



Buddy Dog Policy

2022-2023

Approved by: Headteacher

Date: 5th September 2022

Last reviewed on: September 2022

**Next review due
by:** September 2023

Introduction

This statement of Dog handling Policy is produced in respect of St Ambrose RC Primary School and forms the basis of future planning and implementation for the support and all related matters to keeping and handling dogs on the school site.

This policy is written in conjunction with existing Health & Safety Policies and regulations and matters of any other related health and safety issues.

The school understands that having dogs kept on site brings both emotional benefits and educational endeavour for young people and especially with pupils with disabilities and/or special need. It is also another way of learning about responsibilities by looking after and interacting with animals.

The school is also aware that there will always be room for improvement mostly when it comes to give particular guidelines to staff on specific or generic protective measures and dog handling/keeping at the school is no exception.

This policy is to look at the affiliated risks connected to working with or near dogs and to ensure that all elements that could cause risks to pupils, members of staff and visitors, and possible subsequent legal actions are covered.

The School and its Governors endeavour to identify, reduce and if possible eliminate any risks by creating a safe working environment while supporting staff with their duties as far as is reasonably possible and practicable. This is to be done by maintaining sufficient information, constant situation monitoring and providing training requirements where necessary.

This policy, and any associated procedures, applies to all staff that may work with or near dogs even on a sporadic basis, but most particularly to staff that work with or near animals on a regular basis as an integrated part of their duties or as a partial part of their job.

Overall, this policy is designed to promote safety for all and to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all people and animals kept at the school.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this Dog handling Policy is to guarantee safe procedures related to the control, the keeping and the handling of dogs. All this is for the benefit of members of staff and pupils when working near or with animals. It is also there:

indicate what working or learning with dogs is, and highlight limitations when working To ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff and pupils who work with dogs are not exposed to risks to their Health and Safety and to outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety to staff and pupils who work with or near dogs.

To raise awareness of safety issues and hazards associated with keeping dogs at the school and establish clarity amongst Governors, Managers and members of staff and others (e.g. information

to parents or carers) as to the circumstances in which working or learning with or near dogs may not be appropriate or considered representing a risk.

To propagate information and guidelines and to avoid risks and consequences affiliated to working with dogs or in handling the animals in an educational role or others. It also covers information about the keeping of animals and related matters.

To clearly indicate what working or learning with dogs is, and highlight limitations when working with them and how to minimise possible risk before, during and after an incident that may occur. I.e. to identify what is deemed to be appropriated and what is not.

To define the procedures that must be taken before someone works directly or near dogs at the School and/or any other affiliated risk connected to their actions or non-actions.

To clarify roles and responsibilities and possible consequences that would be considered depending on the different levels of breach of this policy.

To make sure that this policy is appropriately provided and ensure compliance with legislative and protective requirements. That includes procedures related to possible time when things may go wrong.

To guarantee (as far as possible) that the administration of this policy and all the above provisions are clear to all who may require providing or using them.

It is there to take action to reduce risk to pupils, members of staff and visitors and ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibility to use any systems introduced to assist working with dogs.

This policy applies mostly to all School employees including temporary workers and those employed on a casual basis and is to apply to work that is specifically intended to be carried out with dogs. It also includes volunteers and people on placement at the school.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY.

The School recognises that working near or with dogs is a situation that could create risks if not assessed properly.

It is the Schools belief that there is a need to inform parents, staff, pupils and visitors about processes, but also about risks and protection when working with dogs The School management and its Governors endeavour to provide clear procedures to assure that no one is at risk.

This policy endeavours to promote the safeguarding of pupils and support of any other issues related to this policy.

The Governing Body is working in conjunction with current requirements, information and procedures in order to implement this Dog Handling Policy. All Information is to be properly communicated to and by the Governing Body along with any relevant issues as indicated in this policy.

The planning and implementation of the policy is the direct responsibility of the Headteacher, ensuring that managers, head of departments, supervisors and teachers at all levels and all other employees are co-operating with it. Arrangements are also to be made to bring it to the notice of all staff, including new employees, part time, temporary staff, supply teachers, etc.

The School's managers recognise the need to implement a system to protect, support and correctly inform staff about working with or near dogs. With this in mind, they will review periodically information on related issues and matters in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and the School's working system.

Furthermore, the School understands that employees' responsibilities may fall on individual member of staff and that all staff have a degree of accountability for implementing this policy and keep themselves and others safe when working with animals.

