

Grace Mary Dog Risk Assessment

Background

Mrs Sturmey, the leadership team and the governors at Grace Mary 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 dogs will live with Mr Simon Cains and Miss Elizabeth Sturmey in their homes. The school team will be responsible for upkeep of the vaccination, and immunisation programme including rabies and worming treatments. A register of the dog's annual health check will be kept both by school and the vets' surgery.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for the majority it has the potential to provide multiple positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog will be invited to inform school of their wishes in writing.

This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the impact of the school dog will be evaluated by the school leadership team.

PART A. ASSESSMENT DETAILS:			
Area/task/activity: Companion/Reading/Therapy Dog in School			
Location of activity: Grace Mary Primary School			
School name: Address & Contact details:	Grace Mary Primary School Hawfield Road Tividale	Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment:	Simon Cains
		Signature(s):	
Headteacher (Name):	Clare Sturmeay	Date of Assessment:	September 2025
Signature:		Planned Review Date:	September 2027
How communicated to staff:	In person and via email	Date communicated to staff:	

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 code of practice for the welfare of dogs: Code of practice for the welfare of dogs (publishing.service.gov.uk)
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. Microsoft Word - Animal friendly schools web version - English - May 11 (rspca.org.uk)
General information	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below	◆ Follow DfE guidelines on pets and animal contact Chapter 8: pets and animal contact - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Insurance			◆ Dogs to be provided with harnesses, leads, collars and identification. ◆ Dog to have an insurance that covers personal injuries to children/staff. ◆ School has public liability insurance that covers school dogs.

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	♦ 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 but may walk around off lead, fully supervised with a small group of calm children. The dog must wear his jacket. ♦ 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	♦ Pupils and visitors are requested/instructed not to lift/carry the dog as this could injure themselves or the dog. Nominated members of staff will supervise any interaction with the dog (called 'handlers').
Slips, trips and falls	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, Therapy Dog	Physical injury	♦ 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 handler at all times when handling the dog. In the unlikely event of liquid and faeces around school, this will be cleaned up immediately to both reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls and also to reduce the risks from poor hygiene.

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Companion dog eating food in school	Therapy Dog	Physical injury/upset stomach	♦ 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 will be kept out of the dog's reach e.g. in a store cupboard off the floor.

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Companion Dog behaviour	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Bites, scratches	◆ 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. Grace Mary has written a curriculum to support this. ◆ 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; ◆ The dog may interact with children off lead. The dog handler must ensure that the children are calm, the dog is wearing his therapy jacket and the dog does not become agitated. ◆ 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; ◆ The dog will have Dog Behavioural training. Socialisation and training are vitally important for every dog and should be ongoing throughout their life. Undertaking kind and positive training classes and teaching every dog basic instructions is vital to building a great bond with a dog. Playing with the dog and giving them safe toys and chew toys helps prevent boredom. ◆ A notice is displayed in the school reception area informing everyone 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; ◆ Nominated person will provide regular reminders about the dog's needs and what might make them worried/nervous;

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Companion Dog Welfare	Companion Dog	General wellbeing	◆ The dog will be exercised regularly by a nominated person or supervised pupil. ◆ All gates will 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 will be taught to signal when it needs a comfort break or is taken out regularly to allow for comfort needs.
Companion Dog Welfare	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Companion Dog death Pupil upset	◆ 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 dogs live with the Deputy Head and Miss Sturmey. ◆ The dog has regular veterinary health checks, if it is unwell, 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.
Companion Dog Welfare	Companion Dog	General wellbeing	Environment – the dog will have their own draught free bed in a quiet place, secured safely when in a car, daily exercise according to breed, age and health, adequate toileting opportunities throughout the day, a specified separated dog exercise and toileting area a poop scoop and disinfection chemicals in case of accidents, dogs should be safe from any hazards or poisons inside and outside. Diet – a complete balanced diet according to age, breed and lifestyle and 24 hour access to water. Companionship – due to the social nature of the dog they will never be left alone for more than 4 hours in any given day.

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Cleanliness	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Companion Dog	General wellbeing	◆ Regular cleaning of all areas is carried out by Site Maintenance Officer/Cleaner/nominated staff; ◆ Workplace Inspections are undertaken on a regular basis by Headteacher/ Site Maintenance Officer/Cleaner/nominated staff; ◆ Nominated person ensures that the dog is cleaned/groomed on a regular basis prior to coming into school; ◆ The dogs are kept in the Main School Office and Wellbeing Room 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. ◆ Windows can be opened to provide fresh circulating air; ◆ Air fresheners are available if required;
Fire/Emergency Situation	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Companion Dog	Physical Injury/Fatality	◆ The dog is accompanied at all times and will be taken to the Fire Assembly Point by nominated person as they evacuate themselves;
Noise	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers Companion Dog	Physical Injury	◆ Staff 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 Companion Dog	Physical Injury	◆ 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 - permission to access school grounds is sought from the Headteacher/nominated person;

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Visiting other Schools/Premises	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, Companion Dog	Physical injury	◆ Consent is received from the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team/other before arranging any visit to another premise; ◆ Nominated 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;

This risk assessment will apply to a school dog 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 then these will be assessed as appropriate or necessary. If it fully applies please sign below.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to a school dog in Woodlands Primary School.

Signed: Simon Cains

Name: Simon Cains

Risk Assessor: Simon Cai

