



Dog(s) in School Policy

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Approved (date of meeting)	June 2023 (via email)
Scheduled review date	Spring 2025
Statutory or Best Practice	Best Practice
Appendices	Yes

Introduction

This policy sets out Kernow Learning's rules on dogs on site in schools.

The Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

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

Yes there is, though there are a variety of accidents, which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this is included in this document (see appendix 3)

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher. This includes drop off and collection times.

This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present.

School Policy

- The dog is owned by Claire Smith
- Only the school dog is allowed on CPS premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has been informed in advance
- The dog is called Herbie and he is a French Bulldog . He is registered with Pets as Therapy for which he has undertaken a rigorous assessment. Claire Smith has also been assessed by Pets as Therapy as trained handler.
- The Governing Body agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Constantine Primary School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed that a dog will be in school and have had the chance to highlight questions through a consultation process. The Headteacher has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill he will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult at all times.
- Children will never be left alone with the dog and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
- If the dog is surrounded by many children, the dog could become nervous and



agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that she monitors the situation.

- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. 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 warning signs it will be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on his body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Headteacher.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The headteacher will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of the Headteacher.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher or Head of school as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Headteacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in school. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy. Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy. The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school

Appendix 1

Reasons to have a dog in school

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:

1. Improve academic achievement
2. Increase literacy skills
3. Calming behaviours
4. Increase social skills and self-esteem
5. Increase confidence
6. Teach responsibility and respect to all life
7. Help improve attendance
8. Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further details about the benefits of having a dog in school:



Behaviour

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that pupils can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating pupils declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in pupils. In a controlled study, pupils were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Pupils' behaviour improved toward teachers, and pupils also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

Attendance

The responsibility of looking after the dog can motivate children to attend.

Education

Research has highlighted that reading programmes with dogs are impactful for some pupils. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," pupils find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have pupils read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that pupils who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the Pupils they mix with.

Social Development

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils' social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older pupils build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older pupils use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower pupils. With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving pupils in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The pupils also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

As a reward

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the pupils. Those pupils who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made



progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog (should they wish to). Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities pupils will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support dogs can work with pupils on a one-one basis and will especially help those pupils who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the pupils they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A The legal owner of the dog is Claire Smith and she will bear all costs associated with having the dog on site; no money from the school budget will be used for this initiative.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept in the Head's office. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms and the field where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog and a reputable dog behaviourist.

Q Who is responsible for training the dog?

A Claire Smith is the legal owner of the dog and as will be responsible for his training. The dog has been fully assessed as a Pets as Therapy dog.

Q How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour



policy. The dog will be kept in the admin area/Headteachers office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog has been carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered. The dog has been assessed as a Pets as Therapy dog.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. The breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, he is given a high quality food and has regular checks by the vet.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

Meeting your communication needs:

We want to ensure that your needs are met, if you would like this information in Braille, large print, any other format or interpreted in a language other than English, please contact the school, telephone: 01326 340554 or email: Constantine@kernowlearning.co.uk



Appendix 3 – Risk Assessment

Kernow Learning

Risk Management - Assessment Report

Risk Area: Primary General – Constantine Primary school
Assessment Framework: Animal activities in the classroom
Work Area or Activity: ANIMALS (Therapy Dog) Herbie, French bulldog
Competent Person: Malcolm Godwin /Claire Smith
Groups Affected: Notes: Staff, voluntary helpers and children

Assessed on: 06/09/2022

To be Reviewed on: 10/09/2023

Risk Below 9 - Low Risk
Rating: 9 to 14 - Medium Risk
 15 or above - High Risk

What are the Hazards?		What is already being done? Is this considered	Risk Findings satisfactory?
Where companion animals at The animals Herbie) will be some point, allow children held by the owner and the quiet and Risk Rating:2 these animals kept, under safe	Yes Likelihood:1 personal contacts with such animals in the classroom setting		children will be supervised at all times. are

and suitable conditions, on the premises?			
For any programme involving personal contact between children and companion animals do you ensure that the animals involved are safe, specially selected and/or trained?	Deliberately selected animals that are not known to bite and are handled regularly by the owner. Herbie is a French bulldog and they have been identified as a companion dog.He has been assessed as a Pets as Therapy dog.	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2
For any programme involving personal contact between children and companion animals do you ensure that the animals involved are healthy as attested by a veterinarian?	The animals will be with the owner at all times and come from a trusted breeder. It has been confirmed that all vaccinations are up to date and the animals will be introduced to the classroom calmly by the owner. Herbie has a vaccination passport	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2



Where incubation activities are involved do you have tight controls over the incubation area and children only become involved the under supervision of a teacher or classroom assistant?	NA	Yes	Severity:3 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:3
For any programme involving personal contact between children and companion animals do you ensure that the animals involved are prepared for the school environment e.g. socialized to children, adjusted to travel?	The dog has experience of being handled by children. Children are instructed beforehand and are supervised at all times.	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2
For any programme involving personal contact between children and companion animals do you ensure that the animals involved are properly housed, either in the classroom or while at home?	The animals will be controlled and held by the owner at all times. Herbie, the therapy dog, will be kept on a lead. Herbie has been assessed as a Pets as Therapy dog.	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2
For any programme involving personal contact between children and companion animals do you ensure that the animals involved are always under supervision of a knowledgeable adult, either the teacher or the owner?	Yes; no child has contact with the animals without the supervision of an adult who has been trained. All given a talk beforehand on how to handle the animals safely.	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2
For any programme involving personal contact between children and companion animals do you	Yes; the class is spoken to beforehand to find out feelings and identify any worries	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2
Ensure that the safety, health and feelings of each child in the class are respected?	Some children at Constantine have phobias of dogs. Children are supported or appropriate action is taken.		
Do you ensure that prior to the visitation to the class by companion animals that meet the above criteria; both school management and parents have been informed and convinced of the value of such encounters?	School management informed. Parents informed via a letter, website and photographs. Allergies Register has also been checked.	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2



Do you ensure that the safety and well-being of the animals involved is guaranteed at all times?	The animal's safety, wellbeing and health will be a priority and will be looked after by the owner.	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2
Do you ensure that personal hygiene for both children and staff is maintained and that antibacterial hand washing solutions which are also suitable for children are used after the activity and before eating any food?	Antibacterial hand wash to be kept in the classroom and will be available for all children to clean hands immediately after handling.	Yes	Severity:2 Likelihood:1 Risk Rating:2

Malcolm Godwin

**Signed: Malcolm Godwin.
Claire Smith**

Dated: 20/3/23

