

Codsall Middle School - School Dog Policy June 2023

To be reviewed June 2024



Introduction

Pupils can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, pupils take simply great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment? Yes, there is, though there are a variety of accidents, which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this will be available to all. Other dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher, Kristen Reade.

This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the dog to be present on the school premises.

Staff, parents and pupils have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. A risk assessment has been produced and this will be reviewed annually.

The dog will be owned by Ruth Connolly (Codsall Multi Academy Trust Employee)

Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless the Headteacher has given prior permission, and they are insured to be on the premises.

Ted (School Dog) has been chosen because he is small to medium sized, an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children. Ted sheds little to no hair due to his poodle genes, he is also very sociable and friendly.

The school dogs will be insured for veterinary treatment with a reputable pet insurance company, e.g. PetPlan.

PetPlan and other similar insurers do not provide cover for public liability within the school, so a separate policy will be arranged for the dog owner (Mrs Connolly) with a company called..... This will be reviewed at insurance renewal to ensure best value.

Staff, visitors and pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs must remain at a safe distance from the dog. We will develop a dog safe zone in school - meaning that the dog will only access certain areas of the school, leaving other areas dog free. This will be reviewed on a regular basis and in response to individual needs. (Highlighted map below)

All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school. Information will be promptly shared with Mrs Connolly to ensure anyone that wishes to remain a distance from Ted can do so.

If the dog is ill, he will not be allowed into school.

The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between areas or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.

Pupils will not be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.

Pupils will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Pupils should remain calm around the dog.

Pupils should never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.

Pupils must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog. Everyone must wait until Ted is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.

If the dog is surrounded by a large number of pupils, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.

Pupils should not eat close to the dog.

Pupils should always wash their hands after handling a dog.

Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog via an opt out agreement.

Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.

The office will know the whereabouts of the dog (plan for the day - this will be provided on each day to ensure staff and ted can be located at all times)

The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs Connolly.

Actions if someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head teacher as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head teacher or Head of School.

Roles and Responsibilities The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School. The Head teacher is responsible for implementing this policy. Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy. The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dogs. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Should a bite or scratch (even playful) occur: whilst we will do everything we can to avoid this from occurring we need to address all possible outcomes. The wound will be assessed and treated by a first aid trained member of staff. Parents will be contacted.

A full investigation into any circumstances of this instance will be carried out by the Head teacher and passed to governors as necessary.

Please note, this is an evolving process and therefore this policy will be updated as needed in response to Ted and the value having a Dog in school brings to Codsall Middle School.

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Reasons to have a dog in school

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following: -

1. Improve academic achievement
2. Increase literacy skills
3. Calming behaviours
4. Increase social skills and self-esteem
5. Increase confidence
6. Teach responsibility and respect to all life
7. Help prevent school refusing
8. Motivate students who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

Behaviour:

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how peers may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in participating students declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in pupils. In a controlled study, pupils were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Pupils behaviour improved toward teachers, and pupils also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that pupils seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the pupils. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities pupils may be supported to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves students' social skills and self-esteem and behaviour. Support Dogs can work with pupils on a one-one basis and will especially help those pupils who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the pupils they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

Attendance: Case study: (taken from an external source)

Mandy was a pupil with poor attendance and anxiety. Mandy was encouraged back into school using caring for River, a dog, as an incentive. By speaking with Mandy for her to understand that "if she didn't come to school to care for him, he wouldn't get walks, water or love," Mandy came to school almost every day for the rest of the year, only missing two days.

Education:

Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some pupils. Pupils who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction.

Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have pupil read to them or join a group of pupils in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emergent readers. The dogs also provide confidence to pupils as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the pupils with a sense of comfort and love.

Research has proved that pupils who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in intra and interpersonal skills among the pupils they mix with.

Social Development:

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupil's social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older pupils build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older pupils use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower pupils.

With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving pupils in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The pupils also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

Codsall Middle School- School Dog!

