

# RISK ASSESSMENT

Activity being Risk Assessed:	Dogs in school
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What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to manage this risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
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Bites and Scratches	Children, staff, handlers (owners) and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 dogs are in school on a regular basis: -Sonny (Labradoodle) is owned by the headteacher. He is a mature male dog of a very good temperament and is used to being around adults and children. He does not bite or jump up at anyone and will reliably follow behavioural commands. -Dotty (Border Terrier) is owned by the School Business Manager. She is a young adolescent female dog so still displays some puppy type behaviour and can be energetic and playful. Dotty can jump up when she gets excited and will often attempt to lick people but she does not bite or display aggression towards people (adults or children). Any adults (staff and visitors) who choose to approach Dotty are advised of the risks by the owner, and interaction is always supervised by the owner. Dotty has been in school since she was a puppy so she is very used to the school environment and the people who come into regular contact with her. Dotty understands behavioural commands and will follow instructions from her owner and other adults in school who she is familiar with. She is very motivated by treats as rewards.</li> <li>Both dogs spend the majority of time in the office during the school day, always supervised by an adult who knows them well (either of their owners or the office administrator, who is confident with dogs).</li> </ul>				
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If Sonny moves around the school he walks to heel and is always with his owner or one of the named adults above.</li> <li>If Dotty moves around the school she is closely controlled on a lead and only leaves the school office with her owner</li> <li>Both dogs can be safely left in the school office unsupervised</li> <li>Children are taught how to approach Sonny and Dotty and how to interact with each of them appropriately. This is always under the supervision of the dogs' owners.</li> </ul>				
Poor hygiene and health risks	Children, staff, handlers and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both dogs are vaccinated, wormed and treated for fleas and are groomed regularly</li> <li>All children and adults are required to wash their hands after contact with dogs</li> <li>Soap is available at all sinks in school for hand washing</li> <li>Both dogs are taken for a walk off the school grounds for exercise</li> <li>Both dogs are taken to a secure, enclosed outdoor area of the school premises for comfort breaks during the day. Children do not play in this area.</li> <li>In the event of dog urine or faeces on the school site, the owner disposes of this safely and cleans the area involved with disinfectant</li> <li>Dogs are not taken anywhere near food preparation areas</li> </ul>				
Allergies	Children, staff and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School keeps a record of all children and staff with allergies and this information is taken into account</li> </ul>				

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		<p>to ensure these children do not have contact with dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents will be informed that there are dogs on site and asked to contact the school if they are concerned about their children being in contact with them</li> <li>Adults who are allergic to dogs should not approach either dog.</li> <li>If a workshop for children is arranged that includes dogs, alternative activities will be arranged for children with allergies.</li> <li>An information poster is displayed in the school office which is updated daily to show if either dog is on the premises.</li> </ul>				
Phobias	Children, staff and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents, staff and visitors are informed of days when either dog is on site via a notice clearly displayed in the school office</li> <li>People do not have to have contact with either dog and will be able to move around the school without needing to do so</li> <li>Where children, staff and visitors are known to have a dog phobia, the dogs will be kept separate from them in an enclosed space</li> </ul>				
Activities and games involving dogs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dotty is closely supervised during any interaction with children due to the risk of jumping up. During these times she is either on a lead or held by her owner. Sonny is supervised by his owner.</li> <li>The only people who will work with the dogs in school are their owners</li> </ul>	<i>Children will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dogs. Children are likely to become excited and it is important that they react calmly and carefully around the dog(s). They should not make sudden movements and must</i>			

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The owners will remain with their dogs at all times as they move around school</li> <li>Dogs will only be in the school office or the playground, or moving between these areas</li> <li>The owner minimises the number of children interacting with dogs at one time</li> <li>The owner directs activities that the children have with dogs eg ball throwing</li> <li>Where objects are thrown for dogs to retrieve, these will be thrown in areas where there are no other people, to ensure no one is hit by a flying object</li> <li>Children who are not behaving sensibly around dog will be told to go elsewhere, alternatively, the handler will take the dog back to the office.</li> <li>The dog will be outside for short, limited periods only, so that they do not tire.</li> <li>The owner will remove the dog if it shows any signs of distress.</li> </ul>	<p><i>never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should be told not to put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.</i></p> <p><i>Dogs body language is an indicator of how they are feeling, eg 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.</i></p> <p><i>The owner will always accompany the dog during activities so that they can identify any such body language quickly and end the activity by removing the dog.</i></p>			
Children behaving inappropriately around an animal	Children, dogs, adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expectations for children's behaviour around the dog will be set in advance</li> <li>Dog owner and other appropriate school staff will be present at all times</li> <li>School staff will intervene and remove children who are behaving in a way that upsets the animal</li> </ul>				
Damage caused to school materials,	dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs will remain in designated areas – principally the school office</li> </ul>				

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equipment and school site		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the dogs are in the office the door is kept closed. Both dogs have been trained to remain in the office and will reliably follow an instruction o remain there when the door is open</li> <li>Dogs have suitable toys on site</li> <li>The only indoor areas where dogs are allowed are the school office and corridors, where they are always accompanied by their owner</li> </ul>				
Lockdown or fire evacuation	Children, dogs, adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each dog will have a designated plan for evacuation or lockdown: Dotty will be picked up by her owner and carried, Sonny will walk with his owner on a lead.</li> <li>Each dog will have practised lockdown and evacuation procedures and will be used to the sound of the bell</li> <li>The owner will be responsible for their dog during any drill or actual lockdown or evacuation; dogs will be on a lead</li> </ul>				
Feeding and use of rewards/treats		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both dogs have a bowl of water available in the school office throughout the day and suitable food according to their individual needs</li> <li>Dogs will only be given food and treats by their owners – children are not to give food or treats to either dog</li> </ul>				
Risks of all the above from other dogs on site		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If it is necessary to bring a dog on site, it must be kept on a lead and carried. It is recognised that this may be a safer alternative to a dog being tied up at one of the entrances to school.</li> <li>Where a dog other than Sonny or Dotty will be visiting the school, eg for a workshop or if</li> </ul>				

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		<p>accompanying a child/member of staff/visitor as a working/ assistance dog, a separate risk assessment will be undertaken where the dog will be moving around the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a stray dog is on the school grounds, the area will be cleared of children and the local authority will be contacted and asked to remove it. Sonny and Dotty will be kept in the office until the stray dog is removed from the site</li> <li>Most entry points to the school grounds are kept locked for the majority of the day. Anyone entering the grounds to exercise a dog is trespassing and will be asked to leave the site.</li> </ul>				

Risk Assessment Completed by (Name):	Alice Kiddell	Job Title:	School Business Manager	Date:	June 2024
Authorised by Line Manager (Name):	Catherine King	Job Title	Headteacher	Date:	June 2024
Reviewed by:	Sarah Weaver	Job Title	Headteacher	Date:	June 2024
Distribution List:	All Staff			Date:	June 2024
Reviewed by:	Alice Kiddell	Job Title	School Business Manager	Date:	Sept 2025

Appendix – Reasons to have a dog in school (from the Community Schools Alliance Trust guidance on bringing dogs onto school property – Cheney School)

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

1) Improve academic achievement

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- 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) Help prevent truancy
- 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 students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. 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.

**Attendance:** Case study: Mandy was a student with poor attendance and truancy. Mandy was encouraged back into school using caring for River, a dog, as an incentive. By telling Mandy that "if she didn't come to school to care for him, he wouldn't get walks, water or love," Mandy came to school almost every day for the rest of the year, only missing two days.

**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. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student 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. 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. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and

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boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students. With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. 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 during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.