

Animals in School Policy (Dog)

Prospect House Primary School



Prospect House

PRIMARY SPECIALIST SUPPORT SCHOOL

Approved by:	Robin Anthony	Date: June 2024
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Last reviewed on:	N/A
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Next review due by:	September 2027
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Policy Statement

Prospect House Primary School is committed to the safety of its pupils, employees and visitors. This policy has been implemented to ensure that the welfare of these stakeholders, as well as the dog, are prioritised at all times.

Prospect House does not allow dogs on the school site unless specifically authorised by the senior leadership team or if they are assistance dogs.

This policy outlines the measures put in place to allow for the school to authorise a therapy/reading dog on the school site.

Rationale

The value of animal therapy is known to have multiple benefits to pupil and staff wellbeing and mental health.

Existing UK schools with a therapy dog report:

- Increased pupil attendance by up to 16% (Knockhill Primary Academy)
- Decreased anxiety and improved social interactions in pupils (Kingshill School)
- Benefits to the development of communication and emotional skills of pupils (Bristnall Hall Academy)
- Increased understanding of responsibility and development in empathy in pupils (Sancton Wood School)
- The additional value of having a therapy dog to support with reading in school is widely reported by UK charities as:
- Benefitting pupils who are reluctant to read, unconfident readers and those with additional needs (Therapy Dogs Nationwide)
- Improving reading skills, encouraging positive behaviour and building self-confidence and self-esteem (Bark and Reading)
- Reducing stress and nerves when reading out loud to a group and creating a calming environment to develop confidence (Pets as Therapy)

All of these benefits will be of huge value to our pupils given that:

- The proportion of pupils with additional needs at Prospect House is of a high proportion
- Reading is a key priority for the school, particularly targeting reluctant readers
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all students

When identifying a therapy/reading dog to work in school, the following information must apply:

- The dog must have a named owner who is an employee at the school

- The owner must take full responsibility for the care of the dog and keep the dog up to date with their vaccinations, worm and flea treatments and any other treatment they may require to maintain good health
- Consideration must be made to the breed and nature of the dog
- The dog must undergo training at a reputable training company
- The dog must have a base in school where they will remain when not working
- The dog must be at least 6 months of age to work directly with pupils on therapeutic and reading interventions

Communication, Introduction and Integration of the Dog

The school must ensure that prior to the placement of a dog that all stakeholders have been informed. The

following steps are in place:

- All staff will be communicated with via the weekly staff bulletin and the offer of a drop in session. All staff will be given the option to opt of involvement with a therapy dog if they have any concerns regarding: health and safety, allergies or fears of animals.
- Letters will be sent to all parents/carers informing them of the school's decision to have a therapy dog on site. All parents/carers will be given the option to opt out of their child having involvement with the therapy dog.
- The dog will attend school open evenings and events to introduce them to new parents/carers and pupils.
- All visitors will be informed that there is a therapy dog on site via a notice in the school reception and notice on the school website.
- The dog will then be introduced to the school site on a gradual basis over time in order to protect the welfare of the dog and all stakeholders. The dog will not work directly with pupils until they are fully trained, integrated and used to all aspects of school life i.e. school bells, fire alarms, transitions between classes and familiarity with staff.

Curriculum

The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog.

A dog will support pupils with:

- Reading – pupils will read to the dog
- Responsibility – pupils will be offered the opportunity to join an extra-curricular club in animal care and learn how to properly care for a dog
- Welfare – pupils will be offered time with the the dog for therapy
- Rewards – the dog will be involved with rewarding pupils for those who would like to be involved
- A dog will follow a structured timetable, ensuring that its work has meaning and sessions will be preplanned and linked to the school's curriculum.

Complaints and Allegations

Prospect House has completed a thorough risk assessment to allow for the presence of dogs on the school site. This will be reviewed and updated annually unless required sooner. If anyone reports any issues regarding the dog, they will be asked to raise their concerns in writing which will be responded to in line with our complaints procedure.

