



**Maharishi Free School**  
**School Dog Risk Assessment**  
**Secondary 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 responsibility.** Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give a sense of importance and satisfaction that young people can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a young person and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.

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

3. **Dogs teach empathy and compassion.** Being caring and kind isn't a skill we are born with - it's something we learn. Looking after a dog can give hands-on experience of putting the needs of others first.

4. **Dogs are good for mental wellbeing.** The act of stroking a dog has been scientifically proven to lower blood pressure and reduce anxiety. Being with a dog can aid emotional regulation during stressful times.

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

## Introduction



Puds is a laid back and very friendly dog who is accustomed to busy environments. She is regularly around children of a much younger age (KS1-KS2), including special needs. Completely house trained and hypoallergenic (wool coat!), she is a lovely dog to be around. She is 9 years old and a Corgipoo (Corgi/Poodle).

Puds has public liability insurance. She is fully vaccinated and regularly treated for fleas and worms by her vet.

In addition to the 5 key reasons for Puds joining us outlined above under 'purpose', we also believe she will help to create some fun memories for our young people 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**

<b>Step 1 Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2 Who might be harmed &amp; how?</b>	<b>Step 3 What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b> Trivial Low Medium High Stop	<b>Step 4 Is anything further needed?</b>
School dog biting a pupil or adult	Pupil or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites.	<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>Puds lives with Ms Lea-Hayes who handles her all the time to ensure that she is used to interaction with children.</p>	Low	<p>Ensure that pupils 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>
Jumping up/scratching	If the school dog becomes excited, there is a danger that she could jump up and knock a pupil over or leave a scratch mark.	<p>School dog is kept on a lead and/or harness at all times.</p> <p>Pupils 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>	Medium	<p>Ensure that pupils 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>

		<p>School dog is trained not to jump up.</p> <p>Dog interaction: rules/ training taught to all pupils and reinforced by other staff.</p>		
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose she could hurt children/adults or damage property.	The school dog will be contained at all times either in a classroom, the staff room or on a lead/harness.	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective.
Direct interaction with pupils/staff	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind pupils/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**

<b>Step 1</b> <b>Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2</b> <b>Who might be harmed &amp; how?</b>	<b>Step 3</b> <b>What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b> Trivial Low Medium High Stop	<b>Step 4</b> <b>Is anything further needed?</b>
Incorrect/inconsistent interaction with dog	If a pupil/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/pupil will have the interaction stopped.
Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a dog	If adults and pupil 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	<p>Pupils and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat.</p> <p>Pupils/adults must clean their hands after handling treats.</p>	<p>Alcohol gel/soap and water will be available to all adults and pupils.</p> <p>Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation.</p>	Low	<p>Reminders to the pupils to wash hands /use alcohol gel after handling treats.</p> <p>Treats to be kept securely to ensure they can only be used after authorisation.</p>
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## 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**

<b>Step 1 Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2 Who might be harmed &amp; how?</b>	<b>Step 3 What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b> Trivial Low Medium High Stop	<b>Step 4 Is anything further needed?</b>
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 her vets to ensure she is correctly treated for worms and fleas.	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet.

Faeces	If a pupil comes into contact with the dog's faeces, some germs could be transferred.	The school dog will only be walked under supervision. No pupil will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces; this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision.	Low	The dog will be walked off site to reduce risk of pupil contact with faeces.
Allergies	If a pupil is allergic to dogs, they could become unwell.	<p>Pupils will not be in contact with the school dog if we receive a negative response from parents/guardians.</p> <p>If a pupil has an allergy, the school dog will not carry out tasks near the pupil.</p>	Medium	N/A
Pupil's access to school dog's resources	If a pupil has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some, they could become unwell.	<p>Pupils will be reminded not to touch the dog's food/treats and why.</p> <p>No pupil will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation.</p>	Low	Pupils are old enough to know not to eat the dog's treats/food.
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, pupils/adults could become unwell.	All adults and pupils will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog.	Low	Remind pupils and adults to clean their hands.
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**Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking**

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

<b>Step 1 Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2 Who might be harmed &amp; how?</b>	<b>Step 3 What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b> Trivial Low Medium High Stop	<b>Step 4 Is anything further needed?</b>
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<p>Walking the dog on and off the site</p>	<p>Pupils could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed.</p> <p>Pupils 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 pupils will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by an accompanying adult.</p> <p>No pupils will be allowed to interact with the school dog when she is on a walk unless permission is given.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes.</p>
<p>Visits to classrooms</p>	<p>If the school dog visits a classroom, and the pupils do not follow the correct procedure, she may become overexcited.</p>	<p>The school dog will mainly remain in the maths classroom with her owner, Ms Lea-Hayes and will mainly stay in the staffroom at breaks and lunchtime.</p> <p>If the school dog does occasionally visit other classrooms, the pupils will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Being fed</p>	<p>If a pupil tries to interact when the school dog is eating, she may respond aggressively.</p>	<p>No pupil will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when she is eating.</p> <p>Only Ms Lea-Hayes, or another approved adult, may feed the dog.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The dog will be fed in the staff room, away from the pupils, as a further precaution.</p>

School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed, she may become aggressive or boisterous.	The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and she 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 she 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 pupil 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**