

School Dog Policy/ Guidelines



Purpose

Dogs teach children responsibility- Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from other chores. The relationship that develops can be life changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.

Dogs teach children patience- Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!

Dogs teach children compassion- Just like humans, dogs feel emotions and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.

Dogs teach children about socialisation- Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park!

Dogs are fun- Dogs are a lot of fun! They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.

Dogs can support wellbeing- During times of change, trauma or loss, dogs can be a great emotional support. They always have a listening ear and are always happy for be taken for a quiet reflective walk. Dogs are affectionate and happy to offer cuddles!

Dogs can help build confidence and self-esteem- Dogs can offer reassurances to children who may lack confidence or suffer with issues related to anxiety. They are loyal friends who build up strong relationships with humans. Taking responsibility for



a job and seeing the enjoyment of a dog out for a walk or playing can give a child much satisfaction too!

Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for greatness. Dogs can sense when children with epilepsy are about to have a seizure, they can sense when a diabetic child's sugar is low and they can help children with severe physical disabilities find happiness in life. More recently, you may know that dogs are being trained to sense humans with possible Coronavirus.

Introduction

Hollingbourne's dog- Fifi has been living with Mrs Bradley-Wyatt since April 2012. She has been a family pet since this time. Fifi is a very caring, affectionate and well behaved dog. Her calm and friendly nature means she has the right dispositions and temperament to become a real asset to Hollingbourne Primary School.

Fifi is a mixed breed of Yorkie Terrier and Chihuahua. She has been socialised with children of all ages. Fifi regularly visits the vets and is up to date with all flea, worm and inoculations. She is deemed fit and healthy.

While the school has been open to key worker children, Fifi has made some visits with the permission of parents. She has shown she has an excellent temperament and the children present have already made strong connections with the children. In a recent questionnaire (2.6.2020), all children attending said that they would like Fifi to visit and had clear purposeful reasons for this.



Guidelines to interaction with the School Dog

Under no circumstances will children have close interaction with the school dog unless the school has permission from parents/ carers.

Once permission has been given no child shall be forced into interaction with the school dog if this makes them feel unhappy in anyway.

At all times the interaction with the school dog must be controlled and safe for adults, children and the dog herself. If the following guidelines are not followed interaction with the school dog will be stopped.

At all times of interaction there must be an authorised adult who takes the leading role when interaction with the school dog. If children, or visiting adults, do not abide by the guidance given by the authorised adult the interaction will be stopped.

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

- Never enter the school dog's room without an authorised adult.
- If the door to the school dog's room is shut make sure you knock and wait for the authorised adult to let you in. Never let yourself in as the school dog might not be ready.
- There must be an authorised adult present during all interaction.
- Always approach the school dog slowly.
- Never run up to the school dog.
- To start interaction, the back of the hand will be offered for the school dog to sniff. Then a fist should be made, raised over the dog's head to encourage her to sit.
- Keep noise levels low during interaction with the school dog.
- All interaction must remain calm with the authorised adult staying in control at all times.
- Only the authorised adult can move any of the dog's resources, including food and treats.
- Visit children and adults can only handle equipment if the authorising adult gives permission.
- Whilst the school dog is new to the school no visiting adult or children will give her any food/ treats.
- There must not be any interaction with the school dog while she is eating.
- After all interaction with the school dog, hands must be washed with soap and water/ hand gel.
- When interacting with the school dog all children must remain on their feet. Children should not kneel or lay down when interacting unless guided to by the authorised adult.

As the school dog becomes more established there will be times when interaction will take place outside. On these occasions the following guidelines apply in addition to the guidelines outlined above:

- No children will ever be asked to pick up faeces.
- If walking the school dog, the authorised adult stays in control of the lead at all times. Children joining the walk must stay calm and quiet and walk behind the school dog at all times.



3.6.2020

Dear Parents,

Fifi (my family dog) would like to come and visit the children and interact with them. She has been in, to become familiar with the school and also has been interacting with key worker children while school has been closed to everyone else. She has become a popular visitor and when completing a questionnaire yesterday, 100% of the children requested that she visit.

I have written a risk assessment and also a policy related to her visits. Attached is a summary which is set out in the interaction guidelines. I am more than happy to show you the policy and risk assessment should you wish to see them before agreeing to sign the consent form.

Please can you read the interaction guidelines attached and then complete the form below as soon as possible so that Fifi can interact regularly with your child.

Permission slip to interact with the school dog- Fifi.



Child's name: _____

I have read the 'Guidelines to interaction' with the school dog and I am happy for my child to have interaction with Fifi when she visits school (please tick).

I DO NOT WANT MY CHILD TO INTERACT WITH FIFI

Parent signature: _____ Print: _____ Date: _____