

Dogs in School Policy



Hollygirt

SCHOOL

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1. Policy Aim and Requirements

Hollygirt School recognises that contact with a dog can have many benefits for children including:

- a. Developing educationally and emotionally;
- b. Increasing understanding of responsibility; and
- c. Developing empathy and nurturing skills.

The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance and expectations which everyone can follow if there is a dog on the school premises.

The policy sets out the requirements and arrangements that must be in place to ensure that any potential valuable learning experience is not negatively impacted by poor behaviour of the dog, especially if the behaviour poses a risk to student wellbeing.

The requirements underpinning the policy are that:

1. There should be a clear purpose for a dog to be in the school;
2. There is recognition that not all children will like dogs and that there is a clear understanding that the wishes of the child will take priority at all times;
3. There is no intention to allow a dog to roam around the school setting;
4. If a dog is brought on to the school site, its presence is subject to the strict rules in place;
5. A risk assessment is prepared, agreed and in place for the dog;
6. The owner has public liability insurance in place for the dog.

The dog will be given plenty of time for rest and will be in a secure pre-agreed place/cage and all its welfare needs met. Any dog entering a classroom should have a specified purpose such as therapy or reading support dog and be closely supervised by a trained adult at all times.

Failure to comply with these expectations could lead to disciplinary action.

The school is content to support the introduction of service animals such as hearing dogs, therapy dogs or seeing dogs and this reflects the school's ethos of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion. However, their presence is subject to the requirements of this policy and will be managed through the completion of a risk assessment.

2. Legislation & Guiding Principles

There is no dedicated law to cover the procedure for a dog within a school setting however the policy is mindful of the duties required under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

This policy recognises the impact that a school dog may have upon the emotional impact of staff and students and those who feel uncomfortable with a dog. Any impact will be considered under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

The school recognises that school dogs can provide therapy and support children with a range of emotional needs and disabilities. Furthermore, a child reading without fear of judgement to a dog can nurture confidence in reading. To support the role of a dog in the school setting, Hollygirt School recognises the principles of dog welfare set out by The Kennel Club in the [Bark & Read Standards of Practice](#) and these have been adapted for the school's use in Appendix 1.

Further information about the value of dogs in schools is outlined by the national charity [Pets as Therapy](#) (PAT) website.

Subject to the approval of the Trustees, the school may have up to two dogs on the premises at any one time. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and subject to review if there is any report/concern expressed by pupils, staff and/or parents howsoever given.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that the school has a clearly written policy for dogs in school and that this is reviewed by the Health & Safety Committee on an annual basis.

The Safeguarding Trustee is responsible for ensuring that any incident regarding the welfare of a student, staff member or visitor to the school is appropriately reported.

The Head is responsible for ensuring that all staff work to the standards set out within the policy.

The Bursar will be responsible for ensuring that the risk assessments relating to the dogs are regularly reviewed and all records maintained. The Bursar will also be responsible for maintaining evidence of appropriate public liability insurance from both the owner and the school.

The PA to the Head will hold a record of all students who have allergies, or anxieties related, to dogs in school.

Teachers, staff, students, parents and visitors are required to work to the standards and support the safety of all within the school's setting.

3.1 The Responsibility of the Dog Owner

The owner has full public liability insurance in place for the dog and that a copy of this insurance is provided to the Bursar.

The owner of the dog must ensure that the animal is in good health and has had all the necessary immunisations or vaccinations and be treated against fleas, ticks and worms. The vaccination record should be attached to the risk assessment and maintained by the Bursar.

The dog must remain under the control of the responsible adult at all times. The dog should be restrained on a lead or in a suitable carrier. This applies to days when school is in session, prior to the start of school and for any time after the school day, whenever the dog is on the school premises. Transportation of the dog to and from school will be the responsibility of the owner. The owner accepts that all costs relating to the dog are their responsibility.

4. Procedures

4.1 Assessment of Risk & Variations

Any dog on the school premises must be individually assessed in the context of this policy, and a Risk Assessment for the dog put in place. The Risk Assessment will be followed at all times; any exception to the Risk Assessment will not be approved without prior agreement of the Trustees at a Health & Safety Committee Meeting.

A copy of the Risk Assessment may be obtained from the Bursar upon request.

4.1.1 **Incidents/First Aid**

Should any pupil or adult be scratched or bitten by an animal at school, first aid must be administered immediately and in the case of a pupil, parents will be advised as quickly as possible.

