



# Dog in School Policy

Name: Kingsway Primary School

Date: 01/11/23



## Dog in School Policy

<b>Approval date</b>	November 2023	
<b>Review frequency</b>	Triennial	
<b>Date of next review</b>	November 2026	
<b>Signed by Headteacher</b>	Kate Baskeyfield	<i>Kate Baskeyfield</i>
<b>Signed by Chair of Governors</b>	Elizabeth Dunstan	<i>EDunstan</i>

If you have any questions about the content of this policy:

- If you are a member of staff – speak with your line manager or a member of the leadership team
- If you are a parent / carer – contact the school office on 0161 748 1867
- If you are another interested party – contact the school office on 0161 748 1867

## **Dog Therapy Policy for Schools: Stay N Play Canine Therapies - 2023**

Research has shown many benefits to therapy and reading dogs in school settings. This school has a dog who works with our students to improve literacy, student behaviour, and well-being. This policy is designed to set out to students, parents and visitors the reasons for having a school dog at school (Section 2 – The benefits of a school dog) and the rules and responsibilities to ensure the safety of students, staff, visitors and the school dog (Sections 3 and 4 – Principles and Code of Conduct). Although there is a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment, this can be mitigated with a robust risk assessment to ensure the safety of all students, staff and visitors.

### **1. Introduction**

This policy outlines the terms and conditions under which Stay N Play Canine Therapies will provide dog therapy services in school. Schools acting as clients must adhere to the standards and procedures set out in this policy.

### **2. Purpose:**

To provide a structured, safe, and effective environment for dog-assisted interventions contributing to students' emotional, psychological, and educational well-being.

2.1 The benefits of a school dog have been proven to:

2.1.1 help develop students' reading skills;

2.1.2 improve behaviour;

2.1.3 improve pupil's attendance and academic confidence;

2.1.4 increasing student understanding of responsibility and developing empathy and nurturing skills

#### **2.1.5 Literacy Benefits**

"Reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect the dogs' presence has on children and the fact that the dog will listen to the children read without being judgemental or critical. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and gives them the confidence to read aloud. When dogs are in a room of children trying to read, they become less stressed, less self-conscious and more confident because dogs are non-judgemental. If children are partnered with a dog to read to, the dog provides comfort, encourages positive social behaviour, enhances self-esteem, motivates speech and inspires children to have fun and enjoy the experience of reading."

Bark & Read – The Kennel Club (<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>)

"Children who read to dogs are less likely to be embarrassed reading aloud and find the experience less stressful. Research has proved that children who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, and a higher desire to read and write."

School Dog Policy – The White Horse Federation (<https://www.ridgewayschool.com/downloads/default/TWHF-School-Dog-Policy-V2.pdf>)

### **2.1.6 Therapy benefits**

“Therapy Dogs Nationwide dogs have also shown to help with special needs and autistic children and adults by giving focus and providing a calming environment.”

School Dogs - Therapy Dogs Nationwide (<http://www.tdn.org.uk/schools/>)

### **2.1.7 Attendance & Punctuality benefits**

“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 he 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.”

Case Study – Hazel Oak School Dog Policy (<https://hazel-oak.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2018/02/School-Dog-Policy.pdf>)

### **2.1.8 Behaviour & rewards**

“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 student behaviour. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than in schools without. Students’ behaviour improved toward teachers and showed more confidence and responsibility.

Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.”

Case Study – Hazel Oak School Dog Policy (<https://hazel-oak.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2018/02/School-Dog-Policy.pdf>)

2.2 Stay N Play Canine Therapies and the school have a school dog to support our staff team in bringing these benefits to our students.

2.3 Stay N Play Canine Therapies dogs will be trained as and certified by Stay N Play Canine Therapies (see Section 4 – code of conduct).

## **3. Scope:**

This policy applies to all schools contracting to Stay N Play Canine Therapies for dog therapy services.

## **4. Code of Conduct**

### **4.1 Staff Responsibilities**

4.1.1 An approved Stay N Play Canine Therapies practitioner will always control and supervise the dog.

4.1.2 If any therapy dog is ill, they will not attend school. Stay N Play Canine Therapies ensures an appropriate replacement is found or an alternative day will be provided.

4.1.3 Stay N Play Canine Therapies ensures that all therapy dogs are trained and certified by Stay N Play Canine Therapies.

4.1.4 Therapy dogs must be kept on a lead at all times and under the complete control and supervision of a Stay N Play Canine Therapies handler.

