

LITTLE KINGSHILL COMBINED SCHOOL

Dog Policy



Approved: December 2024
Next Review: December 2027

Rationale:

At Little Kingshill Combined School we pride ourselves on the school's nurturing ethos. Our education is not just about learning to read and write, it about developing the whole child.

- **Dogs teach children responsibility.** Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.
- **Dogs teach children patience.** Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!
- **Dogs teach children compassion.** Just like humans, dogs feel emotions and pain. They are prone to injuries and infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
- **Dogs teach children about socialisation.** Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park!
- **Dogs are fun.** Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up when no one else can.

Having animals in school lends itself to our commitment in raising the profile of wellbeing, so following much research, including liaison with many other schools, we have decided to recruit a new member to the Little Kingshill family. But her full integration will be a journey, as documented in this policy.

If you would like to find out more about School Dogs and the benefits to children, the following links make interesting reading!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47655600>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-london-46229906/the-dog-who-gives-school-another-layer-of-happiness>

By googling 'our school dog' you will see how many dogs there are in schools around the country.

Meet Lucy



Lucy belongs to Mr Dodd. She is a 6 year old Yellow Labrador. Lucy was rehomed by Mr Dodd and his family from a local rescue centre after her owner gave her up due to illness. She has been trained to obey many commands.

Lucy has an excellent calm temperament, she previously lived with three other dogs and four cats so she is used to interactions with people and other animals. When she meets someone for the first time, her default is to be a little shy, until she trusts the person and then she is loving in nature. She loves bottom scratches and being stroked gently.

Whilst Lucy has a role in school, her legal owner is Mr Dodd, and as such Mr Dodd will incur all costs; including public liability insurance, veterinarian care, food and sundries. If Mr Dodd were to ever leave Little Kingshill Combined School, Lucy will leave too. But this policy will serve as a template for any incumbents who also see the value in having animals in school.

Lucy's job description:

- To provide comfort to children who need to regulate their emotions.
- To provide comfort to adults – improving wellbeing.
- To further create a family atmosphere: not all families can have a dog in their home.
- To listen to readers.
- To inspire imaginative writing.
- To be trained by the children.
- To inspect the classes each morning.
- To be part of the Nurture Provision.

Progression to School Dog:

From January 2025, Lucy will begin as an 'office dog', bring with her comfort toys and blanket and will have access to clean water.

We will begin her School Dog training by ignoring her when coming in and out of the room and leaving her for short bursts.

Older children will be invited to assist in her further familiarisation of the school.

Younger children will be invited to say 'hello', practising the rules listed below.

When ready, Lucy will conduct morning rounds of each classroom to greet the children

Lucy will have the run of the admin corridor; but will always be on a lead when walking through school.

Over time, Lucy will spend time with the ELSA/Nurture team.

Lucy will always receive plenty of exercise and socialisation with other dogs, regardless of school commitments.

Rules to be established by all stakeholders:

All children at school are taught how to approach dogs and how to respond to unwanted behaviour. They are taught that they must ask if they wish to pet Lucy and know how she is trained to greet people. This is an important life-lesson for the children.

1. Ignore Lucy - speak to adult in charge first
2. Ask permission to approach
3. Four paws on the floor (everyone needs to be consistent with this).
4. Take turns (the children – not Lucy...)
5. No barking (Lucy – not the children...)
6. Let sleeping dogs lie (we recognise that a school can be a tiring experience for a dog, especially with their heightened sense of smell!)

Other dogs in school:

As a rule, **dogs are NOT ALLOWED on the school site**. You may NOT bring your family pet on to the playground for any reason.

There are a few exceptions to this rule **by prior arrangement with the Head Teacher**.

Any visiting dogs must show their vaccination passport and insurance documents, must always be on a lead and have a good reason to be there – for example a new puppy being carried in; or a dog in training for therapeutic, assistance or police work.

The level of thought that has gone into the training and establishing Lucy as a school dog can be seen in this document. We cannot be overrun with the risks that bringing family pets on to the playground brings.

Lucy is the designated school dog. No other dogs are allowed on site without special permission.

FAQs

Will the dog be a distraction?

The school dog is based in Mr Dodd's Office. The office is separate from the classrooms/playground to ensure she only meets children who are happy to have contact, under strict supervision. Her visits to classrooms will be supervised and on the lead. The children will soon get used to her being part of the family, as they do with their pets at home.

How will you ensure the dog remains an asset to the school?

A well-behaved dog is a joy to have around a school and brings a sense of calmness and community. This is what a school dog provides. She has demonstrated the right temperament for the role.

Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

Yes, it forms part of this policy document for ease of reference. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice, including from other schools that successfully have a school dog.

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

In the interest of health and hygiene the school dog is toileted off site and is not allowed outside onto the school grounds off the lead.

Will Lucy be allowed on the school playground?

Only on the lead, once the rules have been established.

How is the dog's welfare considered?

The school dog is walked at least once during the school day. She has a bed and free access to water in the Mr Dodd's office. Children can only approach her after asking permission and staff know what signs to look for if she is uncomfortable or stressed. If the dog is unwell she will not come into school.

How will this be managed where children have allergies?

