



School Dog Policy

MAY 2019

Introduction

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.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?

Of course there is, though there are a variety of accidents which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is considered to be another risk that needs to be managed, and for which a risk assessment has been undertaken.

School Policy

Our dog's behaviour and temperament have been assessed and has passed the Pets as Therapy (PAT) certification meaning the dog is a registered Therapy Dog.

Staff will be informed, through staff briefing, that the school will have a PAT dog. Parents will be consulted by letter regarding having a dog in school. A risk assessment has been produced; this will be reviewed annually.

- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. Parents will be encouraged to inform the school if their child has an allergy to or fear of dogs so that a list can be maintained, and the dog kept away from those children.
- If the dog is ill it will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving around the school premises or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.
- Children will not be left alone with the dog and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with children.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not to put their face near the dog. Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating. Children must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.

- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of Children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs, he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

Reasons to have a dog in school

Reading programmes, and other therapeutic interventions with dogs have been shown to have a positive impact on outcomes. 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. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," Children find social support and peer interaction.

Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have children read to them or join a group of children who are receiving other forms of intervention. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to those who find learning difficult. The dogs also provide confidence to children, as they do not make fun of them when they learn, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that children who work with dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the children they mix with.

Social Development: Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching children social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older children build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older children use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower children.

With a dog in the school, children have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving children in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The children also 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 Children. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem.

Therapy Dogs can work with children on a one-one basis and will especially help those children who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the children they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the children they are spending time with. Children who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

The wider community: Dogs can be a great way for to help children to interact with members of the wider community. For example, children may take the dog to visit other schools, hospitals or care homes and help others to benefit from this therapeutic support.

Anti-Bullying Policy

BULLYING: OUR SCHOOL'S VALUES AND BELIEFS

Langford Village Academy will provide a secure and caring community where everyone can learn their own self-worth in an atmosphere of tolerance, mutual respect and co-operation.

We intend the school to be a happy and enjoyable place to work, which will provide the opportunity for every child and adult to fulfil their potential in an attractive, well-resourced and stimulating environment.

We will encourage children to become confident, independent learners who are able to contribute positively to the school and the community in which they live so they can take their full place in society secure as individuals, whilst able to respect the needs and values of others.

In line with this statement:

- All bullying, of any sort, is therefore unacceptable.
- Pupils who experience bullying will be supported.
- We recognise the effects that bullying can have on pupils' feelings of worth and on their school work, and the school community will actively promote an anti-bullying environment

OUR INTENTIONS IN PRODUCING THIS POLICY ARE:

To express our belief that all pupils should be included fully in the life of the school.

To provide a learning environment free from any threat or fear, which is conducive to the achievement of individual aspirations.

To reduce and to eradicate, wherever possible, instances in which pupils are made to feel frightened, excluded or unhappy.

To reduce and to eradicate, wherever possible, instances in which pupils are subject to any form of bullying.

To respond effectively to all instances of bullying that are reported to us.

To establish a means of dealing with bullying, and of providing support to pupils who have been bullied.

To provide support for pupils who are accused of bullying, who may be experiencing problems of their own.

To ensure that all pupils and staff are aware of the policy and that they fulfil their obligations to it.

To meet any legal obligations which rest with the school.

OUR DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying involves dominance of one person by another, or a group of others, is pre-meditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour.

Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

It can take many forms but the main types are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking another's belongings
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours,
- Cyber - sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones/social networking sites.

Some forms of bullying are attacks not only on the individual, but also on the group to which he or she may belong. Within school we will pay particular attention to:

- Racial harassment and racist bullying
- Sexual bullying
- The use of homophobic language

- Bullying of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities.

CREATING AN ANTI-BULLYING CLIMATE IN SCHOOL

Langford Village Academy's Behaviour Policy explains how we promote positive behaviour in school to create an environment where pupils behave well; where pupils take responsibility for each other's emotional and social well-being; and where they include and support each other.

We also draw on the school's Curriculum and PSHCE materials and promote appropriate behaviour through direct teaching, and by creating an emotionally and socially safe environment where these skills are learned and practised. Our aim is to create a climate where bullying is not accepted by anyone within the school community.

Our curriculum is used to:

- Raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy
- Increase understanding for victims and help build an anti-bullying ethos
- Teach pupils how constructively to manage their relationships with others

We will hold a dedicated Anti-Bullying week event annually.

Circle Time, assemblies, role- plays and stories are used to show what pupils can do to prevent bullying, and to create an anti-bullying climate in school.

Bullying will not be tolerated and we make this clear in the information we give to pupils and parents when they join our school.

The school Code of Conduct is displayed around the school and in classrooms to remind pupils of their rights and responsibilities.

We will publish our anti-bullying policy on the school web-site.

Posters around school will tell pupils what to do if they are bullied, or see others being bullied, and about Childline and other sources of confidential help.

Our School Council offers a forum in which concerns can be discussed on a regular basis.

We will ask pupils whether they feel safe in school and we will supervise, and try to eliminate any unsafe areas which they report to us.

