


RISK ASSESSMENT FOR: School Dog (Bella)		Oak View Primary and Nursery School		
Risk assessment number/ref: SD 005	Assessment by: Mrs O'Shaughnessy, SBM		Date: 01/11/2024	
	Manager Approval: Mr Richardson, Headteacher		Date: 01/11/2024	

Background

'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).

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). DHK were one of the only organisations in the country training and assessing dogs purely to work in an educational environment as both educational and therapeutic aids. We shared DHK's belief that a dog should only be working with a child, in an educational environment, if it has been trained, assessed and certified to do so.

Through our collaboration with DHK our puppy was sourced from an Assured Kennel Club Breeder. She undertook weekly training sessions with a highly qualified dog trainer and behaviourist along with specialist training and assessment at the DHK Headquarters. This was to ensure the safety of the children, the staff, her owner and most importantly Bella.

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 and we are confident that her introduction will:

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

For her first year in school, our puppy was behind the scenes and had little contact with anyone in school. She was based in an admin office and if out of the office she was kept on a short lead and always accompanied by an adult.

Bella's legal owner is Mrs O'Shaughnessy who cares for her out of school hours in her home. She 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.

Bella is fully vaccinated and wormed. She will not attend school if she is unwell and will not return to school until she is fit to do so. Mrs O'Shaughnessy (the owner of the dog) has pet insurance to insure that if she is ill she will receive immediate medical attention. Bella is registered with a local vet and receives regular check-ups. A register of her annual health check will be kept by school and the vets' surgery.

Any access to Bella will be carefully managed and supervised. We understand that some children may have a fear of dogs and Bella will only be in contact with children whose parents have given their permission. Research has shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

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, Bella will be an Educational Assistance Dog and different rules apply (such as for hearing or guide dogs). She will be on a leash at all times when moving around the school property and will always be accompanied by a trained adult, namely Mrs O'Shaughnessy. Bella will also be fully insured to carry out her role thus allowing her to be on the school site.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Allergies	Staff, pupils, visitors may have an allergic reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our letter informing parents that we will be having a school dog in residence requests information on allergies. • People with allergies will be kept away from the school dog. • Allergies are most prevalent when pet dander is present. Bella will be subjected to a very thorough cleanliness and grooming regime to help reduce the risk of allergens. • Bella will be fed on a premium diet. This also reduces dander problems in dogs making them more hypoallergenic. • School is cleaned and vacuumed on a daily basis. • Pupils will not need to touch Bella. • Staff, pupils or visitors are advised not to touch their faces/exposed skin after touching the dog. • Staff, pupils and visitors will be advised to wash their hands after working with the dog. 	<p>Letter to be included in 'new starter pack'</p> <p>Mrs O'Shaughnessy will ensure the continuing cleanliness of Bella and the school.</p> <p>Hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school. If the dog is working in an area without this facility then hand sanitising gel will be provided as an interim measure</p>	Admin Team SO'S	As required Daily	
Asthma	Staff, pupils, visitors could have an allergic reaction to the School Dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The admin team will keep an updated list of children who should not work with the dog • Any pupils with asthmatic issues will be required to keep their inhalers with them and accessible at all times if access to the school dog has been requested by their parents. 	Letter to be included in 'new starter pack'.	Admin Team	As required	
Biting, jumping up, scratching	Staff, pupils, visitors could be hurt if Bella got over excited or distressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Bella becomes over excited or distressed while working with children she will be removed and given time to calm down. • Children will never have unsupervised access to Bella. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bella will be trained to not jump • Bella will have regular exercise throughout the day and stimulating toys 	SO'S		

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of staff are trained to provide first aid if required. SO'S will always accompany Bella 			
Cuts / minor injury from defective housing	Staff, pupils, visitors and Bella, the school dog could become infected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella's housing, equipment and toys will be cleaned and inspected regularly for defects 		SO'S	On-going	
Dog being tired	Staff, pupils and visitors could be hurt or upset if the school dog becomes stressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella will have lots of time to rest in her crate in the admin office. If Bella becomes over stressed or tired while working with children she will be removed and given time to rest. 				
Dog gets loose from admin area or lead	Staff, pupils, visitors, the School Dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Bella gets loose from the office a member of the admin team will retrieve her and return her to the room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella will trained in all areas including recall. 	SO'S		
Fear/phobia	Staff, pupils, visitors may be scared of dogs and other animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our letter informing parents that we have a school dog in residence requests that they complete a electronic form regarding access to the dog. This document informs the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with the dog. Parents are 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 Notices are displayed around the school to advise visitors that a dog is on site. Information is also noted on the school website. The dog will not roam freely around the school. If she is out of the admin office she will be on a lead and will always be supervised by an adult 	Letter included in 'new starter pack'	Admin Team	As required	