TED

We hope that, by welcoming a school dog to CMS, we can help pupils to feel more calm, settled and happy, allowing them to believe that 'all things are possible'. Research has proven that a school dog can bring many benefits to a school community from well-being of children and staff to encouraging reluctant readers to read and calming children who are dysregulated.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you getting a school dog? For a few years now we have seen an increase in the use of pets within schools. Now being able to review the impact pets in schools can have, we know that it will be great for wellbeing and happiness for both pupils and staff alongside helping to support learning in new and different ways!

Where will the dog be from? We have carefully chosen a puppy from a reputable breeder who has a long history in breeding dogs for both health and temperament. We have chosen a lurcher, he is a 50-50 mix of whippet and poodle.

What if my child is allergic to dogs? Poodles are hypoallergenic which a key characteristic is for a lot of people, especially those who have allergies. Our dog will be groomed regularly, to include brushing and a bath. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for those who are allergic to dogs/animals. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional measures in place where needed. Additional supportive measures will be assessed on an individual basis.

What if my child is scared of dogs? We understand that some people are scared or apprehensive around dogs. Access to our school dog will be carefully managed and supervised. We will be sending home a link to all of our information in September 2023, outlining how we intend Ted's time in school to be used. We will be asking parents to opt out for their individual children if they wish to do so.

Will my child have to come into contact with the dog? Access to our school dog will be carefully managed and supervised. Pupils/adults will not need to have any contact with the dog unless they are keen to do so. Ted will be part of certain learning opportunities within

school, where there is any change to the environment for an extended period of time you may be notified by the class teacher or myself. If your child is happy to meet our school dog, there will be plenty of opportunities to say hello!

Will the dog roam freely around school? Absolutely not! Our dog will be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. We need to ensure that Ted has access to a quiet, safe space to escape the busyness of everyday school-life! The dog will be on its lead at all times when moving around school and when interacting with pupils.

Has a risk assessment been done? Yes - a formal Risk Assessment has taken place with support from Staffordshire County Health & Safety advisors. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a School Dog. There will also be a School Dog Policy, available for parents to view on our website.

How will the dog be trained? Mrs Connolly will be responsible for the dog training. Appropriate professional training will also be obtained; initially it will complete puppy training and then work towards becoming a well-being and therapy dog.

Will the dog be a distraction to pupils' learning? The dog will only come into contact with pupils who are happy to have contact with a dog under supervision. In the early stages, interaction with the pupils will be very limited as the dog settles into school life (but we will send you plenty of pup-dates!).

How will the dog's welfare be considered? The dog will only have planned and supervised contact with pupils and visitors. He will have food and unlimited access to water, a bed and some toys. He will be carefully trained over a period of time and we will work very closely with other professionals to ensure his welfare is always carefully considered and he is safe and happy in school.

How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all? In the interests of health and hygiene, the dog will be toileted either away from the school building in an area of the school where pupils don't access. All waste will be disposed of appropriately.

