HAYNES LOWER SCHOOL AND NURSERY

School Dog Policy

Policy Review:

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed	**November 2024**
Next Review	**November 2025**

Rationale and Aim

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. It is a risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out (see Appendix 3).

Policy

The dog is owned by Mrs Hearn. During the school day Bertie will be based in the school offices. Students will not be allowed access to him unless consent is given by parent/guardian and it is for a specific pastoral intervention.

The dog is a Cockapoo. He was chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children. He is very sociable and friendly and he is also a hypo allergenic breed that is well known to be good with families with allergies.

Staff, parents and children are informed when joining the school that a dog will be in school. A risk assessment has been produced and this will be reviewed annually. Parents will be consulted on allowing their children access to the dog and will sign permission forms if they wish for this intervention to occur. Once permission has been given, no child shall be forced into interaction with the school dog if this makes them feel unhappy in any way.

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. The school will ensure that the dog is kept separate from these people. (See Risk Assessment).

All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Headteacher ASAP.

The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of the adult he is with at the time of an evacuation.

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Head Teacher.

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

Teachers, staff, students, 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.

The following guidelines must be followed when interacting with the school dog. These guidelines apply to all adults and children.

- Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times. If children, or visiting adults, do not abide by the guidance given by the authorised adult, the interaction will be cancelled.
- If the door to the school dog's room is shut, knock and wait for the authorised adult to let you in. Never let yourself in as the school dog might not be ready.
- To start an interaction, the back of the hand will be offered for the school dog to sniff.
- Children should be careful to stroke Bertie on his body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- 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 not run up to the school dog.
- Only the authorised adult can move any of the school dog's resources, including food and treats. Visiting children and adults can only handle equipment if the authorising adults gives permission.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating. Children should not eat close to the dog.
- When interacting with the school dog, all children must remain on their feet and not kneel or lay down unless guided to by the authorised adult.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog. Everyone must wait until Bertie is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
- During Covid-19, children should not stroke the dog. Staff will remind pupils that they must keep their distance. This is due to Bertie crossing bubbles.
- 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. Groups of no more than 3-5 at any given time so that he doesn't feel overwhelmed.
- 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 always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- If the school dog is with an authorised adult, he does not need to be on his lead when in school.
- If the dog is ill, he will not be allowed into school.

When interaction with the school dog takes place outside, these additional guidelines apply:

- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately by the authorised adult and disposed of appropriately. Not child will ever be asked to pick up faeces.
- If walking the school dog, an authorised adult must be present at all times. Children may hold the school dog's lead if they are confident to do so. The authorised adult remains in charge of the situation at all times and will take back the school dog's lead if necessary.

Appendix 1 – Benefits Of Having A School Dog

In summary, by having Bertie working and helping in the school environment we would like to achieve the following:

- Improve academic achievement Increase literacy skills
- Calming behaviours and positive attachments Increase social skills and self-esteem
- Increase confidence
- Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- Help prevent truancy and improve attendance Motivate children who are often less attentive

COGNITIVE
Companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing.

BEHAVIOURAL
Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. We would hope that by having Bertie in school we would see a difference in the behaviour of students in terms of improved attitude toward school and learning, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. If students can identify with animals, and have empathy for the dog, they can hopefully better understand how classmates may feel.

SOCIAL
A dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others. After experiencing unconditional love and trust from a dog we would expect to see enhanced relationships with peers and staff. Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching student's social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, teach kindness, responsibility, and boundaries. With a dog in school, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Involving students in the daily care of school dog 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.

EMOTIONAL
A school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety. Students would learn how to express their feelings and enter into more trusting relationships.

Students encouraged to gently pat or talk to the dog to teach sensitive touch and to help them to be calm and promotes provides tactile stimulation.

ENVIRONMENTAL
A dog increases the sense of a family environment, being part of something, another purpose for coming to school. Some of these benefits listed above will continue for the young person long after the school day is over.

It will hopefully also boost the student's connection to the school environment.

ACADEMIC
Reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop their literacy skills and build confidence in reading. 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. Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practice reading aloud. This activity can create a calming effect on the pupil, the dog will listen to the pupil read with no

judgement or criticism and they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. This in turn creates an environment where a student's enthusiasm for reading can grow an also develop the confidence to read aloud. Bertie will be able to support reluctant readers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will have opportunity to walk the dog on school grounds with supervision. This would be on a rota basis. This in turn would allow for a potential improvement in student's attendance as they have a responsibility to the dog.

ATTENDANCE

We would see an improvement in attendance for students given some additional responsibility regarding Bertie. It is also another reason for the pupil to want to come to school.

SPORTING

Bertie will become a school mascot and could attend assemblies that are appropriate for him to be included in. Encouraging movement for some less active children.

TRANSITION

Bertie will be part of the Year4-Year 5 transition process. Students who need extra support and visits with regard to the step up would be able to spend time with him to support transition worries, if needed.

REWARD SYSTEM

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 to interact with Bertie. Walking, grooming, reading with, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It could also be an incentive for positive behaviour or any form of pupil achievement.

OVERCOMING PHOBIAS

There are students who do have dog phobias, a school dog and careful de-sensitisation programme could help to reduce some of these fears.