A copy of the Incident Report (signed by the Head) will be sent to the involved family and the policy for dogs in school will need to be reviewed together with the dog's Risk Assessment accordingly. A copy of the Incident Report will be reported to the Safeguarding Trustee and the Trustees.

In the unlikely event that a child injures the dog (howsoever caused), the owner will be responsible for all medical fees and the Trustees/school will accept no responsibility. It is considered that the owner will keep the dog closely monitored at all times and is responsible for the management of this.

4.1.2 **Death of the School Dog**

In the event of the death of the school dog, the owner does not have authorisation to bring another dog to school. Agreement would need to be reviewed following a full Risk Assessment process and the formal agreement of the Board of Trustees. It is unlikely that a dog under 12 months of age would be approved as a school dog.

Children will be supported sensitively at this time and will be encouraged to understand that this is a natural end to a happy and fulfilled life.

4.1.3 **No-Go Areas**

As employers, the Trustees respect that a dog may have a negative impact on visitors, employees and students. In recognition of the Equality Act 2010, where a member of staff has a concern about a dog within the school setting, a plan will be put in place to ensure that they are able to meet and discuss matters with the Head and staff in a safe and secure setting.

No dog is allowed to enter the Staff Room at any time.

4.1.4 **Dog Foul**

Any dog foul should be cleared by the dog owner immediately and, at no point, should any students be allowed to assist.

4.1.5 **Emergency Procedures/Fire Drills**

In the event of an emergency evacuation of the school, the dog should be taken out on a lead by its owner and kept well away from pupils and other staff members in a safe place. The dog owner will consider the arrangements within the Risk Assessment.

At no point will a dog owner be able to re-enter a building to collect a dog during a fire evacuation procedure.

4.2 **'Students First' Approach**

There should be no physical contact between the school dog and pupils unless it is an integral part of the learning with prior approval received from the Head.

The school will hold a full register of children who have allergies to, or anxieties relating to, dogs.

This information will be taken at the point of enrolment to the school and active consideration of this register will be included in the Risk Assessment of the dog.

4.2.1 **Clarity of Expectations**

- The dog must be kept on a lead at all times and under the full control and supervision of their owner.
- Pupils must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times – this should be the dog's owner.
- Pupils will be regularly reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dogs. Pupils are likely to become excited and it is important that they react calmly and carefully around the dog. Pupils should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Pupils should be told not to put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
- Pupils will be told never to go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
- A dog displaying any nervous or aggressive behaviour (including growling, baring of teeth, backing away, lowered tail, flattened ears etc) are amongst a range of indicators that the dog is not at ease. At this point, the dog will be immediately removed by the owner.
- Pupils will be asked to wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Pupils will not be allowed to feed or eat close to a dog.

Consideration of these points and others should be included within the Risk Assessment for the dog.

4.2.2 **Children with Medical Concerns**

The school will hold a full register of children who have allergies to, or anxieties relating to, dogs. This information will be taken at the point of enrolment to the school.

Health issues must be considered when assessing the appropriateness of a dog in the classroom. Prior to the consideration of the introduction of a dog to the classroom, the teacher/owner should review the medical notes of the pupils in their class and consider any identified risks in the dog's Risk Assessment.

4.3 **Keeping Parents Informed**

Parents will be advised that the school has a dog on the school premises. The role of the dog and their movement/interaction with children will be set out clearly and parents will have the opportunity to share any concerns with the school. These concerns will be recorded by the PA to the Head who will ensure that all staff are aware of any child who has allergies or anxieties related to the dogs.

If parents have any concerns relating to the presence of a dog on the school site, they should inform the Head at their earliest opportunity.

4.4 **Visiting Dogs**

There may be an occasion that a visitor to the school brings a dog with them; the PSHE curriculum may, for example, include a visitor from Guide Dogs for the Blind or the Dogs Trust. In this instance, the Head will sign off a pre-agreed Risk Assessment no less than 48 hours before the visit. Parents will be advised of the visit.

Appendix 1: Dog in School: Duty of Care, Training & Behaviour Standards

The following standards are taken from the Kennel Club's 'Bark & Read' Alliance Standards and accepted by the Trustees as guidelines that owners should follow if their dog is in school.