Should anyone get hurt by the dog:

- Parents/carers will be informed immediately (if pupil)
- First aid procedure will be fully implemented
- Pupil or staff members will be released for medical attention if required
- A full investigation of circumstances will be conducted. A dog will not be permitted onto the school site until the investigation is completed.
- The suitability of a dog will be re-assessed following investigation.

Should the dog get hurt by someone:

- The owner will be informed immediately
- The owner will visit the registered vet if deemed necessary
- A full investigation of circumstances will be undertaken
- The access of the person responsible for injuring the dog will be re-assessed following investigation.
- A dog in school will be covered by the school's public liability insurance for injury to the dog through negligence of a member of staff or the fabric of the building.

Contingency Plans

If the dog escapes from the school building and is loose on the school grounds:

- The owner will be informed immediately
- The owner and other identified handlers/members of staff will be asked to secure exits to prevent the dog from leaving the grounds
- Pupils will be informed not to approach or chase the dog
- The owner will secure the dog with a lead using training commands

If the dog escapes from the school site:

- The owner will be informed immediately
- The owner and other identified handlers/members of staff will be asked to search the surrounding area
- Pupils will be informed not to approach or chase the dog

- If found, the owner will secure the dog with a lead using training commands
- If not found, the missing dog will be reported to the correct outside agencies

In case of an emergency evacuation/fire drill:

- The appropriate adult will walk the dog on a lead to the assembly point
- The dog will be passed to the owner
- The dog will remain with the owner until the building is deemed safe and all pupils have re-entered classrooms.
- If the owner is not on site when there is an evacuation, then another member of staff will be delegated responsible for the ownership of the dog during this time

In the case of severe weather:

- The dog will only be walked during cooler period of the day in hot weather to prevent overheating and burns to paws
- A fan will be provided to keep the dog cool during hot weather if required
- The dog will only be walked if the ground is deemed appropriate during snow/ice periods (clear of both) to prevent frostbite
- The dog will be kept in a room which is warm during cold weather periods

Health and Safety

To ensure the safety and welfare of our pupils, staff, visitors and a therapy dog, a full risk assessment is in place. The following outlined steps will be taken to protect all on the school site.

Pupils, Staff and Visitors

- The dog will be kept on a lead at all times when moving around the school building or on a walk.
- The dog will be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times when on the school site.
- Pupils will never be left alone with the dog.
- Pupils and staff will be informed on how to act around the dog prior to its integration. New staff and pupils will receive this advice prior to joining the school.
- The number of pupils having access at one time will be monitored and limited to a reasonable amount.
- Adults will immediately remove the dog from the situation if it shows any signs of distress (growling, baring teeth, tail lowered between legs).

- The dog will be kept away from any area within the school where food is being prepared or consumed i.e. kitchen, dining hall, technology department).
- Anyone who has access to the dog must wash their hands before and after interaction.
- The dog will be discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking.
- Pupils will only access the dog when they are scheduled to meet or work with the dog.
- The dog will be kept in their designated area when not working.
- The dog will not be linked with any pupil whose parents/carers withdraw consent or where there is a high risk of the pupil injuring the dog or putting themselves in danger with the dog.
- Sensible precautions will be put in place to minimise the risk of the spread of infectious disease.
- The dog will not enter the school site unless free from parasites.
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The Dog

- Pupils will be informed not to disturb the dog whilst sleeping or eating. The dog will have a designated place where it can rest and eat.
- The dog will work for three hours' maximum per day and be given sufficient time between sessions to rest, eat and toilet. Only the dog's handler will have access to the dog during this time.
- Construction of a suitable outside toileting area will commence, fenced off away from pupils.
- The dog will be given time to adjust to the school environment (i.e. fire alarm, bells etc.) prior to being introduced to pupils.
- The dog will never be left in the building unsupervised or overnight.
- The dog will be cared for outside of school when unable to attend school i.e. due to illness etc.
- The dog will only be handled by confident staff who are familiar to the dog and able to control them.
- The dog will have access to fresh drinking water at all times.
- The dog will be given the opportunity to toilet whenever required.
- The dog's owner will ensure that the dog is not put into any potential situations that would compromise the dog's health and wellbeing.
- The dog's claws will be trimmed to reduce risk of accidental scratching.
- The dog is microchipped and registered to the owner.
- Pet insurance is in place to ensure that the dog is covered for any injury.

