



# Dogs in School Policy

Date: September 4<sup>th</sup> 2023



<b>Date ratified:</b>	
<b>Signature of Chair:</b>	
<b>Author/Reviewer:</b>	Ann Farrar
<b>Date for Review:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this Policy will be reviewed every 1 year. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

<b>First Issue</b>	September 4 <sup>th</sup> 23
<b>Originator</b>	Ann Farrar
<b>Linked Policies</b>	
<b>Target Audience</b>	Governors/Parents
<b>Dissemination via</b>	Website

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Changes</b>

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.

### **The benefits of a school dog:**

School dogs have been proven to help develop Pupils' reading skills, improve behavior, attendance and academic confidence, as well as increasing student understanding of responsibility and in the development of empathy and nurturing skills.

### **Animal assisted interventions (also known as AAI's) can:**

- Teach empathy and appropriate interpersonal skills
- Help individuals develop social skills
- Be soothing
- Improve a child's ability to pick up on social cues which are central to human relationships
- Support emotional regulation through the positive impact on the autonomous nervous system
- Impact on pupil motivation and outcomes

### **Research into the effects of therapy dogs in schools reflects a range of benefits including:**

- Improved school attendance
- Improved confidence
- Decreased anxiety
- Improved motivation to learn
- Enhanced relationships with peers and teachers
- Improved ability to express feelings

### **Confidence benefits**

"If children are partnered with a dog to read to, for example, the dog provides comfort, encourages positive social behavior, enhances self-esteem, motivates speech and inspires children to have fun and enjoy the non-judgemental experience."

Bark & Read- The Kennel Club (<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>)

### **SEND benefits**

"Therapy Dogs nationwide dogs have also shown to help with special needs and autistic children and adults by giving focus and providing a calming environment."

Therapy Dogs Nationwide (<http://www.tdn.org.uk/schools/>)

### **Pastoral Care**

Therapy Dogs can work with pupils on a one-one basis and will especially help those pupils who have been bullied, abused or going through upsetting/difficult times. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of strokes to pupils they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

Our school dog is well cared for and responsibly owned by the school and lives with the headteacher.



## **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.

This policy is designed to set out for pupils, parents, staff and visitors the reasons for having a school dog and the rules and responsibilities required to ensure the safety of all the school community. Although there is a low risk in bringing a dog into the school environment, this can be mitigated against with a robust risk assessment to ensure the safety of all.

( Appendix A –Risk Assessment)

### **Context**

- The dog is owned by Miss Farrar and lives with her.
- Veterinary costs will be covered by Miss Farrar.
- The dog has been chosen for the general characteristics of its breed (Nell is a Springer Spaniel) – great with children, very sociable, unaggressive, and intelligence.
- The risk assessment will be reviewed annually.
- Visitors and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival.
- Signs will clearly display that the school dog is on the premises.
- Public Liability Insurance will be covered by the school.

### **Day-to-Day Management**

The dog will:

- Not be allowed in school if she is unwell.
- Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk.
- Be under the full control and supervision of a designated handler at all times.
- Will be kept in Miss Farrar's office with a quiet area for resting.
- Be fully trained to a crate or dog bedmat – including puppy training and PAT training.
- Have had all vaccinations.

### **Pupil responsibilities:**

- Pupils whose parents have withdrawn consent are not allowed to attend dog therapy sessions.
- Pupils should be careful to stroke the dog on her body, chest, back and not by her face or top of head.
- Not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the dog.
- Pupils must always wash their hands before and after stroking and handling of the dog.
- Pupils must wait until the school dog is calm and still before touching or stroking her.
- Pupils are not allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Pupils are not allowed to eat during animal assisted therapy sessions.
- Pupils are not allowed to approach or disturb the dog whilst she is sleeping or eating.

### **Pre-briefing sessions will teach:**

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, she should immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment.

### **Staff responsibilities**

Miss Farrar will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising her at all times.

Miss Farrar is responsible for organising the training and accreditation of the dog.

The therapy dog will be kept in Miss Farrar's office when she is resting or at any point when she is not working with her designated handler.

The therapy dog must be kept on a lead when she is moving around school.

Pupils must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.

The designated handler will ensure that the number of children around the dog is manageable.

If the dog becomes , overwhelmed overwhelmed or displays any warning signs such as growling or flattening of the ears, she should be removed

### **Principles**

The Headteacher and governors have agreed to the presence of a therapy dog at Anns Grove Primary School.

Staff, parents and pupils will be informed in writing that a dog will be in school.

The presence of a school dog will be made clear to visitors via a sign upon their arrival at the school office and on the school gates.

Parents will need to sign the Animal Assisted Intervention consent form in order for their children to be present during sessions with the dog.

Only the school dog is allowed on the premises.

The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Miss Farrar or her designated handler.

The dog is covered by the schools Public Liability Insurance policy and the Business Manager has the responsibility for ensuring the dog remains on the schools policy for the duration of the time that school plans to have a dog in school.

### **In the event of a bite (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 Headteacher