Children will not need to touch her, 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, for example, keeping designated spaces dog-free.

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

Access to the school dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with her. 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 2 - Letter to parents / carers:

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am delighted to inform you that, we have appointed a new member to the Little Kingshill Combined School team!

Lucy is a six year old yellow Labrador, has a wonderful temperament and is very beautiful!

She lives with Mr Dodd and his family. They have been committed to the welfare and training of Lucy who is completely toilet trained and has many basic commands under her belt.

She has been extensively socialised, is used to interactions with people and other animals and children of all ages. When she meets someone, she does not jump up and isn't particularly 'licky' either!

Her job will be to support our wonderful ELSA/Nurture team, perhaps listen to readers and generally to promote wellbeing, as part of our overarching ethos. Her full job description is in our policy.

Lucy will be based in the Headteachers office and there will be rules in place around interaction with her, to protect the welfare of both her and the children. The children will be taught how to approach her and support the staff with her training. She will not be off the lead and free around school during the school day.

No child will have to interact with Lucy if they are nervous or have an allergy. We are seeking your permission today for your child to be allowed access to her. **If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you do give your permission.** If you do not want your child to have access to the Lucy due to allergies or other reasons do please alter the school office.

A lot of research and careful planning has gone into appointing Lucy as part of the team. I hope that she will bring a lot of joy along the way!

If you would like to know more, or have any questions, please do read our extensive policy and risk assessment, including FAQs, attached with this communication.

Kind regards

Mr S Dodd
Headteacher

Risk assessment:

Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times				
Hazard	Who may be affected?	Control measures in place.	Risk after control measures.	Further action?
Biting	Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	The school dog is being trained not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger.	Low	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way
Jumping up / scratching	If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that she could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	<i>The temperament of Lucy and her training programme has involved not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful</i> No interaction will be made with any children where the parents have alerted the school office that they do not wish their child to have contact for a specific reason.	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision.
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose, she could hurt children/adults or damage property	The school dog will be supervised at all times and will be on a lead when walking through the school	Low	Supervise
Interacting with children / adults	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/ staff could be scratched	No interaction is allowed without authorization. Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour Rewards/praise will be given to reinforce the desired behavior	Medium	Ensure that the school dog is approached in the agreed manner
Destruction of property	If allowed the school dog may chew/destroy some school materials/resource	The school dog will be supervised at all times The school dog will have her own toys to play with and normal school resources will be removed	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective

Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times				
Hazard	Who may be affected?	Control measures in place.	Risk after control measures.	Further action?
Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with the school dog.	If a child/adult interact with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way this will affect the school dogs training and have a negative impact on future interaction	Agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation	Medium	If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped
Use of rewards / treats	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats	Alcohol gel will be available to all adults. Cleansing foam is available outside the toilets – children will be directed to these. Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands / use alcohol gel after handling treats Treats to be locked away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation
Pupil / adult knowledge of interaction with the school dog	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves	Mr Dodd will deliver an assembly to the whole school on approaching dogs and he will share the rules regularly with pupils to remind them	Medium	There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dog

Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog to not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school				
Hazard	Who may be affected?	Control measures in place.	Risk after control measures.	Further action?
Worms / fleas	If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger germs can be transferred	The school dog will be treated regularly at a local vets to ensure she is correctly treated for worms and fleas	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet
Faeces / urine	If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	The school dog will only be walked under supervision. <i>Lucy is fed dried food, therefore her poo is dry..</i> Any accidents are to be cleaned using infection control powder which neutralises bacteria and odour. No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision.	Low – there is greater risk of a child causing bodily fluids (sneezing, coughing, dribbling, vomiting, urinating or a diarrhoea accident) on the carpet; or for someone to walk dog / fox mess off the street into the classroom on their shoes, as we well know from much experience. We are fully equipped with specialist cleaning equipment and procedures for such mess: <i>but Lucy is trained, so risk is negligible.</i>	If a child finds faeces on the school field/playground they will report it to an adult
Allergies	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	Any children who parents have identified that they should not go near the dog will be kept away from contact with her.	Medium	
Access to the dog's food /treats	If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some they could become unwell	All of the school dogs resources will be kept in the headteacher's office. No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation	Low	Remind children not to enter area
Contact with food prep areas	If the school dog enters a food preparation area this could be unhygienic	The school dog will be in a contained area or on a lead at all times around school. She will never enter the school hall during dining times.	Low	
Hand washing	If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands

Reason: To ensure the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community				
Hazard	Who may be affected?	Control measures in place.	Risk after control measures.	Further action?
Walking	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focused Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk	If the school dog is taken off-site normal a risk assessed procedure will take place. No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by accompanying adult. No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is on a walk unless permission is given	Medium	Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes
Classrooms	If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure she may become over excited	The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop	Medium	Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant
School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed she may become aggressive, noisy or boisterous	The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and she will be under the control of a supervising adult	Low	Monitor the school dog's reaction to school events If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog might not attend school on that day
Other dogs	If the school dog encounters another dog she may become boisterous	No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises.. At no time will the school dog be walked by a child alone and as a result if another dog is seen this will be dealt with by the supervising adult	Low	Monitor