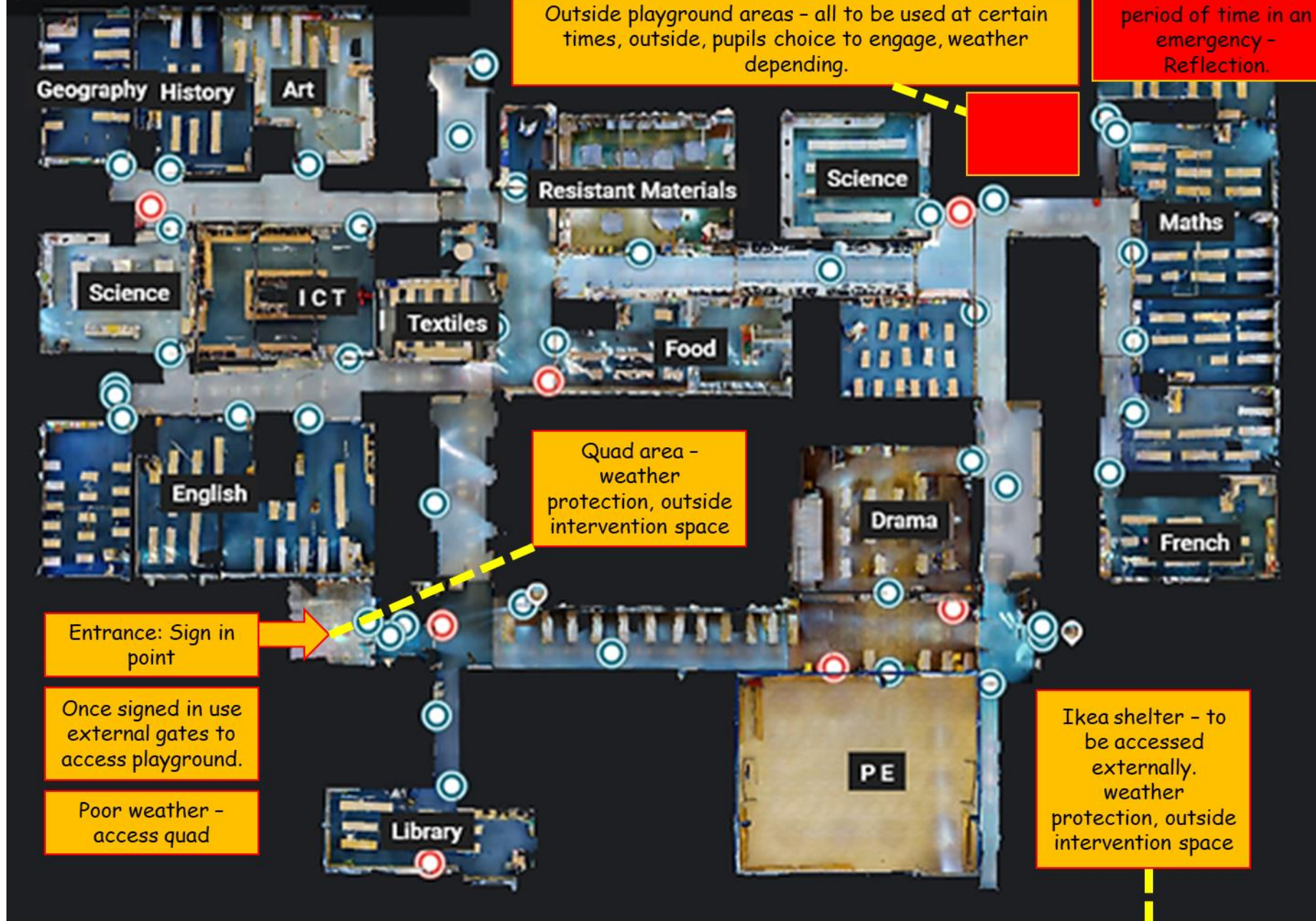
What about people visiting the school? There will be a clear sign on the interior school front desk that says there is a school dog on the school site and directs anyone with allergies or anxieties relating to dogs to inform the office immediately.

Are other dogs allowed on the school site? In order to maintain the integrity of Codsall Middle School's Dog Risk Assessment, only our school dog and registered disability assistance dogs are allowed on the school site except in very particular circumstances with the express permission of the Head of School e.g. for training or socialisation purposes.

Can we bring the dog gifts or treats? Our dog will have everything he needs and we don't want to spoil him too much, we are intending for him to be an exemplary member of our school. I am sure there will be times when he will be a little spoiled by all of us. If he does get any gift's we will ensure that he doesn't receive have them all at once!

Highlighted school map -

School



Risk assessment -



Staffordshire County Council - General Risk Assessment Record Form

Codsall Middle School

Assessor: Ruth Connolly, Sally Deas

School Dog - To assist with Learning of Pupils and Wellbeing for the School Community

