



Barn Croft Primary School

School Dog Policy

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 is available on request.

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 dogs will be owned by Mrs Spence and Miss Kelly.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dogs.
- Only the school dogs are allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Head Teachers have been informed beforehand.
- The dogs are a Jack Russell Terrier and a Welsh Pembroke Corgi, chosen because they are intelligent breeds that will respond well to training, which are known to be good with children and very sociable and friendly.
- The Chair of Governors, Colin Whitehead and the governing board agree that these school dogs will benefit the children and staff of Barn Croft Primary School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that the dogs will be in school. A risk assessment has been produced 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/s in school.

- If the dog is ill she/he will not be allowed into school.
- Both dogs will be inoculated annually and receive regular health checks from a registered, qualified vet.
- 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 a trained 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 Basil and Nessie are ready or lying down before touching or stroking her, upon direction of the adult.
- 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 he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke Basil and Nessie on their bodies, chests, backs and not by their faces.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Children will have lessons and be instructed on safe interaction with the dogs and how to take care of them.
- Children will be taught about the dog's body language and know only to approach the dogs if the adult gives permission.
 - Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.

- Both dogs have a dedicated safe, quiet space (away from children) for regular breaks and feeding etc.
- Access to fresh water will be provided for both dogs at all times.
- Parents have the right to refuse to allow their children access to the dogs.
- All visitors will be informed about the dogs and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Headteacher ASAP.
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dogs and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dogs will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs Spence and Miss Kelly.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteachers as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Headteacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in school.

The Headteacher(s) are responsible for implementing this policy. All staff, pupils, parents and visitors must follow 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 trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Reasons to have a dog in school

Research has shown that dogs in school can help to 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 for all life
7. Improve attendance
8. Motivate children who struggle with maintaining attention

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

The legal owner of Nessie is Mrs Spence and the legal owner of Basil is Miss Kelly; they will bear the costs associated with owning the dogs; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.

2. Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. The dogs are from registered KC breeders in homes where both parents were seen and have both been specifically chosen for their temperaments.

3. Will the dog be a distraction?

The dogs will have the use of the Oak room area when not with children. The Oak room is separate from classrooms and the playground to ensure that the dogs only come into contact with children who are happy to have contact and who have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. The dogs will also have a space to spend time in classrooms, the library, the hall and in the playgrounds where children can interact safely. The dogs will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

4. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

Yes, we have carefully considered having dogs in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

5. Who is responsible for training?

Mrs Spence and Miss Kelly will be the legal owners of the dogs and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained and the dogs will specifically be trained for working in schools with children.

6. How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks around the area. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

7. How will the dog's welfare be considered?

The dogs will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dogs during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward and calming measure for children who need time away from the class. The dogs will have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. They will not attend school every day so as to not overwhelm them. The dogs will be carefully trained 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.

8. How will this be managed where children have allergies?

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. Both dogs are given high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

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.

Signed:

Date: March 2021

Review date: March 2022