



Nightingale Primary School

SCHOOL DOG POLICY

Introduction

This policy outlines the guidelines for the inclusion of a school dog at Nightingale. The primary objective is to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all pupils, staff and the dog while fostering a positive and supportive school environment.

Purpose

The purpose of having a school dog is to:

1. Enhance the educational experience.
2. Provide emotional support and comfort.
3. Improve pupil engagement and motivation.
4. Teach responsibility and care.

Responsibilities

- **Head Teacher:** Oversee the implementation and compliance with this policy.
- **Designated Dog Handler:** Ensure the dog's needs are met, manage interactions and maintain health and safety standards.
- **Staff:** Support the inclusion of the school dog and report any concerns or incidents.
- **Pupils:** Follow guidelines for interacting with the dog and report any issues to staff.

Selection of the School Dog

- The school dog must be chosen based on temperament, suitability for a school environment and health.
- The dog must undergo a thorough health check and behavioural assessment by a qualified veterinarian and animal behaviourist.

- The dog should be trained and socialised appropriately for interactions with children.

Health and Safety

- **Vaccinations:** The dog must be up-to-date on all vaccinations and receive regular veterinary check-ups.
- **Hygiene:** The dog must be groomed regularly and free from parasites.
- **Allergies:** Consideration will be given to pupils and staff with allergies. Areas where the dog is allowed will be designated and alternative arrangements will be made for those with allergies.
- **Behaviour Management:** The dog must be under control at all times. Any signs of distress or aggression must be addressed immediately.

Interaction Guidelines

- **Pupil Interaction:** Interaction supervision will vary depending on the age and responsibility of the pupil. Younger pupils will require closer supervision, while older, more responsible pupils may have less direct oversight. During breaks and lunch times, all interactions will be supervised at the same level as other supervision, with adults on duty in near proximity. When pupils are not trained in appropriate interaction with the dog, they must be closely supervised by an adult at all times during any interaction.
- **Dog-Free Zones:** Areas such as the hall during dining periods and any classrooms where pupils with allergies or fears are present will be designated as dog-free zones.
- **Supervision:** The dog must be accompanied by the designated handler or a trained staff member at all times while within the school building or classrooms.

Training and Education

- **Staff Training:** All staff will read the school's dog policy, including handling techniques and emergency procedures.
- **Life Skills Curriculum:** Pupils will participate in lessons on dog safety, care and appropriate interaction.

Emergency Procedures

- **Incidents:** Any incidents involving the dog, such as bites or aggressive behaviour, must be reported immediately to the Headteacher. An incident report will be completed and appropriate action taken.
- **Health Emergencies:** In case of a health emergency involving the dog, the designated handler will take the dog to the veterinarian immediately.

Review and Evaluation

- The school dog policy will be reviewed annually by the school leadership team to ensure it meets the needs of the school community.
- Feedback from staff, pupils and parents will be considered in the review process.
- Staff should report any concerns to the Headteacher as they would do normally for any other instance.

Parental Consent

- Consultation will be obtained from parents/guardians before pupils are allowed to interact with the school dog.
- Information about the school dog policy will be provided to all parents/guardians.
- Parents will have the opportunity to opt their child out of school dog care and responsibilities.
- Pupils will have the opportunity to opt out of school dog care and responsibilities.

Date of Policy Approval: Autumn 2025

Date of Next Review: Autumn 2028