




Yewstock School

School Therapy Dog Policy

January 2023

Date reviewed by FE&P	27.02.2023	Policy Type	Statutory
Date adopted by FGB	13.03.2023	Review Cycle	2 Years
Date of next Review	26.02.2025	Signed by Chair of Governors	
			

INTRODUCTION

Pupils 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.

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

Yes there is, although 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.

Dogs other than Roxie 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 into place to allow Roxie to be present.

Application process to bring a dog into school

- Permission must be sought from the Headteacher before bringing a dog into school. The Headteacher will determine whether the dog is suitable and the number of dogs that can be accommodated in school.
- Staff dog owners must have signed to say they have read and understood the Dogs in School risk assessment.
- Staff dog owners must provide the School Business Manager with documentation to prove that their dog has been microchipped and vaccinated.
- Staff dog owners must confirm that their dog is wormed and receives anti-flea and tick treatment every 12 weeks.
- Only dogs with a sociable nature who are tolerant of children will be allowed in school.
- Staff dog owners must ensure that their dogs are wormed and treated for fleas regularly.

It is the dog owner's responsibility to ensure that the evidence is produced annually to show that vaccinations are up to date. Failure to do so will automatically invalidate any previous approval to bring the dog on to the school site.

Roxie is owned by Mrs Van Den Boogaard.

- The governors have the right to refuse entry to Roxie.
- Only Roxie 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 beforehand.
- Roxie is a Cavapoo chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children. It sheds very little hair and is considered to be sociable and friendly.

- The Chair of Governors and the Governing Board agree that a school dog will benefit the pupils and the staff of Yewstock School.
- Staff, parents and pupils have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school.
- A Risk Assessment has been produced and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, students and visitors known to have allergies to dogs must not go near Roxie. All visitors to the Early Years block will be informed on arrival that Roxie is in school.
- If Roxie is ill, she will not be allowed in school.
- Roxie will be kept on a lead at all times and will be under the full control and supervision of Mrs Van Den Boogaard.
- Pupils must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Pupils should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around a dog. Pupils should remain calm around Roxie. They should not make any sudden movements and must never stare into Roxie's eyes as this could make her feel threatened. Pupils should not put their face near the dog and should always approach the dog standing up.
- Students should never go near or disturb the dog when it is eating or sleeping.
- Pupils should never play roughly with Roxie.
- Everyone must wait until Roxie is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of pupils, Roxie could become nervous and agitated. Therefore Mrs Van Den Boogaard must ensure that the situation is closely monitored.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or the bearing of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, lowered tail or tail between 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 she should immediately be removed from that particular situation/ environment.
- Students should not consume food when they are close to Roxie.
- Students should take care to stroke Roxie on her body, chest and back, not by her face or the top of her head.
- Students should always wash their hands after handling Roxie.
- Any dog excrement should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing pupil access to the dog.
- Mrs Van Den Boogaard will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and the impact of the school dog.
- Mrs Van Den Boogaard will need to be aware of any students who do not have parental consent to be around dogs and also any students with a dog allergy.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs Van Den Boogaard.
- If someone reports having an issue with Roxie, this information must be passed to Mrs Van Den Boogaard as soon as possible.
- The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has written a policy for dogs in school.
- The Headteacher 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 dogs. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Insurance

For approved dogs who are in school for an educational purpose Dorset Council insurance will indemnify the owner against any incidents whilst the animal is on the school premises (biting, scratching etc.) providing that the processes stated in this policy have been complied with.

Dog owners may be required to pay for any incidental cleaning requirements, damage and repairs to the building structure or furnishings caused by their dog.

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

1. Improve academic achievement
2. Increase literacy skills
3. Calm certain behaviours
4. Increase social skills and self esteem
5. Increase confidence
6. Teach responsibility and respect to all life
7. Help prevent truancy
8. Motivate children who are often less attentive

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Standards of Practice for our Animal Assisted interventions in school (Appendix A).

Failure to comply with this policy and the associated risk assessment may result in the permission to bring the dog into school being withdrawn.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Single Equality Policy. The general equality duty requires that, in the exercise of their functions, schools must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. This should endeavour to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations for all.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Statement:

Yewstock school aims provide a working environment that promotes and supports the mental health and wellbeing of everyone in our school community.

All school policies are reviewed to ensure that each policy reflects our commitment to the protection and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of all and that we will strive to improve the mental health environment and culture of Yewstock School.

Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of children, families and staff is important for physical health, social wellbeing and productivity. Mental health at Yewstock is relevant to all and everyone can contribute to improved wellbeing.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY IN YEWSTOCK SCHOOL (Appendix A)

January 2023

Why Standards are important:

- To build understanding of the benefits dogs can bring in schools and build credibility for the practice based on clear standards.
- To highlight the importance of people and dogs who plan to work in schools being appropriately trained and suitable for their role in school; and to help guide against poor practice
- To promote quality and consistency among practitioners working in schools to deliver the best possible outcomes for people and dogs to ensure there are clear expectations of the practice from all involved

DOG WELFARE AND WELLBEING STANDARDS

Dogs should be in good health to undertake the role there are required to do.

Handlers must only use positive reward base training methods and equipment

Dogs must travel confidently and comfortably in any mode of transport

Handlers must have a policy covering procedures in extreme weather conditions, which is implemented when appropriate

Each active session with the dog must be no longer than one hour and dogs should work no more than three active hours during a day. They should have access to a quiet, safe and comfortable place to rest for a proportionate break between sessions. During this time only the dog handler only should be allowed access to the dog

Dogs must have access to fresh water at all times.

