



## Queen Elizabeth II School

### Dogs in School Policy

**Effective from:** **January 2025**

**Signed by:** *Helen Elphick*

**Reviewed:** **October 2025**

**Next review date:** **October 2026**

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QEII School believe that opportunities to work with animals provide unique opportunities for learning. We recognize our responsibility to provide a safe environment and positive learning experiences for all pupils and a high standard of care and welfare to all animals involved. This policy sets out how this will be achieved. It has been written with reference to the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and our existing school policies.

#### **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, many children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

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

Yes, there is. However, 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. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this is included in this document. Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head teacher Helen Elphick. This includes drop off and collection times.

This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the dog to be present on the school premises School Policy. The dog is owned by Emma Risby-Ward.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dogs.
- Only the school dogs allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has given prior permission.
- QEII School has one school dog. Patsy, a Golden Doodle x a Golden retriever, lives with Emma and her family. Patsy is very curious and likes to play with everyone and likes being stroked.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. A risk assessment has been produced and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill, it will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.

- Children will not be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dogs. Children should remain calm around the dog.
- Children should never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog. Everyone must wait until they are sitting or lying down before touching or stroking them.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, they could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that they monitor the situation.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling dogs.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog via an opt out agreement.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head of the relevant department asap.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog. This includes Isabel Robson.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Emma Risby-Ward or other staff members as delegated by Emma.

### **Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with the dogs, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher or one of the Assistant Heads as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Assistant Heads or Head Teacher.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School. The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing this policy. Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy. The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dogs. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

## **Appendix 1.**

### **Reasons to have a dog in school**

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:-

1. Improve academic achievement
2. Increase literacy skills
3. Calming behaviours
4. Increase social skills and self-esteem
5. Increase confidence
6. Teach responsibility and respect to all life
7. Help prevent school refusing
8. Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

#### **Behaviour:**

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

#### **Education:**

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emergent readers. Dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.