



# Stebbing Primary School

# School Dog Policy

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## Introduction

Children 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, children take 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 is included in this document (see appendix 3).

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site at any time unless specifically authorised by the Head Teacher. This includes drop off and collection times. This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the school dog to be present.

## School Dog Policy

- Woody will be owned by Mr Le Masurier.
- Miss Mawson (Headteacher), and the Chair of Governors, have both agreed that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Stebbing Primary School.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Head Teacher has been informed beforehand.
- Woody is a Cavapoo. Woody was chosen after extensive research, as one of the best breeds of dog to combat allergies. The mixture of a Cavalier King Charles and Poodle makes him hypoallergenic. It also makes him very sociable, well-tempered, clever, affectionate and sensitive.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. Mr Le Masurier has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near Woody. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If Woody is ill he will not be allowed into school.
- Woody will normally be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.
- There may be occasions where Woody is working off of the lead but this will only happen when in an enclosed space and under the control of an adult (primarily, Mr Le Masurier). Before removing Woody from the lead, all those present will be consulted.
- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Woody. Children should remain calm around Woody. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for Woody. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb Woody that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with Woody.
- Everyone must wait until Woody is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
- If Woody is surrounded by a large number of children, Woody could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of Woody must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.

- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicate that Woody is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that Woody is frightened or nervous. If Woody is displaying any of these warning signs he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to Woody.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.
- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to Woody.
- All visitors will be informed about Woody and related protocols on arrival.
- Mr Le Masurier will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- Woody will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mr Le Masurier.

### **Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with Woody, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher or a member of the senior leadership team as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head teacher.

### **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 dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

## *Appendix 1. 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 truancy
8. Motivate children 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 Woody, can better understand how classmates 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 students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog at school.

### **Attendance:**

Case study: Mandy was a student with poor attendance and truancy. Mandy was encouraged back into school using caring for River, a dog, as an incentive. By telling Mandy 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 students. Children 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 student read to them or join a group of children 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, emerging readers. Woodys also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students 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 students they mix with.

### **Social Development:**

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogs to help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students. With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of classroom dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility, caring, and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at school.

### **As a reward:**

Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. Woody will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

**School Dog  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Q Who is the legal owner of Woody and who pays for its costs?**

A. The legal owner of Woody will be Mr Le Masurier who will care for Woody out of school hours and will bear the costs associated with it; the school budget will remain unaffected.

**Q Is Woody from a reputable breeder?**

A. Yes. We have researched breeders and have chosen a reputable breeder

**Q Will Woody be a distraction?**

A. Woody will be kept in Owls classroom We will be careful to ensure that time spent with the school dog is shared among the children fairly. We will also ensure that children who are not involved in regular, direct contact with Woody are still able to participate in a number of ways, should they wish to do so.

**Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

A. Yes, 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 is also a School Dog Policy available to view on our Website.

**Q Who is responsible for training?**

A. Mr Le Masurier is the legal owner of Woody and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained.

**Q. How will Woody be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?**

A. In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be accompanied when toileting with any faeces being collected immediately. Thus there will be no chance of the children coming into contact with faeces. Our policy of no dogs in the playground is still applicable as we are unable to put effective control measures in place that guarantee temperament and safety when children come into unsupervised contact with unknown dogs.

**Q How will Woody's welfare be considered?**

A. Woody will be walked mornings and lunchtime by a member of staff/responsible children. Woody will be kept in Owls classroom or in an enclosure near the classroom and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. Woody will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to water. We will work closely with other professionals to ensure Woody's welfare is always carefully considered.

**Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?**

A. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. The breed of dog has also been chosen for its hypoallergenic properties. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies.

**Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?**

A. Access to Woody is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have regular, close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

**Q What happens if Woody is ill?**

A. If Woody were to be taken ill, he would not attend school and would be cared for at home until he was fit to return to school. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions that have not been covered above.

### *Appendix 3 School Dog Risk Assessment*

#### **Background**

The value of pet therapy is widely accepted as a powerful aid to communication and motivation. Research has shown that companion dogs can improve the well-being of children by reducing their anxiety levels by making the school environment happier and a more enjoyable place to be. Dogs are a great comfort to children who are upset in any way and in need of calm, consolation, comfort, breathing space or a distraction before being able to tell an adult what has upset them. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally; a dog can motivate and encourage their participation, increase their understanding of responsibility, develop empathy and nurturing skills and improve their behaviour and self-esteem. Children cannot fail in any way in their relationship with a dog; they do not judge or condemn and offer unconditional affection. Children will learn the principles of good pet ownership and be taught how to handle dogs safely and responsibly; they will take great enjoyment from interaction with their dog.

The leadership team at Stebbing Primary School considered the options regarding the possibility of a dog as a school pet in the Autumn term 2019. Over a period of several months following several discussions and research, the final decision was taken to introduce a dog to school in May 2020.

The rationale to make the decision to have a school dog was as follows:

- For the school to have a dog that is able to live as naturally as conditions allow.
- For Woody to be properly cared for.
- To have a dog that the children could learn how to care for, interact safely around and also benefit their social and emotional development alongside their academic development.

Woody is Mr Le Masurier's dog. He lives with Mr Le Masurier in his home at his own expense and will be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually. A vet has thoroughly checked Woody for any illnesses and was responsible for his initial vaccination programme. There are no diseases that could be caught from Woody and he is kept up-to-date with immunisations including rabies and worming treatment is in line with European vet guidelines. A register of his annual health check is kept by both Mr Le Masurier and the vets' surgery.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with Woody is invited to inform Mr Le Masurier of their wishes. The risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the Senior Leadership Team.