4.1.5 Therapy dogs must be allowed access to all areas of the school to collect and drop off students from class.

4.1.6 Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not touch or approach the therapy dogs in school. The school is responsible for keeping a list of all students and staff with a reported allergy to dogs and ensuring that all trained handlers know who these students and staff are.

4.1.7 Students must always be supervised by a therapy dog and appropriate adult supervision at all times.

4.1.8 Students will be reminded of appropriate behaviour around the dog before any interaction during therapy sessions or visits.

4.1.9 If many children surround the dog, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the handler in charge of the dog must ensure that they monitor the situation. If the dog displays any warning signs, such as growling or flattening of their ears, the handler should immediately remove them from that particular situation or environment.

4.1.10 Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by a trained staff member.

4.1.11 The school and Stay N Play Canine Therapies will maintain anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the therapy dog to collect quality data.

## **4.2 Student Responsibilities**

4.2.1 Students whose parents have withdrawn consent are prohibited from attending or working with the dog.

4.2.2 Students are taught to stroke dogs from collar to tail and avoid the face and top of the head.

4.2.3 Students cannot approach a therapy dog or disturb them while sleeping or eating.

4.2.4 Students are not allowed to play rough with the therapy dogs.

4.2.5 Students must ask and wait for permission before touching or stroking the therapy dog.

4.2.6 Students are not allowed to eat during sessions with the therapy dog.

4.2.7 Students must always wash or sanitise their hands after handling or stroking the therapy dog during their session.

4.2.8 Students understand that any deliberate violence or threatening behaviour towards any therapy dogs will result in withdrawal from any therapy session and disciplinary action from the school.

## **5. Service Specifications:**

5.1. Selection of Therapy Dogs: Stay N Play Canine Therapies will certify and assess all dogs used for therapy.

5.2. Dog Handler: A certified handler trained by Stay N Play will always accompany the therapy dog.

5.3. Duration of Sessions: Each session will last for a maximum of 30 30-minute.

## **6. School Responsibilities:**

6.1. Designated Area: Schools must provide a quiet, safe space for therapy sessions, free from distractions.

6.2. Supervision: A school staff member must be available but absent during the therapy session.

6.3. Informing Stakeholders: Schools are responsible for informing parents/guardians about the therapy sessions and obtaining necessary permissions.

## **7. Safety and Hygiene:**

7.1. Health of Dogs: Stay N Play ensures all therapy dogs are vaccinated, groomed, and undergo regular health check-ups.

7.2. Interaction Guidelines: Students will be briefed on appropriate behaviour when interacting with the dogs.

7.3. Hygiene: Hand sanitisers will be provided, and students must sanitise their hands before and after interacting with the dogs.

## **8. Data Protection and Confidentiality:**

8.1. Student Information: Any personal information of students shared with Stay N Play will remain confidential. Information relating to safeguarding will be passed on to the DSL - Designated Safeguard Lead.

8.2. Feedback and Reports: Stay N Play will provide periodic reports on students' progress, maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information.

## **9. Fees and Payments:**

9.1. Service Charge: The school will be charged per the agreement signed between Stay N Play and the school.

9.2. Payment Schedule: Payments must be made within 30 days of invoicing.

## 10. Termination of Agreement:

10.1. Either party can terminate the agreement with a 30-day written notice.

10.2. In case of a breach of policy terms, Stay N Play holds the right to terminate the services immediately.

## 11. Policy Review and Amendments:

11.1. Stay N Play Canine Therapies will review this policy annually.

11.2. Schools will be informed of any changes or updates to the policy.

## 12. Therapy dogs

12.1 Kiera



12.2 Mable



This policy is a guideline to ensure all parties' smooth functioning and safety. Both Stay N Play Canine Therapies and the contracting school should maintain open communication for the benefit and well-being of the students.



**Stay N Play Canine Therapies - school dog risk assessment**

Hazard & risk	Who could be harmed	Likelihood	What precautions are in place?	Additional measures
Animal Health, diseases and parasites	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Low	<p>Dog to have necessary vaccinations before coming into school            Dog to have regular veterinary checks            Dog to be bathed weekly            Dog to live with family and owner when not in school or library.</p> <p>Dog will not be allowed to come into contact with wild rodents due to possibility of disease transmission</p>	
Dog excrement & urine - illness and falls/slips	Pupils/Staff/Visitors	Low	<p>Dog will be wormed.            Dog will be vaccinated and kept free of fleas, ticks.            Any excrement or urine will be cleaned up immediately and thoroughly disposed of responsibly and hygienically by the owner or adult with responsibility at the time of the incident            Hand washing facilities close to where the dog will be.            A bag containing poo bags/ plastic bags, kitchen roll and rubber gloves will be carried by the member of the staff walking the dog.</p>	Dog will be exercised out of school twice a day.

