

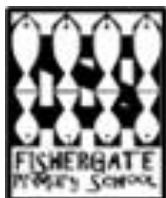


Fishergate Primary School

Dog Policy

Policy approval date:	7/07/2025
Approved by:	FGB
Next review date:	Summer 2027 TBC
Version:	1

Document changes/updates since last review		
Item number	Page	Summary of change



Fishergate Primary School's Dog Policy

Introduction

- Children and adults 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 and adults take great enjoyment from interaction with animals
 - Any dog in our school will be well cared for and responsibly owned.
 - The dog's suitability to have contact with children will be risk assessed on a regular basis
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Is There a Risk in Bringing a Dog into a School Environment?

- It is impossible to eliminate all risk in school
 - 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
 - Our risk assessment is reviewed annually or more frequently if required
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Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring the school has a written policy for dogs in school
 - The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy
 - The Governors have agreed and signed off this policy
 - Teachers, staff, pupils, parents, and visitors are required to abide by this policy
 - The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around them, including awareness that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school
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Reasons to Have a Dog in School

Academic research has shown that dogs in schools:

- Benefit children's social and emotional development
- Have a calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties
- Improve behaviour and concentration, reduce stress, and improve self-esteem
- Encourage expression and participation in more withdrawn children
- Foster a sense of responsibility

- Motivate pupils to think and learn through natural interest and enjoyment
 - Encourage respect, thereby improving relationships with others
 - Teach children to nurture and respect life
 - Help children build confidence in reading
 - Reduce children's anxieties about dogs
 - Improve attendance
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The PAWS Approach

Our school follows the PAWS (Pets As Workmates in Schools) approach:

- **Gradual introduction** of the dog to the school environment in a structured way based on the dog's individual development and temperament.
- **Flexible pace**, allowing the dog to settle without pressure.
- Emphasis on:
 - Safety for both children and the dog, with clear rules
 - Respect for the dog's needs (rest, play, downtime)
 - Ongoing assessment and reflection
 - Positive training to build confidence and trust

Our goal is to support children's wellbeing, confidence, and learning while fostering a culture of empathy and respect for animals.

Examples of How Our School Dog Will Support Wellbeing

- Listening to children read to build confidence
 - Supporting emotional regulation
 - Offering positive distraction during transitions
 - Participating in small-group wellbeing sessions
 - Helping children develop empathy and responsibility
 - Learning to roll a dice to promote cooperative play
 - Spending time with children displaying positive behaviour
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School Policy

- The dog will be paid for and owned by **Tina Clarke**
- He will receive general training
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises
- All other dogs must not come on site unless they are known therapy/assistance dogs approved by the Headteacher
- The dog is a **Goldador**, chosen for its intelligence, friendliness, and child-friendly temperament
- The FGB and Headteacher support the use of a school dog
- Staff, parents, and children have been informed

- Those with allergies may choose not to have physical contact
 - Visitors will be informed upon arrival
 - The dog will not attend school if ill
 - The dog will:
 - Be kept on a lead when walking or moving between rooms
 - Always be under adult supervision
 - Not be left alone with children
 - Children will:
 - Remain calm
 - Approach the dog appropriately (standing up, no face to face contact)
 - Not disturb the dog while sleeping or eating
 - Not play roughly or crowd the dog
 - Wait until the dog is calm before touching
 - Wash hands after contact
 - The adult in charge will monitor and remove the dog if overwhelmed
 - Signs of stress (growling, flattened ears, tail between legs, etc.) will be acted upon immediately
 - The dog will not be in food preparation areas or lunch halls
 - Dog faeces will be cleaned by adults only and disposed of safely
 - Parents may opt their child out of contact
 - Appropriately trained staff will document the dog's work and impact
 - SLT will always know the dog's location and supervision
 - The dog is included in fire evacuation procedures and signed in daily
 - All concerns about the dog are reported to the Headteacher or SLT
 - Public liability insurance is in place
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Day-to-Day Management

The dog will:

- Not attend school if unwell
- Be kept on a lead when walking around the school building and grounds
- Always be under adult supervision
- Have a designated quiet area for rest
- Be trained to stay on a dog bed when in school for long periods
- Be fully vaccinated and up to date with flea/worm treatments
- Be signed in daily

Pupils will:

- Never be left alone with the dog
- Meet the dog in small groups (max six), using the approach: *Approach, Ask, Pet, Goodbye*
- Remain calm and gentle
- Avoid face-to-face contact
- Not disturb the dog when eating or sleeping
- Only feed with approved treats
- Be taught how dogs express their emotions through body language

Health and Safety Principles

- Hands must be washed or sanitised after handling the dog
- All fouling is cleaned up by adults only
- If a bite occurs (even playfully):
 1. Parents are contacted
 2. Wound is cleaned and dressed
 3. Medical attention is sought
 4. All staff informed
 5. Full investigation
 6. Suitability of the dog reassessed by Headteacher/FGB

Health Checks

- The dog will attend **two health checks per year**, paid for by **Tina Clarke**
- Tina Clarke is responsible for:
 - Day-to-day care
 - Ensuring all treatments are up to date
 - Training and maintaining high behaviour standards

Insurance

- The school's insurance covers the dog, supported by a risk assessment
- The dog also has individual insurance including public liability
- Insurance documentation is held in the school office

FAQ

Q: Who is the legal owner and who pays for the dog?

A: Tina Clarke is the legal owner and covers all associated costs.

Q: Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A: Yes. The dog was chosen specifically for its temperament.

Q: Will the dog be a distraction?

A: No. The dog will be based in the office and will only interact with children under supervision and with parental consent.

Q: Has a risk assessment been completed?

A: Yes. Advice was taken from PAWS and other schools with successful dog programs.

Q: Who is responsible for training?

A: Tina Clarke. The dog is being trained with PAWS and will work towards therapy dog certification.

Q: How will toileting be managed?

A: The dog will be walked offsite. Staff will clean up immediately and appropriately. Other dogs are not permitted on site.

Q: How is the dog's welfare ensured?

A: The dog has access to rest, water, walks, and will only have planned, supervised interactions.

Q: What about children with allergies?

A: Contact is optional and managed. Children do not have to be near the dog.

Q: What if my child is scared of dogs?

A: Contact is not required. The school will work with parents to help reduce fear safely and gently.