

Reading and Therapy Dog Policy

Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable, calm dog.

In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

By having a 'Reading Dog' we want to encourage those children who have vulnerable or less confident at reading to have a friendly audience and look forward to reading as a treat. The breed of Cavapoo is carefully selected as suitable for this type of environment.

Jeff is well cared for and responsibly owned by the Headteacher.



Is there any risk in bringing dog into a school environment?

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about school life with the dog and how, through careful management there is very low risk of harm.

Context

- Jeff is owned by Mrs Garnham
- Veterinary costs will be covered by the owner.
- Jeff is a Cavapoo chosen for the general characteristics of the breed - Great with children, very sociable, very friendly, just really so very nice, biddable and unaggressive, sweet and characterful.
- The risk assessment (attached) will be reviewed annually.
- Visitor and new pupils will be informed of the dog on arrival.

Management day-to-day

Jeff will:

- Not be allowed in school if he is unwell.
- Be kept on the lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk.
- Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times.
- Will be kept in the Headteacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Front office
- Have had all injections prior to joining Meadowside.

Pupils will:

- Will not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with Jeff
- Meet Jeff in a group of no more than five children
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Jeff every time they meet him:
 - Always remain calm
 - Be gentle
 - Do not put your face near Jeff
 - Do not disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping
 - Always approach Jeff standing up
- Learn about how dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicates the dog feels threatened or angry. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between the legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs the dog is frightened or nervous. If Jeff is displaying any of these signs he should immediately be removed from the particular situation or environment.

Health and Safety Principles

Children will always wash their hands or use a hand gel after handling the dog. Any dog foul will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of Jeff at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

Should a bite occur (even playfully):

1. parents will be contacted immediately
2. the wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing
3. the child/adult will be released for medical attention
4. all staff will be informed
5. a full investigation will take place
6. the suitability of having a dog in school will be reassessed by the Headteacher

Reviewed July 2019