

Risk Assessment for the School Dog September 2020

Background

Mrs Wolstenholme, the leadership team and the governors at St Mary's RC Primary School have considered having a school dog for some time. The rationale to have a School Dog is as follows:

1. For the school to have a pet that is able to live as naturally as conditions will allow.
2. For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
3. To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.

The dog will live with Mrs Wolstenholme in her home at her own expense and is to be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually. The school dog will be thoroughly checked for any illnesses and Mrs Wolstenholme is responsible for the vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from the school dog as they will be kept up to date with immunisations including rabies and her worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. A register of the dog's annual health check is kept both by Mrs Wolstenholme and the vets' surgery.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for many it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog is invited to write to inform school of their wishes. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the school leadership team.

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GENERAL SCHOOLS RISK ASSESSMENT

This risk assessment must be adapted to meet the needs of individual schools and any specific arrangements must be added. School employees using this risk assessment must be aware of and refer to the CLEAPSS guidance mentioned in the 'existing control measures' section. This risk assessment should also be referred to in schemes of work, lesson plans, teacher planning notes, etc. relating to this subject



PART A. ASSESSMENT DETAILS:

Area/task/activity: Therapy Dog in School

Location of activity: Saint Mary's RC Primary School

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--------------------|
| School name: Address & Contact details: | Mayfield Avenue, Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire BB5 3AA | Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment: | Laura Wolstenholme |
| | | Signature(s): | |
| Headteacher (Name): | Laura Wolstenholme | Date of Assessment: | September 2020 |
| Signature: | | Planned Review Date: | Annually |
| How communicated to staff: | In staff meeting and via email | Date communicated to staff: | |

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PART B. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL MEASURES:

| List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm) | Who might be harmed? | Type of harm | Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk) |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| General information | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | All below | ♦ Staff always refer to the CLEAPSS document GL211-An introduction to keeping and handling Therapy Dogs in schools http://science.cleapss.org.uk/Resource-Info/GL211-An-introduction-to-keeping-and-handling-animals-in-school.aspx |
| General information | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | All below | ♦ Follow guidance issued by the RSPCA on the 'Therapy Dog Friendly Schools' to ensure compliance with the Therapy Dog Welfare Act and best practice. https://education.rspca.org.uk/education/teachers/animalfriendlyschoools |

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| List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm) | Who might be harmed? | Type of harm | Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk) |
|--|--|---------------------|---|
| Poor hygiene | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | Infection, illness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms are to be covered before handling the dog; ◆ Pupils and adults must always wash their hands prior to handling the dog and as soon as possible afterwards or after coming into contact with bedding, toys water bowl etc.); ◆ Reception & KS1 pupils hand washing is to be supervised to ensure that it is done properly; ◆ Reception & KS1 pupils are to be closely supervised to ensure they do not put their fingers in their mouths before hands have been washed; ◆ The dog will not be allowed to walk unrestricted around classrooms; ◆ Dog house/cage/bedding is cleaned and disinfected regularly; ◆ In the unlikely event the dog gets onto tables etc. clean and disinfect them immediately; ◆ The responsible person will arrange to dispose of any uneaten dog food before it begins to decompose or attracts pests such as flies and vermin. |
| Manual handling | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, Therapy Dog | Physical injury | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Pupils and visitors are requested/instructed not to lift/carry the dog as this could injure themselves or the dog. Nominated members of staff supervise any interaction with the dog. |
| Slips, trips and falls | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, Therapy Dog | Physical injury | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Good standards of housekeeping must be maintained at all times. The dog is moved around the building on a short lead by staff to reduce the risk of anyone tripping over the dog. Pupils are supervised by a nominated person at all times when handling the dog. All liquid and faeces are cleaned up immediately to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls and also to reduce the risks from poor hygiene. |

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| Therapy dog eating food in school | Therapy Dog | Physical injury/upset stomach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The dog must only eat its own food and treats and must not be fed by pupils without authority from and under the supervision of approved members of staff. To prevent accidental feeding, the dog will not enter the staff room or the main school dining hall whilst food is being prepared/served/consumed. All food should be kept out of the dog's reach e.g. in a store cupboard off the floor. |
| Therapy Dog behaviour | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | Bites, scratches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Pupils are warned of the general hazards and risks posed by some dogs; ◆ Procedures are introduced and pupils are taught the correct handling of the dog; ◆ The dog is closely supervised by an adult when in the presence of children; ◆ Pupils are closely supervised by an adult when in contact with the dog; ◆ A First Aid kit is available. Any dog scratches and bites must be carefully washed and a first aider contacted; ◆ In line with existing school procedures, all Accidents/incidents will be reported and investigated; ◆ Consider the need for Dog Behavioural training https://archietherapy.com/ ◆ A Notice is displayed in School Reception area informing when the dog is on the Premises; ◆ All Pupils, staff and visitors are made aware of the rules of behaviour when interacting with the dog; ◆ Headteacher/nominated person provide regular reminders about the dog's needs and what might make them worried/nervous/angry; |

