

RISK ASSESSMENT: School Dog (Reading / Therapy) (Page 1 of 6)

School/Academy	Brocklewood Primary School	Date of Assessment	03.10.2023		
Who might be harmed?	Pupils, Staff	Name of person responsible for the dog whilst on school premises	Joanne Beeston / Tim Beeston		
What are the educational (or other) benefits of having the school dog?*	Therapy, calming effect				
HAZARDS (including inadequate or lack of arrangements)	SUGGESTED CONTROL MEASURES	✓ if in place ✗ if not (or n/a)	WHERE: ✗ State action to be taken with timescales ✗ Any additional control measures ✓ Site specific details	RESIDUAL RISK RATING High, Medium, Low	
Parental permission / communication	Parents / carers are informed about the role of the school dog, are given the opportunity to request the school policy and are asked for completed permission slip to give authority for their child to have direct contact with the dog (see also allergies below).	✓	Letters were sent out to all parents/carers. Discussed at new admission meetings to make new parent/carers aware. Information shared on Class Dojo. Information on website	Low	
Lack of insurance	The dog's owner has appropriate pet insurance.	✓	Copy kept in school.	Low	
Inappropriate dog selected	- The dog / dog breed has been carefully chosen* such that they are: ○ Socially confident with children and adults, including groups. ○ Confident in a range of different environments. ○ Not sensitive to and do not react to sudden noise or movement. ○ Calm and relaxed when required	✓	Molly has undertaken lots of training with her owners so that she is suitable for her role in school.	Low	
	The environment where the dog has been brought up in has been considered.	✓		Low	
Dog health / welfare	The dog is taken for a routine health check with a vet at least once a year where the dog is given essential vaccinations and treatments to control parasites (e.g. fleas and worms). The dog is routinely vaccinated against canine parvovirus, canine distemper virus, leptospirosis and infectious canine hepatitis.	✓	Molly's owners keep her up to date with all of her vaccinations and treatments.	Low	
	The dog is checked for signs of injury or illness daily. If it is suspected that your dog is in pain, ill, has been poisoned or injured the dog is taken the vets.	✓		Low	
	The dog will not be brought into school if they are ill.	✓		Low	
	The dog's coat is kept in good condition by grooming him/her regularly.	✓		Low	

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	• The dog is provided with a healthy diet including fresh water.	✓	Water bowl to always be accessible.	Low
	• A quiet space for the dog to rest is provided where they will not be disturbed by pupils, staff or visitors.	✓	Yes there are specific places dotted around the school- pastoral office, site manager's office, office manager's office, and the SEN DEN.	Low
	• A suitable (segregated) toileting area for the dog in the school grounds has been designated.	✓	Down near the field and dog scooping equipment provided.	Low
	• Space is available at or near the school to exercise the dog.	✓	Playground and field.	Low
	• The environmental conditions in the school are suitable- temperature, air quality.	✓		Low
Dog behaviour	• The dog will be trained not to jump up on anybody.	✓	Molly has been trained not to jump up.	Low
	• The dog will undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment including familiarisation with pupils.	✓	Ongoing – Molly has a timetable of children she sees.	Low
	• The behaviour and mood of the dog will be monitored on an ongoing basis so that steps can be taken if the dog becomes tired, stressed or over-excited.	✓	Molly to go to her bed in Jo Beeston's room if needs to.	Low
	• The long-term temperament of the dog will be continually assessed particularly in the early stages as the puppy matures, so that their suitability in school can be reviewed.	✓		Low
Pupils unsafe interaction with the dog	• Pupils are never left unsupervised with the dog even for a short time. Supervision ratios and the numbers of pupils that may interact with the dog at any one time has been carefully thought through and set.	✓	Children / classes will be timetabled to be with Molly.	Low

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	- Pupils are continually reminded of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour around dogs; in particular avoiding: - Running and shouting near the dog - Invading the dog's personal space - Ear pulling and poking / teasing / rough play - Contact with the dog when they are eating or sleeping. - Making sudden movements. - Putting their face near the dog - Feeding the dog	✓	Molly has been introduced in a whole school assembly. Staff will pass on training techniques and information to children in their class. Tim Beeston runs weekly interventions to help children to learn about how to care for a dog.	Medium
	Pupils are taught to recognise the dog's body language, particularly if they are showing signs that they want to be left alone or showing signs of aggression.	✓	Staff will pass on training techniques and information to children in their class. (Molly's tail will wag if she is happy and will be stiff and low if she is scared.)	Medium
Dog safety / lack of control	- The school environment is inspected paying particular attention to: - The route where the dog can safely walk around the class (without coming into contact with pupils or their chairs) - Any items stored on tables that could fall if knocked by the dog. - Any toys or other items which could be a choking or poison hazard.	✓	All staff and children are made aware of this. Molly will always be supervised.	Medium
	The dog is kept on a lead when moving around the school or school grounds.	✓		Low
Bites and scratches	The dog's nails are managed such that they are not too long or cause discomfort for the dog.	✓		Low
	Bites and scratches will be treated with first aid and recorded via the school's accident procedure.	✓		Low
Lack of hygiene	Pupils are taught to wash their hands with antibacterial hand wash after handling the dog. Younger pupils and those with certain special needs are supervised washing their hands.	✓	Children are reminded of this in class and assemblies.	Medium
	Pupils are instructed not to touch any part of their face with their hands after handling the dog, prior to them being washed.	✓		Low

