



Inmans Primary School

Reading Dog Policy

Date	Written By	Approved by	Review Date	Approved by Governors
Nov 23	S Fellows	SLT	Nov 25	Pending

Introduction

The value of pet therapy is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

Pet dogs on the school grounds

To minimise the risk to children in school, dogs are only allowed on the premises when carried in the owners' arms.

All other animals

The definition of animals includes all pets including insects, fish and birds. The only exceptions to this rule are assistant animals (dogs for the blind etc.) and the animals that have permanent residences on the school grounds rabbits, guinea pigs and dogs which belong to the Reading Dogs scheme.

When assistance dogs and Reading Dogs animals are allowed on school premises, the animal's owner and handlers must ensure that the animal is not a nuisance and that it does not interfere with the school environment. If any parent or pupil object to the animals' presence then arrangements must be made to ensure that this animal is kept away from them. If necessary, the animal may need exclusion from specific areas.

It is a requirement of all our Reading Dogs that they are within the following recommended guidelines:

- All animals should be regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness.
- Pets that are ill should be diagnosed and treated by a vet and should not be allowed in the school premises until their health is restored.
- All animals should have received relevant inoculations.
- All animals should be wormed regularly every six months.
- Claws should be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches.
- Pets should have been exercised before being allowed to work with children.
- All pets should have their coats cleaned regularly.

The Reading Dog owner/handler has the responsibility to ensure that:

- Dogs are physically fit before visiting the school environment
- Dogs are kept on a lead throughout the visit/work
- An adult will remain with the dog at all times
- The dog is discouraged from jumping, scratching and licking
- The dog is of an acceptable hygienic standard, i.e. not wet, muddy etc.
- Natural relief for dogs is taken into account prior to visiting

Background

The rationale behind the decision for a school reading dog was as follows:

1. For the dog to be used to encourage reluctant readers to read without fear of over correction and to encourage fluency.
2. For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
3. The dog can also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.
4. The dog has to be up to date with immunisations including rabies and his worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to the head teacher of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the school senior leadership team will evaluate the impact of a school dog on a regular basis.

Risk Assessment

Hazard Risk	Risk	1-5	Likelihood 1-5	Risk 3x4	Control measures
Dog becoming over excited when interacting with pupils	Child knocked over	1	2	2	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. The dog will always be on a lead when he/she is out of his/her pen/the Head's office. The dog will be trained not to jump up or mouth the children. 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, form time and PSHE lessons.
	Child scratched	3	2	6	
	Child bitten	4	1	4	

					Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training will allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed as the dog progresses through their training programme. All staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don'ts) of having a school dog. The dog will attend the vets regularly to make sure that it is fit and healthy.
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	1	1	1	Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept on SIMS. Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children/ staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	1	1	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. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupils don't have access to on a regular basis, if required the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant. All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to

					date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and the Head Teacher keeps a register of this. Flea treatment is carried out at 3 monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out in line with European vet guidelines, at 6 monthly intervals. The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; they will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the school kitchen.
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Equal opportunities

All young people will be treated equally, regardless of race, creed or gender. The policy will be applied regardless of culture, faith or belief.