



Dove Bank Primary School

School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment

Signed: *Mrs. A. Melville* – Chair of Governors (August 2023)

Date of Next review: August 2024



School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment

Dove Bank Dog: Benji



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?

Yes 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 another risk that needs to be managed.

School Policy

The dog is owned by Mrs. Andrea Fletcher. The dog is a Goldendoodle chosen for its very mild temperament and non-moulting coat. Mrs. Fletcher will be responsible for Benji's regular visits to the vets, injections and inoculations. **All copies of vet visits, inoculations and flea treatments are to be kept by the school office.**

The Chair of Governors, and the CEO of LiFE Academy Trust have both agreed that Dove Bank Primary School can have a dog.

Staff have been informed, through staff briefing, that the school will have a dog. Parents/Carers have been informed by letter that a dog will be on site. 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. Fletcher 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, Mrs. Fletcher will accompany Benji to the Fire Evacuation point, on his lead. Benji may become disoriented with the smell of smoke in a fire or from sirens. Benji may be confused within stressful situations. Emergency personnel should be aware that Benji is trying to be protective and, in his confusion, should not be considered harmful. Emergency personnel should make every effort to keep Benji with Mrs. Fletcher.

Staff, visitors and pupils 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, Benji will not be allowed onto site.

The dog will normally be kept on a lead 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.

Pupils must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with pupils. Benji will have his bed in Mrs. Fletcher's office.

Pupils should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Pupils 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. Pupils should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Pupils should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating. Pupils must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.

If the dog is surrounded by a large number of pupils, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that they monitor 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.

Exercise Space:

Dove Bank School will provide an exercise space for Benji.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School. The Head of School 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 - August 2023

Policy to be reviewed – August 2024

Risk Assessment Follows...

