



School Dog Policy & Risk Assessment

Ysgol Pant y Rhedyn



School dog Aims:

Reduce anxiety in pupils

Increase social skills and self esteem

Raise standard of Welsh oracy

Increase attendance

Increase confidence

Introduction

- A variety of animals, including dogs, are becoming an ever-popular and worthwhile addition to schools across the country.
- 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.
- At Ysgol Pant y Rhedyn, we value the development of children's wellbeing along with their spiritual, moral and social education as highly as we value academia. We believe a school dog will be a unique way to enrich all areas of the children's wider education, skills and wellbeing.

Reasons to have a dog in school

- A school dog enables children to put our school values into practice; each one of our values can be developed through and alongside a dog.
- Children with low attendance can be encouraged to come to school with the incentive of a meet and greet from the school dog.
- With the UK dog population reaching 8.5 million, children and adults are bound to come in to contact with dogs at various points in their lives. Children without pet dogs have the opportunity to learn valuable life skills at school about how to safely interact with dogs when they are out and about.
- With a dog to care for, children are more mindful of their behaviour. Incidents of running in corridors and shouting unnecessarily are reduced; they are generally more aware of the impact of their behaviour and choices.
- One of our current school priorities is to help children to develop a growth mindset; to be resilient learners who aren't afraid to make mistakes and persevere to acquire new skills. A dog is an excellent role model for this as training dogs takes time and repetition.
- 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 and reluctant writers to read aloud what they have written. With the presence of a dog, students find social support and peer interaction.
- As a focus or context for learning, the school dog can provide an excellent resource and tangible motivation for children in all subject areas.
- Dogs provide confidence to children as they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Dogs can work with students on a one-to-one basis and will especially help those students who are feeling vulnerable, 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.
- Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching social skills and responsibility. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy from the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Schools can use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness and empower students.

- With a dog in the 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 school dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students 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, can be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities that 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.
- Dogs can be a great way to help students with members of the wider community. For example, students may take the dog to visit other schools or care homes and help others to benefit from this therapeutic support.

Policy written by Catrin Williams, June 2019.

FAQ's

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

The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Williams; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog. Insurance is to be discussed with the business manager.

Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. The dog is from a home where the mother was seen. The dog has a friendly temperament and is a Miniature Labradoodle. The dog is hyper allergenic and has minimal shedding.

Will the dog be a distraction?

The dog will have a timetable where it'll spend it's time between its crate for resting and playpen where it will read/play with children from the trial period. The dog will only come into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

Yes – the risk assessment can be seen below.

Who is responsible for training?

Mrs Williams attends a weekly dog training class with the dog and will be responsible its training. All staff will be encouraged to reward the dog for good behaviour.

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

The dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground.

How will the dog's welfare be considered?

The dog will be taken out each playtime to toilet. The dog will be walked regularly and given free time in the playpen or outside during the day. 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 (appendix 1). This will also be used as a behaviour reward. The dog will be kept in CMW's classroom in playpen or on a leash. 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.

How will this be managed where children have allergies?

Children 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 the dog is known for minimal moulting, and is given high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce the possibility of allergens.

Appendix 1 – Permission slip



Jini—Schaal Dog

While Jini is only a puppy, the long term aim is that she will be used for reading sessions and therapy sessions at the school.

If you are happy for your child to interact with Jini please sign below.

A risk assessment will be available to read on the school website.

Child contract

- I will stay calm around the dog
- I will not make any sudden movements around the dog
- I must only touch Jini in her 'safe area' (green ticks).
- I will keep my face away from the dog
- I will always approach the dog standing up.
- I will wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before stroking it
- I will not eat close to the dog
- If the dog is eating, drinking or sleeping, I will not disturb it.
- I will speak Welsh with the dog

Parent Contract

- I agree with and have discussed the contract points with my child
- I have read the risk assessment on the school website.



I am happy for my child to interact with Jini under supervision.

I am happy for my child to take Jini for a walk on the field under supervision

I wish for my child to have **no interaction** with the school dog.

Signed (by child) _____ Signed (by parent) _____

Class _____ Date _____

Ysgol Pant y Rhedyn – School Dog Risk Assessment

'Standards of Practice for Providers of Animal Assisted Interventions in Schools' document written by the Kennel Club must be read in conjunction with this Risk Assessment.

Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the benefits. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life.

