



Highfield Middle School School Dog Policy



Company Number: 7838203
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Introduction

As part of the Cheviot Learning Trust, Highfield Middle School believes that contact with a school dog benefits children educationally and emotionally, enables them to increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills. 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?

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 1). 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.

Rights/Roles/ Responsibilities

The dog is owned by Miss Gibbs.

Only the school dog is allowed on the premises without prior agreement.

The dog is a Working Cocker Spaniel which is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, which sheds little hair and is very sociable and friendly.

The Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the governing board have agreed that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Highfield Middle School.

Staff, parents and children will be made aware that a dog will be in school and given the opportunity to withdraw their child from contact with the dog.

A risk assessment is in place and 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.

The dog will be kept on a lead when moving around the school building (other than at the front of school) and will be under the control and supervision of an adult.

Organisation

Children:

- will not be left alone with the dog and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog.
- should remain calm around the dog.
- should not make sudden movements and must never stare into the dog's eyes as this could be threatening.
- should not put their face near a dog and should always approach her standing up.
- should never go near or disturb the dog when she is sleeping or eating.
- must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- should be careful when stroking the dog.
- should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.

Exceptions

- If the dog is ill she will not be brought into school.

- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. 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, she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

The Leadership Team will:

Respond to any concerns raised.
 Ensure that the policy is implemented in school.
 Monitor the implementation of the policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
 Make staff aware of the policy.

The Governing Body will:

Ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.
 Have a named Senior Leader responsible for implementing the policy.
 Annually review the policy and ensure it is fully implemented.

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.

Monitoring of this policy

What ?	How?	When ?
Policy remains compliant	Annual review by SLT	Annually in October
Policy being used appropriately	Deputy Head teacher	

Action	By whom	By when
Policy written	Caroline Gibbs, Deputy Headteacher	January 2023
Review	Caroline Gibbs, Deputy Headteacher	October 2023
Review	Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher	October 2024

Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment

Risk	Level of risk LMH	Who is at risk?	Measures taken to manage risk	Further action taken or to be taken (dated)
<p>Allergies</p> <p>Some children and adults have allergies to dogs</p>	L	All	<p>Permission will be sought from parents and carers and we have allergy information and medication in school where appropriate.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after they have touched the dog.</p>	
<p>Bites</p> <p>Dogs can bite people when they are distressed, threatened or frustrated.</p>	L	All	<p>Heather has never shown any aggression towards children or adults - she is very tolerant and relaxed around people.</p> <p>All children will be trained in how to behave around the dog and how to approach the dog.</p>	
<p>Scratches</p> <p>Dogs can scratch with their claws when playing and interacting with people.</p>	L/M	All	<p>Heather's claws will be regularly clipped so that they are not long.</p> <p>She usually sits down when children and young people approach her or stroke her.</p>	
<p>Other dogs on site</p> <p>Presence of other dogs on site could cause Heather to become distressed, anxious or over excited.</p>	L	All	<p>Dogs are allowed on site outside the secure line of the school and only inside the school line with permission and appropriate risk assessments in place.</p> <p>Heather will stay within the school boundaries at pick up and drop off times.</p> <p>If other dogs visit, Heather will be kept close to a member of staff so that she can be removed if her behaviour becomes unpredictable.</p>	

<p>Dog Faeces and Urine</p> <p>Faeces can carry risk of infection to adults and children.</p>	M	All	<p>Heather is trained to do all of her toileting outside. All faeces will be picked up safely and placed in a poo bag by an adult and put in the outside bin (not the bins in play areas).</p> <p>If the faeces leaves mess behind then this will be cleaned off with hot soapy water.</p> <p>If Heather is unwell, she will not come into school.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after they touch the dog.</p>	
<p>Fleas and worms</p> <p>If the dog has worms, these could be transmitted to people</p> <p>Fleas can infest furniture and carpets and cause bites to humans</p>	L	All	<p>Heather will have regular treatment as determined by the vet (Milpro / Bravecto) and therefore is highly unlikely to contract either. If there is any indication that the dog has either worms or fleas she will be kept away from school until cleared by the vet.</p> <p>Where children have lowered immune systems, parents will always be consulted before contact.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after they touch the dog.</p>	
<p>Causing anxiety for some children, visitors and staff</p> <p>Some children and adults are anxious about dogs and have developed fear due to their cultural experiences or a negative experience with animals.</p>	M	Some	<p>Being around a dog is more likely to induce a sense of well-being than anxiety but some people could become anxious if they are fearful of dogs. Heather will always be on her lead inside school and nobody will be put in a position where they have to have contact with her. All children will be educated regarding how dogs behave and we hope that by having a dog around, children will overcome any fears that they may have.</p> <p>There is basket in Miss Gibbs' office where Heather can have rest time and visitors/staff/children will know that she is not to be disturbed when in her bed.</p> <p>Dog safety sessions will be delivered to the children each year.</p>	

<p>Bumps, knocks, trip hazard</p> <p>If the dog is moving around the building, she could cause someone to trip or fall. She could also accidentally knock over younger/smaller children in school.</p>	L	All	<p>Heather will not be allowed to run loose in the building or the grounds. She will be allowed to play off the lead with older and/or dog-confident children at the front of school for exercise (always supervised by an adult).</p> <p>Staff who are supervising the dog will ensure that she is under control and sitting or lying out of the way of doors.</p>	
<p>Being pulled over when holding the lead</p> <p>If children are holding the lead and the dog gets excited, she could pull them over, causing injury.</p>	L	Children	<p>Children will always be supervised by an adult if they are holding the lead. Adults will judge when they need to take control of the lead from a child. Only children who are confident in handling the dog will be allowed to hold the lead independently, but still under supervision.</p>	
<p>Aggression when being fed</p> <p>Dogs are often territorial about their food and can become aggressive.</p>	L	All	<p>Heather has not shown any aggression when feeding and will happily let people take her food away, add to her bowl or stroke her. If this changes then she will eat in an area where children are not allowed access.</p>	
<p>Access to dog toys, equipment and food/treats</p> <p>Dog toys and equipment are not designed for children and could cause injury (eg nips from the lead attachment)</p> <p>Dog treats could cause an allergic reaction if ingested by children (although are fit for human consumption).</p>	L	Children	<p>Adults will supervise children when handling dog equipment and treats. Children will wash their hands after handling treats.</p>	

Appendix 2 - School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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

A The legal owner of the dog is Miss Gibbs; she will bear the costs associated with owning and insuring the dog. The school's RPA includes public liability cover in case of any accident.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept in Miss Gibbs' office. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact with the dog under strict supervision. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms and the library where children can interact safely. The dog may be taken onto the yard or field by Miss Gibbs during breaktimes and lunchtimes and may come into contact with pupils who choose to interact with the dog.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A 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.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Miss Gibbs is the legal owner of the dog and as a result is responsible for her training. 'Professional' training will be considered with the option of Heather working towards being qualified as a school dog in future.

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

A Miss Gibbs (or other willing staff members) will pick up poo immediately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside when children are in lessons. Time with the school dog may be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the admin area/Deputy Head's office and will only have supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will have unlimited access to food and water and will be given quiet time throughout the school day. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A 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.

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

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with Heather. 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.