



# School Dog Policy

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Person(s) Responsible:	GOVERNING BODY
Formally adopted by the Governing Body:	June 2023
Last review:	June 2023
Next review:	June 2024

***This policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)***



**This is Olive, Olive is Biggin Hill Primary School's dog. Olive lives with and is owned by Mrs Freeman and her family but she is also part of the BHPS community. When she is at our school she spends time with staff and children and is part of our inclusion team.**

### **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 take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog. Appendix B sets out further reasons for why the school feels it will be beneficial to have a school dog.

### **School Policy**

The dog will be owned by Hannah Freeman. The dog is a Red Miniature Poodle chosen for its very mild temperament and non-moulting coat. Hannah Freeman will be responsible for Olive's regular visits to the vets, injections and vaccinations.

The Governing body, and the Head Teacher have both agreed that the school can have a dog.

Staff are informed, when recruited, that the school has a dog. Parents are also informed that there is a school dog during tours and before their child starts. At the start of each academic year there will be lessons around the school dog and parents will be given an opportunity to speak to the head with regards to the school dog. BHPS has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment is attached as Appendix A.

In the event of an emergency evacuation the adult supporting Olive, will accompany her to the Fire Evacuation point.

Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must remain at a manageable distance. Parents are able to inform the school of any allergies on admission and there will be posters alerting visitors to the school that there is a dog on the premises.

If Olive is unwell, she will not be allowed into school.

The dog will be kept on a lead and harness at all times when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.

There may be occasions when the dog is working off lead, but this will only happen in an enclosed space and under the control of an adult. Before removing the lead, all present will be consulted.

Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with children.

Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Students should never go near or disturb the dog when she is sleeping or eating. Students must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.

If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that she/he monitors the situation.

Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicate 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, the dog should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

Children should not feed or eat close to the dog. The only exception to this is dog treats and hands must be washed afterwards.

Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog. As a school we will provide anti-bacterial gel.

Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in school.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers and staff and children are required to abide by this policy.

The Health and Safety Lead is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

## Appendix A - Risk Assessment

### **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. The team at BHPS have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and the decision was made in September 2022 to go ahead with the project.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- for the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow
- for the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day
- to have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent/carer who does not want their child to interact with Olive is invited to write to the headteacher and inform her of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the puppy as her vet will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of Olive's health records will be updated and kept in school. Olive will also be insured for the time that she spends in school under the school's public liability policy.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

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Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 - 3	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	<p>Child knocked to the ground.</p> <p>Child scratched by dog.</p> <p>Child bitten by dog.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead or carried when she is not in the school office while the children are in school.</p> <p>Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training from the age of 12 weeks with an experienced dog trainer. Selected children will be part of this process.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed as she progresses through her weekly training.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p>	

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			The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept short.	
The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school.</p> <p>A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept in school.</p> <p>The 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.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	
Children getting ill as a result of contact from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way.</p> <p>She will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.</p> <p>Flea and worm treatment is carried out at regular intervals as recommended by the vet.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes; and never in the food preparation area or staffroom.</p>	

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Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Olive's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Hannah Freeman both in a well-being and financial aspect.  Olive will be insured by the school, for Public Liability Insurance.  All vets costs are covered by Hannah Freeman.	
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**KEY:**

- 1 - Low risk**
- 2 - Medium risk of injury**
- 3 - High risk of injury**

***In the event of any incident mentioned in the risk assessment occurring in school, Olive would immediately be taken home and a full accident report completed. Parents and carers would be informed. Following any incident a review of this policy and the suitability of Olive's position as the school's dog would be referred to the governing body immediately.***

## Appendix B - Reasons to have a dog in school

### **Behaviour**

Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students 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. Although behaviour is excellent at BHPS, there are children who find it difficult to emotionally regulate themselves at times and we believe that calming time with the school dog as well as using time with the dog as a reward, would benefit these children.

### **Attendance**

A school dog could positively impact attendance for children. Children can be encouraged back into school using caring for a dog as an incentive. We are seeing an increase in children with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and we believe that a dog could be a helpful incentive in managing school related anxiety.

### **Social Development**

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching children social skills and responsibility. Researchers report that involving children in the daily care of dogs (for example walking and grooming) is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The children also learn about responsibility, caring and sharing when helping each other to take care of a dog at school.

### **As a reward**

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, may 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. Children who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

### **Reading**

Reading programmes with dogs are very successful 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.