

Greenvale Primary School



SCHOOL DOG POLICY

Policy Date	November 2023
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs A Allnutt
Review Date	November 2025

Rationale

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills by building meaningful relationships with a dog.

In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. By having dogs in school, we want to encourage those children specifically who are vulnerable, or those who are less confident with learning to have a friendly and unconditional companion, whose presence can scaffold any challenge. Having dogs in school can also encourage reluctant children to come to school as the relationship with the dog will often provide more emotional security than with any adult in school. It is the unspoken yet powerful bond with an animal that we recognize will have the most impact for pupils who are in need and forms the basis for all our work with the dogs in school.

The vast majority of dogs are gentle and loving and it is that emotional demonstration that offers children opportunities to improve their social, emotional and mental health and build confidence through experiencing the unconditional acceptance that a dog will offer. If the primary foundation of emotional security is in place for our children, this will enable them to succeed in whatever their next step is and it is the relationships with our therapy dogs that will provide this foundation.

For some children, our dogs will be a special friend, helping them to build wellbeing, regulate and have fun. For others, time spent with the dogs will be a reward for their individual achievements.

Social communication and emotional regulation difficulties can lead to negative experiences in pupil relationships. Bullying can be a problem in all schools with students anxious about school for fear of taunting and abuse. However, using the dogs as positive behaviour mentors will make a difference in pupils recognising their own positive and negative behaviours and therefore improve the choices they make when interacting with others.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body hold the responsibility of ensuring that the school has written a policy for having a dog present in school.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy and will take appropriate steps to ensure that it is operating effectively. The policy will be reviewed biannually to ensure its effective application.

Staff, Parents, Visitors and Pupils

All are required to abide by this policy.

The school curriculum will support the teaching and learning about dogs to enable children to improve their knowledge about animal welfare and the behaviour and care of dogs and animals as a whole. This education will include ensuring that children know that not all dogs are well-trained, and that caution should always be taken around unknown dogs outside school.

All therapy dogs used at Greenvale Primary School have been sourced, trained and are affiliated to The Dog Mentor scheme run by Mrs Jenny Duckworth.

Is there a risk to bringing a dog into a school environment?

The simple answer is yes. However, there a variety of other situations that can happen in the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries/ risks that can be caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be mitigated. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and can be accessed by all stakeholder upon request.

About our dogs

The Dog Mentor will be owned by a member of school staff and reside with them in their family home.

The Dog Mentor will undergo a full training session and a thorough risk assessment is carried out by a third party (The Dog Mentor UK) and will be reviewed annually as a minimum.

The Dog Mentor has been chosen to work as a Dog Mentor in school because of its intelligence and personality. The Dog Mentor has been assessed as being a dog that will respond well to training, is good with children and is very sociable.

All stakeholders have been informed that a dog will be working in school.

The risk assessment carefully considers the needs of any member of the school community who has known allergies. All visitors will be informed that there is a dog on site prior to entering the building. If any visitor raised concerns, this will be reported to the most senior staff member on site and appropriate action will be taken. Visitors will be instructed about the need to follow the rules set in place for working with Dog Mentor.

The Dog Mentor will be slowly introduced to the school environment and the children and staff working within. The time that the Dog Mentor works in school will be gradually increased if this is deemed appropriate and suitable for the dog and school.

If the Dog Mentor is unwell at any time, they will not come into school.

The Dog Mentor will be kept on a lead until full training has taken place when moving through the school building and will be under the full control of a trained member of staff.

On occasions where it is deemed appropriate, and only when training has been completed, the Dog Mentor may be granted 'right to roam' in certain designated areas and will still be accompanied by a trained adult or the dog owner.

Children will never be left alone with the Dog Mentor and there will always be an appropriate adult supervising.

Children and staff will be taught and reminded about what is deemed as appropriate behaviour around the Dog Mentor. This will be in line with the recommendations of the staff at The Dog Mentor UK. Children will be taught by way of an assembly which will be presented to them when the Dog Mentor is first introduced to school, and it is recommended that this is then revisited at least termly.

