

School Dog Risk Assessment – March 2016

Introduction

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

To minimise the risk to children in school, animals are not allowed on school premises. The definition of animals includes all pets including insects, fish and birds. The only exceptions to this rule are assistant animals (dogs for the blind etc.) and the animals that have permanent residences on the school grounds, which belong to the Paws For Learning (known as P4L) scheme.

When guide dogs and P4L animals are allowed on school premises, the animal's owner and handlers must ensure that the animal is not a nuisance and that it does not interfere with the school environment. If any parent or pupil object to the animals presence then arrangements must be made to ensure that this animal is kept away from them. If necessary, the animal may need exclusion from specific areas.

It is a requirement of all our P4L animals that they are within the following recommended guidelines:

- All animals should be regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.
- Pets that are ill should be diagnosed and treated by a vet and should not be allowed in the school premises until their health is restored.
- All animals should have received relevant inoculations.
- All animals should be wormed regularly every six months.
- Claws should be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches.
- Pets should have been exercised before being allowed to work with children.
- All pets should have their coats cleaned regularly.

The P4L dog owner/handler has the responsibility to ensure that:

- Dogs are physically fit before visiting the school environment
- Dogs are kept on a lead throughout the visit/work
- They remain with the dog at all times
- The dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking
- The dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not wet, muddy etc.
- Natural relief for dogs is taken into account prior to visiting

Background

The leadership of St George's lower School considered the options regarding the possibility of obtaining a dog as a school pet in October 2015. Over a period of time following this discussion research into a possible source of a suitable puppy led to the final decision to introduce a puppy in January 2016.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

1. For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
2. For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
3. To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.

Prior to purchasing the puppy, the Head Teacher Miss Marea Rawlings, visited the home of the dog's parents to ensure that the temperament of the parents was suitable for interaction with children. The puppy would live with Miss Rawlings in her home at his and be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually. The existing schools' veterinarian practice Greensands in Woburn Sands, will thoroughly check the puppy for any illnesses and is responsible for his vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the puppy as he is kept up to date with immunisations including rabies and his worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. Both the school and Greensands vets' surgery keep a register of his annual health check.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the puppy is invited to write to inform Miss Rawlings of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the school senior leadership team will evaluate the impact of a school dog on a regular bases.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5*	Likelihood 1-5*	Risk Col 3X Col 4	Controls in place	Review date & signed
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to ground	1	2	2	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises.	March 2016
	Child scratched by Dog	3	2	2	Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. The dog will always be on a lead when he is out of his pen/ the Head's office, except when he is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer/s.	
	Child bitten by Dog	4	2	2	The dog will be trained not to jump up or mouth the children. 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, form time and PSHE lessons. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) The dog will undergo formal training from the age of 12 weeks with an experienced local trainer. Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools' primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training will allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through his weekly training programme. ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (do's and don'ts) of having a school dog. The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and that he is in good health.	
The dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	As above	1	2		The dog's pen is big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease him. If the dog does get loose from his pen the teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in his pen. 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, they are: 1. Miss Marea Rawlings (Head Teacher). 2. Mrs Debbie Nelson (Pastoral Teaching assistant). 3. Mrs Lorraine Ketye (School Secretary) 4. Mr Ted Edwards (Assistant Head)	March 2016

<p>Dog hair causing allergies</p>	<p>Children have allergic reactions</p>	1	1	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school recording system (Integris G2) .</p> <p>Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	<p>March 2016</p>
<p>Children getting germs from the dog.</p>	<p>Children/s taff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs</p>	1	1	1	<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. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupil's don't have access to on a regular bases, if required the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant.</p> <p>All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out at 6 weekly intervals.</p> <p>Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at 6 monthly intervals</p> <p>The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen.</p>	
<p>Financial cost of the dog's upkeep</p>	<p>School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills</p>	1	1	1	<p>The dog is the responsibility of Miss Rawlings she is financially responsible for all his care and day to day costs.</p> <p>The dog is the responsibility of Miss Marea Rawlings outside of school hours.</p> <p>Training cost involving the pupils will be paid for by the school as part of the 'Paws 4 Learning' programme and the high level of obedience training that will need to be carried out</p> <p>As the dog will be used for 'therapy' work within the school, the school will accommodate costs towards training and assessment of the dog to meet these criteria.</p>	<p>March 2016</p>
<p>Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog.</p>	<p>School not adequately covered financially</p>				<p>Miss Marea Rawlings, via Pet Plan Insurance, insures the dog.</p> <p>The certificate is kept in school office and is renewed annually in April.</p>	<p>March 2016</p>

KEY: 1- Low risk

2

3 -Medium risk of injury

4

5-High risk of injury



Signed ...Mr. Stephen Tikin.....Chair of the Governing Body

Equal opportunities

All young people will be treated equally, regardless of race, creed or gender.
The policy will be applied regardless of culture, faith or belief.