

The Grove Partnership



Dogs in School Policy

Date of last review	July 2025
Date of this review:	July, 2026
Date of next review:	July, 2027
Head teacher's Signature:	<i>E. Patel</i>
Review approved by the Governing Body.	On the Governor Hub 15.07.2026.

Introduction

The Grove Partnership recognises that the presence of animals in our school can provide a valuable learning experience but animals cannot be allowed to endanger pupil safety or disrupt learning.

For that reason, there should be a clear educational and emotional purpose for an animal to visit the school. In line with RSPCA guidance the school does not support the keeping of pets on the school site.

The school recognises that a visiting animal offers the potential for a very positive learning experience for children to learn about taking care and showing responsibility for animals as well as developing empathy and nurturing skills. This also allows for a deeper understanding of the importance of the humane treatment of living creatures.

Definitions For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply;

Dogs in School: Any dog brought into a school or workplace environment or educational or social reasons.

Authorisation: All dogs being brought into the school must be authorised by the Headteacher. Staff are expected to complete the Dog in School request form (appendix 1)

Policy Aims

This document details how The Grove Partnership ensures that dogs brought into school are done so safely following a structured authorisation process. We recognise that there are both positive and negative aspects to having dogs in our schools and workplaces.

A child's understanding of responsibility, empathy and nurturing can be increased through interaction with animals, but some children or members of staff may suffer from allergies or phobias.

This Policy is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees, and any other class of person who may work on, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services.

Any dog being brought into the school environment, must be approved by the Headteacher following the correct request and authorisation process.

Roles & Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are defined in this policy and any specific actions are detailed in the section below.

1. Service animals

The policy does not prohibit service animals. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments must be made by school to accommodate any request to bring assistance animals onto schools/workplaces. They must be allowed to move freely with their owners and alternative arrangements should only be applied to assistance animals where their

presence poses a significant risk to health or safety (food preparation or storage areas, allergies, phobias etc).

2. Therapy Dogs

Where a registered therapy dog is brought into school for therapy purposes (such as a recognised scheme), the Pets as Therapy programme certificate must be provided and a copy retained by the School Business Manager.

3. Headteacher & Senior Leadership Responsibilities

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for handling requests to allow a dog to be brought into school. The School Business Manager has the responsibility for conducting risk assessments and deciding whether the individual school/workplace is an appropriate environment for a dog. The School needs to ensure that measures have been put in place to keep the dog away from any pupils or members of staff who object to the dog. A sign should be made visible in the reception area to alert visitors of the dog's presence and parents should be notified in advance of the visit.

4. Authorisation & Rules

The dog owner must complete a request form and provide proof of the dog's up to date vaccination record and appropriate insurance certificate to the School Business Manager. The responsibilities outlined in the request form include:

- Dog owners should familiarise themselves with the Dogs Trust Guidance <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/how-we-help/ownership/dog-friendly-workplaces>
- The Dogs in School risk assessment shall be completed and reviewed by the Business Manager prior to the dog being allowed in school.
- The dog must be personally insured to include liability cover – any liability claim against the dog will sit firmly with the owner. Check with your insurer as you may need to insure them as a working dog.
- The dog must be appropriately vaccinated, free of parasites, healthy and not in season.
- The dog should be clean, regularly groomed and have their claws trimmed.
- The dog must always wear a collar, detailing your name and contact details and any other legal requirements in the keeping of animals should be met (The Control of Dogs Order 1992).
- The owner is responsible for ensuring the dog does not come into contact with any pupils or employees who have objected to its presence.
- The dog must be under the owner or designated handler's control at all times – either restrained by a leash or secured in an appropriate area – it will not be allowed to roam freely in corridors, classrooms etc.
- The dog must never be left alone with pupils – the owner or designated handler must be present at all times.
- The owner or designated handler is responsible for immediately disposing of faecal matter in a proper and safe way.
- The welfare of the dog should be taken into account at all times – this includes ensuring the temperature/environment is suitable, that the dog can retreat to a quiet safe place when needed, fresh water is available, the dog has access to outside areas, receives

regular breaks, and is not kept in confined spaces or in your car (The Animal Welfare Act 2006).

