



## Thameside Primary School: Dogs in School Policy

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<b>Policy reviewed by:</b>	Sophie Greenaway
<b>Key Changes:</b>	Format changed to have new front cover.  The complete policy remains fit for purpose.



## **Legislation**

The following government legislation and advice can be applicable to the control and welfare of dogs in public places in general and in schools in particular.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Environmental Protection Act 1991.

The Litter (animal droppings) Order 1991.

Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997.

Animal Welfare Act 2006. (see appendix A).

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

DFE advice on standards for School Premises 2015.

## **Possible scenarios include:**

- Dogs being brought to the school gate/door by parents/carers taking children to or meeting them from school.
- Disabled staff bringing a guide or assistance dog to work.
- Dogs being brought into school for planned educational purposes.
- A school having their bespoke school dog (the school does not currently have a school dog).
- Dogs being exercised by the public on school land.
- Dogs straying on to school land.

## **Background**

### **Advantages of dogs in educational settings**

We acknowledge that in school, children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. The value of schemes such as 'Pets as Therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to the stimulation of and communication with children especially those of primary school age. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower their levels of anxiety simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less for bidding.



### **Disadvantages of dogs in or near school building**

However, the school also acknowledges that some families choose not to have dogs or other pets and we must respect their right to hold this view. We also recognise that bringing dogs on to the school premises could pose a health and safety risk to our pupils and others on site and it can be unsettling to some children if dogs are close by as they arrive and leave school.

There are added risks of dog fouling, dogs biting and dogs showing unpredictable or even aggressive behaviour. We recognise that even well-behaved dogs can behave uncharacteristically when placed in an unfamiliar, busy, noisy and crowded school environment and that this can leave to misbehaviour by even the best-trained pet. Children, too, can behave unpredictably when in the presence of dogs, especially if they are not used to being with them or indeed are actually frightened of them.

There is also the risk that contact with animals can result in infestation by parasites and infection including gastro-intestinal or fungal infections. This is particularly a risk for pregnant women or persons with a weakened immune system. There are also both adults and children who have an allergic reaction to the proximity of certain types of animal, including dogs.

### **View of the RSPCA**

We are mindful of the fact that the RSPCA is opposed to the use of animals in education if distress or suffering is or is likely to be caused to the animal. They believe that children and young people can be taught about animals without keeping pets in the classroom, and therefore strongly discourages the keeping of animals in schools. Their literature states that schools can be noisy and frightening places for some animals and it is very difficult to look after any animal's needs properly in a classroom environment.

### **School Policy**

The governors and staff of Thameside Primary School recognise that dogs are an important part of the lives of some of our families and, as such, are often included in day-to-day activities, such as walking children to and from school.

In our teaching, we promote good relationships with and treatment of animals. We acknowledge and accept the concept of pets as family members and encourage pupils to accept the responsibilities associated with pet ownership.

We must bear in mind too, that many of our staff and governors may themselves be dog owners.

We fully accept that there are legitimate concerns and risks associated with bringing dogs or other animals on to school premises.



### **Roles and responsibilities**

- The governing board has the responsibility to ensure that the school has a written 'Dogs in school' policy in place.
- The head teacher is responsible for implementing this policy, which may be delegated to a member of the senior leadership team/an assistant head teacher/ a designated person.
- All staff are required to abide by the policy.
- The health and safety officer (School Business Manager) is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

### **Code of conduct**

The governing body requires all staff, parents and visitors whose dogs accompany them on site to adhere to this policy.

### **Authorised visits**

- No dogs are permitted on the school premises at any time unless on an official organised visit.
- No dogs are allowed inside any school building unless they are assistance dogs or are from an officially recognised organisation such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, PAT (Pets as Therapy) dogs, Dogs' Trust workshops etc on an educational visit or as part of a timetabled lesson.
- All visiting dogs must be on a lead or harness that keeps the dog reasonably close to the adult who is in control of them.
- Visiting dogs must not be left unsupervised on the school premises at any time and must not be left in the sole care of a child under the age of 16.
- If a dog is going to be in school for educational purposes, staff must know in advance and parents must be informed by letter and/or online.
- If any staff, parents or child object to an animal's presence then, as far as possible, arrangements must be made to ensure the animal is kept away from them.
- If there is a member of staff or regular visitor who is reliant on a guide dog or dog assistance in any way, that animal must be allowed to accompany the staff member at all times.

### **Family dogs**

- Dogs must be kept away from all the school gates so that children have a choice of whether or not to come into direct contact with dogs.
- No dog may be left tied up and unattended on the school site at any time.
- Parents are also discouraged from leaving dogs unattended off school site i.e. around the outskirts of the school premises. This includes dogs being tied up to the school fencing directly outside the school which could concern some children walking along the footpath.



- Members of the public may not walk or exercise their dogs on school land. If an offender persists after an initial warning, then the school should approach the local authority dog warden or the police.
- If there is a stray dog on the school grounds, the school should contact the local authority warden for advice. Pupils should be kept indoors until the animal has been safely recovered.

### **Guidance for using dogs in an educational context**

The following guidance and code must be adhered to:

- A risk assessment is carried out before the visit.
- The organisation supplying the dog must show evidence that the dog has a suitable nature and temperament.
- The organisation must have public liability insurance.
- Parents and carers must be informed of the visit and the extent of interaction likely between pupils and the animal. Permission slips from parents should be obtained.
- Alternative arrangements must be made for any child who does not wish, or whose parents do not wish him/her, to participate in the lesson.
- All necessary arrangements must be put into place before the visit as agreed with the organisation bringing in the dog. This should take into account the breed of dog, age group of the pupils and numbers of children involved.
- Consideration must be taken of any allergic reaction to dogs that pupils and staff may have.
- All dogs coming into classrooms must be properly vaccinated and treated for parasites, regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or illness.
- The dog's claws should have been trimmed.
- If the dog is ill, it must not come into school.
- Only authorised people should feed the dog. Pupils should not feed or eat close to the dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately
- Pupils should have been taught the appropriate behaviour around dogs before the visit.
- Good hygiene and hand washing procedures must be in place for pupils.

**S Greenaway, July 23**