

**Brampton Cortonwood Infant and Nursery School**

**School Dog Policy**

**September 2023**

Date for Review: September 2024



**School Dog Risk Assessment – September 2023**

Introduction The value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and

communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

To minimise the risk to children in school, animals are not allowed on school premises. The definition of animals includes all pets including insects, fish and birds. The only exceptions to this rule are assistant animals (dogs for the blind etc.) and the animals that have permanent residences on the school grounds.

When guide dogs are allowed on school premises, the animal’s owner and handlers must ensure that the animal is not a nuisance and that it does not interfere with the school environment. If any parent or pupil objects to the animals presence then arrangements must be made to ensure that this animal is kept away from them. If necessary, the animal may need exclusion from specific areas.

It is a requirement of all our school animals that they are within the following recommended

guidelines:

• All animals should be regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other

illness.

• Pets that are ill should be diagnosed and treated by a vet and should not be allowed in the

school premises until their health is restored.

• All animals should have received relevant inoculations.

• All animals should be wormed regularly every six months.

• Claws should be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches.

• Pets should have been exercised before being allowed to work with children.

• All pets should have their coats cleaned regularly.

The dog owner/handler has the responsibility to ensure that:

• Dogs are physically fit.

• A staff member to remain with the dog at all times

• The dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking

• The dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not wet, muddy etc.

• Natural relief for dogs is taken into account.

**Background**

The leadership of Brampton Cortonwood Infant School considered the options regarding the possibility of obtaining a dog as a school pet in July 2016. Over a period of time following this discussion research into a possible source of a suitable puppy led to the final decision to introduce an older puppy in October 2017.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

1. For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.

2. For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.

3. To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children’s

social and emotional development.

Prior to purchasing the puppy, members of the leadership team visited the home of the dog’s parents to ensure that the temperament of the parents was suitable for interaction with children. The puppy would live with the now former deputy head, Mr Minor in his home and be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually. The puppy is registered with Abbey Vets (Wombwell) who are responsible for her vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the puppy as she is kept up to date with immunizations including rabies and her worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. Both the school and Abby vets’ surgery keep a register of her annual health check.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the puppy is invited to write to inform Miss Finley (Head of School) of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the school senior leadership team will evaluate the impact of a school dog on a regular basis.

**Identified Risks**

The dog getting over excited when interacting with children:

CHILD KNOCKED TO GROUND / CHILD SCRATCHED BY DOG / CHILD BITTEN BY DOG

The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises.

Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.

* The dog will always be on a lead when she is out of her pen/ the office, except when she is undergoing structured training with her primary trainer/s.
* The dog will be trained not to jump up.
* Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this
* nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons.
* Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still,
* cross arms)
* Pupils will be taught to recognize when the dog is uncomfortable i.e. yawning, licking lips, excessive licking and pushing away with paws.
* Pupils to approach side on and hand with palm down at side. Allow Luna to approach children and the children to respect her personal space.
* No hugging.
* The dog will undergo training with an experienced local trainer. Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week.
* The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner.
* Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through her training programme.
* ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don’t) of having a school dog.
* The dog will attend the vets’ regularly to make sure her claws are kept short and that she is in good health.

**The dog gets loose from her base or from her lead:**

* The dog’s secure area is big enough for her to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not too tease her.
* If the dog does get loose from the secure area the teacher on duty will call for a
* designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in the office.
* There are four members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if she needs attention at any other time, they are: 1. Mr Dyson (Head of
* School). 2. Miss Fenton (School Business Manager) 3. Mrs Taylor/Mrs Hirst (Admin Officer)

**Dog hair causing allergies:**

CHILDREN HAVE ALLERGIC REACTIONS

* Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept in the school office.
* Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.
* Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.

**Children getting germs from the dog:**

CHILDREN/ STAFF WILL CONTRACT DISEASES THAT CAN BE CARRIED BY DOGS

* Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupil’s don’t have access to on a regular basis, if required the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant.
* All immunizations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and the SBM maintains this record.
* Flea treatment is carried out at 6 weekly intervals.
* Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet Guidelines at 6 monthly intervals.
* The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; she will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen.
* All faeces will be removed from site and areas disinfected.

**Financial cost of the dog’s upkeep:**

SCHOOL UNABLE TO AFFORD ONGOING COST OF THE DOG’S DAY TO DAY UPKEEP OR MEDICAL BILLS

* The dog is the responsibility of Brampton Cortonwood Infant School who are financially responsible for all her public liability insurance and pet insurance costs. Her care and day to day costs will be covered by Mr Minor (former Deputy Head).
* The dog is the responsibility of Mr Minor (former Deputy Head) outside of school hours.
* Training cost involving the pupils will be paid for by the school. As the dog will be used for ‘therapy’ work within the school, the school will accommodate costs towards training and assessment of the dog to meet these criteria.

**Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog:**

SCHOOL NOT ADEQUATELY COVERED FINANCIALLY

* The dog is covered with Pet Business Insurance and the certificate is kept in school office and is renewed annually in September