



Oakfield Primary School

Mentor Dog Policy

2024-25

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| **Written by:** | Heather Farrell | **Date:** June 2023 |
| **Last reviewed on:** | August 2024 | |
| **Next review due by:** | September 2025 | |

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**A close up of a sign

Description automatically generatedThe Dog Mentor Programme UK**

The use of dogs in school is part of the recognised Dog Mentor UK Programme. More information can be found at <https://www.thedogmentor.co.uk>

The dogs that are placed in schools have all undergone The Dog Mentor initial training and will work towards further awards within this programme. By working towards and gaining the awards, the dogs are maintaining the high quality expected of Dog Mentors.

***Is there a risk to bringing a dog into a school environment?***

The simple answer is yes. However, there a variety of other situations that can happen in the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries/ risks that can be caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be mitigated. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and can be accessed by all stakeholders upon request.

Dogs are only permitted on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher or most senior member of school staff. This includes drop off and collection times. The Dog Mentor has been assessed and this policy outlines the mitigation that has been put in place to allow the dog to be on site.

**School Policy**

The Dog Mentor will be owned by **Mr Farrell (Senior Leader/Wellbeing Lead) and Mrs Farrell (Headteacher)** and reside with them in their family home.

The Dog Mentor will undergo a full training session and a thorough risk assessment is carried out by a third party (The Dog Mentor UK) and will be reviewed annually as a minimum.

The Dog Mentor has been chosen to work as a Dog Mentor in school because of its intelligence and personality. The Dog Mentor has been assessed as being a dog that will respond well to training, is good with children and is very sociable.

All stakeholders have been informed that a dog will be working in school. Information will be placed on the web site and in induction packs for all stakeholders to access. Information about the dogs will also be placed on the newsletter on a regular basis.

The risk assessment carefully considers the needs of any member of the school community who has known allergies. All visitors will be informed that there is a dog on site prior to entering the building. If any visitor raised concerns, this will be reported to the most senior staff member on site and appropriate action will be taken. Visitors will be instructed about the need to follow the rules set in place for working with Dog Mentor.

The Dog Mentor will be slowly introduced to the school environment and the children and staff working within. The time that the Dog Mentor works in school will be gradually increased if this is deemed appropriate and suitable for the dog and school.

If the Dog Mentor is unwell at any time, they will not come into school.

The Dog Mentor will be kept on a lead when moving through the school building and will be under the full control of a trained member of staff **(Mr Farrell or Mrs Garside).**

On occasions where it is deemed appropriate, and only when training has been completed, the Dog Mentor may be granted ‘right to roam’ in certain designated areas and will still be accompanied by a trained adult or the dog owner.

Children will never be left alone with the Dog Mentor and there will always be an appropriate adult supervising.

Children and staff will be taught and reminded about what is deemed as appropriate behaviour around the Dog Mentor. This will be in line with the recommendations of the staff at The Dog Mentor UK and the Kennel Club

Children will be taught by way of an assembly which will be presented to them when the Dog Mentor is first introduced to school, and it is recommended that this is then revisited at least termly.

Children will not be permitted to interact with the Dog Mentor when the dog is eating or sleeping.

Children will be able to give treats to the dog when involved in training but will be taught how to do this.

The Dog Mentor will never be surrounded by large groups of children. No more than two children will place their hands on the dog at any one time. Interactions with the Dog Mentor will always be supervised by a trained adult.

The Dog Mentor’s wellbeing will always be a priority. The dog handlers and the dog owner will continually monitor the Dog Mentor and will use their working knowledge of the animal to read the communication given out. If at any point, the Dog Mentor shows any sign of being upset or distressed, he/she will be withdrawn from the situation and given time to relax.

The Dog Mentor programme considers the dogs needs fully and will only continue to work in school if it is deemed that he/she is happy to be there. Positive reinforcement is at the heart of the Dog Mentor training programme and the training received by the dogs is reward-based.

The Dog Mentor will not be present when children are eating.

Children will be carefully guided on how to approach and stroke the Dog Mentor so that the dog’s needs are always being considered.

School staff will carefully monitor and record any impact that the Dog Mentor has on the school community.

Dog foul will be disposed of carefully and in line with the guidance given on the Risk assessment. Staff members working with the Dog Mentor will be offered COSHH training to ensure that they have an understanding of the importance of handling and disposing of dog wasted correctly.

Office staff will be made aware of when the Dog Mentor is on site. This ensures that, in the event of any emergency evacuation, the Dog Mentor will safely be removed from the environment provided this does not put any staff member at risk.

The Dog Mentor will be signed into and out of the school premises

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Academy Improvement Committee hold the responsibility of ensuring that the school has written a policy for having a dog present in school. The risk assessment will be checked and approved by the schools Health and Safety Officer.

The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing the policy in school.

Teachers, staff, parents/carers and visitors are required to always abide by the policy.

The school curriculum will support the teaching and learning about dogs to enable children to improve their knowledge about animal welfare and the behaviour and care of dogs and animals as a whole. This education will include ensuring that children know that not all dogs are well-trained, and that caution should always be taken around unknown dogs outside school.