



Animals on School Site Policy

September 2023

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Approved by: Chair of Trustees

Principal: Neil Bain

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1. Introduction

The school recognises that children can benefit from contact with pets and other animals, increasing their understanding of responsibility and developing empathy and nurturing skills. The development of these skills is a fundamental part of the school's personal, health and social education curriculum. In addition to these benefits children take great enjoyment from interaction with pets and other animals.

With dogs being one of the UK's most popular pets, children are likely to have considerable exposure to dogs, in particular, outside school. Developing children's awareness of how to behave safely around dogs is therefore important.

Dogs may also be brought into school by outside agencies, e.g. Guide Dogs for the Blind or animal rescue charities such as the Dogs Trust or PAWS.

2. Risks of Dogs and Other Animals on the School Site

- The school recognises that there are risks allowing dogs and other animals on the school site, including biting incidents and barking, which may frighten children.
- Parents may understandably have concerns regarding dogs on the school site.
- It is the school's aim to maximise the benefit of children's contact with dogs and other animals, and control risks, by asking staff, parents/carers and visitors to follow some simple rules, exercise common sense and encourage the sensible behaviour of students around dogs and other animals.

3. Legislation

- The school is required to comply with all legislation including, but not limited to, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- These pieces of legislation establish the standards that must be met to ensure the health and safety of all employees and others (students, staff, parents/carers, contractors and visitors) who may be affected by any school activity and are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive.

4. Bringing Dogs onto the School Site

- The school has no jurisdiction regarding dogs walked or tied up outside the school grounds but in the vicinity of the building. This includes the wider Woodstock site. However, the school respectfully asks parents/carers to adopt the same safe practices in the vicinity of the school as it would be on the school site.
- The school welcomes parents/carers who would like to bring their dog to school when they drop off or collect their child. The school will provide a bowl of water for visiting dogs adjacent to the main reception area.
- Parents/carers are asked to ensure that their dog remains on a lead while on school premises, is supervised at all times and controlled so that it does not leap on children or other adults.
- Students must never be left alone with dogs.
- Parents/carers should keep their dog away from other dogs within the school grounds as it is not always possible to gauge how dogs will react towards each other.
- It is imperative that parents/carers do not allow their dog to foul the school premises. In the event of any dog foul, it should be removed immediately by the adult responsible for the dog and disposed of appropriately, i.e. placed in a designated dog foul bin or taken home.
- Dogs should be muzzled where necessary to prevent children being frightened by barking or the threat of biting. Consideration should be given to the temperament and characteristics of the breed of dog being brought onto the school site, including the size of the dog and its age. You may wish to consult <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/breed/Default.aspx> if you have any concerns as to the suitability of a particular breed of dog. Thought should also be given to the environment that the animal has been brought up in. Dogs and puppies brought up in a family home environment will be more accustomed to the behaviour and sounds of children.
- Large numbers of children could cause a dog to become nervous and agitated. Since dogs cannot speak, they will communicate through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicates that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, or whining are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. Dogs displaying any of these warning signs should be immediately removed from the environment by their owner.
- Aggressive dogs, or those with a history of aggression, must not be brought onto school grounds.
- Parents/carers are asked not to bring dogs that are ill onto the school site.
- Dogs with young puppies (those under the age of 8 weeks) should not be brought onto the school site as there is a risk of the mother becoming overprotective, which may cause her to react out of character.

5. Students and Dogs onsite.

The school will ensure that students are regularly reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dogs. It will seek to offer teaching sessions from external agencies such as the Dogs Trust. Students can become excited and it is important that they react calmly and carefully around dogs. The school will inform students that:

- They should not make sudden movements.
- They must ensure that they approach dogs and stroke them gently and calmly.
- They should never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be interpreted as threatening by the dog.
- They should not put their face near a dog.
- They should always approach a dog standing up.
- They should never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
- They should not feed or eat close to dogs.
- They should wash their hands after handling a dog.

6. Walking or Exercising Dogs on the School Site

- The school playing field and playgrounds should not be used for the purposes of exercising dogs.
- Any future therapy dog in the school may be exercised by the students but only with express permissions from the Head of Student Services or the Principal.

7. Animals in the Classroom

- A risk assessment will be undertaken prior to any outside animal being brought into the classroom, for example, for 'show and tell', a science lesson or other classroom activity, or where it is deemed necessary for the mental health of the child. Parents will be notified prior to planned activities involving animals and consent for the activity sought where appropriate.
- Students will not have unsupervised access to any such animal and will be told how to behave around the animal and handle it safely. Where the school has been notified that a child has an allergy to an animal, they will be kept away from the animal as appropriate.
- Students will be required to wash their hands after handling any animals.
- Where animal therapy is deemed to be beneficial to a child, such as offered by the company, PAWS, or to support the mental health of a student, any such animals will need to be insured prior to having permission to come on site and parental permission will be sought for before students are allowed to engage in a therapy session with an external animal therapy company.