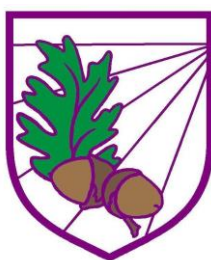



OAK VIEW PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL



SCHOOL DOG POLICY

Policy Date:	November 2024
Policy Review Date:	Autumn 2026
Date ratified by the Full Governing Body:	21/11/2024
Signed by Chair of Governors: 	

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Background

Having a School Dog has been common practice in Australia and America for some time and there are now a growing number of schools in the UK with a School Dog. However, there is currently no benchmark standard of training in order for a dog to come into school. To ensure that our School Dog was safe to work in an educational environment we registered with the charity Dogs Helping Kids (DHK). Through our collaboration with DHK our puppy was sourced from an Assured Kennel Club Breeder and undertakes weekly training sessions with a highly qualified dog trainer and behaviourist.

The DHK charity stopped operating during Summer 2020 due to the constraints of the Coronavirus pandemic.

1. Aims and Objectives

Our belief is that having a School Dog will make the school feel a 'nicer' place to be for the whole school community. It has been proven that animals help with depression, anxiety and stress and promote happiness and wellbeing.

'Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils by developing approaches to the particular needs of their pupils' Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (Nov 2018 DfE).

When a puppy, our dog was behind the scenes and had no contact with the children during her first year in school. She is now in school several times each week and children can have supervised contact with her if they choose to. Our aim is that her presence will:

- Help with anger management and de-escalation of anger/frustration
- Encourage positive behaviour
- Build self-confidence and increase self-esteem
- Encourage respect, responsibility and trust
- Improve attendance

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The Governing Body fulfil a strategic role in health and safety and are not expected to be involved in day to day management of the school. However, they will:

- Ensure that the school has a policy and risk assessment relating to the School Dog.
- Be informed of and review any serious incidents

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

Overall responsibility for the day to day management of health and safety rests with the Headteacher. The Headteacher has responsibility for:

- Co-operating with the LA and Governing Body to enable health and safety policy and procedures to be implemented and complied with.

- Ensuring effective arrangements are in place to pro-actively manage health and safety by conducting and reviewing inspections and risk assessments and implementing required actions.
- Reporting to the Governing body on any safety concerns/issues.
- Ensuring all staff are competent to carry out their roles and are provided with adequate information, instruction and training.

The Headteacher may choose to delegate certain tasks to other members of staff.

Responsibility of the School Business Manager – Owner of the School Dog

- Mrs O’Shaughnessy is Bella’s legal owner and will care for her out of school hours in her home.
- Mrs O’Shaughnessy will bear the majority of the costs associated with having a pet dog including the purchase of the dog.
- The School will support the costs associated with her work in school and contribute to insurances.
- New pupils will receive information on the School Dog in their ‘starter pack’ and will complete a electronic form regarding any allergies or dog phobias.
- There is a notice in reception to advise visitors that there is a dog on the premises and to provide information on any allergies or dog phobias.
- The School Dog will be based in an admin office with Mrs O’Shaughnessy. Any time that she is out of the office she will be kept on a loose lead and will always be accompanied by Mrs O’Shaughnessy, or a designated second adult.

Responsibility of the Admin Staff

- The admin staff will take responsibility for the welfare of the School Dog should Mrs O’Shaughnessy be out of the office at any time (i.e. in the case of the fire alarm sounding they will ensure that she is taken to the muster point).

3. Health & Safety

Our school has a ‘no dogs’ policy and this will remain in place. This means that no dogs are allowed on the site (i.e., when children are dropped off and collected). However, our School Dog is an Educational Assistance Dog and different rules apply (such as for hearing or guide dogs). She will be on a lead and harness at all times when moving around the school property and will always be accompanied by a trained adult, namely Mrs O’Shaughnessy. Our School Dog will be fully insured to carry out her role thus allowing her to be on the school site.

The following actions will be in place to ensure the H&S of the pupils, staff and most importantly the School Dog.

Allergies

- Letters are sent home informing parents that we have a School Dog in residence requesting information on allergies.
- People with allergies will be kept away from the School Dog.
- To help reduce the risk of allergens our dog will be subjected to a very thorough cleanliness and grooming regime and will be fed on a premium diet.

- Staff, pupils and visitors are advised not to touch their faces/exposed skin after touching the dog and to wash their hands after any contact with the dog.
- School is cleaned and vacuumed on a daily basis.

Biting, jumping up, scratching

- The dog will have limited close contact with staff and pupils and will always be supervised during any interaction.
- Should she jump up, scratch or bite someone (even in a playful manner) then the family would be notified immediately and the dog would be removed from direct contact with anyone. An investigation and re-assessment would take place involving the SBM, Headteacher and Governors.

Fear / Phobia

- Any access to our School Dog will be carefully managed and supervised. We understand that some children may have a fear of dogs and Bella will only be in close contact with children whose parents have given their permission.
- Our letter informing parents that we have a School Dog in residence requests that they complete an electronic information form regarding access to the dog. This document will inform the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with the dog. Parents are also offered the option of their child having no close contact or are offered a programme of support to help the child to overcome aversion. This list will be kept by the admin staff.

Hygiene

- The adult will immediately wash their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces or use a sanitizing gel.
- Animal foodstuffs will be stored carefully to prevent contamination and infestation.
- Open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms will be covered with waterproof adhesive dressings
- Bella's toys and equipment will be cleaned regularly

Health/Welfare (The School Dog)

- Before coming to school the dog will be fully vaccinated and have received worm and flea treatments
- The dog will be registered with a local vet and receive regular check-ups.
- A register of her annual health check will be kept by school and the vets' surgery.
- Mrs O'Shaughnessy (the owner of the dog) will have pet insurance to ensure that if it is ill the dog will receive immediate medical attention.
- The dog will not attend school if it is unwell and it will not return to school until it is fit to do so.
- Bella is a sentient being and her health and wellbeing is of the utmost importance and will always take precedence.

Health/Welfare (Pupils, Staff and Visitors)

- Hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school. Staff and visitors will be strongly encouraged to wash their hands if they touch the dog.
- Our School Dog will not be allowed access to food preparation or eating areas.
- Our School Dog will toilet outside the school site. Should any 'accidents' happen then the area will be cleaned immediately by a responsible adult.

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Health & Safety Policy and the School Dog Risk Assessment.

This policy will be reviewed biannually or when changes are required.

Governors will be informed of any serious incidents on an as required basis.