Appendix 2 – School Dog Frequent 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 Mrs Hearn and her family. She 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.

Will the dog be a distraction?
When in school Bertie will be based in the office. He will have access to quiet space & in the back office for some 'chill' time! Bertie will always be accompanied by an adult and will never be on his own with a pupil.

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 and a reputable dog trainer has been used.

Who is responsible for training?
Mrs Hearn, as the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained.

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.

How will the dog's welfare be considered?
Bertie will be well looked after. He will live with Mrs Hearn who will bring the dog in to school. Bertie will be fully vaccinated, will visit the vet regularly for all the necessary injections, as well as regular check-ups. He will also be regularly groomed and is fully insured. If Bertie is unwell for any reason he will stay at home. He will be walked, fed and hydrated during the day. He will have access to a quiet area in the office where he will be able to have 'quiet time'.

How will this be managed where children have allergies?
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. (See Risk Assessment). The breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, he is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

It is completely understandable that there will be some concerns about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. Bertie will be subjected to a very thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. He is also a hypo allergenic breed that is well known to be good with families with allergies. Bertie will only work with students who have voluntarily expressed an interest to do so and after discussion as to whether it would be a beneficial intervention.

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.

Some children may have had upsetting or traumatic experiences and therefore be fearful of dogs (or indeed other animals). The dog will only come into contact with students whose parents have given their permission. This is away from the main part of the school. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance, handling and time, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and gain a greater appreciation for them.

Appendix 3 – Risk Assessment

Assessment conducted by	Sarah Hearn	Assessment Date	September 2022
Job Title	Head Teacher	Review Interval	Annually
Related documents: Health & Safety Policy			

Risk Rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	**Possible**	**Remote**
Likely Impact	**Major** Causes major physical injury, harm or ill-health	High	High	Medium
	Severe Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid	High	Medium	Low
	Minor Causes physical or emotional discomfort	Medium	Medium	Low

Area: Interaction with pupils and staff

Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times

Identify the hazards	Who might be harmed & how?	What are you already doing?	Risk Rating	Is anything further needed?	Action & Review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
• School dog biting a child or adult	• 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. Buddy lives in a family home where he is handled all the time to ensure that he is used to interaction.	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 he could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	• The temperament of Buddy and the agreed training programme has involved not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful • No interaction will be made with any children unless the school has written permission from parents/guardians	Medium	• Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision • The school dog will be enclosed in a play pen when people come to interact with him or under lead control by an authorised adult			
• Running loose	• If the school dog was to run loose he could hurt children/adults or damage property	• The school dog will be contained at all times either in an office (with a clear sign on the door), in a play pen or on a lead	Low	• Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective			
• Direct interaction with children/staff	• 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 authorisation • Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour • Rewards/praise will be given to reinforce the desired behaviour	Medium	• Ensure that the school dog is approached in the agreed manner			
• Destruction of materials	• If allowed the school dog may chew/destruct some school materials/resources	• The school dog with be contained at all times • The school dog will have his 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

Identify the hazards	Who might be harmed & how?	What are you already doing?	Risk Rating	Is anything further needed?	Action & Review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
• Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with the school dog	• If a child/adult interacts 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 (and children with written permission from parents). • 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/staff knowledge of • interaction with a puppy/dog	• If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves	• The Dog's Trust will be visiting each year group to conduct a 'Be Dog Smart' course with all of the children.	Medium	• There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dog			

Area: Hygiene/Health

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							
Identify the hazards	**Who might be harmed & how?**	**What are you already doing?**	**Risk Rating**	**Is anything further needed?**	**Action & Review**		
					Action required	**Responsible person**	**Date completed**
• Worms/fleas	• If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be • transferred to humans	• The school dog will be treated monthly at a local vets to ensure he is correctly treated for worms and fleas	Low	• Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet			
• Faeces	• 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 • No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision	Low	• 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	• Children can only be in contact with the school dog once the school has written permission from parents/guardians • If a child has an allergy the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child	Medium				
• Children's access to school dog's resource	• 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 locked away • No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation	Low	• Remind children not to enter area			
• Contact with food preparation 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 • He will never enter the school kitchen	Low				
• Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	• 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			

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking

Reason: To ensure the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community

Identify the hazards	Who might be harmed & how?	What are you already doing?	Risk Rating	Is anything further needed?	Action & Review		
					Action required	Responsible person	Date completed
• Walking the dog on and off site	• Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed • 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 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	•		

• Visits to classroom	• If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure he may become over excited	• The school dog will initially only make classroom visits with Mrs Hearn • 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	•		
• Being fed	• If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating he may respond aggressively	• No child will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when he is eating • Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards) • All feeding will be supervised	Low	• Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when he is eating	•		
• School events	• If the school dog is overwhelmed he may become aggressive or boisterous	• The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and he will be under the control of a supervising adult	Low	• Monitor the school dogs reaction to school events • If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog might not attend school on that day	•		
• Other dogs (on and off site)	• If the school dog encounters another dog he 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 and as a result if another dog is seen this will be dealt with by the supervising adult	Low	• Monitor the school dogs reaction when out walking			