



School Dog Policy

Introduction

The value of pet therapy is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding.

For some time now the staff of Stoughton Infant School have wanted to introduce a school dog to support the cognitive and emotional development of children in the school.

There is extensive research into the benefits of school dogs and many schools in the country, both primary and secondary schools have introduced them.

- Children can benefit educationally and emotionally
- Children can increase their understanding of responsibility
- Children can develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog
- Dogs can teach children patience
- Dogs in school can help to improve attendance

In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog



Stoughton's school dog is called Stanley, who is a Cavachon. The breed was researched and selected because it is a calm, quiet and an intelligent breed that responds well to training. Cavachons are known to be good with children, they are shed very little and are therefore good for allergy sufferers. They are a very sociable and friendly breed.

Stanley'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 children reading without judgement
- To inspire imaginative writing
- To be walked (with adult supervision and permission from parents)
- To visit different areas of the school accompanied by an adult

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?

Yes there is, although there are a variety of accidents which can happen within a school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and is included as an appendix in this policy.

School Policy

Stanley is owned by Mrs. Carrington and her responsibility.

- Only Stanley, the school dog is allowed on the school premises. No other dogs are permitted to come on the school site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has been informed beforehand. This includes drop off and pick up times.
- Staff, parents and children will be informed that Stanley will be visiting school regularly.

- Mrs. Carrington asks that parents make her aware by email if any children have allergies to dogs or if their child is particularly fearful and they wish to limit their child's interactions with Stanley.
- If Stanley is unwell, he will not be allowed into school.
- The care and welfare of the dog is the responsibility of Mrs. Carrington and this includes all food, veterinary care and pet insurance.
- Stanley will always be kept on a lead when moving around the school.
- Children will never be left alone with Stanley and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will be taught how to behave appropriately around Stanley and dogs in general and this will include visits from the Dogs Trust. Children should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements, they shouldn't put their face near a dog and should always approach him standing up.
- Children should never go near or disturb the dog when it is sleeping or eating.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, it could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that they monitor the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring 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 it should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat close to the dog and therefore Stanley will never be present when the children are eating.
- Children should be careful to stroke the dog on its body, chest, and back and not by its face or top of head.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dog using soap and water and use hand sanitiser.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arriving and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Headteacher as soon as possible.
- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Mrs. Carrington
- If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

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

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

Appendix 1 - Frequently asked Questions

Q	Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?
A	The legal owner of the dog will be Mrs. Carrington and she will incur any costs.
Q	Is the dog from a reputable breeder?
A	Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for his temperament.
Q	Will the dog be a distraction?
A	The dog will be kept in the Headteacher's office. This is separate from the classrooms/playground area. This will help to ensure that he doesn't come into contact with children whose parents have requested that they don't have contact with Stanley.

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 and a reputable dog behaviourist, Emma Huntbach at PuppaCo's.
Q	Who is responsible for training?
A	Mrs. Carrington will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result will be responsible for its training. Specific training for the school environment will be undertaken with a certified and reputable dog behaviourist (Emma Huntbach).
Q	How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?
A	In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks at the front of school and in Cardswell Keep. Stanley will have access to the sensory garden from Mrs. Carrington's office when it is empty. After Stanley has been to the toilet, it will be cleared up and if necessary disinfected. Our policy of no 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.
Q	How will the dog's welfare be considered?
A	Stanley will be walked regularly and given free time outside. He will have a bed and a quiet space in the Mrs. Carrington's office. A stair gate will be placed on Mrs. Carrington's office door to prevent Stanley walking around the school unaccompanied. Stanley will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to water. There will be regular treats too! We will work very carefully to ensure that Stanley's welfare is always considered. We will limit how many hours he will work in a day, have regular breaks and we will limit the number of children with him at any one time.
Q	How will this be managed where children have allergies?
A	Stanley is a hypoallergenic breed but if parents express that they don't wish their child to interact with the school dog, this will be respected. 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.
Q	My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?
A	Access to the Stanley will be carefully managed and supervised, and children do not need to have close contact with him. 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. Mrs. Carrington's daughters were both fearful of dogs before welcoming Stanley into their home and now, over time they have become far more confident around all dogs.

Appendix 2 - Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	Scale 1-5	Control Measures
Getting over excited or irritated when interacting with children.	<p>Child knocked to the ground.</p> <p>Child scratched by dog.</p> <p>Child bitten by dog.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Stanley will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with Stanley.</p> <p>Stanley will always be on a lead or carried when he is not in the Headteacher's office.</p> <p>Children will continue to be taught about how to interact safely with Stanley and other dogs.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>She will attend the vets regularly to ensure he is in good health and that his claws are kept short.</p>
Gets loose from the office or his lead.	As above	1	<p>Regular monitoring of the fit of the stairgate and the latch.</p> <p>Check the fit of Stanley's collar regularly to ensure that it isn't too loose.</p> <p>Ensure that his harness is in good repair.</p>
Causes an allergy	Children or staff have allergic reactions	1	Parents will be asked to inform Mrs. Carrington of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with Stanley will kept on the school SIMs system.
Children getting germs from Stanley	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	<p>Should Stanley defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. He will be trained to toilet in an area of the grounds that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</p> <p>After children and adults have handled Stanley they will need to wash and sanitise their hands.</p>

			<p>All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this.</p> <p>Flea and worming treatment will be carried out as prescribed.</p>
Claim is made against school about the dog.	School not adequately covered financially.	1	Public liability insurance is in place.
Destruction of property	Stanley chews on resources and furniture.	1	<p>Stanley will have plenty of exercise and toys to play with.</p> <p>Stanley hasn't chewed any furniture or belongings in Mrs. Carrington's home but if this was to happen she would reimburse the school for any damages to furniture or resources.</p>
Contact with food preparation areas	If Stanley enters a food preparation area this could be unhygienic	1	<p>Stanley will be kept in Mrs. Carrington's office or on a lead at all times around the school.</p> <p>The school dog will never enter the school kitchen.</p>
Visits to classrooms	If Stanley visits a classroom and the children do not follow the correct procedure then it may become overexcited	2	<p>Careful consideration to be given to when Stanley can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant.</p> <p>Children will be taught how to behave around Stanley.</p>
School Events	Stanley may become overwhelmed and as a result may become boisterous.	2	Stanley will only attend school events if there are appropriate. Stanley's reactions will be monitored carefully.