Governors' Responsibilities

The Governors have a responsibility to assess the risks to working with dogs and take steps to avoid or control these risks where necessary and recognise their responsibility as far as is reasonably practicable to:

- Provide an environment where risks are highlighted and subsequently removed or contained when discovered.
- Identify organisational arrangements in the school for implementing, monitoring, and controlling working with dogs and the keeping and management of animals on the school premises.
- Provide information and support the possible overcoming questions and queries coming from Parents and carers.
- Support with the provision of adequate, information, instructions and supervision in order to enable staff employed or people working at the school to perform their duties in a legal and efficiency manner.
- Ensure that a system is in place to provide grievance and complaints procedures for staff and others (if and when applicable).
- Undertake disciplinary procedures when a member of staff does not follow the guidelines and obligations of this policy or any other related documents and procedures.
- Authorise standards, legal provisions, and accurate information related to working near or with animals.
- Maintain a close interest in all animals related matters insofar as they affect activities in and out the premises under the control of the School.
- Ensure that they support the provision of adequate and appropriate information for enabling working with dogs to be made aware of risks related to working with animals.

Costs

- Establish a suitable budget and authorise funds for people's protection in order to provide training, facilities, systems and equipment to enable the working with dogs and how to deal with emergency situations when and if they occur. The school has public liability insurance and covers the cost of medical insurance and medical care of the buddy dog. (The children take the buddy dog to all of these appointments.)
- All other general expenses are paid for by the main buddy dog carer.
- Encourage a general atmosphere of knowledge, support and understanding.

- Participate in the updating of this policy and all other affiliated documents.

Headteacher's Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to enable safety during working or learning with or near dogs. In particular to help identify risks, to make sure that regular risk assessments are carried out and that adequate control measures are introduced and/or put in place.

The Headteacher:

- Is responsible for the health and safety of all employees and anyone else on the premises and understand the physical working environment and work activities in order to determine whether or not such activities can safely be carried out by a single and/or several persons.
- Clearly states what is considered being acceptable procedures for working with or near dogs and report to the Governor as soon as a breach of this policy or problems occurs.
- Provide clear information to Parents and Carers by form of newsletters, etc. and support the process coming from questions and queries arising from this policy.
- Make sure that new members of staff and other people working at the school are aware of the policy's working guidelines and dog working arrangements.
- Assure that all new or amended material regarding working with animals is brought to the attention of the relevant people.
- Ensure that staff get the best possible use out of the Dog Handling Policy and subsequent assessments.
- Make sure that agreed procedures for reporting related problems function efficiently and effectively.
- Seek advice, when appropriate, from outside agencies that are able to offer expert opinions (e.g. HSE, DFE, RSPCA, etc.).
- Stop what are considered unsafe practices, or any other circumstances that could result in an unsafe or unlawful situation while ensuring that staff are suited to working with dogs for identified activities and/or areas.
- Ensure that the Dog Handling Policy, its codes of practice, risk assessment information and guidance notes are readily available for users' reference and undertaken regularly
- Make sure that good communication relating to working with animals is in place within the school in general and with (and between) members of staff and that staff understand the risks involved with working or learning with or near dogs.
- Make certain that a system is in place for appropriate communication with people involved either directly or indirectly with the animals. This should include the keeping and looking after of the animals.
- Regularly monitor reported accidents/incidents/issues and consult staff and management on related preventative measures.
- Be responsible for the offering help and support in a respectful and confidential manner.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff working near or with dogs are required to follow the safe working arrangements developed and put in place by the School as well as taking reasonable steps to ensure their own and others safety. Furthermore, staff must:

- Understand that members of staff are expected to do all they can to secure their welfare and the welfare of others and the animals, and not to take unnecessary risks.
- Notify the School when a working incident occurs and adhere to accident and risk reporting procedures. This includes informing their manager/supervisor of any incidents, safety concerns, unsafe or potentially unsafe situations, and to report incidents related to near misses.
- Follow all rules, regulations, procedures and recommendations given by the School and its management. This includes attending meetings, training sessions, etc.
- Enquire about procedures when not certain and be aware of guidelines related to working with dogs or the looking after of the animals.
- Be familiar or familiarise themselves with what is implemented to protect staff when working or learning with animals.
- Contact the Headteacher as soon as they discovered an issues or a problem related to working with or near dogs, its guidelines and/or procedures.
- Be aware of the protective measures available to them and others, and use these adequately.
- Be given access to the School's Dog Handling Policy and familiarise themselves with all documents related to it.
- Be aware that copies of the School's Dog Handling Policy will be available at all times in the Staff room, School office or Head's office.
- Be conscious of the risks taken by people working near or with dogs, either for themselves or as part of the management of others.
- Be responsible for complying with the control measures arising out of the risk assessments.
- Support the School when enquiries need to be undertaken, or when litigations might be made against the School.

