****

**Animals in School policy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date:** | January 2021 |
| **Date approved by Management Committee:** | January 31st 2021 |
| **Signature of Chair of Management Committee** | Sue Cain |
| **To be reviewed:** | Annually |

This policy gives guidance on the school’s policy and procedures for animals in the workplace.

**Introduction**

Bishopton PRU believe that opportunities to work with animals provide a unique experience for learning. We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe environment and positive learning experiences for all pupils and a high standard of care and welfare to all animals involved. This policy sets out how this will be achieved. It has been written with reference to the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and our existing school policies.

**Aims**

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 calmer.

Our aims in bringing animals into the school environment:

1. To help pupils develop increased respect, empathy and a sense of responsibility for living things.
2. To encourage pupils to consider the experiences and needs of other living things, including other pupils, school staff and their families.
3. To promote an interest in the natural environment and support hands-on learning across all areas of the curriculum.
4. To help pupils develop a calm, confident, and sensitive manner when interacting with animals.
5. To demonstrate best practice in the care of pets and other animals.
6. To encourage pupils to consider careers working with animals.

**Dog Pet Therapy**

Schools can be extremely stressful settings for some students, creating a strain on resources that can help young people cope with emotions, disorders or relationships. Therapy dogs provide an inexpensive way to assist students in focusing on their education. They provide a comforting presence that should be available to young people in need.

The introduction of a non-threatening therapy dog can serve as a catalytic vehicle for forming adaptive and satisfactory social interactions. Guided activities and group discussions help teach students how to handle interpersonal conflicts and develop constructive responses.

The simple act of petting a dog is shown to reduce blood pressure. Lower levels of stress hormones, like cortisol, and an increase in oxytocin are also associated with pet therapy and contribute to respiratory and cardiovascular health. In short, reducing feelings of anxiety and depression positively affects physical health.

The dog also stays with its family, not at the school, so the cost for food, supplies, and veterinary bills go to the owner of the dog.

At Bishopton we have introduced ‘Chip and Vera’ from the young age of 8 weeks to bond with our Children throughout the week. With impact of being

* Decrease isolation and depression.
* Help to feel calm.
* Develop the pupil’s sense of self, belonging and trust.
* Development and improvement of social skills.
* Lower anxiety and decrease agitation.
* Reduce loneliness.
* Teach children how to nurture, care and have respect for all life
* Help pupils access and leave the school calmly.

**Health and Safety:**

* Pupil’s parents or carers sign a consent form for the school animals during induction.
* Any allergies are also highlighted during induction, which should alert us to allergies to other pets.
* Pupils and Staff who do not wish to be near the dogs are highlighted to his handler.
* There is a picture of the school dogs in reception so visitors have a sign and can tell office staff if they are not comfortable around dogs.
* If a pupil or staff are allergic to a class pet, the pet will be moved to another area of the school.

**School pets and livestock**:

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and animals we will take the following measures before acquiring any school pets or livestock:

* Any member of staff wishing to introduce a class animal or animals must seek permission from the head teacher and agree to take on responsibility for the care and welfare of the animal for the duration of its life. This includes the responsibility to care for the animal themselves, or find a suitable alternative home, if the classroom situation or the health/ temperament of the animal changes and it is no longer appropriate for it to love at school.
* We will ensure there is a robust plan in place for weekend and holiday care of the animal.
* Wild caught and nocturnal animals will not be considered as suitable for school pets.
* We will fully research the needs, habits and temperament of the relevant species to ensure it will make an appropriate addition to the school and that we can fully meet its welfare needs in the school environment.
* We will produce a comprehensive written risk assessment for all activities associated with keeping and caring for the animal/s. This document will identify one or more named members of staff who have agreed to take on responsibility for the care of the animal. This risk assessment process will take into account the safety of any pupils with allergies, a compromised immune system, or behavioural issues. In the case of outdoor animals we will take steps to ensure that they will not impact negatively on local residents or existing uses of the school grounds.
* We will confirm that a local vet will be able to treat the animal/s if needed.
* We will keep parents informed of the plans to introduce the animal/s and ensure they know how to withdraw their child from activities related to the animal if they wish.
* We will assign a budget for the care of the animal/s to ensure ongoing funding is available to provide a suitable level of care if needed.
* We will produce a written plan for how the animal will support the curriculum.
* We will research where the animal is to be acquired to ensure it has come from a reputable source. If appropriate it will live at home with the member of staff responsible for its care, or access to it will be restricted, for a period of quarantine and/or socialisation.

The animal or animals will only be introduced to the school once they have been have been assessed as safe and appropriate for the classroom environment, are up to date with vaccines and those involved are confident that their needs can be met. Once the animal is resident in the school we will take the following measures:

* We will provide housing of a suitable size with all necessary features and enrichments. The housing will be chosen with the safety of pupils in mind and checked for any unanticipated risks. If second hand housing is used then it will be thoroughly cleaned and sterilised.
* We will keep the housing and surrounding area clean and in good condition at all times.
* We will provide a suitable single-sex social group for the animal/s if appropriate.
* We will provide the correct quantity of suitable feed. All feed will be stored correctly.
* We will carry out preventative health care measures as appropriate.
* We will ensure that any sick or injured animals are isolated, treated, and seen by a vet if necessary.
* We will monitor the behaviour and health of the animal on an ongoing basis.
* Pupils will only handle animals under close supervision from a member of staff.
* We will implement strict hand-washing procedures for all pupils coming into contact with the animal or associated equipment.
* Any cleaning chemicals or animal medications will be stored in accordance with our COSHH policy.