Appendix 1 – Named Dog Information and Responsibilities

This appendix relates to the introduction of a named dog. A further appendix will be added for any further introduction of any additional dogs.

General Information

The dog's owner is identified as: Robin Anthony

- The dog breed/information: The dog is a male Border Collie born on 02/07/2018, named Alfie. He has been bred by a reputable breeder. Both parents are KC registered and are cleared for all health tests.
- The breed: Collie's are intelligent and social dogs with a friendly temperament making them appropriate for use as therapy dogs.
- The dog's training: The dog has undergone full puppy training with a reputable company Doggy4Paws – Whitefield. The dog will undergo continual training as necessary to ensure his suitability for the school.
- The dog will be situated: The SLT office and will access classrooms and social areas of the school for therapy as well as the school yard and field for exercise. The dog lives at the address of Robin outside of school hours.
- The dog's care: Robin is responsible for the care of the dog at all times, including veterinary care. It is the responsibility of Robin to ensure that the dog is in good health. If the dog is not in good health, then under no circumstances will he access the school site until he has been cleared as well by his vet. Robin is responsible for ensuring that all vaccinations, worm and flea treatments are fully up to date prior to the dog entering the school site.

Responsibilities

School Name: Prospect House Specialist Support Primary School

The Owner: Robin Anthony

The Handlers: Agreed staff on the school site In case that the owner is not on the school site at the time of an emergency evacuation, the dog will be cared for by:

Millie Gleeson, Tracy Gallier or Debbie Atkinson

The dog's base will be: SLT office

The school will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the 'Dog in School' policy is adhered to by staff, pupils and visitors to the school site.
- Ensuring that the dog has an appropriate rest area, feeding area and toilet area away from busy areas.
- Ensuring that adequate insurance is in place for the dog to be in the school.
- Ensuring that only appropriate adults supervise the dog whilst on the school site.

The owner will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the dog is on site on set days during term unless the dog is unwell.

- Ensuring that the dog is regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.
- If the dog is unwell, that he will be diagnosed and treated by a registered vet
- Ensuring that the dog will receive relevant vaccinations and that a record of dates of vaccinations are held on the school site.
- Ensuring that the dog receives adequate worm and flea treatments.
- Ensuring that the dog's claws are trimmed to reduce risk of accidental scratching.
- Ensuring that the dog is cared for outside of the school to a high standard.
- Ensuring that the dog's rest and food area within the school is kept clean and in line with health and safety standards.
- Ensuring that adequate insurance is in place for the dog's health and care needs when on and off the school site.
- Ensuring that the dog is fully trained prior to working with pupils and other staff.

The handlers (other identified staff) will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that they can handle the dog safely prior to working with pupils.
- Ensuring that the dog is care for whilst being handled by others.
- To be available in case of emergency i.e. dog escaping

Appendix 2: FAQs

- *Is the dog from a reputable breeder?*

Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

- *Will the dog be a distraction?*

The dog will be kept in the office area. The office is separate from the classrooms and playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with pupils 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 and other areas within the school grounds where pupils can interact safely.

- *Has a risk assessment been undertaken?*

Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in the school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

- *How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?*

In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

- *How will the dog's welfare be considered?*

The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents/carers 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. The dog will be kept in the SLT office and will only have planned and supervised contact with pupils and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

- *How will this be managed where staff, pupils or visitors have allergies?*

People do not need to touch a dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for pupils and adults that are allergic to dogs.

Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with all to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

The dog will be given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens and the school site will be cleaned daily.

A list of all known staff and pupils with allergies will be held on our school system.

- *Someone is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?*

Access to the dog will be carefully managed and supervised and staff, pupils and visitors do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with all who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.