



## Poplar Farm School

### School Dog Risk Assessment


#### Background

The value of pet therapy is widely accepted as a powerful aid to communication and motivation. Research has shown that companion dogs can improve the well-being of children and reducing their anxiety levels by making the school environment happier and a more enjoyable place to be. Dogs are a great comfort to children who are upset in any way and in need of calm, consolation, comfort, breathing space or a distraction before being able to tell an adult what has upset them. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally; a dog can motivate and encourage their participation, increase their understanding of responsibility, develop empathy and nurturing skills and improve their behaviour and self-esteem. Children cannot fail in any way in their relationship with a dog; they do not judge or condemn and offer unconditional affection. Children will learn the principles of good pet ownership and be taught how to handle dogs safely and responsibly; they will take great enjoyment from interaction with the dog.

The Leadership Team of Poplar Farm School considered the options regarding having a dog as a school pet from Term 5 2021.

The rationale to make the decision to have a school dog was as follows:

- For the school to have a dog that is able to live as naturally as conditions allow
- For the dog to be properly cared for
- To have a dog that the children could learn how to care for, interact safely around and also benefit their social and emotional development

School Name Poplar Farm School			Decide who may be harmed (insert ✓):					
			Student	✓	Contractors	✓	Visitors	✓
Location / Room No / Year Group (if applicable) All classrooms			Staff	✓	Vulnerable People	✓	Volunteers	✓
Identified Hazards	Initial Risk Rating	Existing Control Measures (select all that are in place)	✓	Actions / Comments			Residual Risk Rating H/M/L	
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.  (Child / staff knocked to ground Child / staff scratched by Dog Child / staff bitten by Dog)	L	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises unsupervised. Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. During the school day the dog will always be on a lead when she is moving from one area of school to another. The dog will be trained not to jump up or bite the children. Pupils will be taught how to read dog behaviour and the impact of their actions. Education of this nature will be continually given to children in whole school assemblies, specific workshops from outside professionals, including The Dogs Trust, in class time and PSHE lessons.	✓				L	

		<p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still with arms by their side - 'tall like a tree')</p> <p>The dog will attend the groomers regularly to make sure her claws are kept short and is also walked on concrete / tarmac to keep them trimmed.</p> <p>The Senior Leader and dog will undergo formal training with an experienced local dog trainer, when the dog is ready.</p> <p>Small groups of pupils will be involved in both on and off-site training (with parental permission) and along with the schools' primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week.</p> <p>The dog will also undergo conditioning around the school environment. This area of training will allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming / therapeutic manner.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (do's and don'ts) of having a school dog.</p>	✓		
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Keeping safe when Dog walking / daily mile	M	<p>A member of staff will always have school dog on the lead and have responsibility to ensure that they have control of her.</p> <p>Small groups of children will walk the school dog with a member of staff during lunchtime (with prior written parental permission). The member of staff always holds the lead. Children are reminded how to keep safe crossing the road and are supervised at all times by the member of staff.</p> <p>The member of staff will pick up any dog poo and remind children of the importance of staff member washing hands on return to school. A specific bin will be allocated for dog poo.</p> <p>Children will be given the choice if they would like to stroke the school dog and or feed the dog a treat and are shown how to do this safely with a flat hand. They are reminded on return to school to wash their hands.</p> <p>Daily mile - The school dog will be taken out on the lead to run the daily mile with a member of staff and is supervised at all times. The children are reminded of how to behave safely around the school dog.</p>	✓		M
The dog being a tripping hazard	L	<p>All members of school community to be vigilant to look where they are walking to avoid tripping over the dog.</p> <p>The dog to be on a short lead when walking around school with a member of staff.</p>	✓		L

The dog gets loose from Head's office, his crate or from his lead.	L	<p>There will be a stair gate at the classroom door and the HT office door for when the doors are open and the dog is in the room off of the lead. In addition to this there is a tee-pee in the rooms to separate from meeting areas if someone requests not to have contact with the dog or she will be removed from the room if required and remain with a member of staff.</p> <p>The dog's teepee is big enough for her to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease her.</p> <p>If the dog does get loose from the classroom, office or her crate/teepee the teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in the classroom or office.</p> <p>There are four members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if she needs attention at any other time, they are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Miss B Mason (Assistant Headteacher)</li> <li>2. Mrs K Hodson (Headteacher)</li> <li>3. Mrs L Thorpe (Administrator)</li> <li>4. Miss F Honeybun (Teacher)</li> </ol>	✓		L
Dog hair causing allergies	L	<p>The school dog is an F1 Cockapoo which is a non-moulting breed to reduce the chance of an allergic reaction. Parents will have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by the Head Teacher, Teachers and Office staff.</p> <p>Parents / Staff will be asked to highlight any allergies and a list of those who should not interact with the dog will be kept by the Head Teacher / Teachers and Office staff.</p> <p>Fully supervised, 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.</p> <p>Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. Wounds on exposed skin will be covered.</p>	✓		L

Children getting germs from the dog	L	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. Poo bags will be carried by staff member walking the dog.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up-to-date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and a register of this is kept by the Assistant Head Teacher.</p> <p>Miss Mason will be responsible for providing the dog with flea and worming treatment. Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals.</p> <p>If the dog is sick she will not come into school until she is better.</p>	✓		L
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	L	<p>The dog is the responsibility of the Assistant Head Teacher, Miss Mason. She is financially responsible for all her care and day-to-day costs.</p> <p>The dog is the responsibility of Miss Mason outside of school hours.</p> <p>Dog training costs will be paid for by the school.</p> <p>As the dog gets older we aim for her to be used for 'therapy' work within the school. The school will accommodate costs towards training and assessment of the dog to meet these criteria when it is felt that she is old enough to partake in this.</p>	✓		L
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog	L	<p>Miss Mason insures the dog and copies of certificates are held at school.</p> <p>The school will hold school pet liability insurance and will be renewed annually. The certificates are kept in school office and renewed annually.</p>	✓		L
Fire Alarm	L	<p>The dog will be signed in as a member of staff so fire marshalls know when she is onsite.</p>	✓		L

Noise / Barking	L	Cockapoos are bred to be sociable dogs and are often used as therapy dogs as they are known to be good with children. Dog will be introduced to the children from an early age so will be acclimatised to a noisy environment, therefore reducing the chance of them barking.	✓		L
Dog Phobia	L	Parents will be asked to inform the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with the dog.  Parents also offered the option of their child having no close contact. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by the Head Teacher, Teachers and Office staff.  Visitors advised dog is in the office and removed if requested. Notice in school entrance and noted on school website.	✓		L

**Risk Rating Guidance:** H= High M= Medium L= Low TBA = To Be Assessed - Assessment of the likelihood and or impact of injury and or damage. Initial assessment has been undertaken, complete the residual assessment based on your control measures/findings/additional actions etc.

Other Hazards Identified	Additional Control Measures to be Put in Place				
Date of Assessment:	24.03.21	Carried out by:	Kate Hodson & Bryony Mason	Signatures:	
Date of next review:	23.03.22	Carried out by:	Kate Hodson & Bryony Mason	Date Review Completed:	

**Note:** Health and safety in our school is the responsibility of everyone and is about taking a sensible and proportionate approach to ensure that the learning environment provides a healthy and safe place for all who use it, including staff, volunteers, visitors and students.