

# Kempshott Junior School

## School Dog Policy

Policy Ratified by Governing Body	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Review Yearly
Date of Review	Spring Term 2024	New policy
Date of Next Review	Spring Term 2025	

### Safeguarding Statement

*At Kempshott Junior School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Kempshott Junior School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.*

### 1 – Rationale

There is a strong evidence base from research that human-animal interactions (HAI) have a positive effect for people in a wide range of areas. Beetz et al 2012 stated that positive effects have been demonstrated in areas such as:

- social behaviour
- interpersonal interactions
- mood
- stress-related parameters
- heart rate
- blood pressure
- fear and anxiety
- mental health
- cardiovascular diseases
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We also believe that children can benefit in other ways from regular interaction with animals. These ways include:

- emotional regulation
- increased understanding of responsibility
- development of empathy

Many children also get great enjoyment out of caring for and interacting with animals

### 2 - Risk Management

Although there are a variety of accidents, which could happen within the school environment these can be effectively managed through a careful and thorough risk assessment for each dog working within school. A copy of the risk assessment can be obtained from school. These plans set out the specific risk involved and the control measures in place to mitigate the identified risks.

Dogs other than those covered by a specific risk assessment are not allowed on the academy site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Principal. This includes drop off and collection times at the beginning and end of the school day.

The following dogs have a risk assessment in place and are authorised to work with children within the school:

Dog	Breed	Assessed handler(s)
Bale	Working sheepdog	C.O'Neill

These dogs have been assessed by the Dog Mentor programme and have been identified because they:

- respond well to training
- are sociable and friendly
- are known to be good with children
- have completed the kennel club good citizens training programme to at least Silver level

### **3 – Organisational and Operational information**

3.1 Only the school dog(s) is allowed on the school premises. All other dogs must not come onto site unless they are known assistance/guide dogs and the head teacher has been informed beforehand.

3.2 Staff, parents and children will be informed in writing that a dog will be in school. This will be done at the start of each academic year, or when a new pupil/member of staff starts. The welcome pack process will set out clear arrangements for how parents should contact the school if they do not want their child to interact with the dog.

3.3 Risks assessments for the dog will be reviewed annually (with the support of the dog mentor programme) and signed off by the head teacher.

3.4 Staff, visitors and children known to have an allergy must not go near the dog and the areas in which the dog can visit will be reviewed regularly.

3.5 The dog will mainly stay in the back office area and training and support work will take place in carefully considered areas of the school and outside where possible.

3.6 All visitors will be informed by reception staff on arrival that there is a dog in school.

3.7 If the displaying any symptoms of illness they will not attend school.

3.8 The dog will be kept in on a lead when moving around inside the school or on a walk and will be under the control and full supervision of the designated assessed handler(s) at all times.

3.9 Children will be taught how to behave appropriately around the dog and how to keep their classrooms 'dog ready' i.e.

- remain calm
- not make sudden movements
- never disturb the dog whilst eating or sleeping
- ask permission from the designated handler to approach and stroke the dog
- approach the dogs standing up and stroke the neck, shoulder and back of the dog from a position where the dog can see them
- wash hands after interactions with the dog

3.10 The children will not be allowed to eat around the dog and the dog will not be taken into the hall during lunchtimes.

3.11 The dog will be taken off site to toilet but should any accidents happen this will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.

3.12 Designated handlers will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and the impact of the school dog

3.13 The dog will be included in the fire evacuation and lock down procedures under the supervision of a responsible adult.

3.14 The dog will not attend schools on the days in which the designated handler(s) are timetabled to teach whole classes.

3.15 Concerns about the work of the school dog should follow the normal reporting procedures set out in the complaints policy.

3.16 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.

3.17 There will be a referral process in place to identify children who would benefit from working with the school dog and this will be implemented in liaison with the SENCo, SLT and Inclusion manager.

#### **4 - Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in the school and to ensure that this policy is reviewed annually.

The SLT on each site is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy

## **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:

### Confidence benefits

“If children are partnered with a dog to read to, for example, the dog provides comfort, encourages positive social behaviour, enhances self-esteem, motivates speech and inspires children to have fun and enjoy the non-judgemental experience” Bark & Read – The Kennel Club

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>

### SEND benefits

“Therapy Dogs Nationwide dogs have also shown to help with special needs and autistic children and adults by giving focus and providing a calming environment.” Therapy Dogs Nationwide

<http://www.tdn.org.uk/schools/>

### Mental Health and Wellbeing benefits

Some mental health challenges and psychiatric disorders are known to respond well to therapy dogs. Patients diagnosed with a range of issues, such as depression, bi-polar disorder, Autism and ADHD benefit from their interaction with therapy dogs and other companion animals.

Evidence shows that just by being near a dog when stressed can reduce anxiety. In a survey, 92% of Pupils said they felt more relaxed during teaching and learning time when there was a dog in the classroom. When children are more relaxed and less stressed, they're going to learn more.

### Behaviour benefits

Researchers report that Pupils 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 Pupils declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. In a controlled study, Pupils were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Pupils' behaviour improved toward teachers, and Pupils also showed more confidence and responsibility.

## Social Development

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils social skills and responsibility. Schools are using dogs to help older pupils build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Pupils can use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower Pupils. With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the dog. This includes walking and grooming. Research reports that involving pupils in the daily care of a classroom dog is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The pupils also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

## Pastoral Care

Therapy Dogs can work with pupils on a one-one basis and will especially help those pupils 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 pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the pupils they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

## **Appendix 2 – Frequently Asked Questions**

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

A. The Legal owner of the dog will be the assessed handler who will care for the dog out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with it. They will also be responsible for any ongoing training.

### **Q. Will the dog be a distraction?**

A. The dog will be kept in the office area which is separate from the classrooms to ensure that he only comes into contact with the children at appropriate times throughout the day. A careful timetable will be put together to ensure the dog only attends classes and works with children at appropriate times. We will also ensure that children who are not involved in regular, direct contact with the dog are still able to participate in a number of ways, over the course of the school year, should they wish to do so.

### **Q. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

A. Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and have sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog. We are finalising our School Dog Policy and this will be available to view on our website.

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

A. In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted away from the play areas where children have access. Thus, there will be no chance of the children coming into contact with any faeces. Our policy of no dogs on school grounds is still applicable. 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 dogs welfare be considered?**

A. The dog will continue with his usual routines outside of school and will still go out regularly with his dog walker. He will be timetabled to join children around the school at times, however he will be kept in the Office area where he will have his own quiet, safe space to sleep and relax. He will always have access to food and water.

### **Q. My child has allergies; how will this be managed?**

A. 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 put additional control measures in place.

**Q. My child is frightened of dogs; how will this be managed?**

A. Interaction with the dog will be carefully managed and always fully supervised. Children do not need to have close contact with him unless they wish to and permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.