

Dogs in School: Risk Assessment



Name of School

Assessment conducted by: Jodie Reilly and Katie Merrell	Job title: Co-Headteacher & Assistant Headteacher	Covered by this assessment: Staff, Pupils and Owner of Dog
Date of assessment: 14th April 2026	Review interval: Yearly	Date of next review: April 2027

Risk rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	Major: Causes major physical injury, harm or ill health.	High (H)	H	Medium (M)
	Severe: Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	H	M	Low (L)
	Minor: Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	M	L	L

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Policy and procedures	H	- The Assistant Headteacher ensures that all staff, and where appropriate, pupils and their parents, are aware of and adhere to the following school policies: - Health and Safety Policy - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy - First Aid Policy - Dogs in School Policy - Behavioural Policy - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy - Fire Safety Policy	Y	KM	Prior to initial visit	M
		The SBM ensures that the school's insurance covers dogs being on the premises.	Y	BB	11.03.26	
		The owner ensures that the dog is cared for in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.	Y	Owner	Prior to visit	

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Dog's welfare	L	- The dog has access to fresh, clean water at all times. - The dog has access to a cool and quiet place where it can be left undisturbed (this will be in one of the Head Teacher's Office or the Reception Area). - Pupils leave the dog alone when instructed by their teachers. - The dog's welfare is considered as a priority when the reading sessions are in progress. - If an activity risks the dog's welfare, the activity is amended. - Noise is kept to a minimum during the reading sessions that the dog is participating in. - The owner ensures that the dog has adequate and frequent toilet breaks and any waste is appropriately disposed of. - The owner ensures that the dog is not over-stimulated, as this can lead to potentially dangerous behaviour.	Y	KM Owner	Ongoing	L

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
		- The dog is not made to participate in potentially distressing activities. - The school complies with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. - The dog is familiar with the members of staff and pupils who are participating in the activity with the dog. - Flash photography is not used when the dog is present. - The dog is given opportunities to exercise and move around independently in a secure area, e.g. the Assistant Headteacher's office/ School Reception Area. - The owner ensures that the dog is fit to participate in specific activities and is not brought into the school if it is unwell. - If the dog becomes unwell while at school, the dog's owner takes it home.	Y	KM Owner	Ongoing	L

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
		- Before any activity is carried out, the Assistant Head Teacher ensures everyone participating in the activity understands how to treat and behave around the dog. - Activities do not cause harm, discomfort or stress to the dog, as guided by the owner. - School to hold a whole-school assembly (staff included) to highlight why the dog is in school, how to behave around the dog, how to interact with the dog, hygiene, health and safety.			Prior to first visit Prior to and then with dog and children	
Site Security	M	At least two adults are appointed to be responsible for the dog.	Y	BZ caretaker	ongoing	L

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
		- Although the dog will be on a lead at all times and held by the owner, the <u>school caretaker</u> ensures that the site is secure and that precautions are in place to limit the chance of the dog getting loose. - The dog is kept on a lead when it is not in its housing or in a secure location, e.g. in the Assistant Headteacher's office. - The <u>Assistant Headteacher</u> ensures that all appropriate doors are closed when the dog is participating in an activity, e.g. in a school hall. - The <u>school caretaker</u> ensures that the premises is secure, e.g. fences are not broken.				
Evacuation procedures	H	- Where necessary, the school's <u>Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy</u> is reviewed to ensure it includes provisions for the dog. - During a school lockdown, the dog and <u>owner</u> would remain in the office they are in. The <u>owner</u> would be responsible for the supervision of the dog only.	Y	JR Owner to be made aware of procedures upon initial visit	Prior to visit	M

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
		- In the event of a fire, the owner and dog are to follow the member of staff supervising and follow the school evacuation procedure. They are to leave the building immediately and join the school on the main field. The owner and dog are to stand separately from the school pupils and the dog must remain on the lead at all times. - In the event of a fire while the reading session is going on, the dog and owner are to help direct the child to the nearest emergency exit. - The person handling the dog during specified activities is responsible for the dog's safety during an invacuation, lockdown or evacuation.				
Disobedience and dangerous behaviour	H	- The dog must be certified by appropriate body- in this case from 'Pets as Therapy'. - The owner is equipped and trained to react to and control any dangerous behaviour. - Pupils are not to handle the dog. They may interact with the dog if:	Y	AW All staff Owner	Pets as Therapy complete0 9/02/26 Ongoing	M

