

# School Dog Risk Assessment

Approved by: Headteacher

Date: January 2023

Review date: January 2025



Knowledge



Spark



Humanity



Grit



Team

**Includes:**

- **Purpose and Introduction**
- **Interaction with pupils and staff**
- **Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog**
- **Hygiene/Health**
- **Activities involving the school dog, including walking**

**Current Risk Assessments completed: January 2023**

**Risk Assessments to be reviewed: January 2025**

<b>Purpose</b>
<p><b>1. Dogs teach children responsibility.</b> Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.</p>
<p><b>2. Dogs teach children patience.</b> Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!</p>
<p><b>3. Dogs teach children compassion.</b> Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.</p>
<p><b>4. Dogs teach children about socialisation.</b> Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be easier.</p>
<p><b>5. Dogs are fun.</b> Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.</p>
<p>Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child's sugar is low, and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can enrich a child's life.</p>

## Introduction

The Clapgate Primary School dog 'Rufus' lives with our Care and Support Worker, Mrs Rhodes, and her family. He is a very caring and well behaved dog who has the right temperament that makes him a real asset to Clapgate Primary School.

His mother is a Cavalier Spaniel and his father is a Bischon Frise. This makes him ½ Cavalier Spaniel and ½ Bischon Frise – this mix is known as a Cavachon.

He has public liability insurance, this means he can come into school. He regularly visits the vet for check-ups. Whilst he is there they administer worm and flea treatments as well as make adjustments to his food intake to ensure he remains a healthy weight.

In addition to the 5 key reasons for him joining us, outlined in the purpose, we also believe he will improve the children's abilities within the school and help to improve and secure higher attendance levels.

**Area: Interaction with pupils and staff.**

**Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times.**

<b>Step 1 Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?</b>	<b>Step 3 What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating Trivial/Low/ Medium/High/ Stop</b>	<b>Step 4 Is anything further needed?</b>
School dog biting a child or adult.	Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites.	The school dog is trained not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way, there is very limited danger. The school dog lives with Mrs Rhodes who handles him all the time to ensure that he is used to interaction with children.	Low	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision. Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in an agreed way.

School dog jumping up or scratching.	If the school dog becomes excited, there is a danger that he could jump up and knock over a child or leave a scratch mark.	The temperament of the school dog is calm, gentle and affectionate. The training he has received has involved not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful. On admission a form is completed by the parent to give/not give consent for their child to have contact with the school dog. Parents asked to explain their wishes to their child and ask them not to approach the dog if they do not want any contact.	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision. The school dog will be under lead control by an authorised adult.
School dog running loose.	If the school dog was to run loose he could hurt children/adults or damage property.	The school dog is contained at all times either in an office (with a clear sign on the door) or on a lead.	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is effective and appropriate.
Direct interaction with children/staff.	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind, children/staff could be scratched.	No interaction is allowed without authorisation. Interaction is cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour. Rewards/praise are given to reinforce the desired behaviour.	Medium	Ensure that the dog is approached in the agreed manner.

Destruction of materials.	If allowed, the school dog may chew/destroy some school materials/resources.	The school dog is always contained. The school dog has his own toys to play with and normal school resources are removed.	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is effective and appropriate.
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### **Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog.**

**Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times.**

<b>Step 1 Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?</b>	<b>Step 3 What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating Trivial/Low/ Medium/High/ Stop</b>	<b>Step 4 Is anything further needed?</b>
Incorrect/inconsistent interaction with dog.	If a child/adult interacts with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way, this will affect the school dog's training and have a negative impact on future interaction.	Agreed guidelines are followed at all times when interacting with the school dog. There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation.	Medium	If there are inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped.
Use of rewards/treats.	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog gets over excited when receiving a reward/treat. Children/adults must clean their	Children/adults are asked to wash their hands after handling treats. Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation.	Low	Reminders to the children to wash their hands after handling treats. Treats to be locked away to ensure they can only be used

	hands after handling treats.			after authorisation.
Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a puppy/dog.	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly, this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves.	All classes are aware there is an agreed format on how to interact with the school dog	Medium	Reminder to follow agreed format on how to interact with the school dog.

