

Dog Policy

Myton School



Approved by:	Leadership	Date:	25 November 2025
Last reviewed on:	October 2025		
Next review due by:	October 2028		
Version	2		

School Dog Policy

Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

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

Yes, there is, though there are a variety of accidents, which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this is included in this document (see appendix 3).

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present.

School Policy

The dog will be owned by Jane Burrows.

- The Governors have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Head Teacher has been informed beforehand.
- The dog is a Cavapoo (crossbreed between a King Charles Caviller Spaniel and Minatare Poodle) and has been chosen because it she is an intelligent breed and bred for companionship. She responds well to training and is known to be good with children. As she is a poodle cross, she is hypo-allergenic and does not shed hair. She is a very sociable and friendly dog.
- The Head Teacher, and Senior leadership team agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Myton School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed via social media that a dog will be in school. The School has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. **(Appendix 3)**
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill she will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.
- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.

- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog. Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on her body, chest, back and not by her face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately in designated bins.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to the dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head Teacher asap.
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- Jane Burrows will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Jane Burrows.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher or a Deputy as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head teacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

The Head teacher is responsible for implementing 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 our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Appendix 1. Reasons to have a dog in school

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following: -

- 1) Improve academic achievement
- 2) Increase literacy skills
- 3) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Help prevent truancy
- 8) Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

Behaviour:

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

Attendance:

Case study: Mandy was a student with poor attendance and truancy. Mandy was encouraged back into school using caring for River, a dog, as an incentive. By telling Mandy that "if she didn't come to school to care for him, he wouldn't get walks, water or love," Mandy came to school almost every day for the rest of the year, only missing two days.

Education:

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some students. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction.

Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have student read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.

Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching student's social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students.

With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

As a reward:

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem.

Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

Appendix 2 **School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

A) The legal owner of the dog will be Jane Burrows (CFO for Stowe Valley MAT); she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; e.g. health insurance and vet bills.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A) The dog will be kept in the CFO's office. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure the dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A) The dog is from a reputable breeder. She is a small dog (weight 5kg) and has been specifically chosen for her friendly temperament. She has undergone basic obedience training and is currently under-taking agility training and is regarded as a well-behaved dog.

Q Where will the dog be located during the school day?

A) Elsie will be kept in the CFO's office. She will have a bed, food and water and will be under the supervision of the CFO.

A school staff member will take Elsie to various classrooms / sessions that are deemed appropriate, where the students will benefit for interacting with the School Dog.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog. (**Appendix 3**)

Q Who is responsible for training?

A) Jane Burrows is the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for her training. Appropriate professional training has been obtained and the dog is currently attending agility classes. Specialist PAT dog training will be investigated for further training.

Q How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

A) In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the wildlife area / playing fields. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. Dog bags will be sealed and disposed in designated bin. Hand must be washed immediately afterwards.

Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A) The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept in the CFO's office and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

Q How will this be managed where Staff/children & Visitors have allergies?

A) Staff/children & Visitors will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. The breed of dog is known to be hypoallergenic as a poodle crossbreed with no moulting.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

A) Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

A Statement Regarding Elsie's temperament from Jane Burrows

20/10/2025

I can confirm that in the 4 years that I have been the legal owner of Elsie, the Cavapoo, she has not shown any signs of aggression. Elsie was purchased as a puppy (11 weeks old) from a reputable breeder. I have taken Elsie to obedience classes and she will follow all basic commands – sit, wait, bed and has excellent recall. I am currently taking Elsie to agility training to further her training.

Elsie has a very friendly, confident dog and loves meeting new people (and dogs). Elsie is very good with children and loves company. Elsie is well socialised with adults and children alike and goes regular to doggy day care with no separation or behaviour issues. She has had numerous visits to the vet for various examinations and treatments and again has not been aggressive during any of them.

Jane Burrows

CFO – Stowe Valley MAT



Myton School – Warwick - Risk Assessment

TASK/OPERATION BEING ASSESSED	School Dog	Ref: RA
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Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the hazards to health and safety	Persons Affected	What existing control measures are in place to reduce the risk?	Risk level achieved H/M/L*	Further action required - Y/N?*
Dog getting over excited when interacting with students	Staff/Student scratched by the dog Staff/Student bitten by the dog	Students Staff Visitors	Dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training. Students not left with the dog unsupervised. Dog always to be on a lead when out of the office. Students to be taught the impact of their actions: -Not to over stimulate or upset the dog and how to remain calm around it. Staff given permission to handle the dog will be given strict instructions to follow. Dog will attend vet regularly to make sure it is in good health.	LOW	N
Dog gets loose from Office or Lead	Scratched/bitten by the dog	Students Staff Visitors	Dog kept in Finance Director's office. All visitors to be alerted by signage and Students not allowed unsupervised access to the dog. Staff and Students not to taunt or tease the dog. If the dog gets loose the designated handler will call for support to put the dog back on her lead.	LOW	N

Dog hair causing allergies	Allergic reaction	Staff Students Visitors	Staff, Parents of students & Visitors to be asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to the introduction of the dog to School. Anyone with allergies will have the opportunity to opt out. Children will be taught to wash their hands after any activity with the dog. As the dog is a poodle crossbreed, she is hypoallergenic with minimal to no hair moulting.	LOW	N
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Myton School – Warwick – Risk Assessment

TASK/OPERATION BEING ASSESSED	School Dog	Ref: RA
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Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the hazards to health and safety	Persons Affected	What existing control measures are in place to reduce the risk?	Risk level achieved H/M/L*	Further action required - Y/N?*
Germs from dog	Contracting diseases or Infections that can be carried by dogs	Staff Students Visitors	Should the dog defecate in the wildlife area / playing fields the handler will clear it up and seal the waste in a dog waste bag immediately and disposed in the designated bin and immediately their wash hands. All immunisations are kept up to date. Flea treatments and working carried out at monthly intervals. Dog will not enter School dining area or food preparation areas.	LOW	Y



Myton School – Warwick - Risk Assessment

Insurance Claim is made against the School Re: Dog behaviour	School not adequately Insured	Governing Body of the School	The School to have Public Liability Insurance and specialist working dog insurance. Insurance Policy to cover the dog Inside and Outside of the School. During School hours Jane Burrows to have her own pet insurance to ensure liability is covered appropriately as well as medical costs	LOW	Y
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Further Risk Reduction Measures	School Dog	Ref: RA
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Activity/ Process/ Operation	Risk	Planned action to be taken to reduce the risk <i>(this can include short term and/or long term action)</i>	Anticipated risk reduction level M/L post action	Responsible person for taking action	Planned completion date	Completion date (Line manager signature to verify and date)
Germ from dog	Contracting diseases or Infections that can be carried by dogs	Records of vaccinations and other treatments to be available at random audit intervals	LOW		Ongoing	
Insurance claim is made against the School Re: Dog behaviour	School not adequately Insured	Insurance Policy to be kept up to date to include Public Liability Records of Jane Burrows' pet insurance to be kept up to date and available at random audit intervals	LOW		Ongoing	

Name of Assessor S Akram

Signed.....S Akram.....

Dated.....16/11/2025.....

(responsible for activity, process, operation)

*If the risk_level achieved is still **High**, the planned activity/ process/operation **must not** continue. The risk assessment action plan must be completed to further action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable lower level.

* If the risk level achieved is **Medium** you must consider whether the existing control measures are sufficient or if any further action could be taken to level. (The risk level may remain as Medium where the risk is inherent in a particular activity/process/operation).