- The dog should be housetrained, well trained, clean and must not cause a nuisance to others (no excessive barking, jumping up etc.)
- The dog will not be allowed into areas where food is prepared/served or into the toilets.
- Parents, carers and staff will be notified of the visit in advance. They are provided with the opportunity to comment and deny their permissions regarding interactions with the dog.
- Staff pupils and visitors with a known allergic reaction to dogs are notified and arrangements are made to reduce their contact with the dog.
- All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead at all times and under full control and supervision of the owner or handler.
- Pupils must never be left alone with the dog and an appropriate level of supervision in place at all times.
- Pupils are reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around a dog. Pupils are asked to remain calm and not to put their face near the dog.
- Pupils must not go near the dog when it is sleeping or eating.
- Pupils are not permitted to play roughly with the dog.
- Groups are kept to a minimum so the dog is not surrounded by a large number of people, this may result in the dog becoming agitated and nervous.
- Anyone handling the dog should wash their hands afterwards.
- Any dog foul is cleaned immediately and disposed of by the owner or designated handler.
- Staff are to maintain records and evidence of the work and impact of having the dog in school.

5. Dog Owner Responsibilities

- The owner should monitor the dog's body language and must ensure appropriate authorisation is completed prior to bringing the dog into school. Part of the planning for the visit is to assess group sizes making sure that groups of children do not surround the dog, as this may cause the dog to become agitated or nervous.
- The owner must accept full responsibility for any damage or injury caused by their dog. If the dog owner fails to meet any of these responsibilities, they will be asked to take their dog home and will not be given permission for the dog to accompany them to school again.
- All staff including the dog owner and designated handler must read and sign the Dogs in School and on Trips risk assessment.
- The Animal Welfare Act places a duty on schools to make provisions for the welfare of any animal. Under this Act, the welfare of an animal includes:
 - Its needs for a suitable environment.
 - Its need for suitable diet (food and fresh water).
- The dog owner is responsible for checking that there are no other dogs on site on the same day that may come into contact with each other causing potential behavioural issues or conflict.

- Its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
- Its need to be housed with, or away from, other animals
- Its need to be protected from pain, suffering and distress.

The owner will work with the school to ensure that all the above are in place prior to the visit.

- The owner will not bring the dog into school if it is unwell.
- The owner will plan the visit taking into account any allergies and phobias of staff or pupils. Anyone with known allergies must not be exposed to the dog. In most cases an allergic reaction will subside once the dog and affected person are kept apart, in extreme cases medical advice should be sought.

6. Reasons to have a Dog in School

In some schools it is believed that dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. We believe that dogs in the school environment can have a positive impact on pupils by increasing social skills, self esteem, teaches responsibility and respect for animals, motivates pupils and has a calming effect on the workplace.

Dogs will be gentle, loving, fun and entertaining all at the same time. Pupils will be rewarded with time spent with the dog in recognition for their hard work and improved attendance in school.

7. Dogs in School Authorisation Process.

The Dogs in School Request form (appendix 1) is completed by the owner and emailed to the School Business Manager. Once the form is received the dog owner will then be asked to put in place measures ensuring that the dogs welfare needs are met.

8. Incidents procedure

In the event of an aggressive incident or bite occurring (even playfully), the parents of the pupil concerned will be contacted immediately. If there is a wound, it should be cleaned with a sterile, non-sticky dressing and appropriate medical attention will be given. An accident/incident form will be completed and handed to the School Business Manager. This will be recorded and reported to the Health and Safety Team at the Local Authority. An investigation will take place and the suitability of having the dog in school will be reassessed.

We believe that the benefits far outweigh the risks of having a dog visit the school. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out so we can as far as is reasonably practical manage the risks.

9. Complaints procedure

If an employee has concerns resulting from a dog at school, they are encouraged to talk to the dog's owner in the first instance. If this does not resolve the issue, they should raise their concerns with their Line Manager.

10. Limitations of this Policy

The policy cannot anticipate all eventualities; therefore professional judgement should be used to identify the appropriate course of action needed to protect those who are vulnerable and/or at risk. This judgement should derive from team discussion rather than any one individual where possible.

10. Appendices

1. Dogs in School Request Form
2. Dogs in School and on School Trips Risk Assessment
3. Guidance for Handling and keeping Animals in the Workplace (OMBC)

11. Links with other policies & Monitoring

- Health and Safety Policy
- Medical Conditions, Medication and Allergy Awareness
- First Aid Risk Assessment
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

This policy and risk assessment will be reviewed annually.