



Dogs in school risk assessment

Assessment conducted by: Aaron Wanford	Job title: Headteacher	Covered by this assessment: Barney
Date of assessment: May 2024	Review interval: Annually	Date of next review: April 2025

Related documents

Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Social, First Aid Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Animals in School Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Fire Safety Policy, Lockdown Procedures

Risk rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	Major Causes major physical injury, harm or ill-health.	High (H)	H	Medium (M)
	Severe Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	H	M	Low (L)
	Minor Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	M	L	L

Background

The leadership of Green Ridge Primary Academy considered the options regarding the possibility of obtaining a dog as a school pet in September 2017 when the school first opened. Over a period of several months following this discussion, research into a possible source of a suitable dog led to the final decision to introduce a known and already trained dog in June 2018 – Barkley, a miniature labradoodle was owned by a member of staff. Barkley retired in April 2024. The decision was made for the school to have a replacement school dog. Barney started visiting the school as a puppy to get him used to the environment from August 2024.

The rationale to have a School Dog was as follows:

1. For the academy 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, as well as academic.

When Barkley left the school due to the member of staff (owner) relocation in April 2024, the leadership team had already put plans in place for a transition to a new school dog, Barney. Barney lives with Miss. Katie South in her home at her own expense and is to be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually. A Vets' practice local to Miss. South's home thoroughly checks Barney for any illnesses and is responsible for his vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from Barney as he is kept up to date with immunisations including rabies and his worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. A register of his annual health check is kept both by Miss South and the vets' surgery. 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 dog is invited to write to inform the Headteacher of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually, and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the school senior leadership team.

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Controls in place	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Policy and procedures	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher ensures that all staff, and where appropriate, pupils and their parents, are aware of and adhere to the following school policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health and Safety Policy - Safeguarding Policy - First Aid Policy - Animals in School Policy - Behaviour Policy - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy - Fire Safety Policy • The headteacher considers whether the school needs to register the dog as a performance animal, in accordance with the Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925. If yes, the headteacher calls the LA and follows local procedures to register the dog. • The Office Co-Ordinator ensures that the school's insurance covers using the dog for the specific planned activities, e.g. using the dog in a school performance, or having a therapy dog. • The headteacher ensures that the dog is cared for in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Headteacher</p> <p>Headteacher</p> <p>Office Co-Ordinator</p> <p>Headteacher</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>L</p>

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Dog's welfare	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog has access to fresh, clean water at all times. • The dog has access to a cool and quiet place where it can be left undisturbed. • Pupils leave the dog alone when instructed by their teachers. • The dog's welfare is considered as a priority when planning the activities that it will participate in. • If an activity risks the dog's welfare, the activity is amended. • Noise is kept to a minimum during the activities that the dog is participating in, e.g. if the dog is participating in a school performance, the audience is instructed not to clap until the dog has left the stage. • The headteacher ensures that the dog has adequate and frequent toilet breaks and any waste is appropriately disposed of. • The dog is not over-stimulated, as this can lead to potentially dangerous behaviour. • The dog is not made to participate in potentially distressing activities. • The school complies with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. • The dog is familiar with the members of staff and pupils who are participating in the activity with the dog. • Flash photography is not used when the dog is present. • The dog is given opportunities to exercise and move around independently in a secure area, e.g. the headteacher's office. • The headteacher ensures that the dog is fit to participate in specific activities and is not brought into the school if it is unwell. • If the dog becomes unwell while at school, the dog's owner takes it home. • Before any activity is carried out, the headteacher ensures everyone participating in the activity understands how to treat and behave around the dog, e.g. not using flash photography, not shouting or clapping and not running around. • Activities do not cause harm, discomfort or stress to the dog. 	<p>Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes</p>	<p>Handler Handler Teachers Handler Handler Teachers Handler Teachers Teachers Headteacher Handler Teacher Handler Headteacher Handler Headteacher Teachers</p>	Ongoing	L

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Site Security	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two adults are appointed to be responsible for the dog. The site manager ensures that the site is secure and that precautions are in place to limit the chance of the dog getting loose. The dog is kept on a lead when it is not in its housing or in a secure location, e.g. in the assistant headteacher's office. The headteacher ensures that all appropriate doors are closed when the dog is participating in an activity, e.g. in a school hall. The site manager ensures that the premises is secure, e.g. fences are not broken. 	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Headteacher Site Manager Handler Headteacher Site Manager	Ongoing	L
Evacuation procedures	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where necessary, the school's Lockdown and Evacuation Policy is reviewed to ensure it includes provisions for the dog. The person handling the dog during specified activities is responsible for the dog's safety during a lockdown or evacuation. Where the handler is a pupil, e.g. if the dog is participating in a school performance, another appointed member of staff is responsible for the dog's safety. 	Yes Yes N/A	Handler/Staff Handler/Staff Handler/Staff	Ongoing	L
Disobedience and dangerous behaviour	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The handler is equipped and trained to react to and control any dangerous behaviour. If the person handling the dog for a specific activity is a pupil, e.g. in a school performance, they are given training to handle the dog, and the pupil and dog are given an opportunity to bond. Pupils are not expected to handle the dog unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their parents have provided permission. They feel safe and confident in doing so. They have received training to handle the dog. The dog's obedience is ensured as far as reasonably possible; however, staff, pupils, visitors and parents understand that animals can be unpredictable. The headteacher ensures that a plan is in place for if the dog is unable to carry out an activity, e.g. if the dog is stressed, and participating in the activity would cause further distress or could lead to dangerous behaviour. If the dog is not behaving appropriately during an activity, e.g. it is barking excessively or running away, the dog handler removes the dog and a contingency plan is implemented. For example, if the dog is 	Yes N/A Yes Yes Yes Yes	Handler Handler Handler Handler/ Headteacher Headteacher Handler	Ongoing	L

