



**KING EDWARD VI**  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**King Edward VI Community College**

**Dogs in School Policy**

**2022-23**

Ratified by the FGB July 2022

Due for Review September 2023

## **1 Introduction**

Research has shown many benefits to therapy and reading dogs in school settings. KEVICC is introducing carefully vetted and approved dogs to work with our students to improve literacy and student behaviour and wellbeing. This policy is designed to set out to students, parents and visitors the reasons for having these dogs in school at KEVICC (Section 2 – The benefits of a school dog) and the rules and responsibilities to ensure the safety of students, staff, visitors and dog (Sections 3 and 4 – Principles and Code of Conduct). Although there is a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment, this can be mitigated against with a robust risk assessment to ensure the safety of all students, staff and visitors (Appendix A - Risk Assessment).

KEVICC has identified that dogs legally owned by staff who have successfully completed Pets as Therapy Assessment and been certified as suitable school therapy dogs may attend the school premises in this capacity as per the guidance in this policy.

The school also has professional links with Pets as Therapy and can arrange for additional approved dogs to visit with owners where specific circumstances recommend this.

The identification of more than one dog to support the school resolves issues relating to matching dog size/skill/energy levels to the needs of our different children at college. It supports dog welfare, allowing frequent rest days. Furthermore, 'succession planning' is made easier through the deployment of more than one dog, easing risk of bereavement and grief should a specific dog no longer be able to attend school for any reason.

## **2 The benefits of a school dog**

School dogs have been proven to help develop students' reading skills, improve behaviour, attendance and academic confidence, as well as increasing student understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills. At KEVICC, we would like to support our staff team in bringing all of these benefits to our students.

### **2.1 Literacy benefits**

"Reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect the dogs' presence has on children and the fact that the dog will listen to the children read without being judgemental or critical. This comforting environment helps to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence needed to read aloud. When dogs are in a room of children trying to read they become less stressed, less self-conscious and more confident because dogs are non-judgemental. If children are partnered with a dog to read to, the dog provides comfort, encourages positive social behaviour, enhances self-esteem, motivates speech and inspires children to have fun and enjoy the experience of reading."

- Bark & Read – The Kennel Club

(<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>)

“Children who read to dogs are less likely to be embarrassed reading aloud and find the experience less stressful. Research has proved that children who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, and a higher desire to read and write.”

- School Dog Policy – The White Horse Federation  
(<https://www.ridgewayschool.com/downloads/default/TWHF-School-Dog-Policy-V2.pdf>)

## **2.2 Therapy benefits**

“Therapy Dogs Nationwide dogs have also shown to help with special needs and autistic children and adults by giving focus and providing a calming environment.”

- School Dogs - Therapy Dogs Nationwide (<http://www.tdn.org.uk/schools/>)

## **2.3 Attendance & punctuality benefits**

“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.”

- Case Study – Hazel Oak School Dog Policy (<https://hazel-oak.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/School-Dog-Policy.pdf>)

## **2.4 Behaviour & rewards**

“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.”

- Hazel Oak School Dog Policy (<https://hazel-oak.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/School-Dog-Policy.pdf>)

### **3 Principles**

3.1 The Principal, Alan Salt, and Chair of Governors, Jim Lodge, both agree to named and vetted school dogs working in the college. Each dog that qualifies through the Pets as Therapy scheme will be listed on a regularly reviewed register managed by the Deputy Principal.

3.2 Only the named school dogs and those arranged through Pets as Therapy are allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless the Principal has approved their presence prior to the visit.

3.3 The named dogs will have been chosen according to the following criteria: intelligent breeds that will respond well to training, known to be good with children, and sociable and friendly.

3.4 The dog's legal owners have full responsibility for the welfare of their dogs and all expenses relating to pet insurance, food and other expenses and ensuring that the dog is vaccinated, wormed and flea treated.

3.5 A risk assessment of the dogs' time in school has been approved by the Business Manager, Mr Corline, and this will be reviewed annually.

3.6 The dogs will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of their legal owners or trained staff members.

3.7 The college's liability insurance covers the school for risk related to a working dog on site. The Business Manager has responsibility for ensuring this remains on the school's policy during the dogs' time working at KEVICC.

3.8 Parents can indicate that their child is not allowed to be present during dog therapy sessions by emailing [kbastin@kingedwardvi.devon.sch.uk](mailto:kbastin@kingedwardvi.devon.sch.uk) or calling 01803 869200.

