

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"> 2 dogs are in school on a regular basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sonny (Labradoodle) is owned by the headteacher. He is a mature 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 puppy who is still getting used to different environments and situations in day to day life. She is still learning basic commands but will generally respond to her name when she is called to 'come' and to the command 'sit'. She is highly motivated by treats which help her to obey commands successfully. As she is a puppy, Dotty can jump up and bite at her toys, hands, shoes and clothing during play or when she gets excited but she does not display aggression towards any adults or older teenage children. She has not yet met any young children and will not do so until her behaviour has matured and the play biting and jumping up has ceased. 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. Both dogs spend the majority of time in the school or Headteacher's 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). If Sonny moves around the school he walks to heel and is always with his owner or one of the named adults above. 				
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dotty does not move around the school building, she stays in the office and has a secure playpen where she can play and rest. Dotty can be safely left in the playpen if her owner needs to leave the office and is also used to being tied to her owner's desk if this office is busy and she needs to be kept to a restricted area • Children are taught how to approach Sonny and how to interact with him. This is always under the supervision of his owner. Children will not interact with Dotty until her owner is confident that she has matured and her behaviour is suitable to allow this to happen safely. 				
Poor hygiene and health risks	Children, staff, handlers and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both dogs are vaccinated, wormed and treated for fleas and are groomed regularly • All children and adults are required to wash their hands after contact with dogs • Soap is available at all sinks in school for hand washing • Both dogs are taken for a walk off the school grounds for toileting • 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 • Dogs are not taken anywhere near food preparation areas 				
Allergies	Children, staff and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School keeps a record of all children and staff with allergies and this information is taken into account to ensure these children do not have contact with dogs • 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 				

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults who are allergic to dogs should not approach either dog. If a workshop for children is arranged that includes dogs, alternative activities will be arranged for children with allergies. 				
Phobias	Children, staff and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, staff and visitors will be informed of days when either dog is on site via a notice clearly displayed in the school office People do not have to have contact with either dog and will be able to move around the school without needing to do so Where children, staff and visitors are known to have a dog phobia, the dogs will be kept separate from them in an enclosed space 				
Activities and games involving dogs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dotty will not participate in any activities or games involving children until she has matured and is no longer exhibiting any play biting behaviour or jumping up. Sonny will be the only dog involved in any such activities until this is the case. The only people who will work with the dogs in school are their owners The owners will remain with their dogs at all times as they move around school Dogs will only be in the school office or the playground, or moving between these areas The owner minimises the number of children interacting with dogs at one time The owner directs activities that the children have with dogs eg ball throwing 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 	<p><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 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,</i></p>			

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. The dog will be outside for short, limited periods only, so that they do not tire. The owner will remove the dog if it shows any signs of distress. 	<p><i>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"> Expectations for children's behaviour around the dog will be set in advance Dog owner and other appropriate school staff will be present at all times School staff will intervene and remove children who are behaving in a way that upsets the animal 				
Damage caused to school materials, equipment and school site	dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dogs will remain in designated areas – principally the school office When the dogs are in the office the door is kept closed Dogs have suitable toys on site The only indoor areas where dogs are allowed are the school office and corridors, where they are always accompanied by their owner 				
Lockdown or fire evacuation	Children, dogs, adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each dog will have a designated plan for evacuation or lockdown: Doty will be picked up by her owner and carried, Sonny will walk with his owner on a lead. Each dog will have practised lockdown and evacuation procedures and will be used to the sound of the bell The owner will be responsible for their dog during any drill or actual lockdown or evacuation; dogs will be on a lead 				

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Feeding and use of rewards/treats		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both dogs have a bowl of water available in the school office throughout the day and suitable food according to their individual needs Dogs will only be given food and treats by their owners – children are not to give food or treats to either dog 				
Risks of all the above from other dogs on site		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Where a dog other than Sonny or Dotty will be visiting the school, eg for a workshop or if 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 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 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. 				

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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:	
Reviewed by:	Sarah Weaver	Job Title	Headteacher	Date:	
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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
- 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

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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 boundaries. Dogs can help communication, 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. Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. 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.