



## **St Mary's CE Primary School**

### **Dogs in School Policy**

#### **Legislation**

The following government legislation and advice can be applicable to the control and welfare of dogs in public places in general and in schools in particular.

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Environmental Protection Act 1991.
- The Litter (animal droppings) Order 1991.
- Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997.
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.
- Animal Welfare Act 2006. (see appendix A).
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- DFE advice on standards for School Premises 2015.

Possible scenarios include:

- Dogs being brought to the school gate/door by parents/carers taking children to or meeting them from school.
- Brief callers to school who bring a dog with them.
- Disabled staff bringing a guide or assistance dog to work.
- Dogs being brought into school for planned educational purposes.
- A school having their bespoke school dog (see appendix A).
- Dogs being exercised by the public on school land.
- Dogs straying on to school land.



## **Background**

### **Advantages of dogs in educational settings**

We acknowledge that in school, children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. The value of schemes such as 'Pets as Therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to the stimulation of and communication with children especially those of primary school age. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower their levels of anxiety simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

### **Disadvantages of dogs in or near school building**

However, the school also acknowledges that some families choose not to have dogs or other pets and we must respect their right to hold this view. We also recognise that bringing dogs on to the school premises could pose a health and safety risk to our pupils and others on site and it can be unsettling to some children if dogs are close by as they arrive and leave school.

There are added risks of dog fouling, dogs biting and dogs showing unpredictable or even aggressive behaviour. We recognise that even well-behaved dogs can behave uncharacteristically when placed in an unfamiliar, busy, noisy and crowded school environment and that this can leave to misbehaviour by even the best-trained pet. Children, too, can behave unpredictably when in the presence of dogs, especially if they are not used to being with them or indeed are actually frightened of them.

There is also the risk that contact with animals can result in infestation by parasites and infection including gastro-intestinal or fungal infections. This is particularly a risk for pregnant women or persons with a weakened immune system. There are also both adults and children who have an allergic reaction to the proximity of certain types of animal, including dogs.

### **View of the RSPCA**

We are mindful of the fact that the RSPCA is opposed to the use of animals in education if distress or suffering is or is likely to be caused to the animal. They believe that children and young people can be taught about animals without keeping pets in the classroom, and therefore strongly discourages the keeping of animals in schools. Their literature states that schools can be noisy and frightening places for some animals and it is very difficult to look after any animal's needs properly in a classroom environment.

The governors are insistent that the policy and code of conduct must be strictly adhered to at all times.



## **Policy**

The governors and staff of St Mary's School recognise that dogs are an important part of the lives of some of our families and, as such, are often included in day-to-day activities, such as walking children to and from school.

In our teaching, we promote good relationships with and treatment of animals. We acknowledge and accept the concept of pets as family members and encourage pupils to accept the responsibilities associated with pet ownership.

We must bear in mind too, that many of our staff and governors may themselves be dog owners.

We fully accept that there are legitimate concerns and risks associated with bringing dogs or other animals on to school premises.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- The governing board has the responsibility to ensure that the school has a written 'Dogs in school' policy in place.
- The headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy, which may be delegated to a member of the senior leadership team/an assistant headteacher/ a designated person.
- All staff are required to abide by the policy.
- The health and safety officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

### **Code of conduct**

The governing body requires all staff, parents and visitors whose dogs accompany them on site to adhere to this policy.

### **Authorised visits**

- No dogs are permitted on the school premises unless on an official organised visit.
- All visiting dogs must be on a lead or harness that keeps the dog reasonably close to the adult who is in control of them.
- No dogs, apart from Wilson our school dog, are allowed inside any school building unless they are assistance dogs or are from an officially recognised organisation such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, PAT (Pets as Therapy) dogs, Dogs' Trust workshops etc on an educational visit or as part of a timetabled lesson.
- Visiting dogs must not be left unsupervised on the school premises at any time and must not be left in the sole care of a child under the age of 16.
- If a dog is going to be in school for educational purposes, staff must know in advance and parents must be informed by letter and/or online.
- If any staff, parents or child object to an animal's presence then, as far as possible, arrangements must be made to ensure the animal is kept away from them.
- If there is a member of staff or regular visitor who is reliant on a guide dog or dog assistance in any way, that animal must be allowed to accompany the staff member at all times.



### **Family dogs**

- Dogs must be kept away from entrance ways so that children have a choice of whether or not to come into direct contact with dogs.
- No dog may be left tied up and unattended on or near the school site at any time.
- No dog should be left unattended in a vehicle on or near the school premises for any longer than 10 minutes and that vehicle should be properly ventilated at all times. In hot weather, this time must be no more than 5 minutes even with ventilation.
- Dogs are not allowed on children's outside play or sports areas.
- Members of the public may not walk or exercise their dogs on school land. If an offender persists after an initial warning, then the school should approach the local authority dog warden or the police.
- If there is a stray dog on the school grounds, the school should contact the local authority warden for advice. Pupils should be kept indoors until the animal has been safely recovered.

