



## **The Froebelian School Dogs in School 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 can take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

This policy sets out the School's approach in both identifying the risks and managing them adequately and outlining the benefits to having a School dog.

### **Legislative Background**

The following of government legislation and advice can be applicable to the control and welfare of dogs in public places in general and in Schools in particular:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Environmental Protection Act 1991
- The Litter (animal droppings) Order 1991
- Dangerous Dogs (Amendment 2014) Act 1997
- Animal Welfare Act 2006 (see Appendix B)
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- DFE advice on standards for School Premises 2015

### **Benefits to having a dog in an educational setting**

We acknowledge that, in School, children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog.

The value of schemes such as 'Pets as Therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to the stimulation of, and communication with children, especially those of primary School age. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower their levels of anxiety simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less foreboding.

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) Encourage calming behaviours
- 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Assist reluctant School attenders
- 8) 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 children can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Behaviour problems occur in Schools and these can interfere with learning. Some Schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in children. In a controlled study, children were found to have fewer discipline issues in Schools with a dog than Schools without. Children's behaviour improved toward teachers and they 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:** Children who are reluctant to attend School, for a number of reasons, may be more willing to come in if they feel that the School dog may miss them or they are missing out on possible time with the School dog. The School dog may help them to feel calmer and welcome; it could be ready to greet the pupil by prior arrangement which may make all the difference to an anxious child.

**Education:** Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some children. 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. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a calm and well-trained dog, children find social support and peer interaction.

Dogs can be incredibly calm and happy to have children 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. Dogs can 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 children 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 children with whom they mix.

**Social Development:** Dogs in School offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching children social skills and responsibility. Specifically, Schools are using dogs to help older children build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Children can use dogs to help with communication and learn about responsibility and kindness.

With a dog in School, children have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving children in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The children also learn about responsibility, caring and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at School.

**As a reward:** Dogs can be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the children. Children can be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities children will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem.

Dogs can work with children on a one-one basis and can especially help those children who have been bullied or are going through upsetting/difficult times or are even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the children they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the children they are spending time with. Children who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

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

Yes, there is. However, if the dog is managed correctly there should be no greater risk than other everyday situations that the children encounter. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and can be viewed on request. The School dog will not be allowed anywhere on the School site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the School dog to be present in School.

## **Policy and Procedures**

The School dog is owned by Mrs Stratford and her family.

- The Governing Body have the right to refuse entry to any dog including the School dog.
- Only the School dog is allowed on the School premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has been informed. Permission from the Headteacher must be sought and obtained for any other dog to come onto the School site.
- The School dog is a Cockapoo. The breed has been chosen because of their intelligence, trainability and good temperament.
- The Governing Body agree that having a dog in School will benefit the children and staff of The Froebelian School.
- Staff, parents/carers and children have been informed that a dog will be in School and have had the opportunity to offer comments. A full risk assessment has been produced and this will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Children, staff and visitors known to be allergic to dogs will not go near her and all visitors will be informed that there is a dog in School.
- If the School dog is ill, she will not be allowed in School.
- Children will never be left alone with the School dog and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will receive instruction (with regular reminders) about appropriate behaviour around the dog including the need to stay calm and not make sudden movements or make loud noises. See Appendix D for rules relating to the School dog.
- Children will be taught about a dog's body language and what to do in certain situations.
- Children will be taught to always wash their hands after touching the School dog.
- Any dog urine/excrement on the premises will be cleaned up immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Records will be kept about the School dog's interaction with children and anecdotal evidence of her impact in School.

- The Office and the Senior Leadership Team will know the whereabouts of the School dog at all times.
- In case of evacuation (fire etc) the School dog will be taken from the building by the responsible adult who she is with at the time of the alarm. The School dog will be signed in and out of the building on a daily basis using the sign in App.

### **Actions / Concerns**

As a School we also acknowledge that some families choose not to have dogs or other pets and we must respect their right to hold this view. We also recognise that bringing dogs on to the School premises could pose a health and safety risk to our pupils and others on site and it can be unsettling to some children if dogs are close by as they arrive and leave School.

