

# School Dog Policy

“Lord make me an instrument of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me sow love  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
And where there is sadness, joy.”

**Prayer of St Francis**



## **'Feeding Hearts and Minds'**

The peace, joy and love of Christ is at the heart of all that we do in our school. Through religious education, school policy and, primarily, our culture of prayerfulness, charity and joy, we seek to share the Gospel with our families, our parish, our community and the wider world.

Using the example of Jesus Christ, we cultivate the skills of heart and mind that allow us to develop our talents and take a shared responsibility for ourselves, each other and the world He gave us. We profess our faith proudly and recognise that we are called to a loving relationship with God through the sacraments, scripture and prayer.

Our school is animated by love and our shared faith and clear values drive our behaviour and our relationships; we are tolerant and respectful of the unique value of each person. Our individual needs and talents are recognised and nurtured in a warm, inclusive environment where we are able to use our gifts for the glory of God and in loving service of others.

We have excellent role models who empower us to believe in ourselves and provide us with an outstanding education and a wide range of opportunities – our aspirations for the future are high and we believe that through God's grace we can grow, learn and realise our full potential.

## SCHOOL DOG POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog. There are further details in Appendix 1.

#### *Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?*

Yes, there is, though there are a variety of accidents, which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this is included in this document (see appendix 3).

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present. Further FAQs are detailed in Appendix 2.

### SCHOOL POLICY

The dog will be owned by Miss Hannah

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Head Teacher has been informed before hand.
- The dog is a Labradoodle, chosen because it is an intelligent, playful breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, which sheds little hair and is very sociable and friendly.
- The Chair of Governors and the governing body agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. Miss Hannah, Head teacher has produced a risk assessment in consultation with Lancashire County Council and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill, he will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.

- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on his body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head Teacher ASAP.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog. This includes Miss Hannah, Miss Liddle, Mrs Morris and Mrs O Connor
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Miss Hannah and Miss Forsyth.

### **ACTIONS**

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher or a Deputy as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head teacher

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The **Governing Body** has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in school.
- The **Head teacher** is responsible for implementing this policy.
- **Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors** are required to abide by this policy.
- The **curriculum** will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

## **APPENDIX 1 – REASONS TO HAVE A DOG IN SCHOOL**

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:-

- Improve academic achievement
- Increase literacy skills
- Calming behaviours
- Increase social skills and self-esteem
- Increase confidence
- Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- Help prevent truancy
- Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

### **BEHAVIOUR:**

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Case study: Mandy was a student with poor attendance and truancy. Mandy was encouraged back into school using caring for River, a dog, as an incentive. By telling Mandy that "if she didn't come to school to care for him, he wouldn't get walks, water or love," Mandy came to school almost every day for the rest of the year, only missing two days.

### **EDUCATION:**

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction.

Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:**

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students. With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

**AS A REWARD:**

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs.

The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

## **APPENDIX 2 – SCHOOL DOG FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

### **Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?**

A The legal owner of the dog will be Miss Hannah; she will bear the costs associated with owning the Dog.

### **Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?**

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

### **Q Will the dog be a distraction?**

A The dog will be kept in the office area to ensure it only comes into contact with children 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 rooms, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

### **Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

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

### **Q Who is responsible for training?**

A Miss Hannah will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained.

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

A 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.

Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

### **Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?**

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents 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. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the admin area/HT office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children 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.

### **Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?**

A Children will not need to touch the 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 children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. The breed of dog is known for


minimal moulting, he is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

**Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?**

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

## APPENDIX 2 – COPY OF RISK ASSESSMENT (LCC)

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<b>SCHOOL DOG RISK ASSESSMENT</b>	
<p style="color: red; font-size: small;">School employees using this risk assessment must be aware of and refer to the CLEAPSS guidance mentioned in the 'existing control measures' section. This risk assessment should also be referred to in schemes of work, lesson plans, teacher planning notes, etc. relating to this subject</p>	

