

1. Policy Statement

Incorporating a dog into a school or educational setting is a trend that is growing in popularity within the UK as it has many benefits to children's development.

Charlestown Community Primary School is committed to the safety of its students, employees and visitors. This policy has been put in place to ensure that the welfare of the Nurture Dog is the main priority, whilst ensuring the safety of all persons on the school site.

Charlestown Community Primary School does not allow dogs on the school site unless specifically authorised by the head teacher or are assistant dogs (dogs for the blind etc.). This includes drop off and collection times.

This policy outlines the measures put in place to allow for the school to authorise for a nurture dog on the school site.

2. Rationale

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted to aid in benefitting children's' communication, educational and emotional skills, as well as the development of responsibility and empathy. As well as the additional benefits, students take great enjoyment from interacting with pets on the school site.

3. Information

The dog's owner is identified as: Allison Collis, Head teacher

School Base: Charlestown Community Primary School

Dog will be situated: The head teacher's office, eventually moving to working in classrooms when qualified and assessed and all therapy training is complete.

The dog will live with Allison Collis, at her home address outside of school hours.

It is important to remember that a school dog does not belong to the school; it belongs to its owner with whom it forms an important bond and lives as part of the family.

4. Communication and introduction of the dog

The school has ensured that prior to the placement of the dog that all stakeholders have been informed. Employees will be communicated via staff briefing and emails. Letters will be sent to all parents/carers informing them of the school's decision to have a nurture dog placed within the site and the benefits and risks of the nurture dog. Letters will be forward to the parents/carers of any new children. Children will be informed via assemblies and through class time. All visitors will be informed that there is a dog on site. This will be openly advertised on our website. It is acceptable

that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for most it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parents who do not wish their child to interact with the dog are invited to write to inform the school of their wishes.

5. Health and safety

To ensure the safety and welfare of our children, employees, visitors and the nurture dog, the following actions are in place:

- The dog will be kept on a lead at all times when moving around the school site or on a walk.
- The dog will be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
- Children will never be left alone with the dog
- Children and employees will be informed on how to act around the dog e.g. no sudden movements, do not put face near dog, approach whilst standing up, and do not stroke face. The visitors leaflet will contain information on how to act around the dog to ensure all persons on site are fully informed.
- Children will be informed not to disturb the dog whilst sleeping or eating. The dog will have a designated quiet place where it can rest and eat (this will be located in the Head teachers office)
- The number of children having access at one time will be monitored and limited to a reasonable amount
- Children and employees will be trained to read the dog's body's language and adults will remove the dog from situations if body language shows uncomfortable behaviours e.g. Dog is growling and bearing teeth – dog is angry Dog's ears are back, tail lowered between legs – dog is frightened
- Dog will be kept away from any area of the school where food is being prepared e.g. breakfast club, and the lunch hall
- Anyone who has access to the dog will be encouraged to wash their hands following interaction
- Dog will be discouraged from jumping, scratching or licking
- Children will only access the dog when they are scheduled to meet or work with the dog.
- The dog will be kept in the office when not working. The dog will not be linked with a child where there is a high risk of the child injuring the dog or putting themselves in danger with the dog.

6. Allergies and phobias

All employees and children have been asked to inform the school of any allergies or other reasons they do not wish to be in contact with the dog. This will be collated on

the SIMS system and a list held by the dog's owner and handlers. Any person with an allergy or phobia of the dog will be kept away from the dog as much as possible. All visitors will be informed via our visitor leaflet about the dog, and any issues will be reported directly to the dog owner.

7. Welfare of Nurture Dog

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that:

- The dog is regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness
- If the dog is unwell then he will not be allowed on the school site until health is restored
- The dog will be diagnosed and treated by a registered vet as necessary
- The dog will receive relevant vaccinations. The owner will be responsible for keeping a record of dates when vaccinations are undertaken and a copy will be held on the school site.
- The dog will be wormed and flea treated regularly
- Claws will be trimmed to reduce risk of accidental scratching
- The dog will be required to wear a collar with a tag at all times stipulating his name and the contact numbers of the school and owner. The dog will be microchipped and will be registered to the owner. The dog will also wear a coat stipulating its name and role in school when working.
- Insurance will be in place to ensure that the dog is covered for any injury which occurs during the school hours
- The dog will have rest periods scheduled throughout the day to allow them to rest and eat without disruption
- The dog and its handlers will be fully trained by a professional, registered organisation – The Dog mentor <https://www.thedogmentor.co.uk/>
- The dog will be kept out of circulation at busy times until trained to manage crowds
- The dog will be kept in his pen when not working
- The dog will not be allowed around site immediately after break/lunch time. This will allow for any dropped food to be cleared, to prevent the dog from eating foods which may be damaging to their system
- Any dog excrement will be cleaned up immediately by an adult using the appropriate cleaning products. Children will not be permitted to clean up any excrement from the dog. A designated toilet area has been identified for the dog away from the playgrounds, this can be located in an area of the school which is not frequented by staff and children. The area will be cleaned using animal safe disinfectant.

