

Risk Assessment

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. The team at Mayflower High School have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and the decision was made in October 2023 to go ahead with the project.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children’s social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does **not** want their child to have direct interaction with the School Dog is invited to complete this [form](#). The school dog will fully vaccinated as advised by the Vet and will have regular health checks. The insurance certificates will also be kept on site.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff.

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1-5	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when	Child knocked to the ground.	1 3	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.	

<p>interacting with children.</p>	<p>Child scratched by dog.</p> <p>Child bitten by dog</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog. Children and adults will be reminded of the guidelines when interacting with the dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be on a lead or carried when moving around the school site.</p> <p>Pupils will have been and will continue to be taught about how to interact with dog and the consequences of their actions.</p> <p>Education of this nature is provided to children often through assemblies, on pastoral pages and PSHE sessions. Parents have also been informed of the guidelines.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training with an experienced dog trainer.</p> <p>Risk of scratching and biting will reduce, and the risk assessment will be reviewed as he progresses through his weekly training.</p> <p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will attend the vets regularly to ensure she is in good health and that her claws are kept short.</p>	
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			<p>Handler and staff to regularly monitor Dog's temperament, behavior and mood.</p> <p>Dog interaction: rules/training taught to all students during initial sessions and reinforced regularly.</p>	
The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff having allergic reactions	1	<p>Parents have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies and to provide consent for their child to have contact with the dog.</p> <p>A list of any children/staff who should not interact with the dog will be kept in school.</p> <p>Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog.</p> <p>The breed is low shedding and known for its hypoallergenic fur.</p> <p>Staff are advised to report any allergies they may have directly to the handler.</p> <p>Bedding is regularly washed to reduce dust.</p> <p>Visitors are advised that the dog is on the premises. Signage on entrance to MHS and in the area in which he is based to reinforce the message and remind visitors.</p>	

			All parents remain aware that Dog is in the building through regular inclusion in newsletter and prospectus, or on the website.	
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	1	<p>Should the dog defecate on the school site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way.</p> <p>His toilet area is a space that children have limited access to. The area will be disinfected as required.</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 treatment is carried out every 3 months or as advised by the vet.</p> <p>The dog will not be allowed in the school dining hall at mealtimes; and never in the food preparation area.</p>	
Insurance	In case an incident occurs		<p>If the dog suffers an injury the owner is financially responsible for the treatment. The dog is ultimately the responsibility of the owner both in a well-being and financial aspect. All vets costs are covered by the owner.</p> <p>If the dog is responsible for damage to school property or for the injury of a member of the school community</p>	

			Mayflower High School is insured for Public Liability Insurance and certificates are on site.	
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