Mithian School

School Dog Policy

Sept 2026-27

School Dog Policy

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 already happen within the school environment, which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents that can be 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 Mithian School Dog Risk Assessment).

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

School Policy

The dog is owned by Mr Faint

- The LMC have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- 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.
- The dog is a double doodle, chosen because they are a loyal, intelligent and friendly breed that respond well to training and are known to be sociable and friendly. A double doodle has lineage from golden retriever and labrador retriever (known as family-friendly dogs) and poodle, meaning that the dog is low-shedding and therefore hypo-allergenic.
- The Chair of the LMC and the LMC agree that a school dog will benefit the children and staff of Mithian School.
- Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. Mr Faint 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 the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill she will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.

- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.

- Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.

- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.

- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.

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

- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dog is displaying any of these warning signs he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

- Children should not eat close to the dog.

- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on her body, chest, back and not by her face or top of head.

- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.

- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.

- Parents will be consulted on allowing their pupils access to the dog.

- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Head Teacher/Head of School as soon as possible.

- 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 and which staff are supervising at all times.

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

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher/Head of School. All concerns will be responded to by the Head teacher/Head of School.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LMC has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

The Head teacher/Head of School 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 the dog, 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. The dogs 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. The dog 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.

Appendix 2

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

The legal owner of the dog will be Mr Faint and he will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament. The dog is Mr Faint's family dog and is in a family with children both of primary school age.

Will the dog be a distraction?

The dog will be kept in Mrs. Evison/Mr Faint's office in a designated area. The children will be made aware of the dog's area. The dog will also have a dog crate which will be his designated safe space.
The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms and around the school, where she can interact safely with the children. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

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.

Who is responsible for training?
Mr Faint will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained from a local dog trainer who is a registered member of the Animal Behaviour and Training Council.

How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed. Prior to coming to school in the morning, Mr Faint will have exercised the dog for at least 30mins outside of the school grounds.

Our policy of no parental 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.

How will the dog's welfare be considered?

The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. This will also be used as a behaviour reward, in line with our behaviour policy. The dog will be kept with Mr Faint and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. The dog's welfare, along with the safety of children and staff, will always be our first priority.

How will this be managed where children have allergies?

Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. She will be given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens and her hair type reduces the amount of dander that is produced, making it lower-allergen.

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

Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have 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.

Appendix 3

Risk Assessment

Mithian School Dog Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	1-5	Likelihood	Controls in place	Reviewed/ signed
Dog getting over excited when with children	Child knocked to ground Child scratched by dog Child bitten by dog	1 1 5	2 2 1	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. The dog will always be on a lead when she is out of his crate/the Head's office/school office, except when he is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer. The dog will be trained not to jump up or bite the children. Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around her. The dog will receive ongoing formal training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment and during puppy training sessions. Pupils will be reminded not to touch the dog's mouth, head and rear end, and to stand, turn and say "whoops/oh dear" if she attempts to jump up or mouth. All staff given permission to handle the dog will be given strict instructions to follow and the appropriate training. The dog will attend the vets' regularly to make sure claws are kept short and is also walked on concrete/tarmac to keep them trimmed.	

Dog gets loose from lead in school	As above	1	2	The dog will be trained to walk on a lead in school and will always be on a lead when moving between rooms. The children will be made aware of the dog's space in the office. If she is roaming free in the school (i.e. before/after school hours) Mr Faint will check that all children, staff and visitors are aware. This is unlikely to happen until the dog is older. Children and staff will be taught not to tease or wind up the dog. If the dog gets loose from the lead the designated member of staff will come and reattach the lead. If the dog is loose at any time, the members of staff to be called upon are: Mr Faint Mrs Evison Mrs Williams Miss Bingham The dog will always be on the lead when out of her designated spaces.	
Dog hair causing allergy	Children have an allergic reaction	1	1	Parents will be asked to provide a list of any known allergies prior to the dog being introduced to the school. A list of any children who should not interact with the dog will be kept by the reception staff and the leadership team. Children will have the opportunity to opt out of any interaction with the dog. Children will be taught to wash their hands thoroughly after interaction with the dog.	
Children/staff get germs from the dog	Children/staff can contract a disease that can be carried by the dog	1	1	Should the dog defecate anywhere on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant. All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and a register of this is kept by Mr Faint with a copy given to the school. Flea treatment is carried out at 6 weekly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out in line with	

				European Vet guidelines, at 6 monthly intervals The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times and will never go into the food preparation area of the kitchen.	
Financial cost of dog	School unable to afford the medical costs and day to day upkeep of the dog	1	1	The dog is the responsibility of Mr Faint – he is financially responsible for all its care. Mr Faint is responsible for all costs associated with the dog.	
A complaint is made against the school regarding the behaviour of the dog	School not adequately covered financially	1	1	The dog will be insured by Mr Faint using Tesco Pet Insurance. Pet insurance: This provides additional public liability insurance cover. The value of the cover is currently £1,500,000. The certificate will be kept in the school office and renewed annually. The school has public liability insurance.	