In relation to mitigating noise from the dog, the dog will be situated in an office which is away from communal areas and classrooms which should reduce noise disruption.

8. Curriculum

The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are trained as well as our dog and the caution must be used around unknown dogs outside the school. The dog will be supporting students with

- Reading – children to read to the dog to help build their confidence in reading to someone who is non-judgemental
- Responsibility and Life Skills – children responsible for walking and feeding the dog to learn the importance of taking responsibility for a living creature
- Welfare – the dog to be involved with children who may require someone to talk to or stroke/play with when feeling overwhelmed
- Rewards – to be involved in rewarding children, particularly those who have an interest in dogs and would like to be involved in their care.

Trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the Nurture dog.

9. Training

A credited training provider has been identified to complete training with the dog and owner. The dog will undergo a training programme through the 'Dog Mentor programme'. The mentor programme uses Animal Assisted Activities to help teach and engage children with educational needs working on areas such as self-esteem, behaviour, peer relationships and better engagement skills. It builds upon the benefits of the human/animal bond by providing children with positive experiences with dogs that can help them educationally, developmentally, emotionally and socially. Copies of all certificates will be maintained on the school site.

10. Complaints and Allegations

Charlestown Community Primary School has completed a thorough risk assessment to allow for the dog to be present on the school site. The risk assessment will be reviewed and updated annually unless required earlier than the review date. If anyone reports having an issue with the dog, they will be asked to raise their concerns in writing and this will be responded in line with our complaints procedure.

Should anyone get hurt by the dog:

- Parents will be informed immediately (if child)
- First aid will be administered and an incident form will be completed
- Employee or children will be released for medical attention (if required)
- A full investigation of circumstances will be undertaken. The dog will not be permitted on site until the investigation is complete
- The suitability of the dog will be reassessed by the school once the investigation has been completed

Should the dog get hurt by someone:

- Owner will be informed immediately
- Owner will visit a registered vet if deemed necessary and an incident form will be completed
- A full investigation of circumstances will be undertaken
- The access of the person responsible for injuring the dog will be reassessed by the school once the investigation has been completed

11. Contingency

If the dog escapes from the school, is loose on the school grounds, and will not return, the following process needs to be followed:

- Owner will be informed immediately
- Owner and other identified handlers/staff members will be asked to secure exits to prevent the dog from leaving the grounds
- Children will be informed not to approach the dog and not to chase the dog
- Owner will secure dog with lead using training commands
- The dog will be required to wear a collar with a tag at all times stipulating his name and the contact numbers of the school and owner. If the dog escapes from the school grounds the following process needs to be followed
- Owner will be informed immediately
- Owner and other identified handlers/staff members will be asked to search the surrounding area

Students will be informed not to approach the dog and not to chase the dog

- If found, owner will secure dog with lead using training commands
- If not found the missing dog will be reported to the correct outside agencies e.g. dog warden

- The dog will be required to wear a collar with a tag at all times stipulating his name and the contact numbers of the school and owner

In case of an emergency evacuation/fire drill the following process needs to be followed:

- The appropriate adult will walk the dog on a lead to the assembly post
- The dog will be passed to the owner who will stand with the dog
- The dog will remain with the owner until the building is deemed safe and all students have re-entered classrooms.
- If the owner is not on site when there is an evacuation, then another member of staff will be responsible for the ownership of the dog during this time

In case of severe weather, the following process needs to be followed: In cases of severe hot weather:

- The dog will only be walked during cooler periods of the day (during morning or evening) to prevent overheating and burns to paws.
- The dog will have a supply of water throughout the day
- A fan will be provided to keep the dog cool during rest periods if required In cases of severe cold weather:
- The dog will only be walked if the ground is deemed appropriate (e.g. clear of snow and ice) to prevent frostbite
- The dog will be kept in a room which is warm during rest and work periods