There are added risks of the dog fouling, biting and showing unpredictable or even aggressive behaviour. We recognise that even well-behaved dogs can behave uncharacteristically when placed in an unfamiliar, busy, noisy and crowded School environment and that this can leave to misbehaviour by even the best-trained pet.

Children, too, can behave unpredictably when in the presence of dogs, especially if they are not used to being with them or indeed are actually frightened of them. There is also the risk that contact with animals can result in infestation by parasites and infection including gastro-intestinal or fungal infections. This is particularly a risk for pregnant women or persons with a weakened immune system. There are also both adults and children who have an allergic reaction to the proximity of certain types of animal, including dogs.

Please contact the School Office should you have any concerns or queries in regards to our School dog.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- The School Council has the responsibility to ensure that the School has a written 'Dogs in School' policy in place.
- The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy, which may be delegated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team/designated person.
- All staff are required to abide by the policy.
- The Finance and Operations Manager is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance regarding the health and safety aspects of the School Dog as and when required.
- 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.

**Policy approved by Headteacher:**



**Policy approved by Chair of Governors:**



**Date:**

December 2020

The date for the next policy review is **December 2021**.

## Our School Dog Procedures

In addition to the below, frequently asked questions can be found in Appendix B.

### Management day-to-day

Our School Dog will:

- ✎ not be allowed into School if unwell
- ✎ be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk
- ✎ be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
- ✎ be fully trained
- ✎ have had all injections
- ✎ never be taken off the site by pupils alone

Pupils will:

- ✎ NOT have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with the School Dog
- ✎ meet the School Dog personally in a group of no more than 3 children
- ✎ be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the School Dog every time they meet her
- ✎ always remain calm around her
- ✎ not make sudden movements
- ✎ be gentle
- ✎ not stare into the dog's eyes as this could be interpreted as a threat
- ✎ not put their face near the dog
- ✎ always approach the dog standing up
- ✎ not be allowed to disturb the dog if she is sleeping or eating
- ✎ never be allowed to feed the School Dog
- ✎ learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. (Growling or baring of teeth indicates 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 she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.)
- ✎ receive information about looking after pets and shown how to stroke the School Dog

### Health and safety principles:

- ✎ Children will always wash their hands after touching the School Dog
- ✎ Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the dog's owner. Children must never attempt to do this

### Should a bite (even playful) occur:

- ✎ parents will be contacted immediately
- ✎ the wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing
- ✎ the child/adult will be released for medical attention
- ✎ all staff will be informed
- ✎ a full investigation into the circumstances will be led by the Headteacher
- ✎ the suitability of the dog will be re-assessed by the dog's veterinary surgeon and this advice shared with School governors who will make the final decision about her remaining in School

### Actions regarding the School dog

- ✎ All learning areas of the School will have the School Dog Code of Conduct for pupils (Appendix D) displayed. Staff will ensure that this is known by all pupils.
- ✎ Staff areas have the School Dog Code of Conduct for staff (Appendix E)
- ✎ The risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

**Animal Welfare Act 2006**

If an animal or animals come on to School premises, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, those adults involved are subject to the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This includes any member of staff or visitor who is reliant on a guide or other assistance dog, although of course such animals are always wholly welcome in School.

This Act equally applies to Schools that may have a School dog, or keep animals in School.

The Act places a legal obligation to ensure that the needs of an animal are met. The most important requirements of the Act are:

- The need for a suitable environment
- The need for a suitable diet (food and fresh water)
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- Any need that the animal has to be housed with or apart from other animals
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

These responsibilities do not end at the finish of the School day, but continue as long as the animal remains in School, and includes evenings, weekends and holidays.

Personal responsibility exists irrespective of whether the animal in question was bought by the School or owned by staff, pupils or parents.

If an animal's needs are not being adequately met while at School, criminal prosecutions could in theory be brought against all persons over the age of 16 who had responsibility for the animal.

