

School Dog

Policy, guidelines and risk assessment

Purpose

Dogs teach children responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.

Dogs teach children patience. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!

Dogs teach children compassion. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.

Dogs teach children about socialisation. Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park (pun intended).

Dogs are fun. Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.

Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and humans to realise the potential for greatness.

Dogs aid human wellbeing.

Introduction

Our School Dog 'Pippin' has lived with Mrs Godfrey and her family since he was 8 weeks old, he is a black Labrador. Pippin is very much a family dog. He has the right temperament to work with a wide range of children and adults within the school environment.

Pippin is a very caring and well-behaved dog. When he was a puppy, he had regular training sessions with an experienced instructor. This means that he is very calm in the presence of children and adults and responds well to the hustle and bustle of school life.

Guidelines to interaction with the School Dog

Under no circumstances will children have close interaction with the school dog unless the school has permission from parents/carers.

Once permission has been given no child shall be forced into interaction with the school dog if this makes them feel unhappy in anyway.

At all times interaction with the school dog must be controlled and safe for adults, children and the school dog himself. If the following guidelines are not followed interaction with the school dog will be cancelled.

At all times of interaction there must be an authorised adult who takes the leading role when interacting with the school dog. If children, or visiting adults, do not abide by the guidance given by the authorised adult the interaction will be cancelled.

The following guidelines must be followed when interacting with the school dog. These guidelines apply to all adults and children.

- There must be an authorised adult present during all interaction
- Always approach the school dog calmly (voice and movement)
- Always approach the school dog slowly
- Never run up to the school dog
- To start interaction the back of a hand will be offered for the school dog to sniff
- Keep noise levels low during interaction with the school dog
- All interaction must remain calm with the authorised adult staying in control at all times
- Only an authorised adult can move any of the school dog's resources, including food and treats
- Visiting children and adults can only handle equipment if an authorising adult gives permission
- There must not be any interaction with the school dog whilst he is eating
- After all interaction with the school dog hands must be washed with soap and water or hand sanitiser
- When interacting with the school dog all children must remain on their feet and not kneel unless guided to by an authorised adult.

When interacting with the dog outside:

- No children will ever be asked to pick up faeces
- If walking the school dog, an authorised adult must be present at all times. Children may hold the school dog's lead if they are confident to do so. The authorised adult remains in charge of the situation at all times and will take back the school dog's lead if necessary.

The following risk assessments outline strategies and expectations regarding

- Interaction with pupils and staff
- Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog
- Health and hygiene
- Activities involving the school dog, including walking.

The risk assessments will be revised and updated on an annual basis.

Area: Interaction with pupils and staff					Assessment Date: Summer 2025		
Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times					Review Date: Summer 2026		
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/low/ medium/ High/stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Step 5 Action and review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
School dog biting a child or adult	- Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	- The school dog does not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger. Pippin lives with 2 children who handle him all the time to ensure that he is used to interaction with children - Pippin gentle, he has benefitted from training sessions with a qualified professional and a warm and loving home and school.	Low	- 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.			
Jumping up/scratching	- If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that he could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark.	- Pippin has been trained to not jump up. - No interaction will be made with any children unless the school has permission from parents/guardians.	Low	- Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision.			

Direct interaction with children/staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the school dog is approached in the agreed manner. 			
Destruction of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If allowed the school dog may chew/destroy some school materials/resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school dog will be monitored at all times. - The school dog will have his own toys to play with. 	Low				

Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog					Assessment Date: Summer 2025		
Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times					Review Date: Summer 2026		
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/low/ medium/ High/stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Step 5 Action and review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
Incorrect/ inconsistent interaction with the school dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If a child/adult interact 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"> - 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. 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped. 			
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"> - Alcohol gel will be available to all adults (and children with written permission from parents). - Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminders to the children to wash hands / use alcohol gel after handling treats. - Treats to be shut away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation. 			

Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a puppy/dog	- If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves.	- The Dog's Trust have visited the school to conduct a 'Be Dog Smart' course with all of the children.	Medium	- There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dog, this will be shared annually through assemblies.			
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Area: Health and hygiene					Assessment Date: Summer 2025		
Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog to not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school					Review Date: Summer 2026		
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/low/ medium/ High/stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Step 5 Action and review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
Worms/fleas	- If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans.	- The school dog will be treated monthly to ensure he is correctly treated for worms and fleas.	Low	- Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet.			
Faeces	- If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	- The school dog will only be walked under supervision. - No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision.	Low	- If a child finds faeces on the school field/playground they will report it to an adult.			
Allergies	- If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	- Children can only be in contact with the school dog once the school has written permission from parents/carers. - If a child has an allergy the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child.	Medium				

Children's access to school dog's resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 put away. - No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind children not to enter area without permissions. 			
Contact with food preparation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the school dog enters a food preparation area this could be unhygienic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school dog will be whilst walking around the school. - He will never enter the school kitchen. 	Trivial				
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind children and adults to clean their hands. 			

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking					Assessment Date: Summer 2025		
Reason: To ensure the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community					Review Date: Summer 2026		
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating Trivial/low/ medium/ High/stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Step 5 Action and review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
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"> - If the school dog is taken off site normal risk assessed procedure will take place. - No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by accompanying adult. - No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk unless permission is given. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes. 			
Visits to classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure he may become over excited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school dog will make classroom visits with a member of staff that Pippin knows well. - The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching partner. 			

Being fed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating he may respond aggressively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No child will be allowed when he is eating a meal. - Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards). - All feeding will be supervised. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when he is eating. 			
School events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the school dog is overwhelmed he may become aggressive or boisterous. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and he will be under the control of a supervising adult. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor the school dog's reaction to school events. - If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog might not attend school on that day. 			
Other dogs (on and off site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the school dog encounters another dog he may become boisterous. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises. - If the school dog encounters another dog whilst off site, the supervising adult will hold the lead. 	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor the school dog's reaction when out walking. 			