



# St Francis C of E Primary School



**Kernow Learning**  
Building Excellent Schools Together

## School Dog Policy

Version number:	V1
Date adopted by Local Governing Body:	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
Scheduled review date:	March 2025
Statutory or Best Practice policy:	Best Practice
Appendices:	Yes
School or Trust policy:	School

### Meeting your communication needs:

We want to ensure that your needs are met. If you would like this information in any other format, please contact us on 01326 211910 or email [stfrancis@kernowlearning.co.uk](mailto:stfrancis@kernowlearning.co.uk)

## **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 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, however, 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, bringing a dog into school can be considered another risk that needs to be considered and safely 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**

- Storm is owned by Mrs Hambly.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. No other dog must not come on site unless it is a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has been informed in advance.
- The dog is called Storm and he is a Poochon. He is an intelligent breed that responds well to training and is known to be good with children. He is very sociable and friendly.
- The Governing Board agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of St Francis CE 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. Mrs Hambly, has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must avoid Storm. However, this risk is minimised further by him being a hypoallergenic breed. All visitors will be informed upon arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If Storm is ill he will not be allowed into school.
- Storm will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under full control and supervision of a trained adult at all times.
- Children will never be left alone with Storm and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Storm and they should remain calm around him. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into Storm's eyes as this could be threatening for him. Children should not put their face near Storm's face and should always approach him standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb Storm if he is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with Storm.
- Everyone must wait until Storm is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
- If Storm is surrounded by a large number of children, he could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of Storm must ensure that s/he monitors the situation cautiously.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicate that Storm is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that Storm is frightened or nervous. If Storm is displaying any of these warning signs he will be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to Storm.
- Children should be careful to stroke Storm on his body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling Storm.
- Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

- All visitors will be informed about Storm and the related protocols on arrival. 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 Storm.
- The headteacher will know the whereabouts of Storm and which staff are supervising at all times.
- Storm will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs Hambly.

### **Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with Storm, the information must be passed to the Headteacher or a Deputy 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 as Storm 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 school environments can achieve the following:

1. Improve academic achievement
2. Increase literacy skills
3. Promote 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 detail 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 students who can identify with animals, and show empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students 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 students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students 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**

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared of reading 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," students find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have students 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. Dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read. Above all, they make amazing listeners, providing children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students 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 students they mix with.

#### **Social Development**

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate and teach kindness, they can help students to experience a feeling of empowerment. The presence of a trusted dog in school provides students with the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal, this includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a

positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

### **As a reward**

Dogs are gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week, 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 Storm (should they wish to). Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students 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 students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, are going through upsetting/difficult times or even feel scared or have a phobia of dogs. Storm will bring much joy and help to all the students he meets, he is happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students he will be spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

## **Appendix 2**

### **School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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

A The legal owner of Storm is Mrs Hambly; 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 Storm be a distraction?

A Storm will be kept with Mrs Hambly for specific targeted interventions or pet clubs. He will only come into contact (under strict supervision) with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this. Storm will also spend time in classrooms, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely. Storm 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 Storm?

A Mrs Hambly is the legal owner of Storm and is responsible for his training.

Q How will Storm be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A In the interest of health and hygiene Storm 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 Storm's welfare be considered?

A Storm 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 Storm during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. Storm will be brought to school for specific targeted interventions. Storm will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. Storm has been carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure Storm's welfare is always considered. Storm will have a crate in a quiet area in the classroom and will also be able to go into the office area to rest.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

Children will not need to touch Storm, 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 professionally regularly groomed regularly to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

A Access to Storm is carefully managed and supervised, children do not need to have close contact with him 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.

**Appendix 3  
Storm's Risk Assessment**

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk Category 1-5</b>	<b>Likelihood 1-5</b>	<b>Controls in Place</b>
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child scratched by dog	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	Storm will always be in the care of a responsible adult who is confident handling her.
	Child bitten by dog	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<p>Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.</p> <p>Storm will always be on a lead when he is out of his crate/ bed /Main office.</p> <p>Storm is well trained</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>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around him.</p> <p>Pupils and adults will be reminded not to touch Storm's mouth, head and rear end and to stand, turn and say "off" if he attempts to jump up.</p> <p>All staff given permission to handle Storm will be given strict instructions to follow and appropriate training from Mrs Hambly.</p> <p>Storm will attend the vets' regularly to make sure he is in good health.</p>
The dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	Child scratched or bitten by the dog	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	The dog's crate in Mrs Hambly's room can be used to keep Storm safe and he will also roam free in the office. Pupils in the office will always be supervised



				<p>If Storm does get loose the office staff or designated handler will call for support from Mrs Hambly who will come and put the dog back on his lead and in the office or his crate. There are four 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.</p> <p>Storm will always be on his lead when out of the offices.</p>
Dog hair causing allergies	Children or staff have allergic reactions	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<p>Storm does not moult. He is a hypoallergenic breed. Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school.</p> <p>Children will have the opportunity to interact with Storm as they wish and those with allergies would be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with Storm</p>
Children getting germs from the dog	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<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>All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and Mrs Hambly keeps a register of this.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out at 3 monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals.</p> <p>The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be</p>

				permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen or the cooking room
Claim is made against school regarding the behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	The school has public liability insurance and should the dog injure a child or member of staff, there is adequate insurance in place.