

# **St. Andrew's Primary School & Nursery Class**



**Dog In Nursery/School Policy**

**February 2021**

# 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 this is included in this document (see appendix 3). Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher Mrs Flanagan. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the dog to be present on the school premises.

## School Policy

- The dog will be owned by Mrs Flanagan.
- The Parent Council will consult on dogs impact and presence.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Head Teacher has given prior permission.
- The dog is a German Shepherd chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training. The dog is known to be good with children and is very sociable and friendly.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog 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 in school.
- If the dog is ill she will not be allowed into school.
- 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 will not be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog.
- Children should never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog. Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.
- 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.
  - Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog via an opt out agreement.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head of relevant department asap.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog. This includes Mrs Flanagan, Mrs. Lambie, Miss Forester and our office staff.
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs Flanagan or Miss Forester.

## Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher as soon as possible. The Head Teacher has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School. The Head Teacher and Staff are responsible for implementing this policy. Teachers, Staff, Pupils, Parents and Visitors are required to abide by 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.

# Appendix 1

Reasons to have a dog in school. In summary, 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 school refusing
- 8) Motivate children who are often less attentive

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 studies show dogs in school can help improve attendance patterns in certain children by giving them meaningful roles and responsibilities to support the dog.

**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, emergent 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. Older students use dogs to help communicate, 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.

**As a reward:** Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. 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.

## Appendix 2

### School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Question	Answer
Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?	The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Flanagan; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.
Will the dog be a distraction?	The dog will be kept in Mrs Flanagan's office area. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms, the library and small soft play area where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.
Has a risk assessment been undertaken?	Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog and a reputable dog behaviourist.
Who is responsible for training?	Mrs Flanagan will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for it's training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained and the dog will work towards being trained as a school dog through 'IMDT Training' with advice from the DogsTrust charity, SPCA and local vet.
How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?	The dog will be trained to toilet on command in a designated area not in school playground or on school walks. This will be cleared by dog handler.
How will the dog's welfare be considered?	The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside when children are in lessons. 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 dog during lunchtime. The dog will be kept in the admin area/head teacher's office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have all its needs met. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.
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.
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 Bonnie. 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.
Will the dog be interacting with children straight away?	No the dog will be slowly introduced to assess impact and response. It will start off coming in on a Friday only as the final day of a SfL reading programme.



### Appendix 3

## St. Andrews's Primary & Nursery Risk assessment – Dogs In School

General risk assessment in relation to return of Educational Establishments 11 August 2020 ensuring utilisation to be COVID safe in line with Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland guidance.

**Please note, this is a live working document which may be subject to change. It will be stored in firstclass and changes emailed.**

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<b>Owner</b>	<i>Safety &amp; Wellbeing Team</i>				
<b>Date</b>	<i>22.2.21</i>	<b>Version number</b>	<i>1</i>	<b>Document status</b>	<i>Annual updates</i>

<b>Governance Committee</b>	<i>H&amp;S</i>	<b>Date approved</b>	
<b>Review date</b>	<i>Anually</i>		

<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	<i>n/a</i>
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<b>Consultation process</b>	<i>Occupational Safety &amp; Wellbeing, Parent Council, Staff, SPCA</i>	
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<i>Education and Families</i>	
	<i>Education and Families</i>	



## Risk Assessment

<b>Assessors Name</b>	<b>Date/Time of Assessment</b>
Jennifer Flanagan	1/8/20
<b>Review Date:</b> Will be reviewed with Parent Council Staff and children annually or where necessary.	
<b>RA Reference:</b> Animals in schools - Dogs	
<b>Location of activity</b> St. Andrew's Primary Airdrie ML60LL	

### Activity Details

We have a general thera-pets in school risk assessment. This risk assessment is specifically targeting therapy dogs in school.

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Who is at Risk</b>	<b>Hazard Identified</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b> L = Low M = Med H = High	<b>Further Actions Required</b>
1a	Hygiene	Pupils	Children coming into contact with Dog faeces	Dog walked and toileted in a designated area of school grounds. Dog trained to toilet on command in area unused by children e.g back of car park. Faeces removed in dog poo bags and disposed of.	L	Sign erected: School Dog toileting zone
b	Hygiene	Pupil/Staff	Contact with Dog sick	Dog won't attend if unwell. Dog team to clean up sick wearing PPE and using disinfectant. Dog disinfectant pack available in school office.	L	
c	Hygiene	Pupils	Stroking contact with dog – touching mouth or food	Children appropriately educated on how to manage canine hygiene. Reminded to wash hands by staff member supervising dog. Anti bacterial gel available in classrooms.	M	Further specific dog hygiene videos created on school YouTube channel
d	Hygiene	Pupil/ staff	Fleas.tics, worms	As point c. Dog wormed and treated for flea prevention. Dog monitored closely by keeper. Dog will never attend school if infected.	L	
2	Scratched	Pupil/Staff	Dog over excited in play and jumps up	Dog kept on lead and harness at all times, outside of office area. Dog strictly trained not to jump up. Children will be taught how and when it is safe to interact with dog. Dog supervised with staf at all times. Dog interaction: rules/training taught to all children and reinforced by other staff. Dog nails clipped regularly by keeper.	L	Vet and SPCA to check dog training