**Visiting animals:**

Visits from domestic, exotic and farm animals can enrich learning. We will take the following measures to ensure any such visits are safe and humane:

* No animals will be brought onto the school premises without prior planning and permission from senior management staff.
* We will produce a written risk assessment for all animal visits, taking into account the safety of any pupils with allergies, a compromised immune system, or behavioural issues.
* We will carefully check the credentials of any potential providers, requesting risk assessments, suitable public liability insurance, welfare policies and references as appropriate.
* We will require animal visit providers/ owners/ handlers to provide details of proposed contact between pupils and animals and assurance that all animals are vaccinated as needed.
* Any animals on site will be safely and humanely restrained or contained when not being held by their owner/ handler.
* This policy, and any risk assessments and other documentation related to animals in school, will be reviewed and updated annually or in the event of a change to school circumstances or relevant legislation.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

The responsibility of care and welfare of any animal to brought into school is with the person who expressed interest originally. As well as said person responsibility to inform parents and carers and to ascertain whether allergies are a risk.

**Key roles and responsibilities**

Miss Kirsty Walsh and Mrs K Dack (for Chip and Vera)

They are responsible for ensuring the dogs needs are met specifically-

* Food
* Walking
* Toilet requirement
* Regular worming and flea treatments
* Behaviour
* Veterinary needs

**Head Teacher**

The head teacher will regularly check that the dogs and pupils needs are being met and it is having an impact on the PRU and pupils needs.

**Intervention Lead**

The intervention lead will reflect on impact of therapy dog in building and review with Miss K Walsh and Mrs K Dack to ensure needs are being fully met.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review.

The desired outcomes for this policy are improvements in student’s emotional and mental wellbeing. To relieve stress levels and enable students to make progress after a designated time with Therapy animal (Dog).

**UNICEF- Rights respecting:**

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child sets out human rights of every person under 18 and applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background (Article 2).

Articles directly relating to this policy are:

Article 2 (Non-discrimination)

Article 13 (Freedom of expression)

Article 28 (Right to education)

Article 29 (Goals of education)

Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture)

**Appendix A**

Dear Parents and Carers

We are excited to announce that we are venturing into offering all students ‘Animal therapy’. There are numerous studies that acknowledge how ‘Animal therapy’ can stimulate and engage students. “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”.

We are offering pupil’s one to one time for socialising and familiarisation with Vera and Chip our friendly work dogs. They will be around the Bishopton buildings during the week under constant supervision, with owner Miss K Walsh or Mrs K Dack. The dogs are wormed, flead and fully vaccinated.

We value your opinions and feedback and we hope you see this as we do a fantastic experience for pupils to build confidence and gain responsibility in a fun and interactive manner.

Vera 9 months old



Chip 2Years old

Please feel free to come into School and see us.

If you have questions, regarding the above or you need to inform us of any allergies, please contact me on 01642-566369.

Kind regards,

**Emily Carr**

**Head teacher**

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

I hereby give permission to allow my child ­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to interact with animals within school.

I can confirm that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does not have any allergies or phobias that we are aware of.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to pupil \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Risk Assessment **Premises: Bishopton**  **Department: Bishopton**  **Section: Building** | SBC logo (new) |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Task/Activity:** | 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. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Author:** | **K.Walsh** | **Date:** | May 2018 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality Assurance Check by Manager / Line Manager (Print Name)** | **J Simpson** | **Date:** |  |