Activities covered by this assessment:		Bringing Animals into School (dog)										
Site Address/Location:		Dove Bank Primary School					Department/Service/Team:			Dove Bank Primary		
Note: A person specific assessment must be carried out for young persons, disabled staff and new and expectant mothers conducting this activity.												
Hazard (Something with a potential to cause harm)	Who Might be Harmed & How?	Existing Controls	Initial Risk Rating (SxL)			Further Controls Required (Consider Control Hierarchy)	Final Risk Rating (SxL)			Action Required		
			Severity	Likelihood	Risk rating		Severity	Likelihood	Risk rating	Who: (Initial)	Date By: (--/--/--)	Done? ✓/✗
Handling Animals (Infection / allergies)	Pupils, teachers and helpers may develop an infection/illness/parasitic infestation or allergic reaction due to the handling of animals or animal waste / poor hygiene procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See CLEAPSS PS:55 Guidance PS55 Cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms are covered before handling animals; pupils and adults must always wash their hands soon after handling any animal (or coming into contact with the soil, bedding, water etc in an animal's housing) ; if necessary gloves should be worn Reception & KS1 pupils hand washing is supervised to ensure that it is done properly; paper towels for drying hands are provided; Reception & KS1 pupils are closely supervised to ensure they do not put their fingers in their mouths or rub their eyes before hands have been washed 	H	L	M	Should a pupil or member of staff suffer an allergic reaction or suffer an injury from an animal, medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside after first aid treatment or once the animal and the afflicted person are kept apart	M	L	L			
Animal Welfare	Cross contamination between animals / species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> animals are not allowed to wander unrestricted around the classroom; Dog to be supervised at all times. Dog to be on lead at all times Wild birds and mammals are not normally to brought into schools. However, where a pupil arrives with an injured animal or bird, while such animals are on the school premises, the following precautions will be taken to guard against the possible risk of disease and parasite transmission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the injured animal / bird will be isolated from resident small mammals and birds and kept in quiet, dimly-lit conditions; the animal will be handled as little as possible with due regard for personal health & safety; 	H	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If appropriate facilities / housing cannot be achieved. The animals should not be brought into the school or school or via school transport 	M	L	L			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For cats and dogs, checks are made that these have been regularly taken to a vet and have been recently wormed and treated for fleas; • Parents are asked to identify any pupils known to have an allergy to certain animals eg: dog, cat or rabbit fur and appropriate instructions should be provided to the school • Staff should be aware of pupils with Asthma and related allergies and an individual risk assessment should be in place if requested by the family • Old bird nests should be placed in a plastic bag to prevent infestation of parasites • For injured animals consult animal welfare organisations e.g. PDSA, RSPCA or a local vet. • For larger animals, including cats and dogs, appropriate facilities are provided and all waste produced, whether accidental or routine, are handled and disposed of hygienically and contaminated items and surfaces properly washed and disinfected; • Animals should be provided with suitable housing and for exotic species specialist guidance should be sought or the owner consulted. • Animals should be housed separately • Where necessary arrangements must be made for animal care during holidays • school should consider the number and type of animals being brought into school • Teachers should be aware of endangered animals and not accept any such offers to bring them in (legal implications) 										
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<p>Handling Animals (Animal Behaviour)</p>	<p>Physical injury to an animal, pupil or member of staff (bites, scratches – ‘dropped’ animal)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks are carried out prior to the visit to ensure that animals which are to be brought in are docile, friendly and gentle in the presence of children; • Children should be shown the correct procedure for handling animals brought into school • Pupils are warned of the hazards of some animals, e.g. not tormenting a sleeping hamster that might retaliate upon waking; • Pupils asked to remain quiet while in same room as animals • Sufficient clean water and food readily available • Were required keep a record of animal inoculations. • Pupils asked not to make any sudden movements close to animal • Pupils are instructed not to handle spiders even if the owner says they are harmless; This is due to the possible presence of barbed hairs, posing a risk of injury, especially to the eyes • Both animals and pupils should be closely supervised 	<p>M</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Any physical injuries to staff or pupils caused through a bite from an animal must be treated by a first aider and then reported via AssessNET and the appropriate medical advice sought</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>L</p>			
<p>Phobia</p>	<p>Pupils may become frightened or upset by particular animals / reptiles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are asked to identify any pupils known to have a phobia of certain animals e.g. dogs, snakes, spiders; • Where there are pupils with phobias, the animals are not banned from coming into school but every effort is made to segregate the animals from those with phobias. 	<p>L</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>L</p>							
<p>Animals to avoid (Animal Welfare & Risk of Prosecution)</p>	<p>Risk of serious injury / legal implications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particular animals such as: Dormice, Crested Newt, Natterjack Toad and the Smooth Snake (are endangered) • Only suitable animals are kept in school, check on CLEAPSS guidance e.g.L52, L71 – Incubating & Hatching Eggs, L206 – Tadpoles, L181-Cold Water Aquaria, L213 Science & Mini beasts 	<p>L</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>L</p>							

Animals to Avoid (Risk of Injury and Prosecution)	Risk of serious injury to pupils and staff / legal implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dangerous Animals should not be bought into school such as those governed by the 'Dangerous Animals Act' 	H	L	M							
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During this activity, what could go wrong resulting in an emergency situation?	First aiders on site if anyone requires treatment or emergency services to be called if required. If a fire alarm is activated member of staff supervising the dog should ensure the animal is evacuated safely. Member of staff to organise a Vet appointment if the dog becomes injured or become unwell.
How could this emergency situation be prevented / controlled?	Dog to be always supervised.
Who should respond to a potential emergency situation and how? Have staff been trained to respond to this emergency situation?	Trained members of staff.
Could any non-routine changes affect the safety arrangements in place for this activity? (Weather, People, etc.) What can be done?	Dog to be supervised during bad weather.

Risk Assessor(s) Name(s):		Risk Assessor(s) Signature(s):				
Authorised By:		Authoriser Signature:				
Date Conducted:		Date Review Required:		Date of Last Review:		
		Date of Review:		Date of Next Review:		
		Date of Review:		Date of Next Review:		
		Date of Review:		Date of Next Review:		

Potential Severity of Harm	High Death, paralysis, long term serious ill health.	Medium	High	High
	Medium An injury requiring further medical assistance or is a RIDDOR incident.	Low	Medium	High
	Low Minor injuries not resulting in any first aid or absence from work.	Low	Low	Medium
	Low The event is unlikely to happen.	Medium It is fairly likely it will happen.	High It is likely to happen.	
Likelihood of Harm Occurring				

