

Policy for Weekly Dog Club – Blackpool Skills Academy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures, expectations and responsibilities for running a weekly dog club at Blackpool Skills Academy (“the School”) with the aim of providing pupils with beneficial contact with a dog in a safe, controlled environment. It seeks to promote positive learning, wellbeing and responsibility while ensuring the welfare of the dog and the safety of all members of the School community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- The dog (hereafter referred to as the “School Dog”) and its handler.
- Pupils participating in the dog club.
- Staff supervising the club.
- Visitors on site during club sessions.
- All School premises utilised for the club.

3. Definitions

- **School Dog:** the dog selected specifically to participate in the weekly animal club.
- **Handler:** the member of staff or designated adult who is responsible for the dog’s welfare, training, supervision and documentation.
- **Club Session:** the weekly scheduled time when the School Dog attends and interacts with pupils under supervision.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** Approve the policy, ensure resources and insurance cover are in place; monitor compliance; review annually.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead / Safeguarding Lead:** Ensure safeguarding procedures are aligned; ensure pupils’ welfare when interacting with dog.
- **Handler:** Maintain the dog’s welfare, training records, session logs; ensure health & vaccinations up to date; attend to risk assessments & incident reports.

- **Supervising Staff:** Attend sessions, manage pupil behaviour, ensure rules are followed.
- **Pupils & Parents/Carers:** Parents/Carers provide consent; pupils follow rules and instructions when interacting with the dog.

5. Conditions for the School Dog

- The dog must be temperament-assessed and suitable for the school environment. scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk+1
- The dog must have up-to-date vaccinations, flea/worm treatments and be microchipped. burlingtonhouseschool.com
- A quiet rest area away from pupils will be provided for the dog. scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk
- Session durations will be limited; active time monitored and rest/recovery given. scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk
- If the dog is unwell, displaying signs of stress, or behaviour changes, it will not attend until reassessed.

6. Participation & Consent

- Parents/Carers will be informed in writing about the presence of the dog and asked to give consent for their child's participation.
- Pupils with known allergies, asthma or severe fear of dogs will be excluded from direct interaction; alternative arrangements provided.
- Participation is voluntary; no pupil will be forced to interact with the dog.

7. Health, Safety & Behaviour Rules

- Pupils must wash hands before and after touching the dog.
- Clear rules will be taught and displayed: e.g., approach dog standing up, do not put face near dog, do not disturb dog when sleeping/eating, no rough play. scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk+1
- The dog will always be under supervision; pupils will never be left alone with the dog. st-francis.herts.sch.uk+1
- The dog must be on lead when moving around non-secure areas. burlingtonhouseschool.com
- Pupils will not eat in the immediate area of the dog.
- A log of any incidents (e.g., scratches, bites, medical reaction) will be kept and reviewed with SLT.

8. Welfare of the Dog

- The dog's welfare is paramount. The School commits to meeting the animal's needs (food, water, rest, quiet periods, opportunity to avoid stress). [Woodgreen Pets Charity+1](#)
- The handler will monitor the dog's behaviour for signs of distress (growling, tucked tail, hiding, flattened ears) and remove the dog if necessary. [scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk](#)
- The policy recognises that the dog may not attend every week if circumstances mean it would be inappropriate (illness, stress, kennel visit, etc).

9. Insurance & Liability

- The School ensures that public liability insurance covers the presence of the dog and the specific activity of the club. [dogsforgood.org](#)
- The handler must provide evidence of pet insurance or equivalent third-party liability cover. [burlingtonhouseschool.com](#)
- The School reserves the right to withdraw permission for the dog's attendance if risk criteria are not met or incident occurs.

10. Communication & Information

- Parents, pupils and staff will be informed of the dog club ahead of launch, including details of risk assessment, welfare measures, consent forms, rules and alternative arrangements.
- Notices will be displayed in relevant areas of the School about the dog's presence on the day(s) of the club. [scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk](#)
- Feedback from participants, staff and parents will be encouraged and reviewed termly.

11. Monitoring, Review & Removal

- The risk assessment will be reviewed at least **termly**, or sooner if incidents/changes occur (e.g., change of dog, change of handler, change of session times).
- The policy will be reviewed annually by SLT in consultation with staff, handler and school governors.
- The School may suspend or permanently withdraw the dog's attendance if the welfare of the dog or the safety of pupils/staff cannot be guaranteed, or if the club is no longer considered beneficial. [burlingtonhouseschool.com+1](#)

12. Appendices

- Appendix A: Consent Form for Pupils/Parents
- Appendix B: Dog Club Rules for Pupils
- Appendix C: Incident Report Form (Dog Club)
- Appendix D: Dog Attendance & Welfare Log
- Appendix E: Responsible Handler Declaration & Vaccination Record