



# St Julian's Church School



***Aim High – Believe - Succeed***

8th June 2021

Dear parents and carers,

**Re: School Dog**

Following the announcement in the newsletter last term, I am writing with further information about the school dog, Bonnie.

The benefits of interacting with animals for our mental health and wellbeing are well-documented. Following our highly successful weekly visits from the Dogs for Health volunteers, I am very pleased to be able to introduce a more permanent school dog at St Julian's. I hope that once fully trained Bonnie will be able to visit all classes regularly and be a friendly addition to our school for all children to enjoy.

Bonnie is a labrador-cocker spaniel cross and is still very young. She is Mrs Noall's family dog when she is not in school. She is completing puppy classes and is undergoing an induction period into the school environment. This involves short visits to the school building and grounds that gradually build to longer periods of time in school and then meeting the children. It is essential that Bonnie's experiences in school are positive and that she enjoys her time as a school dog as well as plenty of time 'off duty' as a puppy at home. In line with the MNSP School Dog policy she will be assessed by a professional animal behaviourist to ensure she is competent, safe and comfortable to work in school. Throughout her training and induction period her welfare is paramount in decision making and she will only start visiting a classroom with children once she has been assessed as being able to do so calmly and safely.

Alongside Bonnie's training, the volunteers from Dogs for Health will be helping me to teach the children about how to act around Bonnie and how to play with her safely, gently and respectfully. We will also ensure that any child who has anxieties about dogs is able to learn more about dog body language and how they should act if they are afraid. If you are concerned about your child interacting with Bonnie, or your child has allergies relating to dogs, please get in touch with me via the school office.

Once Bonnie is 'passed' as able to interact with children she will only be able to do so with those children who have parental permission. Please consent via this [google form](#) (please complete for each child if you have more than one child at school).

The risk Assessment and policy are attached on the following pages.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Ruth Noall

Executive Head Teacher



***Small schools, big aspirations; branching out for learning***



Executive Head Teacher: Ruth Noall  
St Julian's Church School  
Preston, Lancashire  
PR1 1JG  
01773 543333  
www.stjulianschurchschool.co.uk



# Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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LST: GGR/ARA

## SCHOOL DOG POLICY

### Introduction

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid for stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

Developing children's confidence and awareness of safety around dogs can be developed with age-appropriate lessons that focus on appropriate human behaviour, as well as:

- Harnessing empathetic and compassionate attitudes towards a dog's needs
- Learning to safely and respectfully interact with a dog in a quiet and gentle manner
- Understanding when and how it is appropriate to approach a dog
- Learning how to play fairly
- Knowing how to act if afraid of a dog

Any MNSP School Dog will be a highly trained dog with impeccable temperament. The school will either work with a recognised charity to follow a training programme whilst the dog is still a puppy or, in the case that a mature dog owned by a member of staff is to become a school dog, with a Registered Clinical Animal Behaviourist.

The dog will have undergone positive reinforcement training and will be rigorously assessed to ensure that they are competent and safe to work within the school environment.

The assessments will focus on training, behaviour, welfare and temperament. The School Dog will be further assessed every year, to check its on-going suitability to work within the school.

School	Owner of the School Dog	Position in School	
High Littleton C of E Primary	Gareth Griffith	Headteacher	<a href="#">High Littleton Primary School Dog Risk Assessment</a>
Midsomer Norton Primary School	Alun Randell	Headteacher	<a href="#">Midsomer Norton Primary School Dog Risk Assessment</a>

### The role of the School Dog

**First 6 months:** During this time, the dog will be socialised by its owner and will learn basic cues through positive reinforcement training. At the same time, the home school will run an education programme for the duration where they will teach children and staff how to interact with the school puppy and dogs in general. This will extend to teaching the children and staff how to 'read' the body language of dogs and the golden rules to apply when meeting dogs. The dog will follow a gradual period of introduction to the school setting, ensuring that experiences are positive to help it get used to the sights, smells and sounds of a school environment.

Those children that have been given permission by their parents, may as the dog gets older, have basic interaction with the dog, albeit constantly supervised. This may form part of a reward system, or if an entire class has permission to spend time with the dog, the owner may visit their classes occasionally.

During this period an assessment will be carried out to assess the dog's temperament and wellbeing.

**6 to 12 months:** The owner may run a lunch/break time club where a handful of children will be allowed to walk with him/her and the dog. He would ensure that all children who would like to do this are given a 'fair' opportunity to do so.

