

Leintwardine Primary School

School Dog Policy



Approved by:	Headteacher	Date:	September 2022
Last reviewed on:	February 2020		
Next review due by:	September 2025		

Our School Ethos:

Whilst truly embedding ourselves in the heart of the church and the surrounding community, we provide outstanding learning opportunities for all our children and their families.

'Letting Our Light Shine' Matthew 5:16

Our aim is that each child will be kind so that they –

- Achieve their Potential
- Become Independent
- Connect with their Community
- Develop Resilience

Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable, calm dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. By having a school dog we want to encourage those children who are vulnerable, or those less confident at reading to have a friendly audience and look forward to reading as a treat. The breed of Cockapoo is carefully selected as suitable for this type of environment. Ben is well cared for and responsibly owned by the Headteacher.

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

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about school life with a dog and how, through careful management, there is a very low risk of harm.

The chair of governors has agreed that the school can have a dog and parents have been informed by letter that the school will have a dog.

Reasons to have a School Dog

Numerous research studies have shown the benefits of dogs in schools. Dogs have been working in schools for over 5 years across the UK with several integrated very successfully in Barnet schools. Dogs have been commonplace in schools in the USA and Australia for many years.

Evidence indicates that benefits include:

- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving and game-playing. Reading to a dog can be very beneficial as dogs give unconditional acceptance and are non judgemental. Dogs make amazing listeners.
- Social – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others. Attendance for some pupils has improved because of a school dog.
- Emotional – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach empathy, compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety. This has been known to reduce the percentage of violent or aggressive behaviour in school.
- Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses
- Environmental – a dog in a school increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.

Context

- Ben will be owned by Nicola Gorry
- Veterinary costs will be cover by the owner
- Ben is a Cockapoo, chosen for his mild temperament, friendliness and non-moulting coat.
- The risk assessment (attached) will be reviewed annually
- Visitors and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival.

Cockapoo Characteristics

- A medium dog
- Completely people-oriented
- Is very adaptable
- An affectionate, kind, friendly dog
- Is good with children

Day to day Management

Ben will:

- Not be allowed in school if he is unwell
- Be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk
- Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
- Be fully trained
- Have had all injections and these will be maintained annually

School Pupils will:

- NOT have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with Ben
- Meet Ben in a group of no more than three children
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Ben every time they meet her
- Always remain calm
- Be gentle
- Do not put your face near Ben's
- Do not disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping
- Always approach Ben standing up
- Do not feed the dog
- Never tease the dog
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through body language. Growling or baring of teeth means that the dog feels threatened or angry. If Ben is displaying any of these signs she will be removed from the situation immediately.

Health and Safety Principles

Children will always wash their hands or use alcohol gel after handling the dog.

Any dog foul will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of Ben at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

Concerns

Our school does have a 'no dogs' policy, however Ben will be the school dog and will be in school for a specific purpose. He will be on a leash at all times when moving around the school property and will always be accompanied by an adult. Ben will also be fully insured to carry out her role thus allowing her to be on the school site.

Some children may have had upsetting experiences and thus have a fear of dogs (or another animal). Ben will be calm and gentle around children; she has a very loving and gentle nature. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

It is understandable that some of you may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. The Cockapoo breed is known to be hypo- allergenic. Ben will be subjected to a thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. We will ask parents who are concerned to make the school aware if their child has an allergy.

Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog is invited to write to Mrs Gorry to inform her of their wishes.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the headteacher.

The impact of having a school dog will be monitored by the SMT.

Leintwardine Primary School
School Dog Risk Assessment 2020

Hazard & risk	Who could be harmed?	What precautions are in place?	What else can we do?
Animal health, diseases and parasites	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Ben to have all necessary vaccinations before coming into school. Ben to have regular veterinary checks. Ben to be bathed regularly. Ben will live with Nicola Gorry when he is not in school and will be well cared for.	
Dog excrement and urine – illness and falls/slips	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Ben will be wormed. Ben will have had all necessary vaccinations and will be kept free of fleas. Any excrement or urine will be cleaned up immediately and disposed of responsibly by the owner or the adult with responsibility at the time. Hand washing facilities close to where Ben will be based.	Ben will be exercised daily outside of school.
Hygiene/Infection	Pupil/Staff/Visitors	Adequate provision for handwashing. Pupils to be seen washing their hands. Do not allow the children to touch any part of their face before their hands are washed. Exposed wounds on the skin to be covered or the child to be kept away from Ben until they have healed. Ben to be regularly bathed. Food to be stored carefully to prevent contamination.	Hand sanitiser also to be kept in areas that Ben will spend most of his time.
Allergic reaction to Ben	Pupil/Staff/Visitor	All visitors and new pupils/staff to school will be informed about Ben upon arrival. Ben is a Cockapoo and has been specifically chosen as his breed is hypoallergenic – low/non-moulting - therefore reducing the risk of allergies. Parents will be informed about Ben both by letter and via the school website in order for them to inform us about their child's allergies. We will ensure that if a child is known to have allergies they will be kept away from Ben.	Teachers will be kept informed about Ben moving around school to ensure that any pupils with allergies do not come into contact with him.

		<p>Ben will be kept clean and well groomed.</p> <p>Ben's bed will be kept in the Staff Corridor area, so flow of children through this area will be controlled and monitored by Mrs Gorry</p>	
Bites, cuts and scratches	Pupil/Staff/Visitor	<p>Cockapoos are bred to be sociable dogs and are often chosen as therapy dogs as they are known to be good with children.</p> <p>Staff/children with allergies/phobias have restricted access to Ben to suit their needs.</p> <p>Ben is well trained and has been brought up in a family so that he is used to children being around from a young age.</p> <p>Ben will be supervised and kept under control at all times.</p> <p>Pupils and staff will be made aware of the procedures if meeting and handling Ben on every meeting and all staff will follow the rules that Ben has been trained to follow.</p> <p>There will be no unsupervised contact with pupils.</p> <p>If Ben appears anxious or nervous the member of staff responsible at that time will remove him from the situation.</p>	
Noise, barking	Pupil/Staff/Visitor	<p>Cockapoos are bred to be sociable dogs and are often chosen as therapy dogs as they are known to be good with children.</p> <p>Staff/children with allergies/phobias have restricted access to Ben to suit their needs.</p> <p>Ben is used to coming into school and is therefore becoming acclimatised to the environment of a school. Cockerpoos can be chatty and Ben will be kept in the staff corridor and the pod to reduce barking.</p>	
Fire drill and evacuation of Ben	Ben – locked in the building	Ben will be based in the staff corridor and will be looked after by a member of staff during a fire drill.	During an evacuation Ben will be under the supervision of a member of staff and kept on a lead at all times.
Claim made against the school re: behaviour of Ben		<p>Ben will be insured with pet insurance and additional public liability insurance.</p> <p>Insurance will be renewed annually.</p> <p>A certificate of insurance will be kept in the school office. The school insurers have been notified so that he is covered under the schools Public Liability insurance.</p>	