 Holly Park School

 Dog Policy

 Poppy

**Introduction**

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable, calm dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. By having a school dog we want to encourage those children who are vulnerable, or those less confident at reading to have a friendly audience and look forward to reading as a treat. The breed of Cockapoo is carefully selected as suitable for this type of environment. Poppy is well cared for and responsibly owned by the Headteacher.

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

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about school life with a dog and how, through careful management, there is a very low risk of harm.

The chair of governors has agreed that the school can have a dog and parents have been informed by letter that the school will have a dog.

**Reasons to have a School Dog**

Numerous research studies have shown the benefits of dogs in schools. Dogs have been

working in schools for over 5 years across the UK with several integrated very successfully in Barnet schools. Dogs have been commonplace in schools in the USA and Australia for many years.

Evidence indicates that benefits include:

• Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing. Reading to a dog can be very beneficial as dogs give unconditional acceptance and are non judgemental. Dogs make amazing listeners.

• Social – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others. Attendance for some pupils has improved because of a school dog.

• Emotional – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often

provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach empathy, compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety. This has been known to reduce the percentage of violent or aggressive behaviour in school.

• Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses

• Environmental – a dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.

**Context**

* Poppy will be owned by Ann Pelham
* Veterinary costs will be cover by the owner
* Poppy is a Cockapoo, chosen for her mild temperament, friendliness and non-moulting coat.
* The risk assessment (attached) will be reviewed annually
* Visitors and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival.

**Cockapoo Characteristics**

* A small dog
* Completely people-oriented
* Is very adaptable
* An affectionate, kind, friendly dog
* Is good with children

**Day to day Management**

Poppy will:

* Not be allowed in school if she is unwell
* Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk
* Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
* Be fully trained to a bed
* Have had all injections and these will be maintained annually

**School Pupils will:**

* NOT have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with Poppy
* Meet Poppy in a group of no more than three children
* Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Poppy every time they meet her
* Always remain calm
* Be gentle
* Do not put your face near Poppy’s
* Do not disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping
* Always approach Poppy standing up
* Do not feed the dog
* Never tease the dog
* Learn about how dogs express their feelings through body language. Growling or baring of teeth means that the dog feels threatened or angry. If Poppy is displaying any of these signs she will be removed from the situation immediately.

**Health and Safety Principles**

Children will always wash their hands or use alcohol gel after handling the dog.

Any dog foul will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of Poppy at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

**Concerns**

Our school does have a ‘no dogs’ policy, however Poppy will be the school dog and will be in school for a specific purpose. She will be on a leash at all times when moving around the school property and will always be accompanied by an adult. Poppy will also be fully insured to carry out her role thus allowing her to be on the school site.

Some children may have had upsetting experiences and thus have a fear of dogs (or another animal). Poppy will be calm and gentle around children; she has a very loving and gentle

nature. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

It is understandable that some of you may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. The Cockapoo breed is known to be hypo- allergenic. Poppy will be subjected to a thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. We will ask parents who are concerned to make the school aware if their child has an allergy.

Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog is invited to write to Mrs Pelham to inform her of their wishes.

**Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Staffing & Pupil Welfare Committee.

The impact of having a school dog will be monitored by the SMT.

**Document Control**

**Revision History**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Revision Date | Revised By | Revision |
| 1.0 | September 2017 | Ann Pelham | Policy written as a draft |

**Signed by**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Signature | Date |
| Headteacher | Ann Pelham |  |  |
| Chair of Governors | Andrew Ballam Davies |  |  |

**Distribution**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Shared with | Date |
| 1.0 | * Staff via school server
* Parents via Website
* Governors via meetings
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**Review**

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| Date for next review |
| Autumn term 2018 |

**Risk Assessment**

**Activity: Dog on school premises**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hazard & Risk** | **Who could be harmed** | **What precautions are in place?** | **What else can be done?** |
| Animal Health, diseases and parasites  | Pupils/Staff/Visitors  | Dog to have necessary vaccinations before coming into school Dog to have regular veterinary checks Dog to be bathed weekly Dog to live with family and owner when not in school Dog will not be allowed to come into contact with wild rodents due to possibility of disease transmission  |  |
| Dog excrement & urine - illness and falls/slips  | Pupils/Staff/Visitors  | Dog will be wormed. Dog will be kept free of fleas, ticks. Any excrement or urine will be cleaned up immediately and thoroughly disposed of responsibly and hygienically by the owner or adult with responsibility at the time of the incident Hand washing facilities close to where the dog will be. A bag containing poo bags/plastic bags, kitchen roll and rubber gloves will be carried by the member of the staff walking the dog.  | Dog will be exercised out of school daily.  |
| Hygiene/Infection  | Pupils/Staff/Visitors  | Adequate provision for hand washing Do not allow children to touch any part of their face with their hands before hands are washed Younger pupils should be seen washing their hands All wounds on exposed skin are suitably covered Dog Food stuff stored carefully to prevent contamination and infestation Dog to be bathed weekly  | Hand sanitiser also available in HT office, foyer and Orchard room |
| Dog getting overexcited wheninteracting withchildren and jumping up, scratching or biting. | Pupils/Staff/Visitors | The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult andwill never be allowed to freely roam the school premises.Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.The dog will always be on a lead when she is out of the Head’s office. Pupils will be taught the impact oftheir actions. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog fromchasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms)The dog will attend the groomers’ regularly to make sure her clawsare kept short and is also walked on concrete/tarmac to keepthem trimmed | The responsible adult to remove the dog from the situation if she is over excited |
| Dog hair causingallergies | Pupils/Staff/Visitors | Parents have been asked to inform the school of any knownallergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of anychildren who should not interact with the dog will be kept in the welfare room.Children will be taught to wash their hands after activeparticipation with the dog. |  |