Children will not be permitted to interact with the Dog Mentor when the dog is eating or sleeping. The Dog Mentor will never be surrounded by large groups of children. No more than two children will place their hands on the dog at any one time. Interactions with the Dog Mentos will always be supervised by a trained adult.

The Dog Mentor's wellbeing will always be a priority. The dog handlers and the dog owner will continually monitor the Dog Mentor and will use their working knowledge of the animal to read the communication given out. If at any point, the Dog Mentor shows any sign of being upset or distressed, he/she will be withdrawn from the situation and given time to relax.

The Dog Mentor programme considers the dogs needs fully and will only continue to work in school if it is deemed that he/she is happy to be there. Positive reinforcement is at the heart of the Dog Mentor training programme and the training received by the dogs is reward-based.

The Dog Mentor will not be present when children are eating.

Children will be carefully guided on how to approach and stroke the Dog Mentor so that the dog's needs are always being considered.

School staff will carefully monitor and record any impact that the Dog Mentor has on the school community.

Dog foul will be disposed of carefully and in line with the guidance given on the Risk assessment. Staff members working with the Dog Mentor will be offered COSHH training to ensure that they have an understanding of the importance of handling and disposing of dog waste correctly.

Office staff will be made aware of when the Dog Mentor is on site. This ensures that, in the event of any emergency evacuation, the Dog Mentor will safely be removed from the environment provided this does not put any staff member at risk.

Linked policies and documents

Nurture Policy

Appendix 1 - Therapy Dog, Rationale & Continuous Provision Plan 2023 – 25

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Agreed places for Therapy Dogs (courtesy checks made before visiting other areas in the school)			
Class base	Inside safe spaces	Outside safe spaces	Wider school environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robins Class. Woody and Mabel spend the majority of time here. Luna is based in Year 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class bases Inclusion Manager's Office School office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenced off area on KS1 playground Woodland Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corridors and spaces to move around the school; inside and outside

Therapy Dog Role			
Morning Group	Lunchtime Provision	Afternoon Group	Involvement in the Wider School
Enhance the classroom environment by interacting with pupils to support and celebrate the achievements of all abilities	1-1 Dog Mentor Sessions to provide a time in the pupils' day where they can emotionally re-fuel after a morning in class and build their sense of well being to tackle the afternoon ahead. Pupils are put forward by class teachers. There are 10 spaces, 2 pupils have a 20 min session per day.	Enhance the provision that focuses on building and maintaining positive behaviour for learning and making relationships.	Therapy Dog presence provides a homely and family feel to the school. When pupils, staff and visitors interact with the therapy dogs it facilitates warmth and communication. Attending assemblies and special events to show interest and support for all pupils, providing a bond that unites the school.

Therapy Dog's role in the Boxall Profile / Nurture Group Curriculum

Boxall Profile: Developmental Strands (A-J)	How Therapy Dog's actions and behaviours supports pupils' achievement of the building blocks for learning.
A: giving purposeful attention	Is attentive to the person giving instructions, makes an attempt to follow the instructions, shows interest and willing to involve himself in their play / talk / interactions
B: participates constructively	Shows interest and purposeful responses to people and events
C: connects up experiences	Generates his own interest in their play / talk / interactions, recalls instructions and how to respond to them, shows recognition of individuals
D: shows insightful involvement	Shows an interest in people and events, transfers this interest to new people / events / experiences. Demonstrates empathy and trust to promote positive social behaviour.
E: engages cognitively with peers	Adapts, is flexible, interacts with purpose.
F: emotionally secure	The dog is secure and accepting. Demonstrates trust in others, appears secure in how they are viewed by others.
G: is biddable, accepts constraints	Can conform and function within a group situation and shows they have

	positive regard for those around him. Accepts the constraints the environment places on him.
H: accommodates to others	Accepts the needs of those around him and his role in meeting those needs. Accepting of boundaries within the group environment and adapts to changes when they occur. This requires trust in those around them and internalised controls.
I: responds constructively to others	Can make themselves part of the pupils' world, in that moment. Demonstrates respect of the needs of those around them. Shows emotional awareness of those around them.
J: maintains internalised standards	The dogs demonstrate they have internalised their basic training and instinctively behave within the boundaries that have been set.