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		- Their parents have provided permission. - They feel safe and confident in doing so. • The dog's obedience is ensured as far as reasonably possible; however, staff, pupils, visitors and parents understand that animals can be unpredictable. • The owner ensures that a plan is in place for if the dog is unable to carry out an activity, e.g. if the dog is stressed, and participating in the activity would cause further distress or could lead to dangerous behaviour. • If the dog is not behaving appropriately during an activity, e.g. it is barking excessively or running away, the owner removes the dog. If this continues, owner to take the dog home.				
Parent notification/permission	M	• The Assistant Headteacher informs parents that the dog will be present on the school's premises. An email will be sent to all parents as well as included on the school newsletter highlighting when the dog will begin visiting us in school.	Y	AW KM	16/03/26	L

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		- Parents are informed of the activities that the dog will be participating in, e.g. the dog will be used as a reading therapy dog. - The Assistant Headteacher obtains consent from parents for pupils to be in proximity with, or to handle, the dog.				
Dog's health	M	- The dog's designated owner is in charge of feeding and caring for the dog while on the school premises. - The owner is responsible for permitting people to touch the dog. - The dog is permitted to go in the Assistant Headteacher's office/ SENCO office, which is kept clean and secure for the wellbeing of the animal, pupils, staff and visitors. - The dog is given no opportunity to come into contact with wild rodents on or off the school premises. - The owner ensures that the dog is fully inoculated. - On hot days, the owner ensures there are appropriate provisions in place to keep the dog cool and ensure	Y	Owner	Ongoing	L

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		the dog avoids too much activity during the hottest part of the day.				
Hygiene	M	- The dog is suitably toilet trained. - The designated area for the dog to defecate is situated away from pupils and staff (outside school office- where the entrance is). - All faeces are immediately picked up by the owner, using a clinical waste bag, and disposed of into a clinical waste bin. - The owner immediately washes their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces. - Any pupils, staff and visitors who touch the dog are advised to wash their hands afterwards, and sufficient hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school. - Anyone with an exposed wound who touches the dog has the wound suitably covered.	Y	Owner BZ – caretaker All staff to instruct and remind children regarding handwashing	Ongoing	L

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		If the dog is ill with an infection or a disease, it does not return to the school until it has recovered.				
Injuries	H	- The dog is well trained and is used to coming into close contact with people. This would need to have been assessed by the relevant company, in this case 'Pets as Therapy'. - Pupils, staff and visitors around the dog are closely supervised by the owner. - Pupils, staff and visitors are advised not to put their face close to the dog. - The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the owner. - Pupils, staff and visitors must ask the owner if it is acceptable to touch the dog. If the response is no, this is respected. If the response is yes, this is overseen by the owner. - The dog is provided with a place it can go to get away from people- out the front of the school or school	Y	KM Owner All staff	Ongoing	M

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		offices. If this is the case, the dog may need to go home. The dog is trained to not pull on the lead or jump up at people.				
Dog's housing and equipment	M	- The owner ensures that the dog is able to: - Lie fully stretched out. - Turn around without touching either the walls or the ceiling. - Stand in its natural posture. - Move in its natural manner. - Rest comfortably. - All dog equipment is stored in the SENCO office when not in use. - The dog's food and water bowls are kept out of the path of people to avoid any trips. - Any spillages from the dog's bowls are wiped up immediately.	Y	Senco Owner	Ongoing	L

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Allergies	M	- Pupils and staff known to have allergies to animals have restricted access to the dog. - All pupils, staff and visitors are advised not to touch their face after touching the dog. - All pupils, staff and visitors are advised to wash their hands thoroughly after touching the dog.	Y	KM All staff	Ongoing	L
Phobias	M	- Pupils and staff known to have a phobia of dogs are given restricted access to the dog. - The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the owner. The dog will remain on the lead at all times.	Y	All staff and children	Ongoing	L

Signed By: Jodie Reilly (Co-Headteacher)	Signed By: Katie Merrell (Assistant Headteacher)	Signed By: Colin Hull (Certified PAT Dog Handler)
Date:	Date:	Date: