

**School Dog Risk Assessment**

**Barlby Community Primary School April 2023**

The value of pet therapy is widely accepted as a powerful aid to communication and motivation. Research has shown that companion dogs can improve the well-being of children, reducing their anxiety levels by making the school environment happier and a more enjoyable place to be. Dogs are a great comfort to children who are upset in any way and in need of calm, consolation, comfort, breathing space or a distraction before being able to tell an adult what has upset them. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally; a dog can motivate and encourage their participation, increase their understanding of responsibility, develop empathy and nurturing skills and improve their behaviour and self-esteem. Children cannot fail in any way in their relationship with a dog; they do not judge or condemn and offer unconditional affection. Children will learn the principles of good pet ownership and be taught how to handle dogs safely and responsibly; they will take great enjoyment from interaction with the dog.

* Dogs are fun! They greet you with a wagging tail and unconditional love which will inspire you to come into school on time each day and thrive.
* Dogs teach children about socialisation. By learning how to interact with a dog, your communication and socialisation skills will improve.
* Dogs teach children compassion. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain and so you must ensure that you care for our school dog.
* Dogs teach children patience. Dogs do not always do as they are asked first time. Keep trying and don’t give up!
* Dogs teach children responsibility. Help our school dog by ensuring he has enough food, water and comfort each day.

