



Stonehouse Park Federation

School Therapy Dog Policy



RATIONALE

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. The presence of a dog can increase children's confidence when reading aloud.

We value the development of children's well-being along with their spiritual, moral and social education as highly as we value academia. We believe a school dog will be a unique way to enrich all areas of the children's wider education, skills and well-being.

In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

AIMS

- To help children build positive relationships.
- To support children's emotional development.
- To enable children to develop an understanding of responsibility, kindness and care.
- To encourage children with school anxiety or low attendance in to school.
- To act as resource and tangible motivation for children in all subject areas.
- To support vulnerable children in difficult times by providing a source of comfort.

GUIDELINES

- A full risk assessment will be carried out and reviewed annually.
- The risk assessment will set out hygiene and safety measures for staff and children to follow.
- The dog will have health insurance provided by her owner and public liability insurance funded by the federation.
- Children will be taught how to interact safely with the dog.
- Children will be taught how to interpret dog body language.
- Staff will be trained in handling the dog.
- The dog will be on a lead and under full control when moving around the school buildings.
- Children will never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with children.
- Children should remain calm around the dog and will be reminded of appropriate behaviour around the dog.
- Notices will be displayed to inform children, staff and visitors of the dog's presence.
- The dog will be provided with regular breaks including access to outdoor space for toileting.
- The dog will have access to water, bedding and food as required.
- Consideration will be given to children with allergies and those with phobias or nervousness of animals.
- The school will endeavour to use the dog effectively to have a positive impact on children's wellbeing and learning.

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Behaviour Management, Equalities and SEND.

January 2022

Review Due: January 2024