3.9 The presence of a school dog will sign posted to visitors at reception and the school website. Reception staff will relay visitor issues to the legal owners/dog handlers.

3.10 The dogs will only have student therapy and reading sessions once certified as a therapy dog by Pets As Therapy (<https://petsastherapy.org/>).

3.11 Only staff trained to handle the dog in student sessions will have permission to do so.

## **4 Code of Conduct**

### **4.1 Staff Responsibilities**

4.1.1 The legal owners will know the whereabouts of the dogs and which staff are supervising at all times.

4.1.2 If the dogs are ill they will not be allowed into school. The legal owners have responsibility for ensuring appropriate alternative care for the dogs if they are not able to be in the school on a given day.

4.1.3 The legal owners are responsible for ensuring the dogs are trained and certified as therapy dogs by Pets As Therapy.

4.1.4 The dogs must 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 (see clause 3.12).

4.1.5 The dogs will be kept in an office location when not interacting with students for therapy or reading sessions. The dogs will only visit designated pre-planned therapy or reading lessons and not be allowed in other areas of the school.

4.1.6 Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dogs. First Aid pastoral staff keeps a list of all students and staff with a reported allergy to dogs (dander) and ensures that all trained handlers for the dogs know who these students and staff are.

4.1.7 Staff leading therapy or reading sessions with the dogs have a responsibility to ensure all staff, students or visitors present are happy for a dog to enter the room.

4.1.8 Students must never be left alone with any of the dogs and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.

4.1.9 Students will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog before any interaction during a therapy session or visit.

4.1.10 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. If the dog is displaying any warning signs such as growling or flattening of ears, the dog will be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment by the trained staff member handling them.

4.1.11 Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the trained dog handling staff only. The dogs will have designated zones adjacent to PLC and woods in Kennicott zone where their toileting will be encouraged and responsibly cleared.

4.1.12 KEVICC staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog to better inform research into the benefits of school therapy / reading dogs.

## **4.2 Student Responsibilities**

4.2.1 Students whose parents have withdrawn consent are not allowed to attend dog therapy sessions

4.2.2 Students should be careful to stroke the dogs on their body, chest, back and not by their face or top of head.

4.2.3 Students are not allowed to approach the dogs or disturb them whilst they are sleeping or eating.

4.2.4 Students are not be allowed to play roughly with the dogs.

4.2.5 Students must wait until the school dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking her.

4.2.6 Students are not allowed to eat during sessions with the dog.

4.2.7 Students must always wash their hands after handling / stroking the dogs.

4.2.8 Students understand that any deliberate violence or threatening behaviour towards the dog will result in session being withdrawn and follow up in line with the college behaviour policy.

## Appendix A – School Dog Risk Assessment

Hazard	At Risk			Existing Control Measures
	Students	Staff	Visitors	
<b>Animal behaviour</b>  Staff, pupils or visitors could be injured if the school dog is not comfortable in a specific school environment and reacts badly, including bites or scratches	Medium	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dogs will receive ongoing formal training, socialising and conditioning within the school environment</li> <li>The dogs will be certified by Pets As Therapy before commencing therapy and reading sessions</li> <li>Pupils and parents are warned of the hazard before therapy sessions with the school dogs and take part only with consent</li> <li>Students are taught appropriate behaviour around the school dog, what to do to prevent over stimulating or upsetting the dog and how to remain calm around them.</li> <li>Students are closely supervised by an adult during dog therapy sessions</li> <li>Students are never left with the dogs unsupervised</li> <li>The school dogs will always be in the care of a responsible adult who will have received handling training</li> <li>If the school dogs exhibit any warning behaviours such growling or lowered ears they will be removed immediately from students</li> <li>The school dogs reside in a designated office and are not out in the school community outside of designated therapy, reading and reward sessions</li> <li>The dog will always be on a lead when they are out of their office areas. Signage will indicate that pupils are only allowed in this area with staff supervision.</li> <li>In the event that a student, staff member or visitor is bitten or scratched (even if only a "play" bite) first aider will inspect and assess the injury. The suitability of</li> </ul>



