



LEAGRAVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

‘Striving for Excellence, Learning for Life’

School Dog Policy

Ratified by Governors

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STATUTORY

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

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 is available on request.

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher. 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 will be owned by Miss Figg who is the School Dog Intervention Coach.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Head Teacher has been informed beforehand.
- The dog is a Cavapoo and has been chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children. It sheds little hair and is very sociable and friendly.
- The Chair of Governors and the governing body agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Leagrave Primary School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. A risk assessment has been produced 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, she 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.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children should 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 the dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog.
- Children should not put their face near the dog and should always approach it standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog when it is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Everyone must wait until the school dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he 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 they should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke the school dog on her body, chest, and back and not by her face or top of the head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.
- Parents will be required to give consent for the child to be given access to the dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Headteacher(s) as soon as possible.
- Miss Figg will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The office 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 Miss Figg.

Actions

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in school. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring adequate insurance is in place. All staff, pupils, parents and visitors must follow 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.

Reasons to have a dog in school

Research has shown that dogs in school can help to achieve the following:

- Improve academic achievement
- Increase literacy skills
- Calming behaviours
- Increase social skills and self-esteem
- Increase confidence
- Teach responsibility and respect for all life
- Improve attendance
- Motivate children who are often less attentive

Frequently Asked Questions

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

The legal owner of the dog is Miss Figg; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs, where appropriate.

2. Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

3. Will the dog be a distraction?

When not in the classroom the dog will be kept in the PPA office. The door to the office will be fitted with a safety gate. 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. We will be careful to ensure that time spent with the school dog is shared among the children fairly. We will also ensure that children who do not have permission for direct contact with the dog are still able to participate in a number of ways, should they wish to do so.

The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

4. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

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.

5. Who is responsible for training?

Miss Figg will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained if necessary.

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

In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted, in a designated area away from the children, when taken out for short walks. 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.

7. 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. The dog will be kept in the PPA office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be 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.

8. How will this be managed where children have allergies?

The breed of dog has been chosen for its hypoallergenic properties, however, children will not need to touch the dog which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions however small. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults who 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, she is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

9. 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.