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		participating in a school performance, but is nervous about going onto the stage, a toy dog is used instead.				
Parent notification/ permission	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The headteacher informs parents that the dog will be present on the school's premises. Parents are informed of the activities that the dog will be participating in, e.g. the dog will be performing in a school production or used as a therapy dog. The headteacher obtains consent from parents for pupils to be in proximity with, or to handle, the dog. 	Yes Yes Yes	Headteacher Handler Headteacher	Annually	L
Dog's health	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog's designated handler is in charge of feeding and caring for the dog while on the school premises. The handler is responsible for permitting people to touch the dog. The dog is permitted to go in the assistant headteacher's office, which is kept clean and secure for the wellbeing of the animal, pupils, staff and visitors. The dog is given no opportunity to come into contact with wild rodents on or off the school premises. The dog is fully inoculated. The dog goes to the vet for a termly check-up, to identify whether the dog has any transmittable diseases. On hot days, the handler ensures there are appropriate provisions in place to keep the dog cool and ensure the dog avoids too much activity during the hottest part of the day. 	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Handler Handler Handler Handler Handler Handler Handler	Ongoing	L
Hygiene	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog is suitably toilet trained. The designated area for the dog to defecate is situated away from pupils and staff. All faeces are immediately picked up by the handler, using a clinical waste bag, and disposed of into a clinical waste bin. The handler immediately washes their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces. Any soiled dog bedding is immediately disposed of in sealed clinical waste bags and placed into a clinical waste bin. The handler takes the dog's bedding home regularly to wash it. 	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Handler Handler Handler Handler Handler	Ongoing	L

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any pupils, staff and visitors who touch the dog are advised to wash their hands afterwards, and sufficient hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school. • Anyone with an exposed wound who touches the dog has the wound suitably covered. • If the dog is ill with an infection or a disease, it does not return to the school until it has recovered. • Hand sanitiser is provided for anyone who touches the dog. 	Yes	Handler		
Injuries	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog is well trained and is used to coming into close contact with people. • Pupils, staff and visitors around the dog are closely supervised by the handler. • Pupils, staff and visitors are advised not to put their face close to the dog. • The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the handler. • Pupils, staff and visitors are only permitted to stroke the dog during allocated timeslots. • The dog is provided with a place it can go to get away from people. 	Yes	Handler	Ongoing	L
Dog's housing and equipment	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher ensures that the dog has housing that meets its physical and psychological needs. • The handler ensures that the dog's housing is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure, e.g. escape proof. - Clean and free from parasites and vermin. - Free from hazards, e.g. sharp edges. - Well-ventilated. - Sheltered from extreme weather. - Set at a suitable temperature, humidity and light level. - Sheltered from noises that may upset it. - Capable of providing a darkened sleeping area. • The handler ensures that the dog's housing has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A comfortable resting area. - A suitable amount of clean bedding material. • The handler ensures that the dog is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lie fully stretched out. - Turn around without touching either the walls or the ceiling. 	Yes	Dog handler/ Headteacher Handler	Ongoing	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stand in its natural posture. - Move in its natural manner. - Rest comfortably. • All dog's bedding/housing is checked for defects on a weekly basis by the handler. • All dog equipment is stored in the assistant headteacher's office when not in use. • The dog's food and water bowls are kept out of the path of people to avoid any trips. • Any spillages from the dog's bowls are wiped up immediately. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Handler</p> <p>Handler</p> <p>Handler</p> <p>Handler /Staff</p>		
Allergies	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and staff known to have allergies to animals have restricted access to the dog. • All pupils, staff and visitors are advised not to touch their face after touching the dog. • All pupils, staff and visitors are advised to wash their hands thoroughly after touching the dog. • A supply of antihistamine tablets is kept in the medical room in case anyone has an allergic reaction. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>ASFLO/ Handler</p> <p>Handler</p> <p>Handler/Staff</p> <p>ASFLO</p>	Ongoing	L
Phobias	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and staff known to have a phobia of dogs are given restricted access to the dog. • The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the handler. • During busy times, such as breaks, the dog is kept in a safe and secure area away from any commotion. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Handler/ Teachers</p> <p>Handler</p> <p>Handler</p>	Ongoing	L