

Ironstone Academy Trust

Normanby Primary School

Policy statement and Risk assessment for having a dog in school

September 2020 Rev 2
C Faulkner

Background

Service dogs and dogs in training for a service are allowed on the school site, with the permission of the Head teacher.

At some points in the school year other animals, including dogs, may be specifically invited to attend school to support the delivery of an aspect of the curriculum; by way of an example a “Farm Bus’ brings small livestock to school, to display to pupils.

At Normanby Primary School a dog also attends, to support aspects of the schools work.

Rationale for allowing a dog to attend school

The school has identified the following rationale behind deciding to allow a dog to attend on a regular basis:

- Having a trained dog in school allows students to interact with an animal in a safe and controlled environment
- Children who have some fears of animals can be introduced to a trained dog of an appropriate breed
- A dog can generally be a useful intervention with students who struggle to interact positively with adults
- Autistic children and those with other social and communication difficulties often find petting and working with a trained dog a bridge between themselves and other children/adults
- Time with a dog can be used as a reward for specific positive behaviour or more general accumulation of ‘points/targets
- A trained dog will sit or lie attentively as a pupil or pupils read ‘to’ it
- Many dogs are sensitive to human unhappiness and/or illness and will sit or lay by a youngster to give them comfort
- Staff well-being can be significantly increased by having a dog in their school
- Many parents, especially after any concerns are addressed actively support having a pet in school
- Schools who describe themselves as having a family friendly atmosphere will find it enhanced by having a resident ‘pet’

Choice of dog

A Pyredoodle, although relatively new to the UK is a breed known to be of calm temperament and work as a service dog. The school dog has demonstrated the ability to remain calm and show care and affection for humans.

The dog will, in due course, be registered as a Therapy dog.

The breed is one of the least allergenic.

Other examples:

Another school in our Trust, Zetland Primary, has experience of a Great Dane, who worked as a reading dog. When this dog visited Normanby, it was very well received.

Risk reduction:

Using a puppy that has already begun to be trained will allow the dog to develop effective behaviours and routines which will work in harmony with the school's ethos and systems.

The puppy is from a breeder whose previous litter has generated a successful therapy dog. The dog is microchipped and has had all her necessary injections including worming.

Should the dog soil any area of school, this will be cleaned promptly and waste removed.

Only one dog may be present when they visit a class.

The dog should be held on a lead at all times, and not given over to anyone else or left unattended on the premises during her initial year at school when pupils are present.

A staff member will have sole responsibility for their dog, all children must be accompanied and in the presence of a staff member whilst with the handler and dog.

If the handler is also a staff member then a second staff member must be also present.

A quiet room will be used.

Water will be provided for the dog.

Child to use hand gel after touching the dog, or washing if facilities are nearby.
School staff to control the behaviour of children.

The dog will have its own enclosed space at school, in which to rest.

We will tell children not to disturb the dog when it is seen to be resting, sleeping or eating.

COVID 19 update: The Dogs Trust state 'There's no evidence that the virus responsible for COVID-19 can be passed from dogs to humans (or vice versa). The main source of infection is human-to-human transmission, and there is no current evidence to suggest your dog poses any significant risk to your health. But the virus could be passed from person to person via a dog's fur, collar, lead, toys or food.'

Routines:

A routine will be established, to support the dogs welfare and mitigate against stress or anxiety.

The puppy will come into school each morning and spend time in the office areas until school starts. At that point she will move to designated areas of school, where she will spend the school day under the supervision of the adults there or the Executive Head.

Work in school with pupils will be planned.

An image of the puppy will be shared on the school website, and via Social Media, to allow parents to discuss the school dog with their child.

She is house trained and will quickly learn the routines associated with this in a new environment.

If not present, the Executive Head will drop in regularly to take her out for walks and to introduce her to the mainstream student body under supervised conditions. Staff will have the choice not to interact with the dog.

Generally, she will be 'on lead'; however, this will be reviewed as her training progresses.

As she is trained, there will be times when she will be 'off-lead' but within sight of the adult supervising her in a limited area. This will happen when she has demonstrated she will come to heel, sit etc. on immediate command. This will happen when all pupils have been informed, and staff are confident that all parties will demonstrated suitable care for the puppy and will be closely monitored.

Student interactions:

Most students will happily interact with a calm puppy but there will be no time where this is demanded or expected of a young person.

It is highly unlikely that any student regularly attending a reading session would have an allergy, but parents and carers will all be asked in advance. Equally, they will be asked to actively agree to their child interacting with the puppy.

There will be a list of written instructions which students will be asked to read to help them understand how best to interact with the puppy. For children who cannot yet read, these will be discussed with them in an age appropriate manner. Role play and toys, may be used to demonstrate key aspects of this.

During break and lunchtimes around school, the puppy will simply be 'going for a walk'. She will interact with children only if they desire it and otherwise will pass by without stopping.

Worst case scenarios:

If at any point any of the adults supervising the puppy feel that her behaviour is unacceptable or in any way harmful, she will be removed from the school.

Insurance of up to £1 million public liability has been paid for. This covers any injuries caused directly or indirectly by the dog.

Mr C Faulkner
Executive Headteacher

Rev 1 August 2020
Rev 2 September 2020; Covid 19 update.