The school will ensure that the welfare of the dog is its priority and the owner will not take unnecessary risks to bring the dog onto site in severe weather conditions

12. Further reading and resources

www.dogstrust.org.uk

www.dogshelpingkids.co.uk

www.rspca.org.uk

www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2017/august/how-theseadorable-dogs-are-helping-children-love-reading/

www.pdsa.org.uk

<https://www.therapydogs.com/therapy-dog-certification/>

Further information & resources

- Every school 'needs dog as stress-buster', BBC, March 2019: <https://bbc.in/2Zd76F7>
- In order to start thinking about taking a dog into a school, Dogs Helping Kids has worked together with charity Dogs for Good to produce a guidance document for schools: <http://bit.ly/2GjJpSX>
- The Kennel Club has also worked with a number of dog charities to write a set of suggested standards for dogs in schools. This can be found at <http://bit.ly/2VKmlU4>

Risk assessment

Control measure	Action to be taken	Notes
Hugo will be kept on a lead at all times when children are in the building	A lead is to remain in school. Hugo can walk around without a lead before and after the school day but not during breakfast club and during the day and after school clubs	
Hugo will always be with an adult	Mrs Collis and Mrs Griffin will be trained with Hugo in the dog mentor programme. Hugo will never be alone with children.	
Children will not be allowed to interact with Hugo until the consent form is returned from home	All children have had a letter and must return it before visiting or working with Hugo, except in the ARC where Hugo will visit daily.	Forms to be chased for the ARC children as a priority.
If Hugo is on site without Mrs Collis, only Mrs Griffin can work with him.	As Mrs Griffin will be trained to work with Hugo, only she can work with Hugo and children. Hugo can be supervised by other staff however, just not with children present.	
Hugo will use the closed area outside Mrs Collis' room for toileting daily.	This is because no children are usually present here or play here. Any mess will be cleared immediately. Whilst toilet training, this area and puppy pads in Mrs Collis' room will be used.	
In the event of a fire, Hugo will evacuate with Mrs Collis or Mrs Griffin.	Hugo will not be left alone for long periods in the Heads' office – only for quick meetings in the ARC, to go to the photocopier	

	etc. Hugo will accompany either Mrs Griffin or Mrs Collis at all times around the building.	
Once trained, Hugo can be walked by Mrs Collis and Mrs Griffin on the school field with children.	Only in cooler temperatures and once a certificate has been issued	
Hugo will not go outside on paths in the snow – only the grass	This is to prevent the salt hurting his paws. The path to Mrs Collis' office by the blue gate should therefore not be gritted, only the ARC footpath.	
Hugo will rest in the head teachers' office	Hugo has a set place to rest in the office. When sleeping, he should be left alone. If visitors to Mrs Collis do not like dogs, the meeting can be held elsewhere and Hugo can go with Mrs Griffin.	The rest area is near the heating pipes.
As Hugo is a puppy there is a possibility he may chew or bite	Children have been told in assembly that he may bite and are to therefore ask if they can stroke him on his body and not his face. If he looks in a playful mood and may bite, Mrs Collis or Mrs Griffin will remove him from the situation.	
Hugo will attend training from The Dogs Trust and from The Dog Mentor	Hugo is booked to attend basic training from the 29 th March 2022. His Dog mentor training starts on 20 th April although zoom meetings have been carried out prior to this.	Mrs Collis will pay for regular training. The school will pay for mentor training
Hugo's claws will be kept short to avoid scratching	Hugo will visit the groomers and vets regularly to ensure all claws are kept short.	Mrs Collis will pay these fees
If Hugo hurts anyone, parents will be informed immediately and first aid administered.	Medical treatment will be advised and a full investigation will take place and suitability to work in school will be reassessed	
If Hugo gets hurt by anyone, he will be checked over by a vet.	A vet will assess how hurt Hugo is and an investigation will take place. The access of the person responsible for injuring the dog will be reassessed	School will pay the cost of his treatment if hurt in school.
If Hugo escapes from school, Mrs Collis will be informed	Hugo should not be off a lead so should not escape from school. However; Gates will be closed immediately and any staff available will go and search the area.	

	A name tag will be worn at all times. Recall training will be completed at the earliest possible time.	
--	---	--