### Area: Hygiene/health

**Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog do not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school.**

<b>Step 1 Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?</b>	<b>Step 3 What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating Trivial/Low/ Medium/High/ Stop</b>	<b>Step 4 Is anything further needed?</b>
Worms/fleas.	If the school dog is not treated for worms, there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans.	The school dog is treated monthly at a local vets to ensure he is correctly treated for worms and fleas.	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet.
Faeces.	If a child/adult comes into contact with the school dog's faeces, some germs could be transferred.	The school dog is only walked under supervision. No child is asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this is always undertaken by the adult in supervision.	Low	If a child finds faeces on the school playground/field, they report it to an adult.
Allergies.	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell.	Children are not in contact with the school dog if we have received a	Medium	

		negative response from parents. If a child has an allergy, the school dog does not carry out tasks near the child.		
Children's access to school dog's resources.	If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some, they could become unwell.	All of the school dog's resources are locked away. No child is allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation.	Low	Remind children not to enter area.
Contact with food preparation areas.	If the school dog enters a food preparation area, this could be unhygienic.	The school dog is in a contained area or on a lead at all times around school. He never enters the school kitchen.	Trivial	
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog.	If hands are not cleaned, children/adults could become unwell.	All adults and children clean their hands after interaction with the school dog.	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands.

**Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking.**

**Reason: To ensure that the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community.**

<b>Step 1 Identify the hazards</b>	<b>Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?</b>	<b>Step 3 What are you already doing?</b>	<b>Risk Rating Trivial/Low/ Medium/High/ Stop</b>	<b>Step 4 Is anything further needed?</b>
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Walking the dog on and off site.	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focused. Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk.	If the school dog is taken off site, normal risk assessed procedure is followed. No children take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk, unless authorised to do so by the accompanying adult. No children are allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk, unless permission is given.	Medium	Careful consideration to be given to the amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes.
Visits to the classroom.	If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure, he may become over excited.	The school dog only make classroom visits when accompanied by a supervising adult. The children follow the agreed procedure or the interaction is stopped.	Medium	Careful consideration to be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant.
Being fed.	If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating, he may respond aggressively.	No child is allowed in the school dog's area when he is eating. Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards). All feeding will be supervised.	Low	Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when he is eating.
School events.	If the school dog is overwhelmed, he may become aggressive or boisterous.	The school dog only attends school events if they are appropriate and he will be under the	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction to school events. If the school events are too



		control of a supervising adult.		overwhelming, the school dog might not attend school on that day.
Other dogs (on and off the site).	If the school dog is overwhelmed, he may become aggressive or boisterous.	No other dogs are allowed on the school premises (unless a separate risk assessment is completed and a plan put into place to ensure the dogs are not left together). At no time is the school dog walked by a child alone and as a result, if another dog is seen, this is dealt with by the supervising adult.	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction when out walking.

## **Appendix 1 - School Dog - Frequently Asked Questions**

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

The legal owner of the dog is Mrs Rhodes; she bears the costs associated with owning the dog such as food, toys, bedding etc... The school budget supports insurance, vets fees and training costs where appropriate.

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

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

**Will the dog be a distraction?**

The dog is kept in an office area. The office is separate from the classrooms/playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. The dog also has a space to spend time in classrooms, outside and in other learning environments where children can interact safely. The dog attends meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand. The dog will continue to receive training updates, organised in and out of school by Mrs Rhodes.

**Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

Yes, we 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.

**Who is responsible for training?**

Mrs Rhodes is the legal owner of the dog and is responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training has been completed and any additional training will be completed as and when required.

**Who will look after the dog when Mrs Rhodes is on holiday?**

The dog will be looked after by Mrs Rhodes' family or Miss Taylor to ensure his training and routines are maintained.

**What happens if Mrs Rhodes is absent on long-term sick?**

Arrangements will be made so that the dog will still be brought into school to complete his work as usual. A number of staff are trained to work with the dog in the absence of Mrs Rhodes.

**What happens if Mrs Rhodes leaves Clapgate?**

Arrangements will be made so that the dog will still be brought into school to complete his work as usual. A number of staff are trained to work with the dog in the absence of Mrs Rhodes. He will still belong to Mrs Rhodes.

**What happens to the dog when he is too old or incapable of working anymore?**

The legal owner of the dog is Mrs Rhodes, so he will continue to live with her. All costs associated with owning the dog such as food, toys, bedding, insurance, vets fees will become the responsibility of Mrs Rhodes at this point.

Signature:

Jacqui Rhodes – Dog Owner

Heather Taylor – Deputy Headteacher

Natasha Singleton – Headteacher

Dave Bache – Chair of Governors

