



# Chestnut Lane School

## School Dog Policy & Risk Assessment (Staff)

### Introduction

Staff can benefit positively to animals in the work place. Studies have shown that dogs can help alleviate stress, anxiety and depression. Positive interactions with a dog can promote positive wellbeing and mental health. It can also develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog.

In addition to these benefits, staff may take great enjoyment from their interaction with a dog. **Appendix B** sets out further reasons for why the school feels it will be beneficial to have a school dog for the staff.

The Chair of Governors, and the Headteacher have both agreed that the school can have a dog on-site.

Staff have been informed through staff briefing and issue of this School Dog Policy and Risk Assessment, and feedback has been collected by questionnaire that the staff/school will have a dog visiting them regularly. Only staff who wish to interact with the dog will do so, there is no obligation set by the school and those who do not wish to engage will remain at an adequate distance. Parents will be informed by letter that a dog will be in school, but only for staff to interact with.

### 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 that far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. The dog is covered by third party insurance for up to £1,000,000 per incident, including for damage or injury to another person, their property or their animal.

Mrs S Sanghera has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment is attached as **Appendix A**.

Policy updated: May 2023

Policy to be reviewed: May 2024

## The Dog - Bear

**In the event of an emergency evacuation, Mrs S Sanghera will accompany her dog (Bear) to the Fire Evacuation Point.**

<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Feeding and General Care</b>
<p>Mrs Sanghera owns the dog (Bear). Bear is a four-year-old Cockapoo, chosen for his mild temperament and non-moulting coat. Bear is well socialised with adults, children and other dogs. He goes on regular daily walks to different locations with his dog walker &amp; other dogs, and he adjusts quickly to new environments.</p>	<p>Mrs Sanghera is responsible for Bear's feeding, general care and regular visits to the vet. Bear will visit the school site during school hours, entering from the carpark fire door (located behind the fenced area). Bear will not be fed his meals on site but he will have access to water in his water bowl and be given occasional treats but only under the instruction of his adult (Mrs Sanghera). Staff should not feed or eat close to the Bear, unless otherwise instructed by the adult in charge. If Bear is unwell he will not attend school.</p>
<b>Toileting</b>	<b>Bear's Belongings</b>
<p>Bear has a well-established toileting routine and he will be toileted outside the school premises before he arrives and if needed only go to his designated toilet area outside the school premises. Dogs can mark for many reasons including: to show ownership on what they consider their territory, anxiety or to leave information for other animals. Bear understands the command 'no' and 'wee' to indicate where he can go.</p> <p>Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by Mrs Sanghera.</p>	<p>Bear always wears a harness and a collar. Bear will normally be kept on a lead and harness when walking through the school. He will only be taken off lead under the supervision of his adult (Mrs Sanghera) and where safe to do so. His bedding and toys will be provided by his adult (Mrs Sanghera). Bear's bedding and toys will be washed weekly.</p> <p>Spaces will be vacuumed daily.</p>
<b>Cleaning</b>	<b>Allergies</b>
<p>Bear's toys, towels and bedding will be washed regularly. After Bear visits the school premises, areas that he has occupied will be vacuumed and cleaned.</p> <p>Staff should always wash their hands after handling a dog. As a school we also provide anti-bacterial gel.</p>	<p>Areas where Bear has permission to go will be dictated by the response and result of the allergy forms that will be sent out to everyone who attends Chestnut Lane. If certain adults or children have allergies to dogs then Bear will not enter those areas including communal places. Routine daily cleaning and vacuuming will reduce the amount of allergens alleviating allergy symptoms. Bear is also non-moulting as mentioned above.</p>

<b>Coming to school</b>	<b>General Advice &amp; How To Safely Approach A Dog</b>
<p>Bear will be walked to and from the premises and will be under the full control and supervision of his adult (Mrs Sanghera). There may be occasions when Bear is off his lead, but this will only happen in an enclosed space and under the control of his adult (Mrs Sanghera). Before removing the lead, all present will be consulted, (students will not be present). If there are students on the premises, who are likely to see the Bear, they should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around a dog. The adult supervising (Mrs Sanghera) will move Bear to a safe enclosed space (Work Room or outside in fenced area). Staff and students are encouraged to remain calm around Bear.</p>	<p>If Bear is surrounded by a large number of people, he could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge must ensure that they monitor the situation.</p> <p>If an owner says it is ok to stroke their dog then you should do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach the dog by coming into the space slowly, sitting down in a space and wait for the dog to come to you.</li> <li>• Offer a closed fist, allow them to sniff it, this passes information about you.</li> <li>• If the dog is still calm and relaxed, stroke them under the chin or on the chest.</li> <li>• Do not stroke the top of their head as this can make them feel intimidated.</li> <li>• Try not to make sudden movements.</li> <li>• Keep your face away.</li> <li>• If a dog is sleeping, do not touch them.</li> <li>• Avoid heavy direct eye contact.</li> <li>• Leave a dog alone when they are eating.</li> </ul>
<b>Recognising threatening body language</b>	
<p>A great way to stay safe around dogs is to learn to recognise their body language in order to determine how they are feeling. However, learning how to interpret a dog's body language takes time, if you are ever unsure about a dog stay away from them. Owners can usually read their own dog's body language really well and can tell when they are uncomfortable. Dogs that are in a calm state will have a relaxed body, their mouth may be open slightly but not tense and they may have a relaxed tail or it could be wagging gently. Their ears will not be up, down or pinned back but in a natural position for the breed of dog.</p> <p>Growling or baring of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, ears pinned back, pupils dilated, noise wrinkled or even showing their teeth a little; tail lowered or between their legs; hiding behind their owner; body may also be crouching low to the ground with their head bowed down; 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.</p>	