3	Bite	Pupil/Staff	Dog bites	Dog highly trained not to bite in highly distractive, environments. Trainer to regularly monitor dogs temperament behaviour and mood. Dog never left without trained responsible person. Dogs history known by keeper from birth. Dog temperament assessment made by vet. While teething as a young pup no children will be near. Dog interaction/rules to be taught to all children and staff. Children and staff aware to firmly state “stop” stand tall and withdraw all contact with dog if any mouth action is made. Dog trained through obedience classes from puppy age. Dogs undertaking pets as therapy training with keeper.	L	
4	Asthmatic/allergic reaction	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Allergic reaction after contact with dogs	Parents given the choice to opt their child out of close contact with the dog. Medical records used and Health overviews available to identify pupils and staff with dog allergies. All to wash hands after contact with dog. Dog areas regularly cleaned to reduce dust. Visitors advised on entry dog is in office and will be removed if requested. All parents made aware dog is in school once per week.	L	Should anyone have severe allergies the dog will not attend
5	Dog unwell	Pupils	Dog mood affected	If unwell dog will not be in school.	L	
6	Dog Phobia	Pupils/Staff/visitors	Distress caused through close proximity to dog.	Advise visitors and remove if necessary. Notice signs in school entrance advising of dog presence and noted on school website. Staff to supervise dog at all times and be sensitive to all children’s reactions. Parent consent form to be gained to allow closely monitored contact and training. Parents to be offered programme of support to help overcome aversion while remaining cautious and safe from dogs.	M	
7	Dog becoming anxious or tired	Dog	Dog gets irritable or distressed	Safe space on site for quiet/sleep time. Dog left to sleep unless in an emergency where it will be prompted by dog handing team.		



8	Dog Pulling on lead	Pupils/Staff	Someone being pulled over	Dog will be lead trained to a high standard. If pupils are to hold lead a trainers lead will be added to avoid over pull.	M	
9	Dog following basic instructions: Sit, fetch, come, off.	Pupil/staff dog	Dog following wrong command	Dog will have learned all basic commands supported by hand signals and consolidated using the 3 D'd Distance, distraction, duration.	L	
10	Dog mouthing	Pupils/Staff/ Dog	Dog mouthing when taking a treat or dog toy.	Children and staff have been educated on mouthing as appropriate language. Treats should be placed on floor unless confidant.	M	
11.	Dogs reaction to children's behaviour. Banging doors, screaming, running pulling hair ears, tails.	Dogs, pupils Staff	Dog becoming scared or anxious	Educating children on how to behave appropriately but more so when dog is on site. If this happens the dog will be removed to it's safe area and only reintroduced to education zone when trust has been re-established.	M	
12.	Fire Alarm	Dog	Dog being left in building	Dog has practised fire alarms more than 5 times to recognise sound and trained to leave building and go to play yard pencil. Key member of staff responsible for removing dog from the building in each area. Dog will be signed in as a staff member so fire marshals know when on site.	L	
13.	Spread of human infection eg COVID-19	Pupils/Staff	Dog attracting petting and thus spread of infection.	Petting disallowed during infection periods (pandemic). Hands to be washed before and after handling. Dog lead and any shared belongings sprayed using 'tucan' spray.	L	

## Summary of Action Required

Action Required	Responsible Person	Timescale for Completion	Date Completed
Consult Parent council	Head of establishment	Prior to dog interactions with children	February 2021
Risk assessment and policy shared with parents online	Head of establishment	Prior to dog interactions	February 2021
Dog zone identified within school.	Head of Establishment	In place for dog entering	Feb 2021
Communication to be sent out to parents informing of dog presence and signed permissions	Head of Establishment	In place for dog visiting	February 2021
Signage alerting of dog presence and toileting area	Head of Establishment	In place for dog visiting	Feb 2021

The contents of this risk assessment are an accurate reflection of the activities being undertaken and appropriate control measures to be implemented or maintained to ensure the activity can be undertaken whilst protecting the health safety and welfare of employees, children and visitors and anyone else who could be affected. The content of the risk assessment will be made known to employees, controls implemented and monitored and a review carried out either annually or when a change to circumstances dictates.

Signed: J. Flanagan Date: 22.2.21
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### Further information

Head Teacher: [ht@st-andrews.n-lanark.sch.uk](mailto:ht@st-andrews.n-lanark.sch.uk)

School Vet Partnership – Ruth Elliot – Acre Veterinary Group Airdrie – 01236 763541

SPCA –

Health and Safety Executive, Managing risks and risk assessment at work [https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm?utm\\_source=hse.gov.uk&utm\\_medium=refferal&utm\\_campaign=risk&utm\\_content=home-page-info](https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=risk&utm_content=home-page-info)