We will provide regular training/reminders for teachers and non-teaching staff on spotting the signs of bullying and how to respond to it.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

In dealing with incidents of bullying we will use a range of strategies, selecting those appropriate to the circumstances from the following list:

- Cooperative group work throughout the school ~ To encourage children to work together, be tolerant of others' ideas, trust others and be more willing to listen.
- Circle time ~ To set time aside for pupils to take part in enjoyable games, activities and discussion in a safe environment where all opinions are valued.
- Circle of friends ~ To build relationships around a vulnerable pupil with the pupil's and parent's agreement to offer support and friendship.
- Befriending ~ To appoint a specific pupil(s) as a support / friend [appointed by a member of staff]
- Support group ~ To involve the bullied pupil, those involved in the bullying and bystanders to form a group to support the bullied pupil. We will support the person involved in bullying and give them strategies to help them change their behaviour. We will also give the bullied child strategies to help them stand up to and prevent bullying.
- Mediation by adults ~ To establish ground rules that will enable the bully and the person being bullied to co-exist in school.

[For further clarification see DfES "Bullying – Don't Suffer in Silence" anti-bullying pack p 21-31]

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS WHEN THEY OCCUR

Pupils who have been bullied should report this to:

- Their identified adult in school
- Any member of staff (Teachers, Teaching Assistants or Midday Supervisors)
- Their parents
- A school friend

Pupils who see others being bullied should report this to:

- Any of the above

Members of staff who receive reports that a pupil has been bullied should report this to

- A member of the senior management team (Principal or Associate Principal)

Reports of bullying will be logged by:

- The class teacher or member of SMT

Where bullying is of a racist nature, we will report this to the Local Education Authority using the Racial Incident Report Form.

All reports will be taken seriously and will be followed up by the class teacher or member of the SMT

We will provide support to pupils who are bullied in some of the following ways:

- They will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and this is not their fault.
- We will assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- We will encourage them to talk about how they feel.
- We will try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- We will engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved.
- We will try to ensure that they feel safe.
- We will discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We will ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- We will affirm that bullying can be stopped and that our school will persist with intervention until it does.
- We will involve their friends / older pupils in peer support / the buddy system/ mediation

We may then adopt strategies from the following list as appropriate:

- We will interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying separately.
- We will listen to their version of events.
- We will talk to anyone else who may have witnessed the bullying.
- We will reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop.
- We will seek a commitment to this end.
- We will affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We will adopt a joint problem solving approach where this is appropriate, and ask the pupils involved to help us find solutions to the problem. This will encourage pupils involved to take responsibility for the emotional and social needs of others.
- We will consider sanctions under our school's Behaviour Policy.
- We will advise pupils responsible for bullying that we will be checking to ensure that bullying stops.
- We will ensure that those involved know that we have done so.
- When bullying occurs, we will contact the parents of the pupils involved at an early stage.
- We will keep records of incidents that we become aware of and how we responded to them.
- We will follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again.
- We will also work with pupils who have been involved in bullying others to ascertain the sort of support that they themselves need.

There is a tendency, often quite a natural one, to want to investigate an incident and “get to the bottom of it.” Sometimes this will be entirely appropriate. There will be other occasions where an extended investigation is actually unhelpful and where a problem solving approach will be the most effective response.

Our policy will be to use our discretion to respond flexibly and in an appropriate way to each incident

WHEN TOUGHER MEASURES ARE NEEDED

If necessary, we will invoke the following range of sanctions that are in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. These include

- Removal from the group (within the class)

- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in school events that are not an essential part of the curriculum.
- In extreme cases we will also consider fixed term and / or permanent exclusion from school.
- Parents will be involved.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone within school is expected to:

- Act in a respectful and supportive way towards one another, and
- Adhere to and to promote the objectives of this policy.

Pupils are expected to:

- Report all incidents of bullying and suspected incidents that victims may be afraid to report.
- Support each other and to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.

Parents can help by:

- Supporting our anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Encouraging their children to be positive members of the school community.
- Discussing with their child's teacher any concerns that their child may be experiencing bullying or if they are unhappy in some other way.
- Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside of school.

BULLYING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL PREMISES

Schools are not directly responsible for bullying that occurs off the premises but we know that bullying can occur outside the school gates and on journeys to and from school. The bullying may be done by pupils from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent tells us of bullying off the school premises we will:

- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of school.
- Talk to the Headteacher of another school whose pupils are bullying.
- In exceptional circumstances, talk to the police.

CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS ... AND COMPLIMENTS

We recognise that there may be times when parents feel that we have not dealt well with an incident of bullying and we would ask that this be brought to the Principal's notice. If the Principal cannot resolve these concerns informally, parents can raise their concerns more formally through the school's Complaints Procedure a copy of which may be obtained from the school office.

We would also be pleased to receive Compliments – feedback from parents when things have gone well.

EVALUATING OUR POLICY

We will evaluate our anti-bullying policy using the following measures:

The numbers of incidents that are reported to staff over a given period.

Pupils' perceptions of bullying in school through structured discussions in class time.

The number of days of absence which are thought to arise as a consequence of bullying.

We will investigate patterns of absence to ensure that children are not taking unnecessary days off school due to fear of being bullied.

The number of complaints and compliments that we receive from parents.

From the comments made by visitors and other people connected with the school.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and governors, and published on the academy's website. Copies are also available upon request from the academy office. This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required.

Written by: Debbie Randall

Date: 14-12-17

Agreed by Principal: Debbie Randall

Date: 14-12-17

Ratified by Governors:

Date

Staff read and agreed

Date: