

Dee Point Primary School Dog Risk Assessment – July 2023



Introduction

The value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

Background

The senior leadership team considered the options regarding the possibility of obtaining a dog as a school pet in October 2017. We looked at applying for funding through the Airbus Community Awards Programme. We were successful in receiving £4000. Over a period of time following this application, much research into a possible source of a suitable puppy led to the final decision to introduce a puppy in May 2018. Since then the school have sourced 2 further dogs to replace the initial therapy dog.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

1. For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
2. For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
3. To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children’s social and emotional development.

A local veterinarian practice will thoroughly check the puppy for any illnesses and is responsible for his vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the puppy as he will be kept up to date with immunisations and his worming and flea treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. Both the school and vets’ surgery will keep a register of his annual health check.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the puppy is invited to inform the school of their wishes.

This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the school senior leadership team will evaluate the impact of a school dog on a regular bases.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5 *	Likelihood 1-5*	Risk Col 3X Col 4	Controls in place	Review date & signed
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to ground	1	2	2	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will 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 he is out of his pen/ the office, except when he is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer/s. The dog will be trained not to jump up or mouth the children. Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) The dog will undergo formal training from the age of 10 weeks with an experienced local trainer. Some pupils will be involved in training (with parental permissions) and along with the	
	Child scratched by Dog	1	2	2		
	Child bitten by Dog	5	1	5		

					<p>schools' primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week.</p> <p>The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training will allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through her weekly training programme.</p> <p>ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don't) of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and that he is in good health.</p>	
The dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	As above	1	2	2	<p>The dog's crate/space is big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease him.</p> <p>If the dog does get loose from his pen the teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in his pen.</p> <p>There are five members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if he needs attention at any other time, they are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr Steve Ortega (Learning Mentor). 2. Mrs Sian Porter (Learning Mentor) 3. Mrs Shelley Roberts (Admin officer) 4. Mrs Angela Livingstone (FSW) 5. Mr Dave Williams (Head Teacher). 	
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school recording system.</p> <p>Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupils don't have access to on a regular basis if required the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out at 6 weekly intervals.</p> <p>Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at 6 monthly intervals.</p> <p>The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills	1	1	1	<p>The dogs are the responsibility of Mrs Latimer & Miss Kural, they are financially responsible for their care and day to day costs.</p> <p>The dogs are their responsibility outside of school hours.</p> <p>Training costs will be paid for by the school as a high level of obedience training will need to be carried out.</p> <p>As the dog will be used for 'therapy' work within the school, the school will accommodate costs towards training and assessment of the dog to meet these criteria.</p> <p>The school will cover the cost of equipment needed to support the dog and its training in school.</p> <p>Veterinary costs will be paid by the owner, with the exception of non-essential veterinary costs required by the school.</p>	

Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	1	1	1	Miss Kural & Mrs Latimer insure the dogs and provide the school with an updated record annually.	

KEY:

1- Low risk

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3 -Medium risk of injury

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5-High risk of injury