

SKIPPERS HILL MANOR PREPARATORY SCHOOL

School Dog Policy

This policy applies to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).



Skippers Hill Manor
Preparatory School

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Mark Hammond (Head teacher)
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Introduction

Children 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 take great enjoyment from interaction with animals. By having a 'School Dog' we want to encourage those children specifically who are vulnerable, or those who are less confident with reading, to have a friendly audience and to look forward to reading as a treat! The breed, Labrador, is carefully selected as suitable for this type of environment. The dog is well-cared for and responsibly owned by the Headmaster.

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

This policy shows how we have thought carefully about school life with a pet dog and how, through careful management, there is a very low risk of harm.

Context:

- The dog will be owned by Mr and Mrs Hammond
- Veterinary costs will be paid by the owner
- The dog is a Labrador, chosen for its very mild temperament and from a reputable breeder
- The dog has undergone full training and assessment to become a Reading/Therapy dog. She is fully certified and insured through the charity "Dogs Helping Kids"
- The Headteacher and Governors have agreed that a Reading Dog would bring many benefits to Skippers Hill Manor Preparatory School.
- The vast majority of pupils are very keen to have a dog on site; most parents are delighted. Where there are any concerns or fears expressed by individuals, individual responses will be set up.
- The Risk assessment (attached) is reviewed annually.
- Visitors will be informed of the dog on arrival.

Pupils will:

- Never have sole responsibility for the dog, who will always be accompanied by an adult.
- Meet the dog in small groups of no more than 3 children
- Be reminded regularly of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog
 - always remain calm around the dog
 - don't make sudden movements - be gentle.
 - don't stare into a dog's eyes as this could be interpreted as a threat.
 - don't put your face near a dog
 - always approach a dog standing up.
 - do not disturb a dog who is sleeping or eating.
 - do not eat close to the dog or feed her.
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring teeth indicates that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are all signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs, she should be immediately removed from the situation.

Health and safety:

- Children will always wash hands or use alcohol gel after handling the dog.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when outside of the Study, Rose Garden or Flat, unless training.
- Lottie has been vaccinated, wormed, flea treated and checked by a vet and will be carefully monitored.
- Any dog waste will be removed immediately and appropriately by the dog's owner.

- The dog will be toileted in the Rose Garden, where the children do not have unsupervised access.
- Should a bite (even playful occur):
 1. Parents will be contacted immediately.
 2. The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile dressing.
 3. The child/adult will be released for medical attention.
 4. All staff will be informed.
 5. A full investigation into the circumstances will be carried out by the Head and appropriate action taken.

Reasons to have a dog in school:

- **Reading Programmes:** There is increasing evidence of improving reading levels, word recognition, engagements and desire to read in reading programmes with dogs. Children who find reading challenging are often much more willing to have a go when reading to dogs rather than more judgemental adults!
- **Social Development:** Having a dog in school will help us to teach the children about responsibility and mutual respect.
- **Reward/ Promoting positive Behaviours:** Children's achievements and positive behaviour can be rewarded, where appropriate, with spending time with Lottie during a breaktime. Under strict adult supervision, children may enjoy walking, grooming, playing and training Lottie. A class teacher may also request a visit from Lottie (and Mr or Mrs Hammond) to share a class story or to see some of the children's work.
- **Support Dogs** can have a calming, soothing effect on pupils, particularly those who need some support emotionally or with learning. They can help to improve behaviour and concentration, reducing stress and improving self esteem.
- **She will love each and every child and further cement our school ethos and identity.**

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