The school dog is owned by Mrs Williams and is a female Labradoodle. Her brother, Celyn, is already a reading dog at Ysgol San Sior, Llandudno. Mum is a Labrador and dad is poodle. Her name is Jini and she will be kept in Mrs Williams's classroom on a leash in her own 'area'. This leash will be attached to the wall. Jini will work with the children in line with agreed protocols. Mrs Williams is researching the benefits of interaction with dogs for children on the autistic spectrum as a calming measure. Jini will be limited to 3 school days and will sometimes be in a crate. As Jini is a puppy his interaction with the pupils will be limited until she is fully trained

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Area: Interaction with staff and pupils				Assessment: June 2019			
Reason: To ensure the school dog acts appropriately at all times.				Review date: June 2020			
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you doing already?	Risk Rating	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Action Required	Responsible person	Date Completed
School dog biting a child or adult	Child or adult could be hurt if the dog bites	The dog attends dog obedience classes. When the dog is approached and touched in the correct way there is limited danger.	When a puppy – medium	Ensure that children do not interact with the dog without supervision. Ensure that all interaction with the dog is completed in agreed way.			
Jumping up / scratching	If the school dog becomes excited there is the danger that he could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	Training has involved not jumping up with praise / rewards given when successful. No interaction will be made with any children if parents have informed the school that they do not want their child to work with the dog	When a puppy – medium	Ensure that children do not interact with the dog unless supervised. The school dog will be supervised when people come to interact with him or under lead control by an authorised person.			
Running Loose	If the dog was to run loose, she could hurt children or	The school dog will always be supervised when children are	Low	Monitor the dog.			

	damage property	around. If not supervised, will be in crate. When taken for a walk the school dog will always be on a lead.					
Direct interaction with children/staff	If the dog is allowed to interact with children when not in the correct frame of mind children/staff could be scratched.	No interaction without authorisation. Interaction cancelled if the dog is displaying incorrect behaviour. Reward / praise given to reinforce desired behaviour.	Low	Ensure dog is approached in the agreed manner.			
Dog phobias /allergies	Children might fear the dog.	With parent's consent introduce the dog over a period to the child.		Ensure dog does not come into accidental contact with these children.			
Use of rewards	Children could be harmed if the school dog is overexcited when receiving a treat. Children must wash their hands after handling treats.	Treats to be taken from the flat palm of the hand. Treats only given with authorisation.	Low	Reminders to the children to wash their hands after handling treats, treats to be stored away to ensure they are not given without consent.			
Dog becoming territorial and barks	Anyone who encounters the school dog /	This should be managed by appropriate training.	Low	Seek advice if this becomes issue			

	disrupt lessons / frighten children.						
Walking the dog on and off site.	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focused. Children may be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk.	If the school dog is taken off site normal risk assessment procedure will take place.	Low	Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dog can walk around during school play / lunch times. No child to walk the dog on the pavement in case they are pulled into the road. This should be reviewed once puppy is older.			
Reading sessions in the hall.	If the school dog visits the hall and the children do not follow the correct procedure, she may become excited	Hall visits will only be made with appropriate adults. The children will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop.	Medium	School dog will visit hall area for some weeks before being allowed contact with children in hall area.			
Being Fed	If a child tried to interact when the dog is eating, she may respond negatively.	Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards). All feeding will be supervised.	Low	Reminders not to interact with the dog when she is feeding			
School events	If the dog is overwhelmed, she may show	The school dog will only attend school events if	Low	Monitor dog's reaction			

	negative behaviour	they are appropriate and under appropriate adult supervision.					
Other dogs	If the school dog encounters another dog he may become withdrawn or show negative behaviour	No other dog allowed to interact with the school dog while on school premises. When out and about an adult to supervise the dog if another dog is encountered.	Medium	Monitor dog's reaction. Ault to hold lead. No contact with other dogs owned by parents.			
Area: Hygine / Health							
Reason : To ensure that pupils, staff do not have an increased risk of illness as a result of there being a dog on site.							
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how	Step 3 What are you doing already?	Risk Rating	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Action Required	Responsible person	Date Completed
Worms/ fleas	If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans.	The school dog is to be given worm/ flea treatments as and when recommended by the vet.	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and act as recommended by vet			
Faeces	If an adult / child encounters the dog's faeces some germs	The school dog will be walked under supervision. No child will be asked to pick up the	Low	If faeces are discovered this must be reported promptly. Faeces are to be disposed of			

	could be transferred.	dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by an adult.		in the bin in the waste disposal area.			
Allergies	If a child is allergic to the school dog they might become unwell.	All the dog's resources stored away safely. No child to enter dog's area without authorisation.	Low	Remind children to ask permission before entering the dog's area.			
Contact with food prep areas.	If the dog enters a food prep area this could be unhygienic.	The dog will never enter the kitchen or dinner hall when food is served.		Remind all to wash their hands.			