

Sprites Primary Academy



School Dog Risk Assessment

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Risk Assessment Completed

31st March 2022.

To be reviewed annually

Rationale and Introduction

The value of pet therapy is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication in both children and adults. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower rates of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, calmer, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

The rationale for deciding to have a school dog is specified by the following:

- For school to have a pet that is able to live as naturally as conditions allow
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day and for the animal's health and well-being to be paramount
- To have a pet that the children could interact with for the benefit and enhancement of the children's social and emotional development

Purpose and Benefits

Dogs teach children responsibility

Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and provide a great support system as they continue to grow and develop.

Dogs teach children patience and the value of it in learning

Dogs don't always do as they are told the first time! Teaching a dog a new command or encouraging one to act on a command it knows requires patience and calmness, but seeing the dog achieve this creates a great sense of success.

Dogs teach children compassion

Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain but are unable to express it in words. Having a dog to interact with builds empathy and thereby develops the child's sense of self.

Dogs teach children about socialisation

Like most of us, dogs are social animals, who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with each other. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park! (pun intended)

Dogs are a non-judgemental audience

For children who have emotional or social challenges a dog provides a listening ear, someone who will be attentive and calm, who won't comment or suggest and who will love them unconditionally regardless of circumstances. A dog is a quiet reading partner, confidant and friend.

Dogs are fun

Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail and can cheer you up on even your worst day.

Our School Dog

Our School Dog 'Luna' lives with our Deputy Headteacher, Mr Ashley and his family. Luna is a very caring, docile, gentle and well-behaved dog who was selected for having the right breeding and temperament to be a therapy dog. She has experience of being in a school from when she was a puppy, and has learned how to react well to children.

Luna's parents are Kennel Club registered Labrador Retrievers and this means that she is also a pedigree Kennel Club registered Labrador Retriever. She is vaccinated and micro-chipped and attends the vet for regular check-ups. Her

health, well-being, training and insurance will be the responsibility of Mr Ashley. Luna has liability insurance so that she is able to interact with children, staff and visitors.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children, but for many it has the potential to provide a wide range of positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with Luna has the opportunity to discuss concerns and to inform school of their wishes, which will always be respected. The risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the school's senior leadership team will evaluate and report on the impact of having a school dog on a regular basis.

Interaction with Pupils and Staff

To ensure that the school dog interacts appropriately at all times and is effectively supported to do so

Hazard	Risk	Risk severity	Likelihood	Risk Rating	Controls
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children	Child bitten by dog	4	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school dog is trained not to mouth from a very young age and is trained not to bite • When the dog is approached in the right way there is very limited danger • The dog lives with Mr Ashley and his family who handle her all the time to ensure she is used to interactions, including with children • Ensure that adults and children do not interact with the dog without supervision by an appropriate adult • Ensure that all interactions are undertaken in the agreed way * – only when the child is calm and quiet • Children approach the dog quietly and let the dog come to them • The dog is housed in her crate, in the Senior Leaders or Pastoral Team office when left unsupervised
	Child scratched by dog	3	2	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog is trained not to jump up. • She will always be under control by Mr Ashley or another appropriate adult

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will not be interacting with the dog unsupervised and always in the agreed way* • These conditions will be strictly adhered to whenever children are interacting with her • Parents will be asked to write to the school if they are unwilling for their child to interact with the dog. Parents will be asked to explain their wishes to the child • The dog will undergo ongoing conditioning training to the school environment, as well as other dynamic, busy, noisy places to ensure that she is always calm • This will ensure that reading or nurture interventions are always successful • Regular visits to the vet and groomer will ensure that claws are kept trimmed short
	Child licked by dog	2	2	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog is trained not to lick • The dog is trained not to jump up • Children are encouraged to approach the dog in the agreed manner*, and not put their faces near the dog's face
Dog running loose	Possible injury to child/adult, damage to property	1	2	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog will be based in the SLT office, in her crate, and will be under close control by an adult at all other times • There will be a clear sign on the door so everyone knows when she is there • The dog's crate is big enough for her to be happy and safe there when contained • The children will be taught not to tease the dog at any time

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are named members of staff who can be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose, in order to place her back in her crate (very unlikely to occur) • All staff introduced to the dog and the expectations, risk assessments and procedures • Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them (stand still, cross arms etc) • They will also be taught how to approach the dog in the correct way • All equipment – leads, harness, crate etc will be regularly inspected to ensure they are appropriate and effective
Destruction of materials	If allowed to chew dog may damage school materials/resources	1	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog is contained or under close control at all times • The dog will have her own toys to play with and normal school resources will be kept out of reach. • All equipment relating to the dog will be regularly checked to ensure it is appropriate and effective
Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with the dog	If adult/child interacts in the incorrect way this will affect the dog's training and have a negative impact on future interaction	2	2	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog, the interaction will be stopped • If the dog shows any signs of incorrect behaviour interaction will be immediately stopped
Use of rewards/treats	Children could be harmed if the dog is over excited when receiving treats. Children must wash hands after handling treats.	1	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats will only be given to the dog with authorisation and in the presence of Mr Ashley • Treats will be hidden away to ensure this • Reminders to be given to children about hand washing after any contact with the dog
Pupil / staff knowledge of	If adults and children have limited	2	2	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an agreed code of conduct around the dog *

how to interact correctly with the dog	knowledge of how to interact correctly with the dog, this could result in harm to the dog or child/adult				
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Hygiene and Health

