

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

School Dog Policy

Issued March 2022

Reviewed November 2025

Next review due November 2027



SCHOOL DOG			
Review frequency:	Every two years	Next review date:	November 2027
Governing committee responsible:	FGB		
Governor approval:	Yes	Website:	Yes
Staff responsible:	C.Monaghan	Date produced:	MARCH 2022

Background

The Governing Body, Senior Leadership Team and Learning Support Team have considered the possibility of having a school dog in school.

Our findings are that schools that have a School Dog, find that they assist in:

- Teaching responsibility and respect;
- Teaching empathy, non-violence and in some cases how to love and have patience;
- Motivating children who are not that attentive;
- Increasing social skills and self-esteem;
- Increasing confidence around dogs and in general;
- Improvement in attendance rates;
- Helping to calm behaviour down – both in classrooms and in a1:1 situation;
- Increasing literacy skills – children begin to enjoy reading and want to read aloud.

Governing Body approval was granted in March 2022.

It is recognised that animals are not generally allowed in either the school building or grounds, unless a full risk assessment has been undertaken, that considers the behaviour and characteristics of the animal(s). This is the reason why dogs belonging to parents and carers are not allowed on the school site. A full risk assessment has however been undertaken for the school dog/puppy and is attached to this document. This will be reviewed on a regular basis.

It is accepted that interacting with a dog may not be appropriate for all children, but that for the majority it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent or carer who does not wish their child to have direct interaction with the dog/puppy will be asked to inform the school office of their wishes – an opportunity to do this will be offered through the parent consent letter. We will then ensure that this is considered and that these children do not have any contact with the dog at any time. A list of these children will be kept in the school office.

Context

The dog will:

- Be owned by Mrs Monaghan and her family.
- Be introduced to school as a puppy and will 'grow' up with Mrs Monaghan in school.
- 'Live' in Mrs Monaghan's room, where it will have its bed, water, etc. This will be the Stanley's main base.
- Always be kept on a lead when moving around school.
- Have a dedicated area to relieve itself in an area that children do not access.
- Costs associated with the dog, including veterinary costs will be covered by Mrs Monaghan
- Any parent or carer who does not wish their child to have direct contact with the dog/puppy will be asked to inform the school office of their wishes.

The Role of the School Dog

First 6 -12 months

- During this time, the dog will be socialised by Mrs Monaghan and will learn basic commands through positive reinforcement training.
- At the same time, Mrs Monaghan will take Stanley into classes to teach them how to interact with the school puppy and dogs in general. This will extend to teaching the children how to 'read' the body language of dogs and the golden rules to apply when meeting dogs.
- Those children that have been given permission by their parents, may as the dog gets older have basic interaction with the dog, albeit constantly supervised. This may form part of a reward system, or if an entire class has permission to spend time with the dog.
- The dog will take part in puppy training
- If appropriate the dog may sometimes welcome children to school with Mrs Monaghan another staff member in the mornings.
- Begin interactive work with pupils, listening to readers /visiting classes.
- Attend some lessons as long as this does not become a distraction
- The dog may be taken of the lead when visiting classes if deemed appropriate by the supervising staff member. However the harness will still be worn to signify to the dog that it is still "working."

It will be a requirement that the dog:

- Is regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.

- Is diagnosed and treated by a vet if it is ill.
- Receives annual vaccinations.
- Is wormed monthly (as recommended by the Vet).
- Is treated with flea preventative treatment 3 monthly in the winter and every 8 weeks in the summer.
- Has its claws trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches.
- Is exercised before being allowed to work with children.

Management Day to Day

It will be a requirement of the handler/owner to ensure that:

- The dog is physically fit before visiting the school environment;
- The dog is kept on a lead when moving through the school or school ground during school hours. The dog may be taken off the lead whilst in its penned area and during direct training with the handler/in a classroom with a member of staff supervising.
- They/ an appropriate staff member remain in the vicinity of the dog and the children at all times when it is not in its crate, or penned area;
- The dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking;
- The dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not muddy, wet etc.
- Natural relief for the dog is taken in the designated area only. Waste will be disposed of by the handler, in bags deposited in a designated bin.

Pupils will:

- Never have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with the dog
 - Directly 'work' or interact with the dog in a group of more than 3 children;
 - Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog through information assemblies/class discussions/group discussions

Appropriate behaviours are:

- Always remain calm around the dog
 - Don't make sudden movements and be gentle
 - Always approach the dog standing up and come down to his level.
 - Do not approach the dog when it is sleeping or eating unless allowed to by the supervising adult
 - Don't put your face near the dog
 - Don't stare into the dog's eyes as this can be interpreted as a threat
 - Do not eat close to the dog
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicated that the dog is feeling threatened or angry. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling being signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog ever displays these warning signs it will immediately be removed from that situation or environment:
 - Be informed of the following health and safety principles:
 - Always wash their hands and/or use anti-bac gel after handling the dog
 - Any dog 'mess' will be cleaned up immediately by Mrs Monaghan/ other appropriate staff member. This must never be done by children.

