**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. Appendix B sets out further reasons for why the school feels it will be beneficial to have a school dog.

**Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?**

Of course 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.

**School Policy**

The dog will be owned by Mrs James The dog is a Cavapoo chosen for its very mild temperament and non-moulting coat. She will be responsible for Dexter’s regular visits to the vets, injections and inoculations.

The Chair of Governors, and the Head Teacher have both agreed that the school can have a dog.

Staff have been informed, through staff briefing, that the school will have a dog. Parents have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. At the start of each academic year there will be lessons around the school dog and parents will be given an opportunity to speak to the head with regards to the school dog. Mrs James has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment is attached as Appendix A

In the event of an emergency evacuation the adult supporting Dexter will accompany him to the Fire Evacuation point.

Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must remain at a manageable distance. Parents are able to inform the school of any allergies on admission.

If the dog is unwell Dexter will not be allowed into school.

The dog will normally be kept on a lead and harness until fully trained when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.

There may be occasions when the dog is working off lead, but this will only happen in an enclosed space and under the control of an adult. Before removing the lead, all present will be consulted

Students must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with students.

Students should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Students should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog’s eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Students should not to put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Students should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating. Students must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.

If the dog is surrounded by a large number of students, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.

Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring 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 the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

Children should not feed or eat close to the dogs.

Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog. As a school we will provide anti-bacterial gel.

Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers and staff and children are required to abide by this policy.

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

**Policy written October 2022**

**Policy to be reviewed October 2023**

**Appendix A**

**Risk Assessment**

 **Introduction:**

The value of pet ‘therapy’ is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. The team at Maylandsea Primary have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and the decision was made in September to go ahead with the project.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

* For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
* For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
* To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children’s social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with Dexter is invited to discuss with Mrs James and inform her of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the puppy as her vet will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of Dexter’s health records will be updated and kept in school. Dexter will also be insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hazard** | **Risk** | **Risk 1 - 5** | **Controls in place** | **Review date**  |
| Dog getting over excited when interacting with children. | Child knocked to the ground.Child scratched by dog.Child bitten by dog. | 133 | The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.The dog will always be on a lead or carried when he is not in the school office while the children are in school. Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.The dog will undergo formal training from the age of 12 weeks with an experienced dog trainer. Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed as she progresses through her weekly training.All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept short. |  |
| The dog causing allergies. | Children or staff have allergic reactions | 1 | Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will kept in school.The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog |  |
| Children getting germs from the dog. | Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs. | 1 | Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. She will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.Flea treatment is carried out at regular intervals.The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes; and never in the food preparation area. |  |
| Financial cost of the dog’s upkeep. | School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Dexter day to day upkeep or medical bills. | 1 | The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Mrs James both in a well-being and financial aspect. Dexter will be insured by the headteacher, for Public Liability Insurance. All vets costs are covered by Mrs JamesNotely Training are providing puppy training.  |  |

KEY: 1- Low risk

2

3 -Medium risk of injury

4

5-High risk of injury