#### **Classroom visits**

A puppy can visit a classroom only when the school is not open (evening and weekends). This is to get them used to these rooms. The puppy or a mature dog will only start visiting a classroom with children in, once it has been assessed as appropriate by the charity/ Registered Clinical Animal Behaviourist. This is to ensure that the puppy's/ dog's experiences are positive. Young dogs can be overwhelmed by such busy environments and we want our school dog to love being in the classroom and to always be calm when in a classroom.

#### **It will be a requirement that the dog:**

- is regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness;
- is diagnosed and treated by a vet if it is ill;
- receives regular inoculations;
- is wormed at intervals recommended by the vet;
- has its claws trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches;
- be exercised before being allowed to work with children.

#### **Management day to day:** It will be a requirement of the handler/owner to ensure that:

- the dog is physically fit before visiting the school environment;
- the dog is kept on a lead when moving through the school or school ground during school hours. The dog may be taken off the lead whilst in its penned area and during direct training with the handler;
- they remain with the dog at all times when it is not in its crate, or penned area;
- the dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking;
- the dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not muddy, wet etc.
- natural relief for the dog is taken in the designated area only, where pupils do not access. Waste will be disposed of by the handler, in bags deposited in a designated bin;
- all stakeholders are made aware that there is a School Dog working at the school;
- all information, including the policy and risk assessment are freely available on the school's website to all stakeholders.
- the school's reception area will display a poster, explaining that a School Dog is present in the building.

#### **Pupils will:**

- never have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with the dog;
- directly 'work' or interact with the dog in a group of more than 3 children;
- be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog as part of an education programme run by the home school.

#### **Appropriate behaviours are:**

- always remain calm around the dog;
- don't make sudden movements and be gentle;
- always approach the dog standing up;
- do not approach the dog when it is sleeping or eating;
- don't put your face near the dog;
- don't stare into the dog's eyes as this can be interpreted as a threat;
- do not eat close to the dog and never feed the dog.

#### **Should a bite (even playful) ever occur:**

1. parents or carers will be contacted immediately;
2. the wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing;
3. the child/adult will be released for medical attention;
4. all staff will be informed;
5. the dog will be removed from direct contact with any child pending the outcome of the full investigation and reassessment;
6. full investigation into the circumstances will be led by the Headteacher or, in the case of this being the dog owner the investigation will be completed by the Trust CEO or Deputy CEO;
7. the suitability of the dog will be re-assessed by the CEO or deputy CEO/Head Teacher, Governing Body and if

appropriate a dog behaviourist.

### Risk Assessments

The correct socialisation of any dog along with careful supervision of the children at all times should prevent injuries from occurring. All Dogs Helping Kids (DHK) School Dogs are highly trained and rigorously assessed and will only become certified if they are gentle and loving with children at all times. DHK carries public liability insurance for the School Dog and its owner. The school will undertake its own risk assessment and a copy both of these documents can be provided on request. The owner will have been trained to understand basic canine behaviour and how to read canine stress signals. If they see their School Dog becoming stressed, they will immediately remove the dog from the situation.

### Welfare

Water will be provided for the School Dog at all times.

### Allergies

The school will ensure that they are made aware of any child who is allergic to dogs. To reduce the risk of an allergic reaction, the following must be adhered to:

- all children and adults must wash their hands after spending time with the School Dog;
- the dog will be groomed before entering the school;

No treats should be given to the dog without the express permission of the owner.

The School Dog will be with their owner/ appropriately trained adult and on a lead at all times in the school when children are on site.

It is accepted that interacting with a dog is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent/carer who does not wish their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to inform the Headteacher of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the school senior leadership team will evaluate the impact of the School Dog on a regular basis.

If the School Dog is unwell, they will not be allowed to work within the school environment until they have been given a clean bill of health.

The School Dog will be toilet trained and will have an established toileting routine. The dog will only use the designated area provided for them, which will be out of bounds for the children. Should a toileting accident occur, it will be the responsibility of the owner to ensure that the area is cleaned.