Hygiene/ Infection	Pupils/Staff/ Visitors	Low	<p>Adequate provision for hand washing</p> <p>Do not allow children to touch any part of their face with their hands before hands are washed</p> <p>Younger pupils should be seen washing their hands</p> <p>All wounds on exposed skin are suitably covered</p> <p>Soiled bedding/puppy pads disposed of in sealed plastic bags with normal refuse</p> <p>Food stuff stored carefully to prevent contamination and infestation</p> <p>Dog to be bathed frequently</p>	<p>Hand sanitiser and soap to be available kept in the spaces the dog will spend most of their time.</p>
Allergic reaction to dog	Pupils/Staff/ Visitors	Medium	<p>Virtual schools to let parents know there will be a dog on site so if they have a child who is allergic to let the school know. If this occurs we will ensure that the child does not come into close contact with the dog. Dog kept clean and groomed. Work areas kept well ventilated.</p> <p>Dog bed and blankets to be kept clean and to a high standard if on site.</p> <p>First Aid kit to be available on site</p>	<p>Teachers to be made aware of when the dog may be in the playground or communal areas to ensure that children with allergies do not encounter the dog by chance.</p>

<p>Bites, cuts and scratches</p>	<p>Pupils/Staff/Visitors</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Sociable dogs and are often used as therapy dogs as they are known to be good with children.  Staff/children known to have allergies/ phobias have restricted access to suit their needs  There will be no unsupervised contact with pupils.  Dog closely supervised and kept under control in Head's office and in the quad.  Pupils and staff will be made aware of the procedures of meeting and handling the dog.  First Aid kit in office and Welfare officer works full time in the office.  Supervising adult to ensure dog not over petted to avoid any incidents. If dog appears anxious or over-stimulated, to be removed to peaceful surroundings</p>	
<p>Noise, barking</p>	<p>Pupils who can't cope with noise – e.g. autistic children</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Staffordshire bull terriers and Rottweilers are bred to be sociable dogs with humans and are known to be good with children.  The dog has been introduced to the children from an early age so will be acclimatised to a noisy environment and therefore reduce the chance of it barking. Kiera has also been working with children for over 7 years and Mable for over 1 year.</p>	

<p>Fire drill &amp; evacuation of dog A third party could sue the school for injury caused by the dog</p>	<p>Dog – left in Building</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Areas the dog may be in are accessible by all members of staff. The school will ensure that the animal is covered under their insurance policy and take out comprehensive additional insurance including party liability insurance.</p>	<p>Dog will be under supervision of a member of staff at all times.</p>
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## **School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – to publish to parents**

**Q: Who is the dog's legal owner, and who pays for its costs?**

**A:** The legal owner of the dog will be Luke Millington. He will bear the costs of owning the dog and any liability insurance.

**Q: Is the dog a trained therapy dog?**

**A:** Yes. The dogs attending school have been specifically trained and chosen for their temperament.

**Q: Will the dog be a distraction to students' learning?**

**A:** The dog will be kept in the therapy area. The dog will only spend time in the therapy area at specific planned sessions; therefore, the dog will not distract students during core lessons. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

**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.

**Q: Who is responsible for training?**

**A:** Luke Millington will be the dog's legal owner and, as a result, will be responsible for their training. Appropriate professional training has been obtained. The dogs have been assessed and certified.

**Q: How will the dog go to the toilet to ensure hygiene for all?**

**A:** In the interest of health and hygiene, staff members will take our school dog for short walks outside the school. The dog will not be allowed in the main playground other than to conduct therapy sessions.

**Q: What if my child is scared of dogs? Will they be forced to be in the same room as the dog?**

**A:** The dog will be kept in the therapy room. This area is separate from the classrooms/playground area, which will ensure the school dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under the strict supervision of a trained staff member.

**Q: How will the dog's welfare be considered?**

**A:** The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. The dog will be kept with its legal owner and only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog is carefully trained and will have appropriate access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

**Q: How will this be managed when children have allergies?**

**A:** Children will not need to touch the dog or be in the same room as the dog at any point, relieving the possibility of allergic reactions.



[www.staynplaycaninetherapies.co.uk](http://www.staynplaycaninetherapies.co.uk)