



Maharishi Free School
School Dog Risk Assessment
Primary Phase

Includes:

Purpose and introduction

Interaction with pupils and staff

Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog

Hygiene/Health

Activities involving the school dog, including walking

Current Risk Assessment completed: January 2024

Assessment to be reviewed: January 2026

Purpose

1. **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.

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

3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **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 children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child's sugar is low, and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life.

Introduction

Maharishi School's primary phase dog, Ralph, lives with our class teacher, Mr Lowrie. Ralph is a very caring and well behaved dog who has a wonderful temperament and is a real asset to Maharishi School.

Ralph is a 9 year old Cavapoo.



Ralph has public liability insurance, this means he can come into school. Ralph regularly visits the vet for check-ups. Whilst he is there they administer worm and flea treatments.

In addition to the 5 key reasons for Ralph joining us outlined above under 'purpose', we also believe he will improve the children's motivation within the school and help to improve and secure higher attendance levels.

Area: School dog interaction with pupils and staff

Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times

<p style="text-align: center;">Step 1 Identify the hazards</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Step 3 What are you already doing?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Rating Trivial Low Medium High Stop</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Step 4 Is anything further needed?</p>
<p>School dog biting a child or adult</p>	<p>Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites.</p>	<p>The school dog is trained not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way, there is very limited danger.</p> <p>Ralph lives with Mr Lowrie who handles him all the time to ensure that he is used to interaction with children.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision.</p> <p>Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way.</p>
<p>Jumping up/scratching</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>School dog is kept on a lead and/or harness at all times.</p> <p>Children will be taught how and when it is safe to interact with the school dog.</p> <p>School dog is supervised by staff at all times.</p> <p>School dog is trained not to jump up.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision.</p> <p>The school dog will be under lead control by an authorised adult.</p>

		Dog interaction: rules/ training taught to all children and reinforced by other staff.		
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose he could hurt children/adults or damage property.	The school dog will be contained at all times either in an office/ classroom or on a lead/harness.	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective.
Direct interaction with children/staff	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/staff could be scratched/hurt.	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.	Medium	Ensure that the dog is approached in the agreed manner.

Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog

Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times

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?
Incorrect/inconsistent interaction with dog	If a child/adult interacts with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way this could have a negative impact on future interaction.	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	If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped.
Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a dog	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves.	Agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog.	Medium	There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dog.
Use of rewards/treats	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat. Children/adults must clean their hands after handling treats.	Alcohol gel/soap and water will be available to all adults and children. Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation.	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands /use alcohol gel after handling treats. Treats to be locked away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation.

Area: Hygiene / Health

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

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?
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 regularly at his vets 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 comes into contact with the 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 will not be in contact with the school dog if we receive a negative response from parents/guardians. If a child has an allergy, the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child.	Medium	N/A

Children's access to school dog's resources	If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some, they could become unwell.	All of the school dog's resources will be kept out of reach of children. No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation.	Low	Remind children not to enter the area.
Contact with food preparation areas.	If the school dog enters a food preparation area, it could be unhygienic.	The school dog will be in a contained area or on a lead at all times around the school.	Trivial	N/A
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	If hands are not cleaned, children/adults could become unwell.	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog.	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands.

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking

To ensure that the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community

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?
Walking the dog on and off the site	<p>Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed.</p> <p>Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk.</p>	<p>If the school dog is taken off site, the normal risk assessment procedures will take place.</p> <p>No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by an accompanying adult.</p> <p>No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk unless permission is given.</p>	Medium	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 classrooms	If the school dog visits a classroom, and the children do not follow the correct procedure, he may become overexcited.	<p>The school dog will only make classroom visits with Mr Lowrie.</p> <p>The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop.</p>	Medium	Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant.

Being fed	If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating, he may respond aggressively.	No child will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when he is eating. Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards). All feeding will be supervised.	Low	Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when he is eating.
School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed, he may become aggressive or boisterous.	The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and he will be under the control of a supervising adult.	Low	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)	If the school dog is overwhelmed he may become aggressive or boisterous.	No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises. At no time will the school dog be walked by a child and, as a result, if another dog is seen this will be dealt with by the supervising adult.	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction when out walking.

Reviewed by: Lisa Edwards / Dr Ian Birnbaum

Review date: January 2024

To be reviewed: January 2026