



The Hatherley St James' Federation



School Dog Policy 2024-26

This policy is written for dogs to be allowed in school and applies to both Hatherley Infant and St James' CE Junior schools. Specific dogs will also require a risk assessment.

We want to ensure your needs are met. If you would like this document in any other format, please contact us:

admin@hatherley-inf.gloucs.sch.uk or

admin@st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk

Reviewed by:	Simon Millington
Agreed by FGB:	23 rd January 2024
Review Cycle:	Every 2 years
Next Review:	Jan 202

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1 Rationale

Children may benefit educationally and emotionally, and, increase their understanding of responsibility whilst developing empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog. See Appendix A for further information

2 The Dog's role

The dog's role will develop gradually as it becomes more familiar and comfortable with his surroundings.

It might be used as a focal point/ comfort for those children that are struggling with school whether that be due to issues at home, peer issues at school, or simply dislike and unwillingness to attend school. It will become a friendly ear and a confidante.

It will also be seen around school (with its owner and on a lead) where those children that choose to can stroke and interact with him.

3 Associated Risk

School has carried out a risk assessment that should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Children will have lessons in personal safety around a dog.

The school will take into account cultural and religious sensitivities.

4 Operational Considerations

- The dog will be in school whenever leadership see fit.
- During this time the dog will be situated in an appropriate Room where there is room to accommodate visiting pupils and/or staff. This will be on a drop in basis with appointments if necessary for special cases.
- The dog on occasion will be used for pastoral/ wellbeing support and will also listen to pupils read.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving around the school site but will be off lead within the intervention room. A sign notifying visitors that the dog is loose is displayed on the door.

- Once the dog is more familiar with larger groups it will be able to socialise and mix with the children during lunch times.
- 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 Headteacher has given prior permission.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. Children new to school will be told about the presence of the dog.
- The school has a risk assessment for the dog 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.
- Children will not be alone with the dog and there must 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.
- Children should never go near to or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- 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.
- Children and staff should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog via an opt out agreement.
- Appropriately trained staff 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.

Actions if someone reports having an issue with the dog,

This information must be passed to the Headteacher or Deputy Head as soon as possible.

Things to be aware of and to relay to pupils:

- Pupils should remain calm when approaching the dog
- Do not make sudden movements
- Do not look into the dogs' eyes – some dogs find this unsettling/ threatening
- Pupils should not disturb the dog if he is sleeping/ eating
- The dog is an older dog and not known to be playful but if the eventuality arises then pupils should not play roughly with the dog
- If the dog is surrounded by large numbers of people it is up to the adult in charge to gauge the manner of the dog and move away if the dog becomes stressed.

Dog Body Language of which to be aware:

- Growling or baring of teeth indicate a dog is feeling angry or threatened

- Flattened ears, tail low or between legs or hiding behind the owner is a sign the dog is frightened or nervous

If the dog shows any of these signs, then he will be removed from the situation.

- Children should not feed, or eat close to the dog
- Children should always wash/ cleanse their hands after handling the dog
- Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately
- In the event of a fire alarm the dog will be taken by his owner to the recognised assembly point

5 Roles and Responsibilities

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 A

Benefits of having a dog in school

Emotional Support:

Dogs can offer a 'non-judgemental ear' and support to any pupil that is going through difficult times. This may include but not be limited to being bullied, abused or bereaved. The dog can also be a 'friend' to those that struggle with social interaction and may even take some of the fear away from those that are frightened of dogs. Touching the dog, and witnessing the joy in the dog might be the only time that some of our pupils get to feel the warmth of interaction with another living thing.

Behaviour Support:

Behaviour can become an issue in some pupils and interfere with learning. Having a school dog can assist with this as it promotes a non-educational interest, confidence and a sense of responsibility.

Attendance:

Pupils that are unwilling to attend school can be encouraged back into school at the thought of seeing and being able to interact with the dog during the school day. Only good behaviour and attendance will earn that reward. Even being given some responsibility towards the care of the animal can have a positive impact and encourage children into school where they might otherwise have been unwilling.

Reading support:

Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or adults might be less scared to read to the dog. Dogs can be used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. Dogs are 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-judgemental, which is crucial for struggling, emerging readers.

Dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read 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 and a higher desire to read and write.

Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development.

They help teach pupils social skills and responsibility. More specifically they are able to help build self-esteem, learn about positive and negative reinforcement and boundaries.

In some instances, it has even been seen that caring for an animal can also promote their own daily care.