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	Soiled bedding/puppy pads disposed of in sealed plastic bags with normal refuse in school's exterior commercial refuse bins.	✓		Low
	The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times or other classrooms used for food technology or breakfast clubs. The dog will not be allowed to enter the school kitchen and medical/first aid room at any time.	✓		Low
	Wherever possible the feeding schedule is planned to avoid the school day, to avoid food being stored or left out for prolonged periods.	✓	Molly is fed before and after school in her home setting.	Low
Allergies	Shorter hair dogs may be preferable as they collect less dander and don't shed as frequently, however they still may produce an allergic reaction.	✓	Letters have been sent out to all parents / carers asking about allergies. Also posted on Class Dojo and the school website.	Low
	The dog's bedding will be subject to washes on a regular basis and as required.	✓		Low
	The dog will be washed every few months and as necessary.	✓		Low
	Parents / carers are informed that the school has a dog and they are asked about their child's allergies in a letter sent home.	✓	As per above, letters were sent home when Molly joined us and she is discussed at new admission meetings.	Low
	The school will ensure that the dog and bedding will not be in close contact with pupils or staff with dog allergies. Pupils and staff will have their own allergy medication. Pupils and staff informed to wash their hands in the event of accidental contact.	✓		Low
Dog excrement, urine, and vomit	Suitable equipment is given to the member of staff walking the dog to pick up the dog excrement in a hygienic manner.	✓	A bag containing gloves, poo bags and anti-bacterial hand gel to be carried when walking Molly.	Low

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	- Any excrement, urine, and vomit within the school building will be cleaned up immediately by the member of staff responsible for the dog at the time of the incident or by a named person. - The area will be suitably cleaned and disinfected and the fluids will be disposed of hygienically according to an agreed procedure. PPE will be provided as necessary. (Note a COSHH risk assessment will need to be undertaken on the use of the chemical.)	✓		Low
Noise (barking)	Special arrangements are taken with any pupils with autism who may adversely react to the noise of the dog barking.	✓	Molly has been trained and does not usually bark. If she does ignore her and turn away.	Low
Dog absconding	The dog has a collar and tag and has been microchipped (both are legal requirements)	✓		Low
Evacuation from school building	A person is appointed to be responsible for the safe evacuation of the dog during an emergency.	✓	Molly is always with Tim / Jo her owners so they would be responsible for this.	Low
	The dog takes part in any planned evacuation drills if on site.	✓	Molly will take part in a fire drill.	Low
Evacuation off site	The school's off-site emergency (shelter) site can accommodate the dog (or is taken home)	✓		Low
Dog illness / death	Suitable counselling is available to pupils if the dog becomes seriously ill or dies.	✓		Low

Are there any other foreseeable hazards associated with the school dog?		YES ☐ NO ☒
Additional Hazards	List any additional control measures required	RESIDUAL RISK RATING High, Medium, Low
Children behaving in a heightened state	If children are in a heightened state, Molly must be kept away and taken to designated safe space – and encouraged to lie down in her bed with the door securely shut.	Medium

Notes

* Schools and academies must have recorded clearly defined benefits of having a school dog at the very start. A risk benefit analysis should then be undertaken to determine whether the school / academy should go ahead with the project. The actual realised benefits along with the risks should be reviewed on a regular basis, following any significant change of circumstances and/or any serious incident.

Reported benefits include:

- Educational: teaching pupils how to safely behave around dogs including recognising their body language signs and learning about animal welfare. Helping pupils who are cynophobic (dog phobia) to overcome or manage their fear.
- As a reward: pupils that have performed to a high standard may be rewarded with time during lunch or breaks to interact with the dog.
- Reading dogs: research shows that young people can become nervous and stressed when reading to others in a group. However, when a reading dog enters the group, pupils often become less stressed, less self-conscious and more confident as the dogs are non-judgemental. Pupils may look forward to the reading experience as the dogs provide comfort, encourage positive social behaviours, enhance self-esteem and motivate speech.
- Therapy dogs: bring comfort and happiness to pupils with a range of disabilities and emotional needs, including those in special needs schools (see <https://petsastherapy.org>)

Reference Documents

- “Buying [a cat and] a dog” - www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-a-cat-or-dog
- * Choosing and Bringing Home the Right dog for you www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/8199/choosing.pdf
- Puppy Contract (a free tool kit developed to encourage those buying and breeding puppies to do so responsibly).- <https://puppycontract.org.uk/>
- “How to Take Care of Your Dog- Keeping your dog healthy and happy”- and “Dogs and the Law” RSPCA, available via www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs
- The Dog Owners’ Handbook www.thekennelclub.org.uk/getting-a-dog-or-puppy/the-dog-owners-handbook
- Pets as Therapy: <https://petsastherapy.org/>
- † Pets as Therapy Temperament Assessment Tests: <https://petsastherapy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Factsheet3-PAT-Temperament-Assessment-Test-dog.pdf>

ASSESSED BY (Print name) Jo Jeffs	SIGNED J.Jeffs	DATE 03.10.23
LINE MANAGER Heather Tarrant	SIGNED H.Tarrant	REVIEW DATE 03.10.23