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Financial Costs	The School, Mrs O'Shaughnessy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs O'Shaughnessy is the legal owner of the dog and is responsible for Bella's care and the majority of her day-to-day costs (excluding liability insurances which will be paid for by the school and a lifetime pet plan health insurance which will be a shared cost between the school and Mrs O'Shaughnessy). The school will support all the costs associated with her work to become an Educational Assistance Dog. Outside school hours the dog lives with Mrs O'Shaughnessy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has Liability Insurance. 	SO'S	Annually - April	
Fire Alarm	Bella, the School Dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella will be registered as a member of staff on our Sign-In System when she is in school to make Fire Marshalls aware that she is on-site. Should Mrs O'Shaughnessy not be in the office with Bella when the fire alarm sounds a member of the admin team will ensure that she is taken out of school to the marshalling area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure admin staff are all aware of the responsibility to take Bella to the fire marshalling area should the alarm sound 	SO'S	On Going	
Hand washing	Staff, pupils, visitors could become ill through contact with the dog or her waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school. Pupils, staff and visitors will be strongly encouraged to wash their hands if they touch the dog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the dog is working in an area without this facility then hand sanitising gel will be provided as an interim measure Should a Muslim pupil be licked by the dog the parents will be informed immediately by telephone and a note sent home with the child at the end of the day. 	SO'S	If required	

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Hygiene	Staff, pupils, visitors or Bella the School Dog could become ill through contact with the dog or her waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella's toys and equipment will be cleaned regularly No eating or drinking will be permitted when having contact with Bella 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 The adult will immediately wash their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces or use a sanitizing gel. Any soiled dog bedding will be disposed of in sealed clinical waste bags. Mrs O'Shaughnessy will take the dog's bedding home regularly to wash it. 		SO'S	On Going	
Illness	Staff, pupils, visitors could become ill through contact with the dog or her waste or other transferrable illnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella will receive all vaccinations and will have regular worming and flea treatments. She will not attend school if she is unwell and will not return to school until she is fit to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immunisations, worming and flea treatments will be kept up to date 	SO'S	On-Going	
New Starters – Pupils and Staff	Staff, pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new starters will be advised that we have a school dog on the premises. New pupils will receive School Dog letter in their 'starter pack'. Relevant briefings will be undertaken. 		SO'S	On-Going	
Noise/Barking	Pupils who cannot cope with noise – e.g. autistic children or Bella, the School Dog could become 'spooked' by loud noises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some pupils could be upset by a dog barking and could lash out or hurt the dog. She will be introduced to a variety of different noises – fireworks, doorbells, bangs, rings, vacuums, vehicles, crying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella will be highly trained. The children who work with her will be well supported by staff who know them 	SO'S		

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		noises etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Bella becomes over excited she will be removed and given time to calm down. 			
Safety of the School Dog	Staff, pupils or the School Dog could be harmed, i.e. if a child was not nice to the dog then she could retaliate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Bella is working with children this will always take place in a safe and controlled environment. The children who work with Bella will be supported by staff who know them well to ensure the safety of both themselves and Bella 				
Toileting	Staff, pupils, visitors walking in dog faeces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog will be suitably toilet trained. The dog will be toileted before coming on to the school site. All dog waste will be collected and disposed of by a responsible adult, using a waste bag and into a separate waste bin. The adult will immediately wash their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces (or use a sanitizing gel). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog will be taken to the designated area regularly If this is in an area without this facility then hand sanitising gel will be provided as an interim measure 	SO'S SO'S	As required As required	
Working Environment / No Go Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school dog may find some areas in school too slippery to walk on. Some areas of the school are not appropriate for a dog, i.e food preparation areas, the dining room etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella will not be allowed access to food preparation areas. If she was to attend an assembly in the hall then she would have her settle mat to lie on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that a settle mat is always available 	SO'S	As required	

DATE OF REVIEW:
September 2024

COMMENTS: