



QUEENSMEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

Policy Agreed: June 2020

Reviewed: Aug 26

Next review Aug 27

Introduction

Research has shown many benefits to therapy and reading dogs in school settings.

Queensmead Primary Academy has a school dog who works with our pupils to support many aspects of school life including emotional, behaviour and wellbeing. This policy is designed to set out to pupils, parents and visitors the reasons for having a school dog at QPA and the rules and responsibilities to ensure the safety of pupils, staff, visitors and the school dog herself.

School dogs have been proven to help develop pupils' reading skills, improve behaviour, attendance and academic confidence, as well as increasing pupil understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills. At QPA we have a school dog to support our staff team in bringing all of these benefits to our pupils.

Purpose

- Dogs teach pupil responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give pupil a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't from school or 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 told the first time!
- Dogs teach children compassion. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
- Dogs teach children about socialisation. Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, child can learn how to better socialise with other pupils.
- Dogs are fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day.
- Interactions with dogs can be calming and supportive for children who have emotional and wellbeing needs.

Introduction

- Queensmead Primary Academy dog 'Dottie' lives with Miss Sewell and has done since she was 8 weeks old. She is a well- behaved and sociable dog who loves being around all people and she is very used to being around pupil of all ages.
- Dottie's Mum is a cocker spaniel and her Dad is a poodle which makes her a cockapoo.
- Dottie regularly visits the vets for check-ups and they ensure that she is healthy, worm and flea free.
- In addition to the reasons outlined at the beginning of the policy, we believe that Dottie will help with pupil attendance, punctuality and have a positive contribution to the well-being of both pupils and staff.

Interaction with the School Dog

- Under no circumstances will a pupil have close interaction with the school dog unless the school has permission from parents/carers.
- Once permission has been given no pupil will be forced into interacting with the dog if it makes them unhappy in any way.
- At all times interaction with the school dog will be controlled and supervised by a member of staff. This will maximise safety for adults, pupil and the dog herself. If the following guidelines are not followed, interaction with the school dog will be cancelled.
- These guidelines apply to all adults and pupils.

Guidelines to be shared with pupils and parents:

- 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 adult to let you in. Never let yourself in as the school dog may not be ready.
- There must be an adult present at all times during interaction.
- Always approach the dog calmly (voice and movement)
- Always approach the dog slowly.
- To start interaction, offer the back of your hand first for the dog to sniff.
- Keep noise levels low at all times when interacting with the dog.
- Only the authorised adult can move any of the dog's resources, including food and treats.
- There must not be any interaction with the dog when she is eating.
- After all interactions with the dog, hands must be washed with soap/hand gel.

On occasion, interaction will take place outside. The following guidelines apply in addition to the guidelines above.

- No pupil will ever be asked to pick up faeces.
- If walking the school dog, an authorised adult must be present at all times.
- Pupil may hold the dog's lead if they are confident to do so. The authorised adult remains in charge of the situation at all times and will take the lead back if necessary.

A carefully prepared programme of interaction is timetabled and fully Risk Assessed.