



Newbottle and Charlton C.E.V.A. Primary School

*'Let all that you do be done in love';
Every Person Matters, Every Moment Counts*

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School Dog Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body on [Date]:	May 2025
Chair of Governors Signature:	Chris Coopman
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School Dog Policy

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. We value the development of children's well-being along with their spiritual, moral and social education as highly as we value academic achievement. We believe a school dog will be a unique way to enrich all areas of the children's wider education, skills and well-being.

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 an animal. Therefore, as with any risk, a thorough risk assessment has been out carried and this is included in this document (appendix 1)

Reasons to have a dog in school

Below, are listed numerous benefits to having a dog in school.

- A school dog enables children to put our school values into practice: from friendship to respect, love and happiness; each one of our values and more 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.
- Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some pupils. 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.
- A school dog can potentially improve self-esteem, acceptance from others and lift mood, often provoking laughter and fun.
- Dogs provide confidence to children as they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Dogs can work with pupils on a one-one basis and will especially help those pupils 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 pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the pupils they are spending time with. Pupils 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 pupils can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help pupils build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Schools can use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower pupils.
- 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, can be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog.

Principles

This policy applies to the named dog only (Nova). It does not affect the school's right to prohibit other dogs on school property.

The dog/s is owned by and lives with Mr Peter Pitts-Smith (headteacher) as such all veterinary care and necessary costs for caring for Nova will be responsibility of Mr Pitts-Smith. The dog's health and well-being is prioritised along with that of the children and staff. The dog will be insured. All vaccinations, worming treatments and vet checks will be up to date. If the dog is ill, he will not be allowed into school.

Nova is a 5-year-old Dachshund/Patterdale Terrier cross.



Nova will be kept on a lead when moving through the school building or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of Mr Pitts-Smith or an appropriately chosen adult.

The dog will be restricted to very specific areas of the school building (interventions rooms or Headteacher office)

Nova will not be on the school premise every day but will be in on occasions supporting the school in different ways. Notices will be displayed to inform children, staff and visitors of the dog's presence.

Staff, visitors and pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs should not go near the dog. Anyone with a fear of dogs will be respected and never be forced to interact with the dog. They can receive coaching in a controlled environment with the dog to help them overcome their fears if they so wish.

Interactions with Pupils:

- Pupils will carry out workshops regularly by the Dogs Trust to support their understanding of dogs and how interact safely with them.
- Pupils will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around a dog.
- Pupils will not be allowed near the dog when she is sleeping.
- Pupils will not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Pupils will be reminded not to feed the dog food that is meant for human consumption.
- Pupils will be reminded not to put their face near to the dog.
- Pupils will be reminded to wash their hands after playing with the dog and/or handling her
- Growling is a very important behaviour used by a domestic dog to signify that he feels threatened. If the dog growls at any time, the dog will be separated from the pupil or pupils immediately.
- Pupils will be encouraged to remain calm around the dog. Failure to do so will impact on their access to the dog.
- The dog will be taken out the front entrance grass area for toileting which children don't freely use. If any 'accidents' occur in areas where children have access to, appropriate measures will be taken to disinfect the affected site.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy and risk assessment for dogs in school. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy and risk assessment will be reviewed and monitored when the need arises by the headteacher but at least every year. It will be approved by the governing body.

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): To publish to parents

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

A The legal owner of the dog will be Mr Pitts-Smith. He will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support liability insurance and training costs only where appropriate.

Q Will the dog be a distraction to students' learning?

A The dog will be kept in Mr Pitts-Smith's office or other intervention rooms. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, and support staff well-being, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken? (see appendix)

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school.

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 around the grounds.

Q What if my child is scared of dogs? Will they be forced to be in the same room as the dog?

Mr Pitts-Smith or an appropriate adult will ensure the school dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. A student will not be forced to be in contact with dog at any time against their wishes. 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 using evidence based interventions such as graded exposure.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog's welfare will be carefully monitored. She will not stay in school all day but have up to 5 hours on the school grounds while also resting at home and going for walks.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children will not need to touch the dog or be in the same room as the dog at any point 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.

Dog in School Risk Assessment

HAZARD	WHO IS AFFECTED/AT RISK	RISK RATING (LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH)	ACTIONS/CONTROL MEASURES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Bites, scratches or illness caused by the dog	Staff, pupils	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around dogs prior to every meeting. • The dog will be vaccinated, wormed, and treated for fleas • Any toileting will be carried out away from the children. • All staff and pupils are required to wash their hands after contact with dogs • Adults will clear up dog urine and faeces promptly and dispose of this safely – pupils are told to stay away • Dogs are not taken anywhere near food preparation areas 	Mr Pitts-Smith
Allergies	Staff and pupils	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We seek parental permission for children to interact with dogs • Pupils and staff should wash their hands after active participation with the dog • All areas to be cleaned on a daily basis which the dog has access to. 	Mr Pitts-Smith
Phobias	Staff and pupils	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We tell parents and children about the visit in advance • Contact with dogs is optional • Alternative activities are provided in a separate room for those with a phobia 	Mr Pitts-Smith

HAZARD	WHO IS AFFECTED/AT RISK	RISK RATING (LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH)	ACTIONS/CONTROL MEASURES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Dog getting over excited when interacting or agitated with children and staff	Staff and pupils	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the school building the dog will always be on the lead and her claws will be checked regularly. • Dog will only be in school up to 4 hours at a time. • If the need arises the dog can be taken home to calm down if she is getting over excited or agitated by any noises or interactions (monitored closely by Mr Pitts-Smith) 	Mr Pitts-Smith
Children misbehaving	Pupils, dogs	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are told in advance what to expect and how to behave • School staff are present at all time during the visit • School staff are ready to remove children who misbehave or upset dogs 	Mr Pitts-Smith
Damage caused to school materials, equipment and the school site	Dogs	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog remain on a lead at all times • The dog is kept in secured rooms, with closed doors • Mr Pitts-Smith to bring suitable toys if necessary • Areas/classrooms are cleared as much as possible before the dog's visit 	Mr Pitts-Smith