### **Guidance for using dogs in an educational context**

The following guidance and code must be adhered to:

- A risk assessment is carried out before the visit.
- The organisation supplying the dog must show evidence that the dog has a suitable nature and temperament.
- The organisation must have public liability insurance.
- Parents and carers must be informed of the visit and the extent of interaction likely between pupils and the animal. Permission slips from parents should be obtained.
- Alternative arrangements must be made for any child who does not wish, or whose parents do not wish him/her, to participate in the lesson.
- All necessary arrangements must be put into place before the visit as agreed with the organisation bringing in the dog. This should take into account the breed of dog, age group of the pupils and numbers of children involved.
- Consideration must be taken of any allergic reaction to dogs that pupils and staff may have.
- All dogs coming into classrooms must be properly vaccinated and treated for parasites, regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or illness.
- The dog's claws should have been trimmed.
- If the dog is ill, it must not come into school.
- Only authorised people should feed the dog. Pupils should not feed or eat close to the dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately

- Pupils should have been taught the appropriate behaviour around dogs before the visit.
- Good hygiene and handwashing procedures must be in place for pupils.

### **Wilson – our school dog**

In addition to the below - School Dog frequently asked questions can be found in Appendix B

#### **Management day-to-day**

Wilson will:

- 🐕 not be allowed into school if unwell
- 🐕 be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk
- 🐕 be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
- 🐕 be fully trained
- 🐕 have had all injections
- 🐕 never be taken off the site by pupils

Pupils will:

- 🐕 NOT have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with Wilson
- 🐕 meet Wilson personally in a group of no more than 3 children
- 🐕 be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Wilson every time they meet him
- 🐕 always remain calm around him
- 🐕 not make sudden movements
- 🐕 be gentle
- 🐕 not stare into a dog's eyes as this could be interpreted as a threat
- 🐕 not put their face near a dog
- 🐕 always approach the dog standing up
- 🐕 not be allowed to disturb Wilson if he is sleeping or eating
- 🐕 never be allowed to feed Wilson
- 🐕 learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. (Growling or baring of teeth indicates 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.)
- 🐕 receive information about looking after pets and shown how to stroke Wilson

#### **Health and safety principles:**

- 🐕 Children will always wash their hands after touching Wilson.
- 🐕 Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the dog's owner. Children must never attempt to do this.

Should a bite (even playful) occur:

- 🐕 parents will be contacted immediately
- 🐕 the wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing
- 🐕 the child/adult will be released for medical attention
- 🐕 all staff will be informed
- 🐕 a full investigation into the circumstances will be led by the Headteacher



- ✎ the suitability of the dog will be re-assessed by the dog's veterinary surgeon and this advice shared with school governors who will make the final decision about him remaining in school
- ✎ All learning areas of the school will have a Wilson Code of Conduct for pupils (Appendix C) displayed. Staff will ensure that this is known by all pupils.
  
- ✎ Staff areas have a Wilson Code of Conduct for staff (Appendix D).
- ✎ The risk assessment (Appendix E) is reviewed annually.

### **Equal Opportunities Statement**

This policy applies to all and does not unlawfully discriminate because of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

**This is a non-statutory policy.**

**The policy is dated at its last review or when written.**

**The policy will be reviewed as required by the School Leadership Team.**



## **Animal Welfare Act 2006**

If an animal or animals come on to school premises, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, those adults involved are subject to the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This includes any member of staff or visitor who is reliant on a guide or other assistance dog, although of course such animals are always wholly welcome in school.

This Act equally applies to schools that may have a school dog, or keep animals in school.

The Act places a legal obligation to ensure that the needs of an animal are met. The most important requirements of the Act are:

- The need for a suitable environment.
- The need for a suitable diet (food and fresh water).
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
- Any need that the animal has to be housed with or apart from other animals.
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

These responsibilities do not end at the finish of the school day, but continue as long as the animal remains in school, and includes evenings, weekends and holidays. Personal responsibility exists irrespective of whether the animal in question was bought by the school or owned by staff, pupils or parents.

If an animal's needs are not being adequately met while at school, criminal prosecutions could in theory be brought against all persons over the age of 16 who had responsibility for the animal.



**School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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

A The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs Hanger; she will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

**Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?**

A Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

**Q Will the dog be a distraction?**

A The dog will be kept in Mrs Hanger's office. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure the dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact, under strict supervision.

The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely.

The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialization.