### 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 Mrs Stratford who will care for the dog out of School hours and will bear all the costs associated with it; the School budget will remain unaffected.

**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 Mrs Stratford's office. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure the dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact, under strict supervision. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms, agreed communal areas and in the playground where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation.

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

A. We have carefully considered having a dog in School and sought advice from many sources, including other Schools that successfully have a School dog. There will be a School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment (agreed with our Health & Safety consultants) available to view on the website shortly.

**Q Who is responsible for training?**

A. Mrs Stratford 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 in a sectioned off area of the School site to which children have no access. Only staff members will clear away any mess appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. Thus, there will be no chance of the children coming into contact with faeces. 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 School dog will be extremely well looked after. She will live with Mrs Stratford and her family. She will be kept in the Deputy Head's office area and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. Whilst the dog is in School she will have access to the Deputy Head office area where she can relax during the day. This is where she will spend most of her time initially. The School dog will visit the vet regularly for all her injections as well as regular check-ups. If she is unwell for any reason she will stay at home with a dog-sitter! She will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to water. We will work closely with other professionals to ensure that her welfare is always carefully considered.

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

A. We already manage a number of allergies at School and this will be no different for children and adults who 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. She will also only be allowed in situations with pupils who voluntarily wish to work with her. Your permission will of course be sought in advance of the School dog having access to, and working with, your child in School. The dog is given 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. The School dog will be carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have regular, close contact with her 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. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

**Q What if the dog becomes over excited and knocks my child over?**

A. The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult. Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog and the dog will always be on a lead. We will have a risk assessment in place to deal with any situations that arise.





## Our School Dog Code of Conduct – Pupils

Our School Dog is everyone's friend. Please love her as if she were your own. Here are a few simple rules to make her and our lives happy and easier:

### Safe Hands

- 🐾 Stroke her back, not her face.
- 🐾 Never allow her to lick you.
- 🐾 She will always be on a lead with an adult. Children will not be allowed to hold the lead.
- 🐾 Do not feed her.

### Safe Feet

- 🐾 Remain seated or, if working standing up, at your table.
- 🐾 Do not approach her unless you have been given permission.

### Safe Voice

- 🐾 Remain quiet. Loud noises or shouting will frighten our School Dog.
- 🐾 If there is too much noise or crowding, our School Dog will be removed from the classroom.

### General rules:

- If you are frightened DO NOT scream, wave your hands around or run away.
- Our School Dog (and all dogs) will think you are playing and she will chase you and jump up.
- If you are frightened, please move away from her slowly and let an adult know.
- If she is close to you and you are frightened, cross your arms and turn your back to her.



**Our School Dog**  
**Code of Conduct – Staff**

**Our School Dog's presence is to enhance everyone's wellbeing. Please love her as if she were your own.**

**Here are a few simple rules to make her and our lives happy and easier:**

1. Our School Dog is still a puppy and needs a lot of sleep, so if you see that she is asleep in her den please DO NOT come in and wake her.
2. Please do not feed her ANY treats unless they have been given to you from her allowance of special dog treats. (Chocolates, grapes and raisins are very dangerous to her).
3. To keep her calm, please respect her space and if she is sleeping or agitated please leave her alone. In order for our School Dog to be successful, she will need a calm and consistent approach from everyone.
4. Please ask if you wish to see her. There is a right time for love and rewards.
5. Encourage children to do the same. The calmer our School Dog is, the better results we will get.
6. The School Dog is not allowed in:
  - The Kitchen and food store;
  - The HUB during food preparation time or lunchtime;
  - The toilets – staff and pupil;
  - The DT Room;
  - The Hall during Games sessions;
  - The Medical Room
7. She is always willing to go for walks. If you fancy a walk around the neighbourhood (it's a great way to get some exercise, fresh air and a release of tension with a break from the norm) you are more than welcome to take her out. There will be a rota on the office door if you want to select a day.