



Thameside Primary School: Dogs in School Policy

Approved by Governors: July 2026

Review date: July 2029



Contents

Legislation	3
Background	3
School policy	4
Roles and responsibilities	5
Code of conduct	5
Authorised visits	5
Family dogs	5
Guidance for using dogs in an educational context	6

Policy reviewed by:	Sophie Greenaway
Key Changes:	Updated legislation references and corrected inaccuracies. Improved clarity, grammar and formatting throughout. Strengthened risk assessment, safeguarding and incident reporting procedures. Added enhanced animal welfare and equality considerations. Clarified expectations for educational visits and family dogs on or near school premises.



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 etc. Act 1974 [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk), [\[hse.gov.uk\]](https://hse.gov.uk)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 (not 1991) [\[gov.uk\]](https://gov.uk), [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk)
- The Litter (Animal Droppings) Order 1991 [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk), [\[commons.wi...imedia.org\]](https://commons.wikimedia.org)
- Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997 [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk), [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk)
- Animal Welfare Act 2006 [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk), [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk)
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 [\[mylawyer.co.uk\]](https://mylawyer.co.uk), [\[lawassista...ient.co.uk\]](https://lawassistant.co.uk)
- DfE Advice on Standards for School Premises (2015) [\[gov.uk\]](https://gov.uk), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)

Background

Thameside Primary School is committed to maintaining a safe, secure and inclusive environment for all pupils, staff, visitors and animals. While recognising the educational benefits that dogs can bring, the school's primary responsibility is the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. Any authorised dog on site must comply with this policy and associated risk assessments.

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 its own school dog (Thameside Primary School does not currently have a school dog. Should this change, a separate School Dog Policy and risk assessment process will be developed).
- Dogs being exercised by the public on school land.
- Dogs straying on to school land.

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 forbidding.

Disadvantages of dogs in or near school building

However, the school recognises that not all members of the school community are comfortable around dogs, and some families may choose not to own pets. We respect these views and acknowledge that the presence of dogs on school premises may cause concern for some pupils, staff and visitors.

Bringing dogs onto the school site can present a number of health, safety and welfare risks. These may include dog fouling, biting, scratching, or displays of unpredictable behaviour. Even dogs that are normally calm and well behaved may react differently in a busy, unfamiliar environment such as a school, where noise levels, large numbers of people and unexpected movements can cause anxiety or stress. Similarly, children may behave unpredictably around dogs, particularly if they have limited experience of animals or are fearful of them.

The school also recognises that contact with animals can present health risks, including allergic reactions, the transmission of parasites, and certain bacterial, fungal or gastrointestinal infections. Some individuals, including those with allergies, weakened immune systems or certain medical conditions, may be particularly vulnerable. For these reasons, appropriate precautions, supervision and hygiene measures must always be implemented when dogs are present on the school site.

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.

The school recognises that some individuals may have allergies, medical conditions, sensory needs, cultural beliefs or phobias relating to dogs. Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever practicable to support those individuals.

Roles and responsibilities

- The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed regularly and remains compliant with current legislation and best practice guidance.
- 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, Assistance Dogs UK organisations, 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.
- Any incident involving a dog, including biting, scratching, aggressive behaviour, unexpected escape or injury to a person or animal, must be reported immediately to the Headteacher and recorded in accordance with the school's accident and incident reporting procedures.

Family dogs

- Parents, carers and visitors bringing dogs to school must remain a suitable distance from school entrances and exits. Dogs must be kept under control on a short lead at all times and owners should ensure that pupils can enter and leave the site without coming into contact with dogs if they choose not to.
- 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 written risk assessment must be completed and approved by the Headteacher or designated senior leader before any dog attends the school site. Risk assessments must consider allergies, phobias, supervision arrangements, safeguarding, emergency procedures, infection control, and the dog's welfare needs.
- The welfare of the dog must be prioritised at all times. Dogs must have access to drinking water, a quiet resting area, regular comfort breaks and should be removed from any activity if signs of stress, fatigue or distress are observed.
- Children must never be left unsupervised with a dog. Interaction between pupils and dogs must be directly supervised by a responsible adult at all times.



- 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. Written parental consent should be obtained before pupils participate in activities involving direct interaction with dogs.
- 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 fouling 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 26