**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 and a reputable dog behaviourist.

**Q Who is responsible for training?**

A Mrs Hanger is the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for his training. Appropriate professional training has been obtained for the dog and key staff members.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school 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, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

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

A The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. 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. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will have unlimited access to water and will be fed only by Mrs Hanger. We will work carefully



to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

**Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?**

A 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 dog is known for minimal moulting, he is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

**Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?**

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

Code of Conduct – pupils

## Wilson

### Student Code of Conduct



Wilson is everyone's friend. Please love him as if he were your own. A few simple rules to make his and our lives happy and easier.

- 1) Remain seated or, if working standing up, at your table.
- 2) Remain quiet. Loud noises or shouting will frighten him.
- 3) Do not approach him unless you have been given permission.
- 4) Stroke his back, not his face.
- 5) Never allow him to lick you.
- 6) He will always be on a lead with an adult. Children will not be allowed to hold the lead.
- 7) Do not feed him.
- 8) If there is too much noise or crowding, Wilson will be removed from Class.

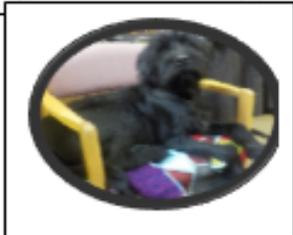
**General rule.** If you are frightened DO NOT scream, wave your hands around and run away. Wilson (and all dogs) will think you are playing and he will Chase you and jump up. If you are frightened, please move away from him slowly and let an adult know.  
If he is close to you and you are frightened, Cross your arms and turn your back to him.

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Code of Conduct – staff

Wilson

**Staff Code of Conduct**



Wilson is everyone's friend. Please love him as if he were your own pet.  
A few simple rules to make his and our lives happy and easier.

- 1) Wilson is still a puppy and needs a lot of sleep, so if you see that he is asleep in the office please DO NOT come in and wake him. (This is also our time to complete our work.)
- 2) Please don't feed him ANY treats unless they have been given to you from his allowance of special dog treats. (Chocolate, grapes and raisins are very dangerous to him.)
- 3) To keep him calm, please don't fuss over him. I know this is hard, but he is learning and although we think he's funny, he then thinks he is allowed to carry on, and although this is okay while he is a puppy, it's not so good when he is full grown and powerful. Please ask if you wish to see him. There is a right time for fuss and rewards.
- 4) Encourage children to do the same. The calmer Wilson is the better results we will get.
- 5) He is always willing to go for walks. If you fancy a walk in the park (it's a great way to get some exercise, fresh air and a release of tension with a break from the norm) you are more than welcome to take him out. I was surprised to find some areas around here, that even after 18 years, I didn't know were here.) I will put a rota on my door, if you want to nominate a day.

**Wilson Risk Assessment**

Hazard	Risk	Risk Category 1-5	Likelihood 1-5	Controls in place
Dog getting over excited when interacting with	Child scratched by dog  Child bitten by dog	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐕 Wilson will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training.</li> <li>🐕 Children are not left with the dog unsupervised.</li> <li>🐕 Wilson will always be on a lead when he is out of the office.</li> <li>🐕 Wilson will be trained by an experienced trainer.</li> <li>🐕 Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, class time and PSHE lessons.</li> <li>🐕 Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting Wilson and how to remain calm around him.</li> <li>🐕 Wilson has received formal training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment.</li> <li>🐕 Pupils and adults will be reminded not to touch Wilson's mouth, head and rear end and to stand and cross their arms if they do not want to engage with Wilson.</li> <li>🐕 All staff given permission to handle Wilson will be given strict instructions to follow and appropriate training.</li> <li>🐕 Wilson will attend the vets' regularly to make sure he is in good health.</li> </ul>
The dog gets loose from his pen or from his lead.	Child scratched, or bitten by dog	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐕 Wilson will be kept safe whilst at school, he will also roam free in the office area and around the staff areas when with a designated adult.</li> <li>🐕 Children and staff are taught not to tease him or taunt through the window.</li> <li>🐕 If Wilson does get loose the office staff or designated handler will call for support. There are certain members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if he needs attention at any other time, they are: Mrs. hanger, Mrs. Cross, Mrs. Garrett, Mr. McCarroll, Miss Melvin</li> <li>🐕 Wilson will always be on his lead when out of the offices or when trained adults are in strict supervision.</li> </ul>
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐕 Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school.</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐕 Children will have the opportunity to interact with Wilson as they wish and those with allergies would be able to opt out of interaction.</li> <li>🐕 Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with Wilson.</li> </ul>
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐕 Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner.</li> <li>🐕 All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and Mrs. Hanger keeps a register of this.</li> <li>🐕 Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with European Vet guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals.</li> <li>🐕 The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen or the Food Tech room.</li> </ul>
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐕 The school has public liability insurance and specialist working dog insurance via Pets in Business (cost covered by school). The policy covers Wilson in school and Mrs. Hanger has further insurance outside of school hours.</li> </ul>