The Barlby Community Primary School Dog Bernie will live with Mrs Baker, the Headteacher. Mrs Baker will cover the day to day cost and upkeep of the school dog, including pet insurance and vet bills. Bernie is a very caring and well behaved dog who has the right temperament to become a real asset to our school community. Public liability insurance is in place for Bernie; this means that he is able to come into school. Bernie will regularly visit the vet for check-ups and Mrs Baker will ensure that all flea and worming treatments are up to date.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task / Activity / Area: How the school dog will interact with pupils and staff** | | | | **Assessment Date: May 2023**  **Update – June 2023**  **Updated September 2023** | | | |
| **Brief Details: To ensure that the school dog interacts appropriately at all times** | | | | **Review Date: May 2024** | | | |
| **Step 1: Identify the hazards** | **Step 2: Who might be harmed and how?** | **Step 3: What are you already doing?** | **Risk rating /likelihood** | **Step 4: Is anything further needed?** | **Step 5: Action and review** | | |
| **Action required** | **Responsible person** | **Date complete** |
| School dog biting an adult or child. Claim made against the school if the school dog bites. | Any child or adult within the school could be hurt if the school dog bites. | 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 the agreed way  • Pet insurance and liability insurance updated / checked annually | low |  |  |  |  |
| Dog hair causes allergic reaction | Staff and / or pupils may have pet hair allergies. They may have an allergic reaction to the school dog | Bernie is a cockapoo, a hypoallergenic dog.  Consent from all parents / guardians regarding contact with the dog  • Up to date health care plans for any children with allergies.   * School SLT liaise directly with parents of children with allergy and work together on Risk Assessment measures as set out below: * The dog will NOT be washed prior to coming into contact with child as this releases fluff/hair/dander * The child will not be allowed any direct physical contact with the dog * The child will be allowed to be present in same room/ space as dog but an adult will ensure a minimum distance of 5m is kept between dog and child. * The dog and child will be allowed in the same room at the same time but the room will be well-ventilated. Where appropriate to the weather and activity- an outdoor space will be used instead. * Staff will ensure adequate amounts of antihistamine are available (piriton) in the event of an allergic reaction. * Other children in the child’s class will wash and sanitise their hands after contact with the dog and before contact with the child. * School staff will notify child’s parents day BEFORE the dog is due to come into child’s class so they can monitor any reaction / impact. | medium |  |  |  |  |
| School dog jumping up / scratching | If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that he could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark | The dog has attended training where jumping up is discouraged • Children will not interact with the school dog without adult supervision.  • No interaction will be made without parental / guardian consent.  • Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour  The school dog will be in a handled harness when interacting with children  • Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way  • The school dog will be positively praised / rewarded for not jumping up when greeting staff and children. | medium |  |  |  |  |
| Running loose | If the school dog was to run loose, he could hurt children/adults or damage property | The school dog will be supervised by an adult at all times  • The school dog will be contained at all times either in a closed room or on a lead  • Ensure that staff know what to do if they see the school dog loose/unsupervised | low |  |  |  |  |
| Destruction of materials | If allowed, the school dog may chew/destruct some school materials/resources | The school dog will be contained at all times, on a lead or closed room.  • The school dog will have his own toys to play with and any school resources will be removed | low |  |  |  |  |
| Use of rewards/treats | Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats | Alcohol gel will be available to all adults and children.  • Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation and supervision  • Treats to be put away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation | low |  |  |  |  |
| Incorrect and/or inconsistent interaction with the school dog | If a child/adult interacts with the school dog in an incorrect or inconsistent way this will affect the school dog’s training thus having a negative impact on future interaction | Agreed guidelines in place must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog  • There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation/ adult supervision  • Assemblies to discuss correct interaction with the school dog will take place  • Agreed guidelines discussed with adults and children regularly | medium |  |  |  |  |
| Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a dog | If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves | There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dog – guidelines in place for staff and children | medium |  |  |  |  |
| The school dog becomes ill | If the school dog is unwell then he is unlikely to interact in the correct manner. | Mrs Baker will decide on the day whether the school dog is fit and well enough to attend  • If the school dog becomes ill during the school day, then he will be taken home and off school site | low |  |  |  |  |
| Fire alarm / lock down | Dog may become agitated during a fire alarm / lock down. School dog may be left in the building during a practice alarm | School dog will be signed in each day so that staff and caretaker know that he is on site  • The supervising adult will be responsible for getting the school dog to safety   * Early exposure by dog to the fire alarm sound * The dog shows no sign of agitation towards loud noises already exposed to, such as fireworks, drumming, electric guitar. | low |  |  |  |  |
| Financial cost of dog’s upkeep | School unable to afford day to day cost for upkeep of dog including medical bills | The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Baker and she is financially responsible for all of her care and day to day costs.  • The dog is the responsibility of Mrs Baker outside of school hours.   * Dog training cost – responsibility of Mrs Baker | low |  |  |  |  |
| Visits to classroom/ classroom noise | If the school dog visits a classroom and the children do not follow the correct procedure, he may become over excited | Classroom visits will take place to act as a meet and greet in the mornings or as part of a quiet reading session. The dog will only be with staff that have build up a relationship with the dog and read the RA toughly  • The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop  . Children that do not have permission to interact with the dog will be greeted by a member of staff and removed from the area until the dog has left the room.  • Agreed guidelines / procedure discussed with adults and children regularly. | medium |  |  |  |  |
| Walking the dog on and off site | Children could be harmed during a walk off site if they are not focussed. 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 will take place  • No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk. They may jointly hold the lead with the supervising adult  • No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk unless permission is given  The school dog will be contained in an office during break and lunch and will not be allowed onto the school playground or field. | medium |  |  |  |  |
| Being fed | If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating, she may respond aggressively | No child will be allowed in the school dog’s contained area when he is eating  • Children will not interact with the dog when he is eating a treat | low |  |  |  |  |
| School events -eg sports day/ fairs | If a dog is overwhelmed they may become aggressive or boisterous | The school dog will not attend any school events | low |  |  |  |  |
| Other dogs (on and off site) | If the school dog encounters another dog, she may become boisterous | No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises  • At no time will the school dog be walked by a child - and as a result if another dog is seen this will be dealt with by the supervising adult | low |  |  |  |  |
| Hygiene – dog fouling | If the dog fouls on site a child may come into contact with it and the associated germs | School dog will be regularly walked off site / carpark area  • The school dog is toilet/ house trained and generally does not foul inside. In the event he is unwell or has an accident, this will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by the supervising staff member.  • Supervising adult will be responsible for picking up and disposing off any dog dirt using the doggy bags. | low |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Risk assessment completed by: Jillian Baker | Signed:  Date: |
| Risk assessment authorised by: Philip Boyes | Signed:  Date: |