Risk Rating Definitions	
Low	This is an acceptable level of risk. No further controls are required as the risk rating cannot be reduced any further. However, it is advised that continual monitoring occurs in order to ensure that no changes / deviation of control measures occur.
Medium	It is advised that further controls are implemented to reduce the risk rating to as low a level as possible. If the risk cannot be reduced to lower than a medium, then on site monitoring should occur to ensure that all stipulated controls are being adhered to.
High	This is an unacceptable risk rating. Urgent interim controls should be implemented to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable. If the risk rating cannot be reduced to lower than a High, then a documented safe system of work should be implemented to control the activity. It may be necessary to seek further professional advice. Serious consideration should be given to the validity of carrying out the activity at all. Monitoring of the activity should occur.

Additional Information from CLEAPSS follows...

Bringing pets and other animals temporarily into schools

There are occasions when animals are brought into school for a short period of time, possibly just for a day. In these circumstances, staff may not have sufficient experience of keeping and handling the animals concerned. However, it is important to be properly prepared before any visit happens and whenever possible to have a knowledgeable handler accompany any visiting animals. The CLEAPSS website has a number of documents giving advice on looking after a variety of animals' longer term.

Effective planning and organisation

Before animals are brought into school, apply some common sense.

1. Consider the age and experience of the children and possible, or predicted, responses to animals. Decide whether additional supervision will be needed. What will the children be doing whilst the animals are in school, or class.
2. Plan your instructions to the children and go through them before the visit. Explain and make clear your expectations.
3. Bringing animals to school should not be unduly stressful for the handler or the animals. The animals must be looked after as well as they would be when they are at their normal residences. If this cannot be achieved, they should not be brought in. Use the expertise of the owners, especially for exotic species, to provide the necessary guidance for the proper care of the animals.
4. Where a variety of animals will be together, think about the possibility of unwanted interactions e.g. avoid cats, dogs and fish or birds present in the same room on the same day.

Housing and food for the animals

If animals require specialist housing e.g. gerbils, snakes and spiders, that cannot be provided by the school and which is not transportable, then do not bring such animals in. It is acceptable, however, to bring suitable housing in advance of a visit so that the animal can be housed in familiar surroundings as soon as it arrives. Where animals cannot be brought into school in their normal housing, containers used to transport them must be appropriate and *retain the animal securely*.

Animals must be housed separately. Different species, or individuals of the same species from different litters, must never be placed together in the same cage, vivarium, tank etc. This will prevent diseases from passing between individuals; stop any aggressive conflict between incompatible animals, and ensure that the correct animal is returned to its rightful owner.

Some animals, e.g. snakes and spiders, feed irregularly, but most will require food and water. Ensure that the owner brings all necessary food and equipment with them to the school.

Providing a suitable environment for the animals

Consider carefully where to put the animals' temporary housing. Avoid the risk of overheating by keeping enclosures away from windows, and not in direct sunlight. It is also useful to plan an alternative setting where the animal can be moved to. This will allow it to escape the noise and attention of excited children and will stop the animal from distracting the children if they are to concentrate on other work.

Handling animals

Handling needs to be managed carefully as it usually generates a great deal of excitement. It is likely that small mammals that are pets will be accustomed to being handled and will not be stressed by this. However, they will not be used to so many people at once and may react differently to handling in the classroom than they do at home. Children should be shown how to handle small mammals properly; Search the CLEAPSS website for guidance on the technique that is right for a particular animal. There is always a danger that animals may be dropped, particularly by children with small hands, if the children become scared or if the animal is agile or fast moving. Handling small animals should therefore always be carried

out over a table or a trough filled with a soft material such as sand or sawdust, so that the animal will not fall more than a very short distance.

Some animals are best not handled at all e.g. hamsters are nocturnal and generally do not appreciate being disturbed. Any animals that appear to be nervous should just be observed and not handled. Invertebrates, e.g., stick insects and spiders, are fragile and delicate, for these, handling should always be kept to a minimum; they could easily be damaged by over-keen children, not used to handling such animals gently. An animal may best be handled only by its owner.

