

School Dog Risk Assessment

Introduction:

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. The team at Northwood have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and the decision was made in November 2017 to go ahead with the project.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with 'Betty' is invited to write to Miss Hussey and inform her of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the puppy as Pet Doctor's will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. Betty will also be insured.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 – 5*	Controls in Place	Review date and Signature
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground.	1	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.	
	Child scratched by dog.	3	Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog. The dog will always be on a lead or carried	

	Child bitten by dog.	4	<p>when she is not in her crate, except when she is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer or a trainer from 'Ability Dogs'</p> <p>Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole school through assemblies and PSHE sessions.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training from the age of 8 weeks with an experienced ability dog trainer.</p> <p>The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this training will future therapy or reading sessions to involve the school dog can be done in a calming/therapeutic manner.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as she progresses through her weekly training.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>She will attend the vets regularly to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept</p>	
--	----------------------	---	--	--

			short.	
The dog gets loose from her crate or lead.	As above	1	The dog's crate is big enough for her to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease her.	
The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will kept on the school SIMs system.</p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. She will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.</p>	

			<p>Flea treatment is carried out at 6 week intervals.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at meal times; and never in the food preparation area.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford the ongoing cost of the Betty's day to day upkeep or medical bills.	1	<p>The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Miss Hussey both in a well-being and financial aspect. Betty will be insured by the school, for the first year the vet costs are covered by 'Pet Doctors' and food will be bought by staff who would like to contribute to Betty's upkeep.</p> <p>'Ability Dogs for Young People' are providing puppy training and support in school free of charge as they are a charity.</p>	
Claim is made against school about the dog.	School not adequately covered financially.		<p>Insurance will cover any claim.</p> <p>Certificate will be kept in office and renewed annually.</p>	