



# Buckstones Community Primary School

## Dog in School Policy

Written by staff: Monday 27<sup>th</sup>. June 2022

Approved by Governors on: 28.6.22

Review: June 2025

## **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.

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

Yes there is, though 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 and this is included in this document (see appendix 3).

Dogs 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 in place to allow the school dog to be present.

## **School Policy**

The dog will be owned by Miss Healey.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- Only the school dog 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 before hand.
- The dog is a Cavalier King Charles spaniel. She is a small dog who is sociable, patient, calm, adaptable.
- The Chair of Governors, Steve Beckley and the governing board agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Buckstones Primary School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school sometimes (not every day). Miss Healey, Head teacher has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill she will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.

- 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.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog. Everyone must wait until Fudge is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.
- 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 s/he monitors the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing 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 she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke Fudge on her body, chest, back and not by her face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to the dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head Teacher asap.
- Staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Miss Healey.

### **Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher or a Deputy as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head teacher.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

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

The Head teacher 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 our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well behaved and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

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) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Motivate children who are often less attentive

Behaviour:

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students.

Education:

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. 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.

Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs 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 students 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 students they mix with.

Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. The students also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other 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, will be rewarded with spending time with Fudge.

**Appendix 2 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 Miss Healey; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

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 Miss Healey's office and will probably only come into school once a week. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure she only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

The dog will also have a space to spend time in other areas of the school where children can interact safely with her.

The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Miss Healey will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for her training.

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 when taken out for short walks.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time. She will only be in school for short periods of time not all week. The dog will be carefully monitored over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that 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.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it 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.

| <u>Hazard</u>  | <u>Risk</u>            | <u>Risk Category</u><br><u>1-5</u> | <u>Likelihood</u><br><u>1-5</u> | <u>Controls in place</u>   |
|--|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Dog getting over excited when interacting with children. | Child scratched by dog | 3                                  | 2                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fudge will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training.</li> <li>• Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.</li> <li>• Fudge will always be on a lead when she is out the Head's office.</li> <li>• 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, class time and PSHE lessons.</li> <li>• Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around her.</li> <li>• Pupils and adults will be reminded not to touch Fudge's mouth, head and rear end.</li> <li>• Fudge will attend the vets' regularly to make sure she is in good health.</li> </ul> |
|  | Child bitten by dog    | <u>4</u>                           | <u>2</u>                        |  |
| Dog hair causing   | Children have allergic | 1                                  | 1                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents will have been asked to inform the school</li> </ul>  |



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|--|---|---|---|---|
| allergies  | reactions   |   |   | <p>of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. No reports were returned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children will have the opportunity to interact with Fudge as they wish and those with allergies would be able to opt out of interaction.</li> <li>• Children will be taught to wash their hands after active touching Fudge.</li> </ul>  |
| Children getting germs from the dog.                   | Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs | 1 | 1 | <p>A member of staff will clear up any mess immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this.</li> <li>• Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals.</li> <li>• The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times.</li> </ul> |
| Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog. | School not adequately covered financially                         | 1 | 1 | The school has public liability insurance   |

## **Appendix 4 BBC Report**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47655600>

Every school should have a dog or another pet to reduce stress in the classroom, says Sir Anthony Seldon.

The University of Buckingham vice-chancellor says it is "a powerfully cost-effective way of helping children feel more secure at schools".

Sir Anthony was speaking at a conference about the need to improve young people's sense of wellbeing.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds says more schools seem to have "wellbeing dogs" and "the pets can really help".

'Perfect lives'

The University of Buckingham's Ultimate Wellbeing in Education Conference examined how to respond to the stresses and anxieties facing young people.

Mr Hinds told the conference that the relentless presence of social media made growing up "more pressurised".

He said this could be all-pervasive for teenagers, making them compare their own experiences with the "perfect lives" on social media.

- Dog helps pupils with reading at primary school in Somerset
- School with dog subject of TV documentary
- Why a Bristol school has a dog on its staff
- University switches off social media to help wellbeing

It could also normalise exposure to harmful material on subjects like self-harm or eating disorders, he added.

Social media creates the pressure to have "perfect lives", says the education secretary

The education secretary called for more attention to be paid to ways of building up children's wellbeing, such as teaching emotional resilience and a sense of "character".

Sir Anthony has been a longstanding advocate of the need for schools and universities to pay much more attention to mental health.

He told the conference, held at the Westminster Academy in west London, that it was no longer possible for schools to focus solely on academic achievement without thinking about the emotional wellbeing of pupils.

His campaigns have helped to raise awareness about the prevalence of mental health problems on university campuses - and he has argued for more recognition for the risks from drug use.

'Wellbeing dogs'

But Sir Anthony suggested another more low-tech approach to reducing anxiety - the soothing presence of animals such as dogs.

"The quickest and biggest hit that we can make to improve mental health in our schools and to make them feel safe for children, is to have at least one dog in every single school in the country," said Sir Anthony.

Damian HindsImage copyright Reuters

Image caption

Damian Hinds said young people were under pressure from false expectations created by social media

"Because children can relate to animals when they are hurt and anxious and sad in a way that they can't always with human beings.

"It will be a powerfully cost-effective way of helping children feel more secure at schools.

"It's very easy to do, it's very cost-effective, the evidence is very clear that it works, and every single school - primary, secondary, special - should have dogs.

"It's hard to think of an easier, quicker benefit," he said.

Universities have increasingly been bringing pets on to campuses at exam times, as a way of reducing stress.

Paws for thought

But the education secretary said that his visits had shown him how common "wellbeing dogs" were becoming in schools.

"This is one of those things that wasn't around when I was at school," said Mr Hinds.

"I hadn't really realised the incidence of it until I was education secretary.

"First I was a bit surprised, but actually it's a great thing.

"For the kids it can be really uplifting, particularly those that have different ways of expressing themselves and coming out of themselves - and the dog or the pets can really help."

But he said there were no plans for a "central dog policy".