All of these considerations require careful organisation by the school, especially if several animals are to be brought in on the same day. Staff should be aware of the pet that a pupil intends to bring in and the problems that it might pose. Liaison with parents is very important.

Health & safety issues

Hygiene

- Always wash hands (children and adults) after handling any animal (or coming into contact with the soil, bedding, water etc. in an animal's housing). This is best done in the classroom or laboratory, where it can be supervised.
- Cover cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms.
- Ensure suitable facilities (e.g. paper towels) for drying hands hygienically.
- Ensure children do not put their fingers in their mouths before their hands have been washed.

Physical injuries

There is always the danger of bites and scratches, and schools should check that visiting animals are docile, friendly and gentle in the presence of (exuberant) children. This is particularly important with larger animals such as cats and dogs.

Warn children of the hazards of some animals, e.g., not tormenting a sleeping hamster. Small fingers poked towards the mouths of normally non-aggressive animals may be interpreted as an offering of food and obligingly bitten. The bodies of some large spiders are covered with many small, barbed hairs or bristles that cause irritation when they penetrate the skin, mucous membranes and especially the eyes. **Do not touch the face or eyes** if contact is made with 'hairy' spiders, or material within their housing, until the hands have been thoroughly washed.

Diseases, parasites and allergies

The likelihood of diseases being passed on to humans from pet animals is low. Farm animals, however, present a higher risk. In all cases, good hygiene will reduce the risks even further. For cats and dogs, it is sensible to check that these have been regularly taken to a vet and have been recently wormed and treated for fleas. For larger animals, including cats and dogs, it is important to provide appropriate toilet facilities. All wastes produced must be handled and disposed of hygienically, and contaminated items and surfaces properly washed and disinfected.

Allergic reactions to mammals, birds and a few other animals cannot be discounted. These might result from handling the animals or just from being near them. Possible symptoms include skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties. Again, washing hands soon after handling animals will help and it is important to stop children rubbing their eyes before this has been done. Check before if any children are known to have allergic reactions to animals. Ensure these children have restricted access to animals that may trigger a response. In most cases, an allergic reaction will subside once the animal and the afflicted person are kept apart. In extreme cases, seek medical advice.

Phobias

Schools should be aware that children and adults may have phobias of certain animals, eg dogs, snakes and spiders. This is *not* to say that such animals should not be brought into schools. However, the fears that may be expressed should be respected and efforts made to segregate the animals from people with phobias.

Sources of visiting animals

Pets and farm animals

Children, or staff, sometimes want to bring their own pets into school to show them to others or because the animals fit in with a teaching topic. Some schools organise an 'animal club' for keen children who help to look after the school's animals. Club members might additionally bring in their own animals for short periods. Schools sometimes arrange 'animal days' when children (normally from one class) bring in their pets; such events pose problems because of the sheer number and variety of animals. It is not unknown for schools in rural communities to have new-born lambs, chicks and ducks visiting. Make sure the owner (or another skilled individual) accompanies them and is on hand throughout the visit.

Visiting animal schemes

There are commercial organisations or individuals that, for a fee, take a variety of animals into schools. When planning to use such a scheme, do what you can to check the scheme's provenance. Enquire about actions the school need to do to prepare, and about any risk assessments. Make sure you know what will happen on the day of the visit.

Some employers have misgivings about such schemes; fearing that the animals in the collection, although not deliberately ill-treated, may be harmed or stressed by the regular movement from place to place and repeated exposure to, or handling by, groups of enthusiastic pupils. Some schemes ensure that they have several individuals for each species in the collection. In this way, when one animal is being shown to children in schools, its companions are 'resting'. Before deciding to invite in a visiting animal organiser, it might be worth enquiring whether such a system is in operation.

It is essential to obtain information about the animals that will be shown, to identify if there are likely to be any problems, such as phobias to particular species or the development of allergies. The discussion on handling animals and health & safety issues in the previous section is also likely to be relevant here, and good hygiene will be crucial.

