low Low Low
Dog hair causing allergies			

Children have allergic reaction	med	Parents have been asked to inform the school, by letter/email, of any known allergies prior their child starting at VPS/MM School. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept. Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children have been taught to wash their hands/using hand gel after active participation with the dog.	Low Low Low
Children getting germs from the dog Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	low	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. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupils do not have access to on a regular basis. If required, the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant. All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with Veterinary guidelines. Flea treatment is administered every 3 months (Bravecto). Worming treatment is carried out in line with Veterinary guidelines, at 3-month intervals. The dog will not go in the school dining hall at mealtimes. He will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen.	Low low low low
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day-to-day upkeep or medical bills.	low	The dogs are the responsibility of Mrs Ashbolt-Smith, and she is financially responsible for all of their care and day-to-day costs. The dogs are the responsibility of Mrs Ashbolt-Smith outside of school hours.	Low Low
Claim is made against the school re: behaviour of the dog School not adequately covered financially	Low	Mrs Ashbolt-Smith is legally responsible for any injury or damage caused by the dog so is covered by The Kennel Club Pet Insurance. The current certificate is kept in the school office and is renewed annually in November 2024 (Dave) and December 2024 (Bryn).	Low

Completed:	Date:	Head of establishment:
-------------------	-------	------------------------