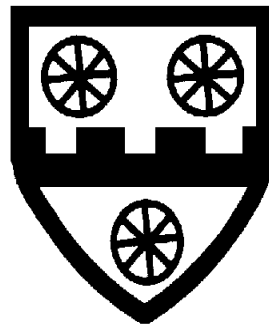


# Pets and Dogs in School Policy

Ash, Cartwright & Kelsey Church of England Primary School (Aided)



**Through God's love and strength all flourish**

## Mission Statement

Our Christian vision guides our journey to provide a rich, well-rounded education enabling all to become the very best that God intended. We treat adults and pupils with love and dignity in a space where Christian values are developed and everyone can flourish.

Friendship    Joy    Community    Forgiveness  
Perseverance    Creation

Date approved: July 2023

Review date: July 2025

## **Rationale**

Ash Cartwright and Kelsey recognises that the presence of animals in our school can provide a valuable learning experience but animals cannot be allowed to endanger pupil safety or disrupt learning. 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. The school recognises that a visiting animal offers the potential for a very positive learning experience for children to learn about taking care and showing responsibility for animals as well as developing an understanding of the importance of the humane treatment of living creatures. It is the school's policy to notify pupil's parents when an animal is being introduced into the classroom. The school is particularly keen to support the introduction of service animals such as hearing dogs, therapy dogs or seeing dogs and this reflects the school's ethos of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion.

## **Procedures**

Animals brought to school for short term/day visits: Before bringing an animal onto the school premises during school hours, staff and pupils must seek prior authorisation. Pupils must obtain permission from their class teacher; staff will obtain authorisation from the Headteacher. Arrangements for animal visits should be made at least 48 hours in advance to ensure that parents are appropriately notified. A letter must be sent to parents explaining about the animal visit and asking families to advise the school of any allergies, or fears the children may have. Staff or parents must ensure that the animals are in good health and have had all the necessary immunisations or vaccinations. Where possible, evidence should be provided. Any animal brought to school must remain under control of the responsible adult at all times (member of staff the animal belongs to or the parent of the pupil who wants to bring an animal in). The animal should be restrained on a lead or in a suitable carrier. This applies to days when school is in session, prior to the start of school and for any time after the school day, whenever the animal is on the school premises. Transportation of animals to and from school will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian or other adult. No wild animals or protected animals will be purposely brought to the building or on school grounds by anyone other than an authorised or licensed animal handler. There will be no physical contact between the animal and pupils unless it is an integral part of the learning with prior approval received from the Headteacher.

Should any pupil or adult be scratched or bitten by an animal at school, first aid must be administered immediately and in the case of a pupil, parents will be called. A copy of the 2 incident report (signed by the Headteacher) will be sent to the involved family and the policy for animals in school will need to reviewed accordingly. Children with Medical Concerns Health issues must be considered when assessing the appropriateness of animals in the classroom. Prior to the consideration of the introduction of an animal to the classroom, the teacher should review the medical notes of the pupils in their class to ensure there is no conflict. It is the policy of the school to consider the safety, health and well-being of every pupil when making decisions regarding the introduction of animals to the classroom. When there is a conflict in this area, the Headteacher will confer with the staff member to find an agreeable solution to the matter in consultation with others, e.g. the parents and pupil, school and others as appropriate. If pupils have petted an animal, it is essential that they wash their hands after the activity and that this is supervised to ensure that it is thorough.

## **Responsibility**

The owner or handler of any animal, including a service animal, is responsible for the animal at all times and must take responsibility in the event of any harm accidentally or otherwise that befalls a child. All staff must complete a risk assessment form prior to the introduction of an animal in the classroom which must be signed off by the Headteacher.

## **The Care and Humane Treatment of Animals**

Animals within the school will be handled, treated, and cared for in a humane manner. Enclosures must be appropriate to the animal and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that the animal has sufficient food, water and a comfortable environment to reduce the stress for the animal. Habitats must be maintained and cleaned by staff, not pupils.

## **Guidance on Bringing Dogs into School**

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with pets. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with dogs and puppies. As dogs are one of the most popular pets, it is more than likely that children will have some exposure to a dog while still at school.

Additionally, dogs are often brought into schools from outside agencies, e.g. Guide Dogs for the Blind, as well as animal rescue charities such as the Dogs Trust and occasionally 3 by pupils, parents or teachers. Only rarely does a dog bite without warning. Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment? Of course there is, though there are a variety of accidents which can happen within the school environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by dogs. Therefore, it is just another risk that can be successfully managed. We should not lose sight of the fact that 'nearly all biting accidents are preventable and very often depend on the behaviour of the child prior to the accident.

## **Parents Bringing Dogs into School Grounds – Code of Conduct**

The School requires all staff, parents and any visitors intending to bring their dogs to school must adhere to this Code of Conduct which states:

- All visiting dogs must be on a lead that keeps the dog reasonably close to the adult who is control of them;
- No dogs accompanying children to and from school are allowed inside any school buildings only dogs resident on the School site or assistance dogs are allowed inside school buildings;
- Unsupervised resident or assistance dogs must be secured in an appropriate crate when on the school site;
- Visiting dogs must not be left unsupervised on the school premises and must not be left in the sole care of anyone under the age of 18. No dog can be tied up and left unattended on or near the school site at any time - dogs should be kept away from entry ways so that children have a choice whether they want to come in direct contact with dogs;

- If any parent or pupil object to the animal's presence then arrangements must be made to ensure that this animal is kept away from them. If necessary, the animal may need exclusion from specific areas;
- In any event, no dogs are allowed in the enclosed Early Years play area nor on the West Heath Sports' pitches at any time;
- The adult bringing the dog on site is responsible for cleaning up and removing from site any soiling by their dog on the school grounds and failure to do so will mean the dog will no longer be allowed in the school grounds (N.B. dog waste must not be put into the school bins);
- All dogs coming onto School grounds must be properly vaccinated and treated for fleas and other parasites, regularly groomed and checked for signs of infection or other illness;
- Claws should be kept trimmed to reduce the risk of scratches;
- Pets that are ill should be diagnosed and treated by a vet and should not be allowed in the school premises until their health is restored. All pets should have their coats cleaned regularly.
- When bringing dogs on to the site, dog owners do so with an absolute understanding that their dog has no issues around children, has never displayed any aggression towards children or others and that the owner believes the dog is fully trustworthy in a school environment;
- It is understood that bringing dogs to school is a privilege not a right and is done at the absolute discretion of the Head.

This information should be circulated to parents through a newsletter or through the school website

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for pets and dogs in school. The Headteacher is responsible for developing this guidance into a school policy and implementing it. Teachers and staff are required to abide by this policy. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.