Various conservation trusts, in promoting their organisations or publicising their work, may bring 'rescued' wild animals into schools. Make sure that such animals, e.g., hedgehogs or owls, have been kept in captivity for some time and that they have been treated for diseases transmissible to humans (if applicable) and parasites, such as fleas. If you are unsure about any such animal don't let the children handle it.

Animals from local habitats

Land invertebrates

Invertebrate animals, such as woodlice, snails and earthworms, are often brought into schools for short-term studies. While kept indoors, ensure that they are kept in cool, damp and dark conditions, which equate with their natural surroundings. Note that it is not easy to keep *carnivorous* invertebrates, such as centipedes or spiders, for extended periods because of the difficulty of providing them with live food.

Aquatic animals

Fish, such as minnows, from local streams should be kept in pond water that is cool, well aerated and provided with a supply of live food. If kept for any length of time, refer to specialist texts on cold-water fish for guidance.

If sampling animals from ponds, streams or rivers, there may be a possibility that the water has been contaminated with the bacteria that cause Weil's disease. Good hygiene is essential. Search the CLEAPSS website for specific guidance on pond dipping and Weil's disease.

Amphibians

In spring, the spawn of *common* species of frog, toad and newt (i.e., **not** the great crested newt nor the natter jack toad) are often studied in schools. This is acceptable and perfectly legal, but only *small* amounts of spawn should be taken and the tadpoles are best reared in water that is aerated and filtered (Search the CLEAPSS website for specific guidance on tadpoles and frogs). In this way, the maximum number of tadpoles will survive to become young adults for release into a suitable environment (preferably the pond where the spawn was taken from).

Birds and mammals

The school should already have a view on the presence of guide/hearing/assistance dogs in schools. In the main, these present no problems or issues.

Wild birds and mammals, dead or alive, are best not brought into schools, even if legal to do so, because they may be harbouring diseases or carrying parasites such as fleas, lice or worms that could be transmissible to humans (or resident animals). They may also inflict physical injuries. However, this recommendation does not stop children arriving with injured animals that they have found. While such animals are on the school premises, guard against the possible risk of disease and parasite transmission. Isolate the injured animal from resident small mammals and birds and keep it in quiet, dimly-lit conditions. Handle the animal as little as possible, with due regard for personal health & safety. Wash hands immediately afterwards if it has not been appropriate or possible to protect the hands by wearing suitable gloves.

Children may have unrealistic expectations of school staff; they often want the injured animal to be nursed back to full health and released into the wild. Unfortunately, this may not be possible without expert help and the most appropriate action may be the immediate humane killing of the animal. Staff in schools will rarely have the expertise, facilities or willingness to achieve this, and may not even be able to assess the condition of the animal. At the earliest opportunity, to avoid prolonging the animal's suffering, take the injured animal to a local vet or an animal welfare clinic run by the PDSA or RSPCA. Schools are advised, *in anticipation of the arrival of an animal in distress*, to check out the local assistance available before any arrive. Vets are commercial businesses. Ask if they will charge to treat such wild animals or put them to sleep.

Dissuade pupils from bringing in young animals that they have found 'abandoned'; the animals' parents are often not far away and will generally retrieve their offspring as soon as the unwelcome intruder has moved on.

If wild mammals are to be the subject of a trapping investigation, they must be handled with care, wearing gloves which provide protection from contamination and bites or scratches.

Animals to avoid

Obviously dangerous animals, such as leopards, monkeys, crocodiles and poisonous snakes, should not be brought into schools. Such animals are governed by the *Dangerous Wild Animals Act* which makes it an offence to possess such animals without a licence.

Endangered species should also not be brought into school, though it may be difficult for school staff to identify which organisms are fully protected by the *Wildlife & Countryside Act*. Under the Act, there are different levels of protection given to different species. Those with full protection (which includes: dormice, all bats, all wild birds and their eggs, the great crested newt and natter jack toad, the smooth snake and sand lizard, and a variety of rare invertebrates) must never be taken from the wild. Lower levels of protection make it illegal to kill or injure an animal. For some species, it is only illegal to take them from the wild and sell them without a licence. For such animals, it is legal to bring them into school, though other considerations, discussed above, may rule against this. For details of which animals are protected, go to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website.