| **Step 1 - What is the hazard?** | **Step 2 - Who might be harmed & how?** | | Step 3 - Existing Controls | | Step 4 - Any further controls required? | | Person Responsible / Completion date |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dog  getting over excited when  Interacting with children. | Children/Staff/Supply Staff | | * The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. * Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. * Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) | | * Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. * ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don’t) of having a school dog. * Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. * The dogs will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dogs in a calming/therapeutic manner. * Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed. | | Miss K Walsh  Mrs K Dack |
| Child/Staff knocked  to ground | Children/Staff/Supply Staff | | * The dog will always be on a lead when he is out of his pen/ designated office, except when he is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer/s. * The dog will be trained not to jump up or mouth the children. * The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. * Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) * Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. | | * Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. * ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don’t) of having a school dog. * Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. * The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. * Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed. | | Miss K Walsh/  Mrs K Dack |
| Child/Staff scratched  by Dog | Children/Staff/Supply Staff | | * The dog will always be on a lead when he is out of his pen/ designated office, except when he is undergoing structured training with his primary trainer/s. * The dog will be trained not to jump up or mouth the children. * The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. * Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. * The dog will attend the vets’ regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and that he is in good health. | | * Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. * ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don’t) of having a school dog. * Staff first Aiders available * Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. * The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. * Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed. | | Miss K Walsh/  Mrs K Dack |
| Child/Staff bitten by  Dog | Children/Staff/Supply Staff | | * The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult (person responsible for dog) and will never be allowed to freely roam the school premises. * Children are not left with the dog unsupervised. * Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) | | * Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. * ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don’t) of having a school dog. * Staff first aiders available * Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. * The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. * Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed. | | Miss K Walsh/ Mrs K Dack |
| Dog gets loose | Children/Staff/Supply Staff | | * Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. (i.e. stand still, cross arms) * If the dog does get loose from his pen the teacher on duty will call for a designated staff member who will come and put the dog back in his pen. * There are members of staff who will be called upon in the event of the dog getting loose or if he needs attention at any other time, they are: | | * Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. * ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don’t) of having a school dog. * Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. * The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. * Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed. | | Miss K Walsh/ Mrs K Dack |
| Dog hair causing  allergies | Children/Staff/Supply Staff | | * Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies prior to introduction of the dog to school. A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept on the school recording system. * Children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. * Children have been taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog. | | * First Aiders available * Stockton Borough council to be asked for advice. | | Miss K Walsh/ Mrs K Dack |
| Children/Staff getting germs from the dog. | Children/Staff/Supply Staff | | * Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff (person responsible for dog )will clear this up immediately and dispose of it safely. The dog will be trained to toilet in an area of the school that our pupil’s don’t have access to on a regular basis, if required the area will then be disinfected with an appropriate animal disinfectant. * All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with European Pet Passport scheme and the Head Teacher (PA) keeps a register of this. * Flea treatment is carried out at 6 weekly intervals. * Worming treatment is carried out in line with European Vet guidelines, at 6 monthly intervals      * The dog will attend the vets’ regularly to make sure his claws are kept short and that he is in good health. * The dog will not go in the school dining hall at meal times; he will not be permitted into the food preparation area of the kitchen. | | * Pupils have been, and continue to be, taught the impact of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to whole school during assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons. * ALL staff have been introduced to the dog and the expectations (does and don’t) of having a school dog. * Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. * The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. * Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed. | | Miss K Walsh/ Mrs K Dack |
| Financial cost of the dog’s  upkeep | Staff | | * The dog is the responsibility of Miss Walsh/Mrs K Dack she is financially responsible for all his care and day to day costs. * The dog is the responsibility of Miss K. Walsh/Mrs K Dack outside of school hours. | |  | | Miss K Walsh/ Mrs K Dack |
| Claim is  made  against school re: behaviour of the dog. | Staff | | * Primary handlers are responsible for insuring the dogs. * The certificate is kept in school office. | | * Some pupils will be involved in both on and off site training (with parental permissions) and along with the schools’ primary handlers, continue to reinforce positive training strategies in a controlled area throughout the week. * The dog will also undergo conditioning to the school classroom environment, this area of training with allow future reading or nurture intervention to involve the school dog in a calming/therapeutic manner. * Risk of scratching and mouthing will reduce and the risk assessment will be reviewed. | | Miss K Walsh/ Mrs K Dack |
| **Step 5 - Keep the assessment under review:**  For a new procedure, review in the first 6 weeks.  If satisfactory review again at least annually, or sooner if there are any changes. | | | | | | | |
| **Review 1 by Author (Print Name)** | | **K Walsh/K Dack** | | **Date:January 2020** | | **Any Action Necessary: Second dog added to risk assessment** | |
| **Review 1 Quality Assurance Check by Manager / Line Manager (Print Name)** | | | |  | | **Date:** | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Review 2 by Author (Print Name)** | **K Dack** | **Date:9th June 2020** | **Any Action Necessary: COVID 19 update** |
| **Review 2 Quality Assurance Check by Manager / Line Manager (Print Name)** | |  | **Date:** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Review 3 by Author (Print Name)** | **K Walsh** | **Date: 19/09/2020** | **Any Action Necessary: COVID- 19Update** |
| **Review 3 Quality Assurance Check by Manager / Line Manager (Print Name)** | |  | **Date: Ingredients checked and actions updated** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **COVID 19 update** | **What is the hazard?** | **Who might be harmed and how?** | **Existing controls** | **Further controls Person responsible/Completion date** |
| Dogs being brought into the building to visit staff and students | Cross-contamination from adult to dog to child/staff member | Persons touching animal | As risk assessment above | * Dogs to be put on longer leads of at least 2 metres * Staff/child to wash hands before and after contact with dogs. * Owners to ensure harnesses and leads are washed on a regular basis |
|  | Fogger and hand sanitiser ingredients | Animal - Ingredients used in hand sanitiser and Fogger are the same and can cause sickness symptoms to animals if directly ingested. | As risk assessment above | * The fogger will cause no harm to animals providing animal does not enter room where fogged for at least 30 minutes. * Hands to be dry of sanitiser before touching animals. * If animals eating to ensure as per policy to use own bowls. |