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in school.
- The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.
- Staff and students are required to abide by this policy.
- The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

## Appendix A

### Risk Assessment

#### Introduction

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to support positive wellbeing. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the wellbeing of staff and lower the rate of anxiety and stress, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. Chestnut Lane School have been considering to have a visiting dog owned by a member of staff for some time and the decision was made in November 2021 to go ahead with the process to introduce a dog to the staff.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a dog visit the staff - occasionally during school hours or after school hours. Bear will remain in the workroom/fenced area at the back of the school during his visits, and will not interact with the children.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet, that staff could interact with and be of benefit from.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all staff but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Staff members have all completed a questionnaire prior to the first visit to share their thoughts about the visits. There are no diseases associated with the dog as his adult (Mrs Sanghera) will be responsible for vaccinations, including rabies and completing regular health checks and necessary treatment. A copy of Bear's health records will be updated and kept in school.

**Vet information: Goddard Veterinary Group: 58 Lower Rd, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross SL9 9AA - [01753 882704](tel:01753882704)**

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 - 5	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with staff.	Knocked to the ground.	1	As stated in the school policy the dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.	
	Scratched by dog.	2	Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.	
	Bitten by dog.	2	The dog will normally be kept on a lead and harness at all times whilst on the premises. There may be occasions when the dog is off his lead, but this will only happen in an enclosed space and under the control of his responsible adult. Before removing the lead, all present will be consulted, and students will not be present.  Staff will be taught what to do and how to interact with the dog. All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.	

			<p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed each time. If an injury should occur the injured party should seek medical advice as soon as possible (e.g. in case antibiotics are needed etc).</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure he is in good health and that his claws are kept short.</p>	
The dog causing allergies.	Children & Staff have allergic reactions.	1	<p>As stated in the school dog policy parents will be asked to inform the school of any known allergies to animals before the introduction of the dog to the school.</p> <p>A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept in school office.</p> <p>Staff will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction, and maintain adequate distance.</p> <p>Staff will wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p>	
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	<p>As stated in the school dog policy should the dog defecate on the school site the supervising member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way.</p> <p>The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children do not have access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations are kept up to date in and a record will be kept of this.</p> <p>Flea treatment is carried out by owner.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall, and never in the food preparation area. The dog will not visit if unwell.</p>	
Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	Cost to School	1	<p>The dog is ultimately the responsibility of Mrs Sanghera both in a wellbeing and financial aspect.</p> <p>All vets costs are covered by Mrs Sanghera.</p>	
KEY:	<p>1- Low risk</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 -Medium risk of injury</p> <p>4</p> <p>5-High risk of injury</p>			

## Appendix B

### Reasons to have a dog in school

Taken from: <https://allwork.space/2020/01/5-science-backed-benefits-of-having-dogs-at-work/>

#### 1. Dogs Reduce Stress

Petting a dog for just ten minutes can help reduce stress. When you cuddle or stroke a dog, our bodies release oxytocin, which is a stress-reducing hormone.

#### 2. Dogs Increase Teamwork and Morale

Group behaviour in a setting where a dog is present is more [‘cooperative, comfortable, friendly, active enthusiastic and attentive’](#), found researchers at Central Michigan University.

Dogs have a fantastic way of lightening the mood in any situation and making people smile, which can therefore increase morale in the workplace. Moreover, a significant percentage of people like dogs, and dogs in the workplace can act as an icebreaker, encouraging more interaction among employees and enhancing teamwork.

#### 3. Dogs Encourage Regular Breaks

Bringing a dog to work will mean you’ll need to take regular breaks to take them out for a walk or give them food. While this might seem counterproductive and distracting, taking regular breaks is necessary for people to perform optimally.

Going out for a walk can help people clear their mind while getting some physical activity. Physical activity is great in terms of staying active, but it [also boosts brain power](#).

#### 4. Dogs Increase Productivity

With the regular breaks, comes an increased level of productivity.

[Studies show](#) than spending too much time on one project can actually decrease productivity. Therefore, when people take short breaks, they come back feeling refreshed and ready to tackle the project again.

This study found that ‘pets remind people to pause and step back from whatever they are involved in. Short walks, a little playtime, and temporary distractions allow mental breaks so as not to overwork and become stressed.’

#### 5. Dogs Increase Employee Retention and Decrease Absences

The more policies there are at a place of work that aim to make the work environment a more welcoming and relaxed place, the less likely you are to have people who want to leave.

Allowing your employees to bring their pets to work will make them feel valued, which will in turn translate into loyalty and better talent retention numbers.

[A study carried out](#) on employee retention and job satisfaction found that ‘the first benefit of employee satisfaction is that individuals hardly think of leaving their current jobs.’

The less stressed a person is in their job role, the less likely they are to be absent too, and given that dogs decrease stress – this can be a major benefit to employers.

## **How to Implement Pet Policies in Co-working Spaces**

It can be tricky trying to implement a new policy in a co-working space where lots of different companies and individuals work.

To make this work, you will need to ensure that there is a robust policy in place if you want to allow dogs into the workspace.

Consider these points when creating a pet policy for your shared workspace:

- All dogs need to be well trained.
- They might need to pass a trial period to check that they are suited to the workplace.
- Allow for a few dog free areas for those people who don't like dogs or are allergic.
- Consider any health and safety hazards for allowing pets in the workplace.