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**Park Road Support Centre Dog Policy**

**Introduction**

We believe that students 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 people take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

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 of Centre. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present.

**School Policy**

* Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. No other dogs must come on site unless this has been agreed by the Head of Centre and students have been informed before hand.
* The school dog will be an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children, which sheds little hair and is very sociable and friendly.
* Staff, parents and students will be informed by letter that a dog will be in school.
* A full risk assessment will be undertaken and this will be reviewed annually.
* Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs should not go near the dog.
* Visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
* If the dog is ill she will not be allowed into school.
* The dog will be kept on a lead when on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.
* Students should never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
* Staff working with the dog shall ensure that students are reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog.
  + Students 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.
  + Students should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
  + Students should never go near or disturb the dog when it is sleeping or eating.
  + Students must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
  + Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking it.
* Staff working with the dog shall ensure that the behavioural signs from the dog are understood
  + Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing 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 she should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
* Adults supervising the dog shall ensure that
  + Students should not eat close to the dog.
  + Students should be careful to stroke the dog on her body, chest, back and not by her face or top of head.
  + Students should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
* Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the supervising adult using gloves and dog poo bags.
* Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog.
* All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and any issues will be addressed by the Head of Centre asap.
* Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
* The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of staff.
* The dog will have all the required certifications stating that all required inoculations, worming etc have been undertaken.
* If the dog dies those students that have become attached to the dog will be offered counselling and suitable support will be put in place.
* The dog belongs to Mrs Smalley. Mrs Smalley will be responsible for insuring the dog. The insurance policy must cover the dog and any possible subsequent claim that may be made.

**Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head of Centre as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head of Centre.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

The person responsible for the dog is Mrs Smalley.

The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around the school dog. 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 truancy
8. Motivate children who are often less attentive

*Appendix 2* **School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Q **Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?**

A The school is not the legal owner and shall not bear the costs associated with owning the dog;

Q **Will the dog be a distraction?**

A The dog will be kept in the office. She will come into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

Q **Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog.

Q **Has the dog been trained ?**

The dog will have undergone some training but further appropriate professional training will be sought and the dog will work towards being trained as a school dog through a suitable organisation with advice from the Pets As Therapy charity.

Q **How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?**

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks off-site. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Q **How will the dog’s welfare be considered?**

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to water and be fed regularly. We will work carefully to ensure the dog’s welfare is always considered.

Q **How will this be managed where children have allergies?**

A Students will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. The breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, it is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

Q **My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?**

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and students do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of students who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.