



Send Church of England Primary School

School Dog Policy

Animals in School Policy	
Date this review	Autumn 2023
Date next review	Autumn 2024
Review period	Annual
Approval body	Resources Committee
Reviewed by	School Business Manager
Governor's committee responsible	Resources Committee

Vision Statement:

Childhood matters to us: it is short, precious and cannot be repeated.

Our Christian values are rooted in God.

Growing in love, every child reaches their spiritual and academic potential.

Our learners use their resilience, curiosity and independence to become fruitful and effective global citizens.

With the Holy Spirit by our side, we can achieve anything!

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 well-being, lower anxiety and increase motivation simply by making the environment a happier, more enjoyable place to work for children and staff.

Academic research has shown that dogs working in the school environment can also:

- Improve academic achievement
- Increase literacy skills
- Calm challenging behaviours
- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Teach responsibility and respect for life
- Improve attendance
- Increase motivation

Send C of E Primary has two School Dogs called Lottie and Mollie, who have been part of school life for many years.

Rationale

1. Education

Children who may be too embarrassed to read or lack confidence when reading aloud, often are less nervous about reading to a dog. Dogs provide a non-judgmental, embarrassment-free audience for reading, after all, dogs won't correct or interrupt them. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practice spelling aloud. With the presence of a well-trained, calm dog students can find support and acceptance.

Dogs can be incredibly calm and are happy to have a student read to them or join a group of children in Th Library, The Haven or The Den whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practice spelling aloud. With the presence of a well-trained, calm dog students can find support and acceptance.

Our school dogs are incredibly calm and are happy to have a pupil read to them or join a group of children in these areas when having a reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance which is especially crucial for struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide children with confidence as they make amazing listeners and provide a great sense of comfort and love. Research has proven that children who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition and desire to read and write.

2. Social Development

Dogs in school are especially useful for teaching pupils' social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older children build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility and boundaries. Dogs help communication and the empowerment of children. With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for animals. This includes walking, feeding, watering and grooming. Researchers report that involving pupils in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting routine and responsibility.

3. Attendance

In an increasing number of schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that pupils can identify with animals and, with empathy for the dog, can better understand how their classmates, peers and Teachers may feel in certain situations. Behaviour problems in school interfere with learning so using a dog to promote positive behaviour could improve anu such issues. Schools who are using dogs, have found that there are fewer disciplinary issues as well as increased pupil confidence, motivation and responsibility. Parents have reported that children are more interested in school where a dog is being used.

4. Rewards

Dogs are gentle and loving, but at the same time, full of fun and enjoyment for everyone. Pupils who have performed incredibly well during the week, have made progress in a certain subject or achieved targets set for them are rewarded with spending time during lunch or break interacting with the school dog. Walking, grooming, playing and raining are some of the responsibility's pupils will be allowed to undertake.

5. Safeguarding

School dogs can work with children on a one-to-one basis and especially help those pupils who have been bullied, are grieving, are struggling at home or school and even those who are scared/phobic of dogs. Dogs bring much joy and support to all pupils and provide physical comfort with the children that they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

Risks

The school has carried out a Risk Assessment that examines risks involved in having a School Dog. The Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually by the Business Manager and Headteacher, but as it is a working document updates may be required throughout the year. The Risk Assessment and Policy will be ratified by the Resources Committee of the Governing Body.

Safety and Welfare Measures

- School Dogs are owned by Mrs Clare Harwood and Mrs Hazel Ward, ultimately the wellbeing of the dogs lies with the staff named.
- Only Lottie and Mollie will be allowed on the school premises, with the exception of known therapy/assistance dogs or if the Headteacher has given permission for another dog to visit.
- The school dogs are a black Labrador and Sprollie X Poodle.
- Permission has been sought from the Governing Body to allow the school dog into school. The Governing Body have the right to refuse entry to the dog should this stop being the case.

- All staff, parents and children have been informed that Send C of E Primary has school dogs.
- Parents will be asked to provide permission annually allowing children interaction with the dogs.
- All visitors will be informed upon arrival that there is a school dog on the premises.
- Any staff, visitors or children with a dog allergy do not need to interact with the school dog.
- If the school dog is unwell, it will not be brought into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms and will wear a harness during the therapy/reading sessions so that it can be restrained easily if necessary.
- The school dog will always be under the full control and supervision of an appropriate, knowledgeable adult.
- Children will never be left alone or unattended with the dog.
- Children will be aware of the School Dog Rules.
- Children will be educated on how to behave appropriately around the school dogs. They will be told the importance of remaining calm and gentle around the dog and that the dog must always approach them first.
- Children will be told that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside of school.
- School dogs will have undergone formal training (outside of school) – with the owner in attendance.
- The dog will not actively work for more than three hours in a school day.
- Nobody will be allowed to disturb the dog during its rest periods, while sleeping or eating.
- The adult supervising the dog will ensure they understand the dog's body language and take the dog for a rest if needed.
- If the dog shows any un-friendly or negative behaviour, the supervising adult will immediately remove the dog from the situation or environment.
- No staff or children will be allowed to eat near the school dog.
- Anyone interacting with the dog MUST wash their hands immediately after interacting with the dog.
- The dog will have a designated outside toileting area, any mess will be cleared and disposed of immediately by the supervising adult.
- The owner of the dog will know the whereabouts of the dog at all times.
- A record will be kept, including notes made and anecdotal evidence of the school dog's impact.
- A copy of this Policy along with the Risk Assessment will be posted on the school website.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written Policy and Risk Assessment for having the dog in school.
- The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the school Policy and ensuring the Risk Assessment is followed.
- Mrs Harwood and Mrs Ward are responsible for the care, training and monitoring of their school dog.
- Everyone involved with Send C of E Primary are required to abide by this Policy.

Issues and Complaints

Should anyone have a concern or complaint regarding this Policy should direct their concern to the Headteacher in the first instance. All concerns will be addressed by the Headteacher.