



**Stockingford
Nursery School**

Therapy dog in Nursery School

Passed and adopted by Governing Body:

Signed

Dated.....

Created: May 2022
Review: May 2024

1. Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable, calm therapy dog.

In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

Our Nursery School therapy dog is well cared for and responsibly owned. He lives with a member of reception staff and has undertaken a period of training with Therapy dogs Nationwide

<http://tdn.org.uk/>

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to:

- The Pet Animals Act 1951
- The Health and Safety at work Act 1974
- The Animal welfare Act 1974
- RSPCA(2012) Guidance for Educational Establishments

3. Is there a risk in bringing a therapy dog into a school environment?

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about welcoming a therapy dog into School, and how, through careful management, there is a low risk of harm.

The Governing Body and the Headteacher have agreed that a therapy dog can come to Nursery School.

4. Context

- The therapy dog is owned by the specified handler
- Veterinary costs will be covered by the specified handler.
- The therapy dog has been chosen for the general characteristics and has undergone a period of training with Therapy dogs Nationwide <http://tdn.org.uk/>
- The risk assessment will be reviewed annually.
- Visitor and new pupils will be informed of the therapy dog on arrival if he is visiting that day.

No child will be allowed to meet the therapy dog unless written permission has been received from parents/carers.

5. Day-to-day management

The therapy dog will:

- not be allowed in school if he is unwell
- be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk
- be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
- will be kept in a specified office with a quiet area for resting
- have had all injections and necessary treatments

Our pupils will:

- not have sole responsibility for, or be left alone with, the therapy dog
- meet the therapy dog in a group of no more than four children, following 'approach, ask, pet, goodbye'
- be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the therapy dog every time they meet him
- always remain calm
- be gentle
- not put their face near the therapy dog's
- not disturb a therapy dog that is eating or sleeping
- not feed the therapy dog

The pupils will also learn about how therapy dogs express their feelings through their body language.

Growling or baring of teeth indicates that the therapy dog feels threatened or angry. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the therapy dog is frightened or nervous.

If the therapy dog is displaying any of these signs, he would immediately be removed from that particular situation or environment.

6. Curriculum

The therapy dog will support the curriculum through the following strands:

- Improving pupil behaviour and concentration
- Reducing stress and improving self-esteem
- Having a calming effect on pupils
- Encouraging expression, participation and confidence in all children
- Fostering a sense of responsibility
- Motivating pupils to think and to learn
- Encouraging respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers
- Teaching children to nurture and respect life
- Supporting all work undertaken with the most vulnerable children
- Helping overcome a fear of therapy dogs
- Increasing staff morale and wellbeing
- Developing the understanding of unconditional love
- Supporting with the development of cooperative play
- Supporting children to develop empathy
- Further promoting our wellbeing agenda for pupils
- Encouraging enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals
- Helping children build confidence in reading
- Improving attendance.

7. Health and Safety Principles

Children will always wash their hands or use hand-gel after handling the therapy dog.

Any therapy dog foul will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of the therapy dog at the time. Children will never be allowed to do this.

Should a bite occur (even playfully):

1. Parents will be contacted immediately
2. The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing
3. The child/adult will be released for medical attention
4. All staff will be informed
5. A full investigation will take place

6. The suitability of having a therapy dog will be reassessed by the Headteacher
7. The incident will be recorded in the Animal Incident log (Appendix 1)

Should a scratch occur (even playfully)

1. Parents will be contacted immediately
2. The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing
3. The child/adult will be released for medical attention
4. All staff will be informed
5. A full investigation will take place
6. The suitability of having a therapy dog will be reassessed by the Headteacher
7. The incident will be recorded in the Animal Incident log (Appendix 1)

8. Links with other policies and documents

This policy also has due regard to school policies, including, but not limited, the following:

- Health and Safety policy
- First Aid Policy
- Therapy dog Risk Assessment and Therapy dog COVID risk assessment

Animal Incident Log (Appendix 1)

| Date and time of incident: | Reported by: | Recorded by: | Description of incident: | Was property damaged? (Y/N) | Were pupils or staff placed in danger or harmed? (Y/N) | Recommended actions: |
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