- The dog should be in good health and demonstrate excellent, calm behaviour when around children and adults.
- The dog should be able to walk calmly on a loose lead.
- Handlers must only use positive, reward-based training methods and equipment.
- The owner must understand their responsibilities towards the dog and school evacuation procedures.
- Dogs must have access to fresh drinking water at all times.
- Dogs must be given the opportunity to toilet when required, in an appropriate place provided by the school.
- If a dog shows signs of stress, anxiety, discomfort or fatigue, they must be taken out of the situation and only return if fully recovered and the issue causing the stress has been identified and addressed.
- Enough space must be provided for the dog to be able to move about comfortably and lay down within a 'protected' environment such as a cage or room solely for their use.
- Dogs must be re-assessed regularly to confirm that they are in good health, both physically and emotionally and have the appropriate temperament to be around children in potentially noisy/busy environments. Ideally, this assessment should be conducted once a year.
- The owner 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 only wear items of uniform designed for dogs, such as jackets, leads and bandanas. Fancy dress or clothing not appropriate for dogs are not permitted.

General health, hygiene, safety and legislative standards

- Sensible precautions must be in place to minimise the risk of the spread of infectious disease e.g., hand washing.
- Dogs with wounds must not be allowed to have contact with students or staff.
- Staff and children with open wounds must not be allowed to pet the dog, although dressed wounds are acceptable.
- Dogs must be free of disease or infection. At the first sign of any illness the dog should not come to school and should not return until it is back to normal good health. If the illness has required veterinary attention and treatment, clearance to attend the school setting should be given by a vet.
- Individuals (anyone in the school community) that are immunosuppressed due to illness and/or certain types of medication should not have close contact with the dog. Dogs should not enter the classroom or any shared place of such an individual without medical approval.
- Dogs must be up to date and compliant with vaccinations, in line with current WSAVA guidelines and/or Titer testing. The vaccination record should be provided to the Bursar to retain on file.
- Dogs must be free of parasites and receive regular worm/flea treatments.
- Bitches in season must not enter classrooms or move around in shared areas.
- Dogs must be discouraged from licking people and handlers should manage excessive salivation.
- Service providers and schools must ensure that risk assessments are carried out, specific to the individual dog.
- The owner and the school must ensure that appropriate liability insurance is in place with copies available to all relevant parties.

Appendix 2: Risk Assessment Template

HAZARD RISK 1-5 CONTROLS IN PLACE REVIEW DATE

Name of the Dog		Owner	
Date of Review		Public Liability Insurance in place	Expiry date:
Vaccine Record	Expiry date:	Authorised by Trustees on:	Date of approval

Where this Risk Assessment refers to the Owner of the dog, it is agreed that the Owner may designate a responsible adult to take care of the dog in their absence. The Owner is responsible for ensuring that their designated adult is aware of their responsibilities set out in the Hollygirt School Dogs in School Policy. This Risk Assessment should be read in conjunction with the Dogs in School Policy.

Hazard	Risk	Risk Rating (1-5)	Controls in Place
Responding to the Protected Characteristics of staff	A member of staff or visitor to the school is uncomfortable in the presence of dogs		
A child has an allergy to a dog	Child/staff member has an allergic reaction to a dog		
A child has a fear of dogs	Child/staff member has a fear of dogs and becomes anxious		
Noise/barking	Causing a negative response in children		

Passing infection/disease from a dog	Children/staff contract a disease spread by a dog		
Poor behaviour by the dog	<p>A child is knocked to the ground.</p> <p>A child is scratched by the dog. A child is bitten by the dog.</p>		
Slips, trips & falls	<p>Someone trips over a long dog lead</p> <p>Slipping on dog excrement</p> <p>Slipping on water/dog food</p>		
School evacuation	<p>The school fire alarm sounds and the school is evacuated</p> <p>The school is closed due to a bomb scare/terror threat.</p> <p>The school is 'locked down'</p>		

Risks specific to the dog covered by this risk assessment			
School evacuation	In the event of a fire alarm/school evacuation, the dog has a specific plan in place which is outlined in this risk assessment.		
Secure place of rest	The dog has sufficient time to rest and be undisturbed in a safe area.		
<i>Further identified risks:</i>			

Statement of Undertaking

On completion of this risk assessment, I undertake responsibility for my dog whilst on the school premises and can confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all risks have been considered. I will follow the expectations set out within the Hollygirt School Dogs in School Policy. I consider that my dog is of a nature/temperament suitable for an environment in which there are children and, potentially, vulnerable adults.

I confirm that my dog conforms to the following standards and can be relied upon to:

- ✓ 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 them
- ✓ Be comfortable with appropriate physical interaction e.g. 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 e.g. wheelchairs, where relevant
- ✓ Exhibit no guarding of resources e.g. food/toys or avoidance behaviour
- ✓ Take treats gently when offered and not snatch toys from hands

Signed:

Date:

AUTHORISED ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES OF HOLLYGIRT SCHOOL BY:

Signed:

Date: