School Dog Policy

Knowledge Schools Trust Primaries

Policy owned by:	**Knowledge Schools Trust Primaries**
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School Dog Policy

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.

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 this is included in this document (see appendix 3).
Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head of School. 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 Hitchins.

- 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 of School has been informed before hand
- The dog is a Shih Tzu Poodle cross breed and was 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 Chair of Governors, and the governing board agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Kensington Primary Academy
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. The Trust has produced a risk assessment 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
- 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 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 she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment
- Children should not eat close to the dog
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog

• Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately
• Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils 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 Head of School
• Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog. This includes Phase Leaders
• 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 Hitchins

Actions

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.
The Head of Schools and Executive Headteacher are 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:

Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students.

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. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student 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.

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 older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older 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.

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, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. 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. They can especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. 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. 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 Miss Hitchins; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.

Q: **Will the dog be a distraction?**
A: The dog will be kept in the office area. 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. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely. 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, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

Q: **Who is responsible for training?**
A: Miss Hitchins will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Miss Hitchins aims to have Ada assessed as a Pets As Therapy dog once her training and adolescence are completed.

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 around the school. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Q: **How will the dog's welfare be considered?**
A: 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. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the admin area/AHT office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will have allocated rest times to ensure she does not get overwhelmed during the day. The dog will have unlimited access to 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: Ada is a hypoallergenic and non-shedding breed which greatly reduces the risk of any children or adults having an allergic reaction to her fur. However, in the case of severe allergies, children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage several allergies at school, and this will be no different for children and adults that 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.

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.