Areas of Assessment

- All animals brought to the school should be vaccinated and in good health. All possibly diseased and/or sick dogs should never be authorised on school ground.
- Dogs should have no contact with other possibly contaminated animals in order to avoid transfer of parasites and diseases. Furthermore, all dogs should be checked on a regular basis.
- Any areas where diseases and un-healthy environment is present should be avoided and addressed if in existence.
- Cages and dog resting areas are to be cleaned on a regular basis and as soon as an area becomes soiled. Condition of cages and areas are also to be inspected on regular basis.
- Temperature should be monitored and possibly the provision of fan or additional heating should be provided if required in dogs resting areas.

Bites and Scratches

- Any animals expressing possible dangerous and/or threatening behaviours should either never be allowed on school premises or removed immediately if already on site.
- Disease or possible infections related to bites or scratches from dogs should automatically be addressed and handled by a first aider.
- Feedings of animals should only be handled by trained members of staff and pupils should never be allowed to eat near animals nor participate in non-supervised feeding of animals.

- Behaviours near and around dog should always be monitored including possible aggression from both animals and humans.
- Animals are to be kept away from anyone's face and dogs are not to be intimidated or scared into submission unless it needs to be done as a protective measure.

Classrooms and teaching areas

- Space and position of furniture should be reassessed or at least reviewed if dogs are allowed in classrooms.
- If cages are used in classrooms or teaching areas they should be kept secured and in good condition.
- A system should be put in place to assure that any of the dogs' behaviours are not interfering with the educational delivery to pupils.
- Numbers of pupils around a dog present during learning at any one time should be limited.

Existing health conditions

- Any pupils and members or staff with existing allergies to dogs should be taken in to consideration and this should be addressed in the general risk assessment. Furthermore, people with possible allergies should also be identified.
- Any issued related to possible dog phobia or any pupils or staff not comfortable in the presence of dogs should also be kept into attention and arrangements made accordingly.
- Pupils suffering from asthma and other respiratory illnesses should be risk assessed as part of their medicine management.
- Pupils with existing cuts or wounds on exposed skin should have these covered when near or handling dogs.

Hygiene

- Cleaning of all areas where dogs are kept or moved around should be undertaken on a regular basis. This includes beddings, cages, etc.
- Any soiled items and litter/waste items is to be disposed of accordingly.
- All people and pupils handling dogs should go through regular hand washing practices and adequate provision of washing facilities made available.

Keeping of dog

- Dog food should be kept in a locked and stored in specific areas to limit access and reduce risk of cross-contamination.
- Arrangement should be clearly made for holiday periods and when the school would need to be closed for any reasons (e.g. broken broiler, etc.).
- Specific members of staff will have to be made responsible for the evacuations of animals during fire drills and when the fire alarms go off.
- Dogs should have regular breaks in order to rest, urinate, defecate, etc.

Supervision

- Dogs have to be supervised at all times.
- Numbers of pupils around a dog at any one time should be limited.
- Pupils working with or near dogs have to be supervised at all times.
- All pupils, after handling animals should be thoroughly supervised with hand washing and general hygiene.

Training

- Areas where activities and obligations are present, all members of staff should be appropriately trained and get familiarised with all activities and restrictions related to working with or near dogs. This especially with regard to supervision of pupils and their engagement with the animals.
- Pupils should be clearly instructed in all related matters to handle animals and how to behave around dogs.
- Information about the different meanings of what barking is and means in specific or general behaviour of dogs.

CONCLUSION AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Overall all children should be encouraged to treat any animal at the school with respect. The role of the staff at the school is to be clearly delimited and a regular review of activities with and near the animals should be undertaken.

Overall, the most important issue is that none of the dogs show aggression or aggressive behaviours towards people and other animals at all time. Any such behaviour is to be reported immediately.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

<u>ACAS</u>	0161 833 8500	http://www.acas.org.uk
<u>BACP</u>	0870 4435252	http://www.bacp.co.uk
<u>BABCP</u>	01254 875 277	http://www.babcp.org.uk
<u>HSE Info Line</u>	08701 545 500	http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact
<u>NHS Direct</u>	0845 4647	http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
<u>Teacher Support Line</u>	0800 056 2561	http://www.teachersupport.info

Equalities Statement:

St Ambrose RC Primary School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and

with respect and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. The Governing Body recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at St Ambrose RC Primary school should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.