### PART A. ASSESSMENT DETAILS:

**Area/task/activity:** Keeping Animals in School

**Location of activity:** Primary School Classroom

<b>School name:</b>	Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School, Farringdon Lane, Preston PR2 6LX	<b>Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment:</b>	Kelly Hannah, assisted by Ursula Clarkson, Health and Safety Advisor
<b>Address &amp; Contact details:</b>		<b>Signature(s):</b>	
<b>Headteacher (Name):</b>	Kelly Hannah,	<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	28 March 2019
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Planned Review Date:</b>	28 March 2020
<b>How communicated to staff:</b>	During a staff meeting	<b>Date communicated to staff:</b>	

### PART B. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL MEASURES:

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
All below	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff always refer to the CLEAPSS document GL211-An introduction to keeping and handling animals in schools</li> </ul>
All below continued...	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Animals which can transmit diseases to</li> <li>◆ The school will follow guidance issued by the RSPCA on the 'Animal Friendly Schools' to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and best practice.</li> </ul>

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List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Poor hygiene	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Infection, illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms are to be covered before handling animals;</li> <li>◆ Pupils and adults must always wash their hands as soon as possible after handling any animal (or coming into contact with the soil, bedding, water etc. in a 'safe space' crate, kept in two locations in school)</li> <li>◆ Reception &amp; KS1 pupils hand washing is to be supervised to ensure that it is done properly;</li> <li>◆ Paper towels for drying hands hygienically are provided;</li> <li>◆ Reception &amp; KS1 pupils are to be closely supervised to ensure they do not put their fingers in their mouths before hands have been washed;</li> <li>◆ School dog will not be allowed to wander unrestricted around the classroom;</li> <li>◆ School dog's area will be cleaned and disinfected regularly;</li> <li>◆ If the School dog wander on floors or tables clean and disinfect them immediately;</li> <li>◆ When the School Dog require fresh food, remove any uneaten surplus before it begins to decompose.</li> </ul>
Diseases, parasites and allergies	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Illness, allergic reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Guardians are asked to identify any pupils known to have allergic reactions to the School Dog and these pupils are instructed and supervised to ensure they avoid all further contact with the animals;</li> <li>◆ Pupils and adults must always wash their hands as soon as possible after handling any animal (or coming into contact with the soil, bedding, water, etc. in an animal's housing);</li> <li>◆ Pupils are instructed not to rub their eyes after handling animals until they have washed their hands and are to be closely supervised;</li> <li>◆ Medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside once the animal and the afflicted person are kept apart;</li> <li>◆ Safe and secure storage for animal food is required to prevent unauthorised and pest access.</li> </ul>

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List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Animal behaviour	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Bites, scratches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pupils are warned of the hazards of some animals e.g. not tormenting the school dog;</li> <li>◆ Procedures are introduced and pupils taught the correct handling of animals</li> <li>◆ Animals are closely supervised by an adult;</li> <li>◆ pupils are closely supervised by an adult;</li> <li>◆ A First Aid kit is available all animal scratches and bites are carefully washed and a first aider contacted.</li> </ul>
Animal Welfare	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Animal death Pupil upset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ welfare conditions are upheld;</li> <li>◆ The School dog will have access to clean water each day;</li> <li>◆ Provision made for animal's welfare during school holidays including alternative arrangements Headteacher will take the School dog home each evening;</li> <li>◆ The School Dog will have regular health checks.</li> </ul>

**NOTE:** CLEAPSS have issued a number of guidance leaflets on keeping animals in school as well bringing pets, etc to school that schools may find useful in developing this risk assessment further

- L56 – Housing and Keeping Animals;

This general risk assessment will apply to this area/task/activity in most schools providing the control measures described are in operation and there are no further local significant hazards. If it does not fully apply and further control measures are required, please complete the Action Plan at Part C. if it fully applies please sign below.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to the area/task/activity under assessment in .....  
(Name of school)

Signed:

Name:

Risk Assessor:



## School Dog Policy

January 2020

The School Dog Policy is based on best practice advice from Lancashire County Council.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by The Headteacher in consultation with the Faith, Curriculum and Community Committee of the Governing Body.

This policy will be reviewed as appropriate by the Faith, Curriculum and Community Committee on behalf of The Governing Body.

Intended Policy Review Date – September 2020

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Governor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_