

School Dog Risk Assessment

Newfield Primary School



Completed: August 2025

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School Dog Risk Assessment

Purpose

1. Dogs teach children responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.
2. Dogs teach children patience. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!
3. Dogs teach children compassion. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
4. Dogs teach children about socialisation. Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park (pun intended).
5. Dogs are fun. Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.

Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child's sugar is low, and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life. After all, dogs are basically four-legged children who never grow up!

Introduction

The Newfield School Dog lives with our Year 3 teacher, Ms Clifford. She is a very caring and well-behaved puppy who has the right temperament to become a real asset to Newfield Primary. She has public liability insurance, this means she can come into school. She regularly visits the vet for check-ups. Whilst she is there they administer worm and flea treatments as well as make adjustments to her food intake to ensure she remains a healthy weight.

Area: Interaction with pupils and staff				
Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times.				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
School dog biting a child or adult	Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	The school dog is being trained not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger. She lives with Ms Clifford who handles her all the time to ensure that she is used to interaction with children	Low	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision or permission from parents. Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way
Jumping up / scratching	If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that she could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	The temperament of the dog and the agreed training programme has involved not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful. A letter was sent home asking parents to sign and return the form if they were unwilling for their child to have contact with the school	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision or permission. The school dog will be under lead control by an authorised adult when the children come to interact with her.

		dog. Parents asked to explain their wishes to their child and ask them not to approach the dog if they do not want any contact		
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose she could hurt children/adults or damage property	The school dog will be contained at all times either in an office, set specified room (with a clear sign on the door or on a lead	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective. Remind people entering and exiting the specified rooms to close the door.
Direct interaction with children/ staff	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/ staff could be scratched	No interaction is allowed without authorisation. Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour. Rewards/praise will be given to reinforce the desired behaviour	Medium	Ensure that the dog is approached in the agreed manner specified in the staff/children dog contract
Destruction of materials	If allowed the school dog may chew/destroy some school materials/resources	The school dog will be contained at all times. The school dog will have his own	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is

		toys to play with and normal school resources will be removed		appropriate and effective. Check the floors for any dangerous items that the dog may pick up
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Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog				
Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with dog	If a child/adult interact with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way this will affect the school dogs training and have a negative impact on future interaction	Agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog. There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation	Medium	If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped. All children and staff that wish to interact with the dog will need to sign a contract specifying how to interact with the dog.
Use of rewards / treats	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat. Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats	Alcohol gel will be available to all adults (and children with written permission from parents). Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands / use alcohol gel after handling treats. Treats to be kept in specific dog bag so they can only be used after authorisation

Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a puppy / dog	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves	Special assemblies will take place to show children and staff how to interact with the dog	Medium	There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school stated in the dog contract
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Area: Hygiene / Health				
Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog do not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Worms / fleas	If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans	The school dog will be treated monthly by a local vets to ensure she is correctly treated for worms and fleas	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet
Faeces	If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	The school dog will only be walked under supervision. No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervising	Low	If a child finds faeces on the School field/playground they will report it to an adult
Allergies	If a child/staff member is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	Children/staff will not be in contact with the school dog if we have received a negative response form from parents/guardians. If a child/staff has an allergy the	Medium	

		school dog will not carry out tasks near the child/staff		
Children's access to school dog's resource	If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some they could become unwell	All of the school dog's resources will be kept in a safe place. No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation	Low	Remind children not to enter area without a supervising adult. Remind chn that dog treats are not to be eaten by humans
Contact with food preparation areas	If the school dog enters a food preparation area this could be unhygienic	The school dog will be in a contained area or on a lead at all times around school. He will never enter the school kitchen. At lunchtimes she will not be in the teachers room where teachers may be preparing food.	Trivial	
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking				
Reason: To ensure that the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Walking the dog on and off the site	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not	If the school dog is taken off site normal risk assessed procedure will	Medium	Places for walks will be considered and planned

	focussed. Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk	take place. No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by accompanying adult. The dog will usually be walked with a double lead, allowing both the adult and the child to hold the lead at the same time. No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk unless permission is given		prior to the walk
Being fed	If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating she may respond aggressively	No child will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when he is eating. Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards). All feeding will be supervised	Low	Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when she is eating
School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed she may	The school dog will only attend school events if they are	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction to school events.

	become aggressive or boisterous	appropriate and she will be under the control of a supervising adult		If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog might not attend school on that day
Other dogs (on and off the site)	If the school dog is overwhelmed she may become aggressive or boisterous	No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises. The school dogs lead will always be controlled by an adult.	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction when out walking