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing? List the control measures already in place	What is the risk rating - H, M, L? See section 5	What further action, if any, is necessary, if so what action is to be taken by whom and by when?	Action Completed State the date completed and sign.	What is the risk rating now - H, M, L? See Section 5
1. Bites & Scratches	Pupils, Staff, Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog has been chosen for its temperament. • The dog will not be put in a situation where it could become excitable. • Pupils are regularly monitored to ensure their behaviour doesn't excite the dog. • Regular grooming of the dog to include clipping of claws as appropriate. 				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils, staff and visitors will have a choice of whether they want to interact with the dog 				
2. Disease & Infestation	Pupils, Staff, Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog has been passed off as fit by the vets and has no disease, fleas or parasites. • Regular preventative measures - worming, fleas, tics will be administered. <p>Annual health check at vets. Regular grooming to inspect for fleas and parasites. Regular cleaning is in place for areas where dog is allowed, including regular washing of bedding. Pupils and staff are instructed to wash their hands before and after contact.</p>				
3. Disposal of Animal Waste	Pupils, Staff, Visitors	<p>Appropriate gloves, scoops, waste bags and cleaning materials available and centrally stored. Animal Waste is double bagged and disposed of in specially provided and labelled bin.</p>				

4. Slips from Animal Waste	Pupils, Staff, Visitors	<p>Staff and Pupils are aware that any animal waste they identify must be reported to designated staff to be cleared up immediately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other animals/wildlife have access to the site. 				
5. Substances	Pupils, Staff, Visitors	<p>COSHH data sheets are in place for the relevant cleaning materials to clean up animal waste. Cleaning materials are stored out of the reach of pupils in RC's office.</p>				
6. Allergic Reactions	Pupils, Staff, Visitors	<p>Staff have been surveyed for allergic reactions to dogs (June 2023) Results to be displayed for RC to ensure views are considered at all times. Pupils to be assessed for possible allergic reactions to the dog. Parent communication to remain open as needed and Pupils timetables highlighted to ensure no access to Ted. Visitors will be notified about the school dog before they enter the building. Medical needs to be reviewed and information updated as required.</p>		<p>Dog Zone's to be highlighted as needed across the school site (highlighted map) Outside access used as much as possible and for prolonged intervention sessions. Highlighted pupils form rooms and teacher rooms</p>		

				to remain dog free zones. No access to food areas (dining corridor/food room) Data collection sheet - amend to request dog allergies?		
7. General		<p>A school policy is in place to identify the purposes and functions of the school dog and has been approved by the relevant people.</p> <p>Parents and new pupils are made aware of the school dog and the schools policy, risk assessment and FAQ's document is publicly available on the school website.</p> <p>The use of Ted as a resource at school will be reviewed on a regular basis, pupil voice, parent voice and staff opinions will be considered.</p> <p>Ted will have his own sign in card for the reception door - this will ensure that he is part of the fire procedures and located in the</p>				

		event of a fire drill - once signed in Ted will use the side gate as access.				
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Tick if any of the identified hazards relate to any of the following specific themes:

Hazardous substance	Manual handling	Display screen equipment	Fire	Work equipment/ machinery	Stress	Individual person such as young person, new expectant mother or service user
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Risk rating: the risk rating is used to prioritise the action required. Deal with those hazards that are high risk first.

Risk Rating	Description	Action Priority
High	Where harm is certain or near certain to occur and/or major injury or ill-health could result	Urgent action
Medium	Where harm is possible to occur and/or serious injury could result e.g. off work for over 3 days	Medium priority
Low	Where harm is unlikely or seldom to occur and/or minor injury could result e.g. cuts, bruises, strain	No action or low priority action

Assessment:

Signature of assessor(s):	Signature of assessor(s):	Signature of line manager:
PRINT NAME:	PRINT NAME:	PRINT NAME:
Date assessed:	Date assessed:	Review date:

Communication and Review:

This risk assessment should be communicated to all employees and relevant persons who may come into contact with the hazards being assessed. The assessment must be reviewed annually or following a significant change, accident or violent incident.

<https://www.dogsforgood.org/app/uploads/2018/05/SCHOOL-DOG-FACTSHEET-DOGS-FOR-GOOD-DOGS-HELPING-KIDS-APRIL-2017.pdf>

<https://www.learnwithdogstrust.org.uk/school-dogs/school%20dogs%20guide.pdf>