Hazard	Risk	Risk severity	Likelihood	Risk Rating	Controls
Worms/fleas	If school dog is not treated for worms there is a risk that germs can be transferred to humans	3	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Ashley is responsible for taking the dog to the vet for regular check-ups • The dog will receive flea prevention treatment monthly and worming treatment 6 monthly in line with European Veterinary Guidelines
Diseases	If the dog is unwell its welfare will suffer and interaction with the children could become hazardous	3	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog's health and well-being is the responsibility of Mr Ashley • If the dog is unwell then she will not be brought in to school
Allergies	If a child/adult is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	3	2	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will not be in contact with the dog if a negative response has been given by a parent • If a child or adult has an allergy, they will not interact with the dog, or undertake tasks in the same room • Details of allergies will be requested from parents
Food	Dog can become unwell if given food items intended for humans				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Ashley will ensure that nothing is given to the dog without permission • Children will be closely supervised when interacting with the dog • Children will not be permitted to interact

					with the dog unless supervised by an appropriate adult
Faeces	If a child/adult comes into contact with the school dog's faeces, germs could be transferred	2	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school dog will only be walked under supervision by an appropriate adult, with children supporting as agreed No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision The dog will have a designated area to go to for relief. The dog is trained to only relieve herself on grass
Contact with food preparation areas	If the dog enters a food preparation area, this could be unhygienic	2	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school dog will be supervised around school and will never enter the school kitchen, the kids kitchen, or other food preparation areas
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	If hands are not clean, there is a risk of illness	2	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly remind children and adults to wash hands after interacting with the dog Hand sanitiser to be used immediately after interacting with the dog

Activities involving the School Dog

Hazard	Risk	Risk severity	Likelihood	Risk Rating	Controls
Walking the dog on and off site	Children could be harmed during a walk off site if they are not focussed. Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk	2	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the school dog is taken off site, this will only be undertaken by Mr Ashley or another allocated adult No child will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk, unless authorised to do so by one of the nominated adults

Being fed	If a child tries to interact with the school dog when she is being fed she may respond aggressively	3	0	Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school dog will be fed outside of school hours by Mr Ashley and his family
School Events	If the school dog is overwhelmed, she may become boisterous	2	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school dog will undergo conditioning training before being allowed into school This will prepare her for noisy, busy, and dynamic environments The dog's reactions to school events will be monitored If the events are too overwhelming the dog will not attend
Other dogs	If the school dog is overwhelmed or sees other dogs she may become boisterous.	2	1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other dogs will be permitted on school premises The school dog has previously lived with another dog and regularly socialises with other dogs

Equal Opportunities

All young people will be treated equally, regardless of race, creed or gender. The policy will be applied regardless of culture, faith or belief.

* How to approach the school dog, Luna

- Always ask Mr Ashley/other appropriate adult if it is okay to stroke Luna; don't approach her or say 'hello' until you've been given permission to do so
- Mr Ashley/other appropriate adult will ensure that she is happy and relaxed before any interaction
- Put out your hand and let Luna sniff it – don't move your hand towards her; **let her come to you**
- If she seems happy, stroke her on the **shoulder or chest**. Aiming for the face isn't a good idea as dogs could see this as an invasive place to be touched by a person they don't know.
- After a stroke or two, stop and see what she does – if she 'asks' you to continue by nudging or leaning into you, carry on fussing her, if you feel comfortable
- However much you'd like to, don't hug Luna – while hugging is a sign of affection for humans, holding a dog close to you tends to make them anxious
- If Luna turns or moves away from you, she's telling you she'd rather you didn't stroke her just now, so it's time to stop. When she has got to know you, she will be happy to be stroked. She may even roll over for you to rub her belly!
- Always be calm, quiet and move slowly around Luna
- Never chase Luna, or follow her around. If she's moving away from you it means she wants space.
- When Luna is in her crate, that is her safe place to be. It is her space. You can talk to her there if you have permission to do so, but fingers or objects must not be put through the bars.

Luna is going to take a while to settle in, she is new to school and has a huge number of people to get to know. Be patient, calm and gentle with her always. Approach her slowly and calmly. The calmer and the quieter you are, the more she will want to spend time with you.