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| Therapy Dog Welfare | Therapy Dog | General wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The dog is exercised regularly by a nominated person or supervised pupil. ◆ All gates must be kept closed/locked during exercise periods, regular checks of any fencing for breaches must be undertaken to ensure the dog cannot escape. ◆ The dog is taught to signal when it needs a comfort break or is taken out regularly to allow for comfort needs. |
| Therapy Dog Welfare | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers | Therapy Dog death Pupil upset | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Any specific welfare conditions for the breed of dog have been considered prior to making the decision to allow a dog on site; ◆ Dog have access to clean water throughout the day; ◆ Provision is made for the dog's welfare out of school hours e.g. the dog lives with the Headteacher. ◆ The dog has regular veterinary health checks, if it isn't feeling well, it will be removed from the school environment until it is feeling better or treated by a Vet. ◆ The dog is given regular breaks away from interacting with pupils. |

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| Cleanliness | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Therapy Dog | General wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Regular cleaning of all areas is carried out by Site Supervisor/Cleaner/nominated staff; ◆ Workplace Inspections are undertaken on a regular basis by Headteacher/ Site Supervisor/Cleaner/nominated staff; ◆ Headteacher/nominated person ensures that the dog is cleaned/groomed on a regular basis prior to coming into school; ◆ The dog is kept in the Headteacher's/other's office when not interacting with staff/pupils. ◆ Blankets/bedding and crate 'safe place' are cleaned on a daily/weekly/regular basis, all blankets and bedding are cleaned off site by the Headteacher/nominated person; ◆ Windows can be opened to provide fresh circulating air; ◆ Air fresheners are available if required; |
| Fire/Emergency Situation | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Therapy Dog | Physical Injury/Fatality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The dog is accompanied at all times and will be taken to the Fire Assembly Point by Headteacher/nominated person as they evacuate themselves; |
| Noise | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers Therapy Dog | Physical Injury | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Headteacher/nominated person to instruct anyone coming into contact with the dog to keep noise levels low to avoid upsetting/startling the dog; ◆ Staff to monitor the behaviour of students and dog, including noise levels; ◆ The dog will be trained to tolerate some noise levels e.g. walking through the school playground during break times/lunch time; |

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| Security of Premises | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers Therapy Dog | Physical Injury | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Controlled access, Safeguarding policy available; ◆ Staff to supervise pupils outside the building; ◆ The dog is restrained on a lead at all times; ◆ Gates are kept locked, Visitors cars and delivery vans come into the car park/Street Park/other e.g. permission to access school grounds is sought from the Headteacher/nominated person; |

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| Visiting other Schools/Premises | Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, Therapy Dog | Physical injury | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consent is received from the Headteacher/Senior management team/other before arranging any visit to another premise; ◆ Trained members of staff accompany and supervise the dog and pupils at all times; ◆ If the dog needs to be transported, a suitable method is used e.g. strapped in with a safety device attached to seatbelt in the vehicle or is placed in their crate whilst travelling in the vehicle; ◆ The dog is fed/watered and encouraged to take a comfort break prior to travelling; ◆ Confirm date and time of visit prior to the initial visit by the dog, discussions between both parties are recommended; ◆ Site is assessed to ensure suitability of a visit by the dog; ◆ Pupil visit risk assessments to be undertaken/reviewed as necessary; ◆ Parent/Pupil consent forms to be completed; ◆ The Headteacher/nominated person to reiterate responsibilities for the dog's behaviour on other premises e.g. if another adult is with the dog they need to understand how to handle the dog what to do/and what not to do; ◆ Comply with all premises procedures; ◆ Signage to be displayed indicating "Dog on Premises" while the dog is on site; |

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NOTE: CLEAPSS have issued a number of guidance leaflets on keeping Therapy Dogs in school as well bringing pets, etc to school that schools may find useful in developing this risk assessment further:

- L56 – Housing and Keeping Animals;

This general risk assessment will apply to this area/task/activity in most schools providing the control measures described are in operation and there are no further local significant hazards. If it does not fully apply and further control measures are required, please complete the Action Plan at Part C. If it fully applies please sign below.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to the area/task/activity under assessment in Saint Mary's RC Primary School.

Signed:

Name: Laura Wolstenholme

Risk Assessor: Laura Wolstenholme