<p><b>Significant Hazards and Associated Risks</b></p> <p>Those hazards which may result in serious harm or affect several people</p>	<p><b>Those who might be harmed</b></p> <p>Persons at risk from the significant hazards identified</p>	<p><b>Residual Risk Rating</b></p> <p>(H / M / L)</p>	<p><b>Control Measures (CM's):</b></p> <p>Controls, including relevant sources of guidance (e.g. Generic Risk Assessment, CSF Offsite Visits Manual, Guidance from Provider, etc.). Specific CM's not included in the generic RA (e.g. briefings, actions by leaders / participants, qualifications / experience of supervisors)</p>
<p>Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.</p>	<p>Child/staff</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Woody will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises unsupervised.</p> <p>When deemed suitable, children will be permitted to spend time with Woody unsupervised.</p> <p>During the school day Woody will always be on a lead when he is out of the classroom, except when he is undergoing structured training or is supervised in an enclosed area.</p> <p>Woody may spend some time off of his lead at break time and lunch times when suitable.</p> <p>Woody will be trained not to jump up or nip the children.</p> <p>Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught how to read dog behaviour and the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children in whole school assemblies, specific workshops from outside professionals, including the Blue Cross / Dog Trust, in class time and PSHE lessons.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent Woody from chasing them. (i.e. stand still with arms by their side – ‘tall like a tree’)</p> <p>Woody will attend the vets’ regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and is also walked on concrete/tarmac to keep them trimmed.</p>

			<p>Mr Le Masurier and Woody have undergone formal training from the age of 12 weeks with an experienced local dog trainer. All staff will have been introduced to Woody and the expectations (do's and don'ts) of having a school dog.</p>
<p>Keeping safe when dog walking</p>	<p>Child/staff</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>A member of staff will always have Woody on the lead and have responsibility to ensure that they have control of him. At times, responsible children will be given responsibility for walking Woody within the school grounds independently.</p> <p>From Year 2, children in small groups will walk the school dog with a member of staff. Children are reminded how to keep safe crossing the road and are supervised at all times by the member of staff.</p> <p>The member of staff will pick up any dog poo and remind children of the importance of staff members washing hands on return to school.</p> <p>Children will be given the choice if they would like to stroke the school dog and or feed Woody a treat and are shown how to do this safely with a flat hand. They are reminded on return to school to wash their hands.</p>
<p>Woody being a tripping hazard</p>	<p>Child/ staff/parent/ visitor</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>All members of school community to be vigilant to look where they are walking to avoid tripping over Woody.</p> <p>Woody will be on a short lead when walking around school with a member of staff.</p> <p>If Woody is resting in a shared area/classroom etc, he may be on his lead which will be safely attached under a table leg – where possible passers-by informed.</p>

			Woody may be taken off of his lead at times during the school day. Children and staff to be informed when this is happening.
Woody gets loose from the classroom, his crate or from his lead.	Child/staff	M	<p>If someone requests not to have contact with Woody he will be removed from the room if required and remain with a member of staff.</p> <p>Woody's crate is big enough for him to be happy and safe during the school day and the children are taught not to tease him.</p> <p>If Woody does get loose from the classroom or his crate, the teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put Woody back in the classroom and/or in his crate.</p>
Dog hair causing allergies	Children have allergic reactions	L/M/H	<p>The school dog is a Cavapoo which is a low/non-moulting breed to reduce the chance of an allergic reaction.</p> <p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to the introduction of Woody to school.</p> <p>A list of any children who should not interact with Woody will be kept by the Headteacher, teachers and office staff.</p> <p>Parents / Staff have been asked to highlight any allergies and a list of those who should not interact with Woody will be kept by the Headteacher, teachers and office staff.</p> <p>Children will have the opportunity to interact with Woody as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children have been taught to wash hands after interacting with Woody. Wounds on exposed skin will be covered.</p>

Financial cost of Woody's upkeep	School unable to afford ongoing cost of Woody's day-to-day upkeep or medical bills	L	<p>Woody is the responsibility of Mr Le Masurier who is financially responsible for all his care and day-to-day costs.</p> <p>Woody is the responsibility of Mr Le Masurier outside of school hours. Dog training costs will be paid for by Mr Le Masurier. As Woody gets older we aim for him to be used for 'therapy' work within the school. The school will accommodate costs towards training and assessment of Woody to meet these criteria if and when it is felt that Woody is old enough to partake in this.</p>
Claim is made against school re: behaviour of Woody	School not adequately covered financially	L	Mr Le Masurier insures Woody. He is fully insured to be at school. The certificates are kept in school office and renewed annually
Fire Alarm	Who has responsibility to remove dog from the building	L	Woody signed in as a member of staff so fire marshalls know when he is onsite
Noise / Barking	Pupils who can't cope with noise	L	Cavapoos are bred to be sociable dogs and are often used as therapy dogs as they are known to be good with children. Woody will be introduced to the children from an early age so will be acclimatised to a noisy environment, therefore reducing the chance of him barking.
Dog Phobia	Distress caused by close proximity to dog	L	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school if their child is scared to be in close contact with Woody.</p> <p>Parents are offered a programme of support for their child to help overcome aversion. Parents are also offered the option of their child having no close contact. A list of any children who should not interact with Woody will be kept by the Headteacher, teachers and office staff.</p>

			Visitors will be advised that a dog is in the building and removed if requested. Notice in school entrance and noted on school website.
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