Boxall Profile: Diagnostic Profile (Q-Z)	How the dogs' actions and behaviours support pupils to overcome barriers to learning.
Q: disengaged	Greets pupils with purposeful interest. Eye contact, wagging tail, moving close, wriggling body presents an engaging and attaching warmth for the individual and ultimately encourages a mirrored response from them. Over time pupils will gain the confidence that the dogs' actions are genuine and they can invest trust in them and return their warmth and attachment.
R: self-negating	The dogs show no recognition of the negative characteristics pupils feel they have. Their response to them is non-judgemental and totally accepting. They demonstrate attaching behaviours and bare no grudge that they may not be ready to reciprocate. They will continue to show warmth regardless. This provides a consistent, positive model for interaction.
S: makes undifferentiated attachments	The dogs provide a consistent, unconditional source of attachment for anyone that is seeking this. Pupils seeking attachment, indiscriminately, can develop the awareness to form a meaningful and reciprocal attachment, without fear of rejection.
T: shows inconsequential behaviour	Expectations of appropriate behaviour are set for all pupils around the dogs. Their attention and company are the incentive. Learning a model of positive behaviour can condition the understanding of cause and effect in our actions which can then be applied to other aspects of our everyday behaviour.
U: craves attachment, reassurance	For pupils who have a deep insecurity about their personal worth and adult regard, the dogs provide an alternative source of attachment that is not reliant on human to human interaction. The dogs are non-verbal so their actions are not read as judgmental or rejecting therefore pupils can build their confidence and sense of worth using the dogs as a mechanism of support.
V: avoids, rejects attachment	Where a pupil may have a profound lack of trust in others and resist making attachments, the dogs can provide an alternative source of friendship that pupils can safely build their confidence to interact with on an emotional level, without fear of the type of rejection that has been experienced so far.
W: has undeveloped / insecure sense of self	For pupils that have conflicting attitudes or emotions about themselves the

	dogs demonstrate consistently positive and non judgmental attitudes and emotions. He demonstrates no recognition of the negative characteristics that pupils think they have.
X: shows negativism towards self	Pupils who feel unvalued and therefore have a fractured sense of self can learn to build trust in the dogs as they won't reject or show the negative responses that the pupils may expect from adults. The dogs will consistently show a positive and non-judgemental response to all friendly interactions with the pupil. This will prove to the pupil that they are safe to invest themselves as what they are doing is appreciated and the dogs would like to receive this attention repeatedly.
Y: shows negativism towards others	Pupils who have become deeply conditioned to take satisfaction in having power over others (emotionally and physically) need to have a sufficient incentive to want to seek the approval of the adults placed to set expectations for positive behaviour. The dogs then become the tool to support nurturing this relationship as his presence comes with this team of adults. Boundaries and expectations can be modelled and rehearsed through the dogs and their expected behaviours in school. Positive behaviour around the dogs can then be transferred to other aspects of daily life. Pupils can build their confidence to release the control they have over their actions and begin to limit their behaviour to the expectations of the adults.
Z: wants, grabs, shows disregard for others	The dogs have to maintain their training. They are not allowed to grab from others and have to give things back on command. They demonstrate respect for others' personal space and demonstrate that they like their own. They are not aggressive in nature and instead model gentle and accepting characteristics. As adults and pupils give the dogs the necessary commands to maintain these behaviours, the pupils expect that the dogs will respond to these and can experience the pleasure in them responding positively and the frustrations of when they might ignore them, due to distractions.

