

St. George's CE Primary School



School Dog Policy

2024-25

Version	Date	Narrative	Review Date
1	Sept 23	New Policy	Sept 24
2	Sept 24	No changes	Sept 25

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 Leadership Team. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present.

Beaux's welfare will be prioritised. As quoted by the Dogs Trust:

Having a dog in school may be beneficial for the children, but it needs to be equally enjoyable for the dog. It is not sufficient, from an ethical point of view, for an animal which is used in education simply to tolerate it; they need to actively enjoy it.

Therefore, Beaux's physical and emotional wellbeing will be at the forefront of all involvements she has in school as well as children and adult safety.

School Policy

The dog (Beaux) will be owned by Mrs Redfearn.

- 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 Leadership team has been informed beforehand or when the Leadership team has specifically authorised another dog to be allowed onto the school site.
- Beaux is a Labrador chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training, 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. Mrs Redfearn and Mrs Craig has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near Beaux. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If Beaux is ill, she will not be allowed into school.
- Beaux will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of Mrs Craig/ Mrs Redfearn.
- Children must never be left alone with Beaux and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dogs. Children should remain calm around Beaux. They should not make sudden movements and

must never stare into his eyes as this could be threatening for him. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.

- Children should never go near or disturb Beaux when he is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with Beaux.
- Everyone must wait until Beaux is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
- If Beaux is surrounded by a large number of children, she could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of Beaux 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 Beaux is displaying any of these warning signs she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to Beaux.
- Children should be careful to stroke Beaux on her body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling her.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to Beaux.
- All visitors will be informed about Beaux and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Leadership team asap.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The office will know the whereabouts of Beaux and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs Craig/ Mrs Redfearn.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with Beaux, this information must be passed to the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of School is 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 truancy
- 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.

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, emerging 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 incredibly 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 these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibility's 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)

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

A The legal owner of Beaux will be Mrs Redfearn; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will not be used to support Beaux.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for his temperament. The breeder has bred previous school dogs.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A Beaux will be kept in the office area. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure she only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

Beaux will also spend time in classrooms, the library and in the playground where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

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 Mrs Redfern will be the legal owner of Beaux and as a result, will be responsible for her training.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene Beaux will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A Beaux will be walked regularly and given free time outside. 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 that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the admin area/head of school 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 unlimited access to food and water. 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. The breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, he is given a high-quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

A Access to Beaux is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with her unless permission for this has been given. 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.

Appendix 3: Nelson Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	Severity 1- Nil 2- Low 3- Medium 4- Major 5- High	Probability 1- Improbable 2- Remote 3- Possible 4- Probable 5- Likely	Controls
Beaux getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child scratched by dog.	3	2	Beaux will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises.
	Child knocked to the ground.	1	2	
	Child bitten by dog.	4	2	<p>Children are not left with Beaux unsupervised.</p> <p>Beaux will always be on a lead when he is out of the office, except when he is undergoing structured training with his trainer/s.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting Beaux and how to remain calm around her.</p> <p>Beaux will receive ongoing training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment.</p> <p>Beaux 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 Beaux progresses through her training.</p>

				<p>Beaux will attend the vets' regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and that she is in good health.</p> <p>Pupils will be reminded not to touch Beaux's mouth, head and rear end.</p>
Beaux gets loose from the office or her lead.	As above	1	2	<p>Beaux's pen in the Head's office can be used to keep him safe and she will also roam free in the office.</p> <p>Children and staff are taught not to tease her or taunt her through the window.</p> <p>If Beaux does get loose, the designated handler will call for support from designated adults who will come and put the dog back on his lead and in the Head of school's office or her pen.</p> <p>Bourby will always be on her lead when out of the offices or when trained adults are in strict supervision.</p>
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies when starting at St George's. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be recorded in school.</p> <p>Children will have the opportunity to interact with Beaux 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 Beaux.</p> <p>Beaux will be regularly groomed at home to reduce the amount of hair coming into school.</p>
Children or adults have a phobia of dogs.	Distress caused through close proximity with Beaux.	2	2	<p>Advise visitors on arrival.</p> <p>Notice signs in school advising of dog presence and noted on the school website.</p> <p>Staff to supervise Beaux at all times and be sensitive to all children's reactions.</p>

				Parental consent form to be gained for close contact.
Children getting germs from Beaux.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	1	<p>Should Beaux defecate on the school site, a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. If required, the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate disinfectant.</p> <p>All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and Mrs Redfearn 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.</p> <p>Beaux will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; she will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen.</p>
Beaux becomes anxious or tired.	Nelson gets irritable or distressed	2	3	<p>Safe space on site for 'Quiet time' in the Head of school's Office. A sign will be used to notify staff and children that he is not to be disturbed.</p> <p>When Beaux is sleeping, she will not be woken unless there is an emergency.</p>
Fire Alarm/Lock Down	Beaux left in the school building (Fire Alarm) or not returned to the Office (Lock Down).	5	1	<p>Beaux will take part in the drills to be familiar with the protocol and alarm sounds.</p> <p>A named member of staff will be responsible for removing Beaux from the building during fire alarms or taking her to her safe place during lockdown.</p> <p>Beaux will be signed in as a member of staff so Office staff/Leadership team know she is onsite.</p>
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of Beaux.	School not adequately covered financially.	1	1	<p>St George's has school public liability insurance/</p> <p>Mrs Redfearn insures the dog for outside of school.</p>

Financial costs of Beaux's upkeep.	School unable to afford ongoing cost of Beaux's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	1	Beaux is the responsibility of Mrs Redfearn. She is financially responsible for all her care and day to day costs. The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Redfearn outside of school hours.
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