				the school dog/s will then be reassessed by the Principal.
<b>Disease, illness and allergic reactions</b>	Medium	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with veterinary advice and dogs' legal owners are responsible for keeping a register of this.</li> <li>• Flea treatment is carried out at monthly intervals. Worming treatment is carried out compliant with veterinary guidelines, at 3 monthly intervals.</li> <li>• The dogs will not go in the canteen or bothy; they will not be permitted into food preparation areas or the cooking room.</li> <li>• SLB keeps at all times an up to date list of students with known allergic reactions and these students are not present during therapy, reading or reward sessions with the dogs.</li> <li>• The dog is taken regularly outside the school building for toilet facilities by a designated member of staff trained to handle the school dogs.</li> <li>• All waste produced by the dog, whether accidental or routine, is handled and disposed of hygienically by designated staff members only. Contaminated items and surfaces are immediately washed and disinfected.</li> <li>• Pupils and adults are not allowed to eat around the school dog.</li> <li>• Pupils and adults must always wash their hands after handling the school dog.</li> <li>• Immediate medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside once the animal and afflicted person are kept apart.</li> </ul>
<b>Animal Phobias</b>	Medium	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student are encouraged but never forced to take part in dog therapy or reading sessions.</li> </ul>

Staff or students could suffer distress themselves or distress the school dog if they become scared or upset around the school dog				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where there are pupils with phobias, every effort is made to segregate the school dogs from those with phobias.</li> <li>Outside of therapy or reading sessions the school dogs are kept in their designated office areas and enter and exit buildings outside of break and lesson changeover periods.</li> <li>Therapy, reading and reward sessions will take place only in specific areas of the school (e.g. the PLC, library, RISE, Peace Garden) where students can avoid contact with the dog if desired.</li> </ul>
<b>School emergency evacuation (including drills)</b>  The dog could become distressed by the evacuation and behave in an unexpected way.	Medium	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school dogs are accompanied by trained adults at all times. In the event of an emergency evacuation, immediately proceed to the nearest fire exit and then the adult walks as far as possible from other people evacuating whilst maintaining a safe distance from the building.</li> <li>Where possible, the school dogs to be present for sounding of the alarms outside of school hours to observe their response and practice evacuation procedure with them.</li> <li>If the dogs manage to escape from an adult during the evacuation, the adult must still evacuate immediately and notify staff outside of the dog's absence.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – to publish to parents

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

A The legal owner of the dogs are those who have legal responsibility for the dog and with whom the dog resides. The legal owners will bear the costs associated with owning their dogs; the school pastoral budget will support liability insurance and staff training costs **only where appropriate**.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

A Yes. School dogs will be checked to have been sourced from licensed home breeders where both parents were seen and specifically chosen according to the temperament of the breed and their parents specifically.

Q Will the dog be a distraction to students' learning?

A The dogs will be kept in private office areas unless designated to be working therapeutically with children according to timetable. The dogs will only spend time in the PLC, Kennicott spaces, the library, RISE room and Peace Garden at specific planned sessions where students can interact safely outside of lesson times and therefore the dog will not be a distraction to students during lessons.

The dogs may also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

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.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A The legal owners of the dogs have responsibility for their training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained and the dog will work towards being trained as a school dog in dog training classes with advice from the Pets As Therapy charity. The school will have the dog assessed and certified as a therapy dog by Pets As Therapy before they begin therapy and reading sessions. The dogs socialisation to school will support their training (outside school hours and in office spaces during school hours), but work with children will not commence until PAT certification is in place.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dogs will be toileted when taken out for short walks in designated areas (adjacent to PLC and specified areas in Kennicott grounds as well as outside of school) by staff members. The dog will not be allowed in main areas of student traffic at any time (such as school playing fields/playgrounds).

Q What if my child is scared of dogs? Will they be forced to be in the same room as the dog?

A The dogs will be kept in designated office areas. The offices are separate from the classrooms / playground areas which will ensure the school dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision of a trained member of staff.

We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and understand healthy and safe interaction with known dogs.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog will be walked regularly. 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.

The dog will be kept in designated office areas either with their legal owners or trained and approved staff. The dogs have regular rest days from school. The dogs will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. The dogs will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have appropriate access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children will not need to touch the dog or be in the same room as the dog at any point 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. The school dogs are given a high quality diet and are regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

## **Appendix C: Advice on School Dogs**

The Dogs Trust – School Dogs

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/factsheets-downloads/school%20dogs.pdf>

The Kennel Club – Bark and Read <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>

BBC News – “Every school ‘needs dog as stress-buster’”

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