### Monitoring and evaluation

The Trust along with the home school Local Governing Body and the Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. The Governing Body, in consultation with professional advisors, will carry out regular risk assessments, with the object of keeping the school environment safe.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Risk Assessment Area: School Dog			
Assessment completed by: Ruth Noall	Date: May 2021	Workplace: St Julian's Church School	Employer: MSNP

Hazard	Risk	Consequence (prior to controls) 1-5	Likelihood (1-5)	Controls put in place	Risk rating after control
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children	Child knocked to ground	1	2	The breed of dog (cockerdor) that has been chosen by Mrs Noall is one that has a very loving, sensitive and reliable temperament. They are known to be very good with children and other animals and quick learners.  The dog is the Noall family's pet and has been living with them since she was a puppy. Therefore her temperament is well known.  The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will not be allowed to freely roam the school premises during times when there is a risk that pupils will be present.  Children will never be left with the dog unsupervised. Children actively involved with the dog will be from Year 2 upwards, as younger children may be more prone to act unpredictably and therefore pose a greater risk.  The dog will always be on a lead when it is out of its pen, except when it is undergoing structured training with its handler. The dog will be trained to not jump up, or mouth anybody.  Pupils will be taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature will be continually given to the children and often to the whole school during assemblies or PSHE sessions.	1
	Child scratched by dog	3	2		1
	Child bitten by dog	4	2		1

				<p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them, for instance: stand still and cross their arms.</p> <p>The dog is undergoing formal training. This started with puppy socialisation classes as soon as the puppy had her vaccinations, followed by formal training through dog training classes. Once the dog is assessed by a registered clinical animal behaviourist as being suitable to work with pupils, they may (with parental consent), become involved with training, in particular should the dog be taught to be a 'Reading dog'.</p>	
Dog getting loose from its pen or from its lead	As above	1	2	The dog will be based in Mrs Noall's office. She will have a crate, soft bed, toys and water. If the dog gets loose from the office then the Head Teacher or office staff will be informed immediately. There will be three members of staff who can be called upon to help with the dog at any time. They are: Mrs Noall, Kate Edwards and Annette Harris	1
Allergic reaction	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	<p>Parents will be asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to the introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school system and in the folder containing all of the school dog's paperwork.</p> <p>Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction if they wish to do so.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. Younger children will be supervised when doing this. There will also be wipes available for use.</p>	1
Children getting germs from the dog	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	Should the dog defecate on the school site Mrs Noall will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner (in a designated bin). The dog will be trained to	1

				<p>toilet in an area of the school that our pupils do not have access to. If required, the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant.</p> <p>All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) will be kept up to date in accordance with the European Vet guidelines.</p> <p>Worming treatment will be carried out in line with European Vet guidelines and the puppy will also undergo treatment to prevent lungworm.</p> <p>The dog will not go into the school dining hall at meal times.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills	1	1	<p>The dog will be the responsibility of Mrs Noall and she will be financially responsible for all its care and day to day costs.</p> <p>The dog will also be the responsibility of Mrs Noall outside of school hours.</p> <p>Initial and follow up assessments by a registered clinical animal behaviourist will be paid for by the school.</p> <p>The school may undertake fundraising activities to help supplement this cost.</p> <p>All obedience training will be funded by Mrs Noall.</p>	1
Claim is made against school re: the behaviour of the dog	School not adequately covered financially	1	1	Mrs Noall will insure the dog. The school will take out liability insurance. The insurance will be renewed annually and the certificate will be kept with the other school dog paperwork and would be available to be seen upon demand by any parent/carer or staff member.	1

Overall Risk Rating for this area / activity (please highlight):

1 - Low risk	2 – moderate risk	3 – High risk	4 – Critical risk	5 – Catastrophic risk
Acceptable with periodic review	Tolerable with periodic review	Tolerable with continuous review	Intolerable	Intolerable

Signed: RENOall	Date: May 2021	Next review/assessment: Feb 2022
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**Risk Matrix Chart**

		Likelihood				
		1	2	3	4	5
Consequence		Rare The event may occur in exceptional circumstances	Unlikely The event could occur sometimes	Moderate The event will occur sometimes	Likely The event will probably occur in most circumstances	Almost certain The event is expected to occur in most circumstances
1	<b>Insignificant</b> No injuries or health issues	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MODERATE
2	<b>Minor</b> First aid treatment	LOW	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
3	<b>Moderate</b> Medical treatment	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	CRITICAL
4	<b>Major</b> Permanent disability or disease	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	CRITICAL	CATASTROPHIC
5	<b>Extreme</b> Death	MODERATE	HIGH	CRITICAL	CATASTROPHIC	CATASTROPHIC