Dogs must be given the opportunity to toilet when required, in an appropriate place provided by the school.

If the dog shows signs of stress, anxiety, discomfort or fatigue they must be taken out of the situation and only brought back into the session if fully recovered and the issue causing the stress has been identified and addressed.

Enough space must be provided in the working area for the dog to be able to move about comfortably and lay down.

Dogs must be reassessed regularly to confirm that they are in good health, both physically and emotionally to continue working. Ideally this assessment should be conducted once a year and no less than once every two years or after a period of significant absence.

The handler is responsible for ensuring that the dog is not put into any potential situations which may compromise the dog's health and wellbeing.

Dogs must not be expected to mix with unfamiliar dogs.

GENERAL HYGIENE, SAFETY AND LEGISLATIVE STANDARDS

Sensible precautions must be in place to minimise the spread of infectious disease, eg hand washing after each session for the handler and pupil.

Dogs with wounds must not be allowed to participate in a session

People with open wounds must not be allowed to participate in a session, although dressed wounds are acceptable.

Dogs must be free of disease or infection. AAI must be postponed at the first sign of any illness and only resumed when the dog is back to normal good health. If the illness has required veterinary attention and treatment, clearance to resume to work should be given by a vet.

Humans or dogs that are immunosuppressed due to illness and/or certain types of medication must not be involved in AAI sessions without medical approval.

Dogs must be up to date and compliant with vaccinations.

Dogs must be free of parasites and receive regular worm/flea treatments.

Bitches in season must not be involved in an AAI work.

Dogs must be discouraged from licking people and handlers should manage excessive saliva.

Schools must ensure risk assessments are carried out specific to the AAI programmes taking place and that all parties have access to them.

Schools must ensure appropriate liability insurance is in place in relation to the programmes taking place with copies available to all parties.

Schools are expected to be up to date with current legislation and policies regarding working with dogs and dog health and welfare, safeguarding of animals and children, GDPR standards and procedures.

DOG TRAINING STANDARDS

The handler and dog must work to minimum standards required by the Kennel Club Silver Good Citizen Aware or equivalent.

Dogs must walk calmly on a loose lead at all times.

Dogs must be appropriately socialised and orientated into the school environment.

DOG BEHAVIOUR STANDARDS

Dogs involved in active sessions in schools must:

Be a minimum of 12 months of age

Not bark, mouth, jump up at or paw people

Be adaptable to new environments and unexpected stimuli such as new smells, objects and sudden noises

Be socially confident, enjoy human interaction, and be relaxed and calm in the company of children, even when there is a level of noise and erratic behaviour around.

Be comfortable with physical appropriate physical interaction eg grooming and not respond unduly negatively to unexpected lively behaviour from children

Be comfortable engaging with children that may have physical/learning disabilities and around mechanical aids eg wheelchairs , where relevant.

Exhibit no guarding or resources, eg food/toys or avoidance behaviour.

Takes treats gently when offered and not snatch toys from hands.

Be easily identifiable as a dog performing a clear role in the school.

GENERAL STANDARDS FOR HANDLERS WORKING IN SCHOOL

Handlers:

Must have DBS clearance and have a member of staff in attendance with pupils at all times in accordance with school's policy and insurance arrangements.

Must be covered by appropriate Public Liability insurance.

Must ensure they are aware of the Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures within the school.

Must know the dog well and has passed an assessment for working with that dog.

Must be in control of the dog at all times with the dog on a static lead.

Must be competent in understanding the dog's behaviour, body language and their health and wellbeing needs Only use positive reward- based dog training methods Be able to recognise signs of stress, anxiety, discomfort, illness and fatigue in the dog they are working with and act suitably.

Must be equipped with the necessary training and knowledge to ensure sessions are effective and safe.

Must identify with the school an appropriate place for toileting the dog that meets the health and safety needs of the dog and the school. Dog waste must be picked up, bagged and disposed of in an agreed manner.

Must ensure the dog is groomed and clean before going into school.

Must be aware of the relevant risk assessments and associated procedures, including fire evacuation, and assist in their development if necessary.

Must be aware of the appropriate expectations on them in relation to confidentiality. At a minimum they should seek permission in relation to the following:

- Having access to personal data on pupils, eg name, medical information, etc.
- Taking and using photographs
- Posting photographs/information on social media
- Identifying pupils on social media or other forms of publicity
- Discussing and identifying pupils outside of the school environment

GENERAL STANDARDS

Schools must:

Ensure handler is covered by appropriate public liability insurance.

Ensure that handler is aware of child protection and safeguarding procedures within the school.

Ensure that there is member of staff present at all times whilst the handler is working with the pupils and should supply resources are required.

Ensure Handler is aware of Health and Safety policy including fire drill arrangements.

Must provide an environment suitable for the dog and handler to operate in. This should be discussed and agreed between the school and the handler prior to work commencing in school

Must identify with the handler an appropriate place for toileting the dog that meets Health and Safety needs of the dog and school.

Should supply any appropriate resources that are required such as hand sanitisers,etc

Must take responsibility for all communication regarding the dog with parents.

Must provide and agree with the handler a suitable and consistent area for the dog to rest, where it will not be disturbed and has fresh water.

Outcomes being worked towards should be agreed by Senior Leadership Team.

Must work with handlers to provide a suitable education programme for children and staff on how to behave around and interact with a dog. This should take place before dog is introduced into school.