Appendix B : School Dog Policy Risk Assessment

The Hatherley St James' Federation

Area: Interaction with pupils and staff					Date: January 24		
Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times					Review Date: January 26		
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial/ low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Step 5 Action & Review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
<input type="checkbox"/> School dog biting a child or adult	<input type="checkbox"/> Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	<input type="checkbox"/> The dog has shown no inclination to bite, snarl or growl. When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger and the dog is not likely to be left unsupervised	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way 			
<input type="checkbox"/> Jumping up/scratching	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog becomes excited there is the possibility that he could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has shown no inclination to jump, however if this becomes a behaviour then training will rectify this. It is More likely to jump up at a known adult. <p>Introductions to new people are made slowly and calmly</p> <p>No interaction will be made with any children if parents have informed the school that they are not happy.</p>	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision The school dog will be supervised when people come to interact with him or under lead control by an authorised adult 			

<input type="checkbox"/> Running loose	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog was to run loose she could hurt children/adults or damage property	<input type="checkbox"/> The school dog will be supervised at all times. Currently he is not allowed off lead. Should this become a possibility in the future then the situation will be reviewed	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor the school dog's behaviour, on and off site			
<input type="checkbox"/> Direct interaction with children/staff	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/ staff could be scratched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No interaction is allowed without authorisation Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour Rewards/praise will be given to reinforce the desired behaviour 	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the school dog is approached in the agreed manner			

Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog					Date: January 24		
Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times					Review Date: January 26		
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Risk Rating	Step 4	Step 5		
Identify the hazards	Who might be harmed & how?	What are you already doing?	Trivial/ low / medium / high / stop	Is anything further needed?	Action & Review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with the school dog	<input type="checkbox"/> If a child/adult interacts with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way this will affect the school dogs training and have a negative impact on future interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation ,or, supervision 	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped			

<input type="checkbox"/> Use of rewards/treats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treats to be taken from the flat palm of the hand Alcohol gel will be available to all adults and children. Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation The dog shows no possessiveness of food and is very gentle when fed by hand 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminders to the children to wash hands after handling treats Treats to be stored away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation 			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a dog	<input type="checkbox"/> If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves	<input type="checkbox"/> Children are regularly reminded by the responsible adult.	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dog			

Area: Hygiene/Health					Date: January 24		
Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog do not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school					Review Date: January 26		
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Risk Rating	Step 4	Step 5		
Identify the hazards	Who might be harmed & how?	What are you already doing?	Trivial/ low / medium / high / stop	Is anything further needed?	Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Worms/fleas	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans	<input type="checkbox"/> Medication is purchased via the vets which means the school dog is given worm and flea treatments every 3 months.	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet			
<input type="checkbox"/> Faeces	<input type="checkbox"/> If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aim would be to exercise the dog offsite by the owner. But should the dog relieve himself on the school premises then this will be picked up promptly and the area sprayed with antibacterial spray. 	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> A portable dog bag to be created including antibacterial spray, kitchen towel and disposal bags If a child finds faeces on the school field/playground			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision 		they will report it to an adult			
<input type="checkbox"/> Allergies	<input type="checkbox"/> If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	<input type="checkbox"/> If a child has an allergy the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child	Medium	Create a database of children that do not have parental permission to interact with the dog and also that have allergies			
<input type="checkbox"/> Children's access to school dog's resource	<input type="checkbox"/> If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some they could become unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the school dog's resources will be stored away safely No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation 	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Remind children not to approach the dog/ enter the office without permission			
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact with food preparation areas	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog enters a food preparation area this could be unhygienic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school dog will not enter any area where food is being consumed The school dog will not enter the school's staffroom 	Low				
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	<input type="checkbox"/> If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell	<input type="checkbox"/> All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Remind children and adults to clean their hands Provide sanitisation gel			

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking					Date: January 2024		
Reason: To ensure the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community					Review Date: January 2026		
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Risk Rating	Step 4	Step 5		
Identify the hazards	Who might be harmed & how?	What are you already doing?	Trivial/ low / medium / high / stop	Is anything further needed?	Action & Review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed

<input type="checkbox"/> Walking the dog on and off site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No children will walk the dog offsite No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk unless permission is given 	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes			
<input type="checkbox"/> Visits to classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure she may become over excited or withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not planned for the school dog to visit classrooms in the near future The school dog will initially only make classroom visits with its owner The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop 	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and only when agreed with the class teacher			
<input type="checkbox"/> Being fed	<input type="checkbox"/> If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating she may respond negatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not planned to feed the dog at school If this does become a routine then all feeding will be supervised 	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when she is eating			
<input type="checkbox"/> School events	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog is overwhelmed she may show negative or boisterous behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and she will be under the control of its owner	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the school dogs' reaction to school events If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog will not attend school on that day 			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other dogs (on and off site)	<input type="checkbox"/> If the school dog encounters another dog he may become withdrawn or show negative behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other dogs are not allowed on the school premises The dog has shown no interest/ aggression in other dogs but will remain supervised 	Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor the school dogs reaction when out walking			

Signature:	Review Date: January 2026
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