

Brampton Cortonwood Infant School



School Dog Policy

Last Reviewed: July 2021

Next Review: July 2022

Part of the James Montgomery Academy Trust



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.

- The dog will be owned by Mr Adam Minor (former Deputy Head).
- Luna is a cocker spaniel from a local breeder and has been chosen for her very mild temperament.
- The governors have agreed to the school having a dog.
- Staff have been informed, through staff briefings, that the school will have a dog.
- Parents have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school.
- A risk assessment has been written.
- Staff, visitors and pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog.
- If the dog is ill she will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under full supervision at all times when the dog is present with children.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behavior around the dog, remaining 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.
- Pupils should not put their face near the dog and should always approach her standing up.
- Pupils should not go near or approach the dog when she is eating or sleeping.
- Pupils will not be allowed to play rough with the dog.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of pupils, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that they fully monitor the situation.
- Children should not feed or eat close to the dog.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog.

Dogs express their feelings through their body language, growling or baring teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowering or between their legs, hiding behind their owner and whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs she should be immediately removed from the situation/environment.

Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately – with the affected area disinfected.

APPENDIX 1:

Reasons to have a dog in school:

- **Attendance**

Pupils with poor attendance can be encouraged back into school using caring for Luna, a dog, as incentive. By telling children “if you don’t come in to school to care for her, she wouldn’t get walks, water or love.” This may increase their willingness to come to school.

- **Social and Emotional Needs**

These occur in school and can affect and interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve children’s emotional wellbeing by promoting positive behavior in pupils. In a controlled study pupils were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than those without. Pupils’ behavior improved towards teachers and pupils also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog in a school.

- **Reading Programmes**

These programmes often do wonders when sat beside a dog. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud 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 rather than a teacher or peer. After all, a dog will not judge or correct you. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practice reading aloud. With the presence of a ‘calm and well trained dog’ pupils find social support and peer interaction. Dogs prove to be incredibly calm and happy to have a student read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance as they are non-judgemental which is especially good for struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners – providing the children with a sense of caring and love. Research has proved that children who read to 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 pupils they mix with.

- **Personal Development**

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help pupils build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility and boundaries. With a dog in the classroom pupils have an opportunity to learn how to care for the animals. This includes walking and grooming. Research reports that involving pupils in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The pupils 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 pupils. Those pupils 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, will be rewarded by spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities pupils will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem.

- **Support Dogs**

Support dogs can work with students on a one to one basis and will especially help those pupils 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 pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of comfort to children they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

- **The wider community**

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