Therapy Dog role in supporting achievement in the Prime Areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Prime Area	Therapy Dog role in enhancing achievement
Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and attention • Understanding • Speaking 	<p>The dogs are also expected to listen attentively in a range of situations. They join in with carpet sessions and have to use good sitting, looking and listening.</p> <p>The dogs model giving their attention to what others say and are expected to respond appropriately.</p> <p>Pupils can rehearse confident speaking with the dogs as they respond positively to clear and confident speaking. They will show patience with those who are still developing their confidence to speak.</p>
Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and handling 	<p>Stroking the dogs is a sensory experience that encourages hand-eye co ordination. Pupils show purposeful movement around the dogs, to ensure their safety and when walking alongside them. Holding the dog's lead is an</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and self-care 	<p>incentive to demonstrate 'good walking' at an appropriate pace and consideration of the dog's needs.</p> <p>Accompanying the dogs to the woodland area promotes being active in the fresh air and natural daylight. Moving alongside and around the dogs, develops spatial awareness in differing environments.</p> <p>Pupils will learn the importance of hand washing after contact with the dogs. They see that they must eat and drink healthily just like them. The dog's toileting needs will be explained and managed by the adults so all pupils are aware of the importance of good hygiene for humans and animals.</p>
<p>Personal, social and emotional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation • Managing self • Building relationships 	<p>For some pupils, interacting with the dogs will be a new and perhaps challenging experience. Handled with care and respect for the pupils' perception of dogs whilst gently introducing the therapy dogs in a wholly positive way and allowing pupils to progress at their own pace can provide a child with the life skill of how to manage their own feelings when they feel challenged and the resilience they need to move forward from a negative emotion.</p> <p>When the dogs interact with someone it has an immediate, positive effect on that person's well being which is a quick confidence boost that has a deep impact. People seek to repeat this interaction, this builds a model of positive interaction as it is already understood as welcome. This can give an individual with a negative self image an awareness that they are hugely appreciated, just for being themselves.</p> <p>Pupils are expected to use appropriate body language, voice and behaviours around the dogs, just as we model expectations on the dog's behaviour around the pupils. When pupils are expected to ensure this for the dog's welfare it gives a purpose for good behaviour and they experience the immediate benefit of the dog's company.</p> <p>The confidence to accept and return positive social interactions is what can be learnt through the dogs. This can be transferred to building relationships with peers and adults.</p>

Therapy Dog role in supporting achievement in the National Curriculum at KS1 and 2

The most effective impact the dogs' presence has on progress is not in specific subjects but in developing pupils' ability to engage in their learning. The foundation of success in any activity is to give purposeful attention and to communicate. Therefore the following is an outline of how they support the development of spoken language.

Programme of Study (statutory requirements)	Therapy Dog role in enhancing achievement
<p>Spoken Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers • Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge • Articulate and justify answers arguments and opinions • Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, 	<p>The dogs rely heavily on the spoken words and sounds from the humans who surround them and seek to interact with them, in their role as the school therapy dog. It is vital that all pupils and adults use a clear and confident voice to issue commands to the dogs. Using this type of speech does not always come naturally to pupils for a range of reasons that inhibit their confidence to communicate verbally.</p>

<p>staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English• Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)	<p>The following teaching points when working with the dogs supports the process of listening and responding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Good listening: the dog's body language and facial expression demonstrates that they are using their listening ears when he is spoken to.2. Understanding: the dogs demonstrate that when they hear certain words and phrases it is their job to respond in a specific way. If they don't understand they won't know what to do. When we don't understand we can ask the speaker questions to clarify.3. Remembering: the dogs will recall specific words and phrases and what they require them to do. How can we build our memory skills, too?4. Evaluating: instructions should be given to the dogs once and clearly. This enables them to think about what they have been asked to do and respond appropriately. We all need thinking time and need to use this to prepare ourselves to respond.5. Feedback: When the dogs have listened to their instruction their response is required. When we are spoken to we must also plan our response and show this appropriately.
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