



WOOL CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rooted in the community to grow and flourish

Name of Policy:	School Welfare Dog
Date first adopted:	1 st October 2020
How often to be reviewed:	Annually
Reviewed:	
Reviewed By:	SLT and FGB

School Welfare Dog Policy 2020/2021

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. Having a dog in school can help nurture a calm, positive atmosphere and can also build a child's self-confidence. Dogs can help children feel comfortable about speaking about their feelings, teach them about relationships and can also support pupils to become more engaged in school life.

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, Wool Primary see a school dog as being another risk that needs to be managed in order to bring about an inevitable positive impact for the school community. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out.

It remains the case that 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 ONLY the school dog to be present at these times.

School Policy

The school dog, Murphy, is owned by Mrs Griffiths (Headteacher) and the governing body have enlisted Canine Assisted Learning to conduct ongoing training and assessment.

- 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, or unless the Headteacher has previously given permission.
- The dog is a Labrador German short-haired pointer crossbreed chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, and is very sociable and friendly.
- The governing body and staff agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Wool Primary School and have a positive impact on wellbeing as well as motivation and engagement in learning.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. Mrs Griffiths has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment outlines the collaboration involved with the company Canine Assisted Learning.
- 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 through clear signage and information on the school website.
- If the dog is ill he will not be allowed into school. The dog will not be in school all day everyday as we understand it is important for the dog to have some time away from the school site.
- 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. Canine Assisted Learning will train relevant staff members in how to handle the school dog effectively.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children should be informed and reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and will be taught how to stroke the dog effectively. 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.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the staff member in charge of the dog at that time 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, yawning, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he 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 dog on his body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by a staff member.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to the dog. Written permission will be sought and children will only be allowed to interact with the dog if this has been given.
- 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 Mrs Griffiths or the member of staff working with him at that time.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher 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 prevent truancy
- 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. There are reports which have shown that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Often violent behaviour and general aggression declines. Challenging behaviour in school can interfere negatively with pupils' learning . Schools who have a school dog have reported that they have seen improvements to behaviour and that a school dog has enabled the school to promote positive behaviour in students. Students' behaviour has been seen to improve towards teachers, and children also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents/carers from other schools have stated that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

Attendance:

Schools have used time with a school dog as an incentive to encourage pupils who are reluctant to come to school in order to arrive on time.

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 to read to a dog. Often children feel less stressed when reading aloud to a dog rather 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 and to promote a love of reading. 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 children 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. Some schools with school dogs have reported 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 students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students. With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience for children and promotes pupils to consider their own daily care. The students 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 students. Those

students 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, can be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. 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 experienced trauma. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. They will help provide secure attachments. 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 the dog and who pays for its costs?

A The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Griffiths and she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. The dog is from a home where there was a report about the stud and the mother was seen. Murphy was specifically chosen for his temperament.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept in the Headteacher or main office areas. He may also be kept in the Acer Base. These areas are separate from the main classrooms / playground areas and will help us to ensure the dog 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, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely and if parental/carer permission has been granted.

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. Staff have completed consultation surveys and the Headteacher has spoken with several reputable dog behaviourists.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Mrs Griffiths is the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for the dog's training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained and the dog will work towards being trained as a Canine Assisted Learning dog. The CAL programme includes termly assessments to check the dog's progress.

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

A 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?

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents/carers 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 areas mentioned 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.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A 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 will manage allergies to a dog in the same way.

Parents/carers will be responsible for informing the school if their child has an allergy and will not give permission for their child to interact with the school dog. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

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

A 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.

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment

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. The team at Wool Primary have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and the decision was made in October 2020 to go ahead with the project.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

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

It is accepted that not all parents/carers will want their child to interact with Murphy and it is therefore a requirement for parents/carers to complete a written permission slip before their child can do so. Murphy has all the recommended vaccinations and treatments and these will be kept up by the owner of Murphy (Mrs Griffiths). Murphy is under the Canine Assisted Learning programme and is insured. The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked regularly by key staff.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 – 5 (1 = low risk)	Controls in Place
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	<p>Child knocked to the ground.</p> <p>Child scratched by dog.</p> <p>Child bitten by dog.</p>	2	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a Staff member and these adults will also receive training during the autumn term in 2020 from CAL.</p> <p>The dog will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead when he is not in the office spaces, unless he is having a specific training session.</p> <p>Pupils will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions and how to interact effectively with a dog. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training with an experienced dog trainer outside of school and also receive termly training and assessment through the CAL programme.</p> <p>The dog will undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment before interacting with children.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce due to training and the risk assessment will be reviewed as Murphy progresses through the CAL programme.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure he is in good health and that his claws are kept short.</p>
The dog gets loose from his space in the offices/staffroom	As above	1	<p>The dog's dedicated space in the office and staffroom areas are big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease her.</p> <p>There will be a baby gate on the HT office door.</p>
The dog causing allergies	Children or staff have allergic reactions	1	<p>Parents/Carers are required to complete a permission slip before their child is allowed to interact with the dog.</p> <p>Any child who is not given parental permission to interact with the school dog will not be allowed to touch the dog.</p>

			Parents/carers complete a medical form on entry to the school to outline any allergies their child has. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the noticeboard in the main office. Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.
Children getting germs from the dog	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to and the area will be disinfected as required. All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with advice from the vet and a record will be kept of this. Flea, tick and worming treatment will also be kept up to date. The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times; and never in the food preparation area.
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Betty's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Mrs Griffiths both in a well-being and financial aspect. Murphy will be insured by the school and Mrs Griffiths will be responsible for covering the cost of food, resources (e.g. dog bed, dog toys) and vet bills. The school will pay for the CAL programme which includes training, assessments and insurance. For 2020-2021 this money has been raised through external fundraising for the purpose of this project.
Claim is made against school about the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	1	Insurance will cover any claim. Certificate will be kept in office and renewed annually.

Dated: 1st October 2020