



SCHOOL DOG POLICY 2024-2025

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS: September 2024

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED: September 2025

Policy Statement

At Waterside Academy, we recognise the positive impact that animals can have on the wellbeing of staff and pupils at our school. To this end, we have established this policy to outline the guidelines for the presence of a school dog on our school premises.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this policy is to ensure the safe and responsible presence of the school dog on site. The school dog's role is to provide support to the wellbeing of individuals on site, including pupils, staff, and visitors. The school dog is not a therapy or registered assistance dog but will provide a positive contribution to school life by improving the wellbeing and morale of those who encounter him whilst on site.

Ownership and Responsibility

1. The school dog is owned by a member of staff and will continue to reside with them, going home with them each night.
2. The member of staff assumes responsibility for the care, behaviour, and supervision of the school dog during their visits to the school.
3. The member of staff responsible will ensure the school dog is well-behaved, adequately controlled, and poses no harm or disruption to students, staff, or visitors.
4. The member of staff responsible assumes responsibility for all costs relating to the school dog's care.

Insurance

1. The school dog is covered through the schools public liability insurance, specifically for visits to workplaces.
2. Proof of insurance coverage will be kept on file at the school office.

Visitation Schedule

1. The schedule of the school dog's visits will be coordinated between the member of staff responsible and the headteacher, with consideration of the best times to support the wellbeing of pupils and staff.

Behaviour and Etiquette

1. The school dog will be well-groomed, clean, and free of parasites or illness during all visits.
2. The member of staff responsible will ensure the school dog is under control while on school premises and on a lead when in public spaces around the school.
3. The school dog will not enter classrooms, offices, or areas where he may disrupt the learning or working environment unless invited by an adult on site.
4. All students and staff will be encouraged to approach and interact with the school dog in a calm and gentle manner.

5. Students and staff will be reminded to wash their hands after interacting with the school dog to maintain hygiene standards.
6. Any concerns or incidents related to the school dog should be reported promptly to a member of SLT.

Safe Interactions with Students

1. All interactions between the school dog and students will be supervised by a responsible adult.
2. Students will be educated on appropriate behaviour around the school dog, including not startling or approaching from behind and remaining gentle when stroking.
3. Students with allergies or fear of dogs will be accommodated to ensure their comfort and safety.
4. The school dog will be introduced to students gradually to gauge their and his comfort levels.
5. Students will not be allowed to feed the school dog without prior permission, to prevent any potential allergic reactions or dietary issues.

Health and Safety

1. The school dog will be up to date on vaccinations and regular health check-ups.
2. The member of staff responsible will ensure the school dog is clean and free from any offensive odours.
3. If the school dog shows signs of illness or distress, they will not be brought to the school until he has received appropriate veterinary care and is cleared for visits.

Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary amendments will be made to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all individuals on school premises.

Conclusion

The presence of the school dog, at Waterside Academy is intended to contribute positively to the overall school environment and wellbeing of our students and staff. The co-operation and adherence to this policy by all members of the school community are essential to ensure a safe and harmonious experience for everyone involved, especially during interactions with our students.

Risk Assessment

Risk	Potential Harm/Consequence	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Level	Mitigations
Risk to Students, Staff, and Visitors Uncontrolled Behaviour	The school dog may exhibit uncontrolled behaviours, leading to injury or distress to students, staff, or visitors.	Low	High	Moderate	Ensure school dog is trained and well-behaved. The school dog will not be permitted on site if they displays uncontrollable behaviour. The school dog will always be on a lead or under direct control.
Allergic Reactions	Students, staff, or visitors may have allergies to dogs, leading to allergic reactions.	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Staff and students will be informed of the school dog's presence in advance. Students with known allergies will not interact with the school dog. Handwashing stations will be encouraged following interactions with the school dog.
Fear or Anxiety	Some students may have a fear of dogs, leading to anxiety or distress.	Low	Moderate	Low	The school dog's interactions with students will be gradual and supervised. Students' comfort levels will be assessed, and any signs of anxiety will be addressed.
Risk					
Overstimulation or Stress	The school dog may become overstimulated or stressed due to the school environment.	Low	Moderate	Low	Regular breaks and quiet areas will be provided for the school dog. The school dog will be closely monitored for signs of stress and

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					intervene as necessary.
					Students will be shown how to interact with the school dog appropriately and will be supervised at all times.
Health Issues	The school dog may experience health issues, which could worsen during visits.	Low	Moderate	Low	<p>The school dog will have regular health check-ups.</p> <p>The school dog will be clean and free from any offensive odours.</p> <p>The school dog will not be brought to the school if he shows signs of illness or distress.</p>
Risk to Others					
Zoonotic Diseases	The presence of the school dog may pose a minimal risk of zoonotic diseases being transmitted to humans.	Low	Low	Low	<p>The school dog will be regularly examined by a veterinarian and there will be regular maintenance of hygiene and cleanliness.</p> <p>Students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands after interacting with the school dog.</p>
Risk Level Definitions:					
- Low: Unlikely to occur, minimal harm.					
- Moderate: May occur					

Risk	Potential Harm/Consequence	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Level	Mitigations
occasionally, moderate harm.					
- High: Likely to occur, significant harm.					
- Severity Definitions:					
- Low: Minor injuries, discomfort.					
- Moderate: Injuries requiring minor medical attention, moderate discomfort.					
- High: Severe injuries requiring medical attention, significant discomfort.					

This risk assessment has been conducted to ensure the safe interaction and presence of the school dog at Waterside Academy. The mitigations listed are intended to reduce and manage the identified risks effectively. It is essential that all staff, students, and visitors follow these guidelines to maintain a safe environment.