Should a bite (even playful) ever occur:

1. Parents or carers will be contacted immediately.
2. The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing.
3. The child/adult will be released for medical attention.
4. All staff will be informed.
5. The dog will be removed from direct contact with any child pending the outcome of the full investigation and reassessment.
6. A full investigation into the circumstances will be led by the Head Teacher.
7. The suitability of the dog will be re-assessed by the Head Teacher and the Governing Body

SCHOOLS RISK ASSESSMENT



PART A. ASSESSMENT DETAILS:

Area/task/activity: School Dog

Location of activity: Whole school, Primarily Learning Support

School name: Address & Contact details:	St.Joseph's Catholic Primary School PR1 5XL	Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment:	Mrs Catherine Monaghan
		Signature(s):	
Head Teacher (Name):	Mrs Catherine Monaghan	Date of Assessment:	January 2024
Signature:		Planned Review Date: (Minimum 12 months)	January 2027
How communicated to staff:	Staff briefing & emails	Date communicated to staff:	31.3.2022

PART B1. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL MEASURES:

Step 1 Identify significant hazards	Step 2 Identify who might be harmed and how	Step 3 identify precautionary measures already in place	
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List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm) (1)	Who might be harmed? (2)	Type of harm (3)	Existing controls (4) (Actions already taken to control the risk)
All below:	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below:	◆ Staff will always be referred to refer to the CLEAPSS document PS 55 'Bringing pets and other animals into schools' (04/02) when involved with the school dog.

Poor hygiene	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Infection, illness	◆ Cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms are covered before handling the school dog. ◆ Pupils and adults always wash their hands soon after handling the school dog (or coming into contact with the soil, bedding, water etc). ◆ Soap, anti-bacterial hand wash and paper towels for washing/drying hands hygienically are provided.
Animal behaviour	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Bites, scratches, snapping. Dog becoming distressed and unpredictable.	◆ Pupils instructed in handling the dog and closely supervised. ◆ Keep the dog away from the face. ◆ The dog will be regularly handled ◆ The dog will undergo puppy training ◆ Consideration of the breed/size of the dog being brought into school in relation to the age group of the children. ◆ The dog owner has adequate Public Liability Insurance through the Local Authority. ◆ Parental consent required for pupils working in close contact with the dog on a regular basis. Parents can 'opt-out' of this provision.
Pupil behaviour	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Pupils becoming anxious/distressed, which may create a stressful situation for the dog and other pupils.	◆ Permission collected for all pupils working in regular close-contact with the dog. ◆ Pupils informed of how to behave around dogs prior to the dog arriving in school. ◆ Small manageable groups of pupils with the dog at any one time. ◆ Pupils to be taught about the dog in assembly to ensure all pupils are briefed in advance of meeting the dog. ◆ Teachers/supervisors to be vigilant of pupils and what steps to take if a pupil does become anxious/distressed and agreed actions will be taken if the dog shows signs of stress. This will involve returning the dog to its school base.

Allergies	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose, breathing difficulties	◆ Parents are asked to identify any pupils known to have allergic reactions to animals and these pupils have very restricted/ no access to the dog. ◆ Pupils and adults always wash their hands soon after handling any animal (or coming into contact with the soil, bedding, water, etc, in an animal's housing); ◆ Pupils are instructed not to rub their eyes before washing their hands and are closely supervised; ◆ Medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside once the animal and the afflicted person are kept apart.
Diseases and parasites	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Illness	◆ Dog obtained from accredited and high-quality source. ◆ Dog must not be able to come into contact with wild rodents etc. due to the possibility of disease transmission. ◆ Arrangements in place for care during holidays / weekends ◆ Cages kept secure and clean for the wellbeing of the dog and the pupils and staff. ◆ The dog will be regular vaccinated and receive worming and flea treatment to reduce to risk of parasitic infection. ◆ Dog waste to be disposed of in sealed plastic bags with normal waste. ◆ The dog will be vaccinated annually, including against kennel cough. ◆ The dog will be given preventative flea, worm and tick medication regularly, with products bought from a veterinary surgery
Phobias	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Psychological stress	◆ Parents are asked to identify any pupils known to have a phobia of dogs, ◆ Where there are pupils with phobias, they will be kept at a distance from the dog. Opportunity for systematic desensitisation will be provided by school staff with parental permission.
Suitable environment for the animal	Dog		◆ Adult handler is asked to identify and maintain optimum conditions for animal in question. The dog will have a crate in school .The dog will never be unsupervised by a staff member unless it is in the crate or enclosed area.

Cuts/minor injury from defective housing	Dog	Physical	◆ Housing will be maintained by Mrs Monaghan and repairs will be done immediately.
Fire risk	Dog, Pupils, Staff	Physical	◆ The dog will be led out of class with the staff and pupils. It will then be given to a nominated member of staff, who has no form/pupil responsibilities once outside . ◆ All staff will be briefed on this arrangement and a fire drill will take place to check all procedures are working.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to the area/task/activity under assessment in St.Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Signed: *CMonaghan* 19/01/2024

Name: MRS CATHERINE MONAGHAN Risk Assessor.