

School Dog Policy

Brockenhurst CE Primary School,

Pre-School, & Nursery

Approved by:	Board of Governors	
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2028	

School Dog Policy

2026-2028

Introduction

The emotional well-being of children and staff can be enhanced by the presence of a school dog. In addition social, behavioural and academic benefits have been well documented by interaction with a dog.

School Policy

- The School's Governing Board have agreed that the school can have two dogs.
- Having two school dogs was passed by the Full Governing Board on: September 2019
- The dogs are a miniature Labradoodle named Luna (bitch), and a Cockapoo named Oakley (dog)
- Luna was purchased by Mrs Gale and lives with her and her family. All expenses incurred in caring for the dog are covered by Mrs Gale.
- Oakley was purchased by Mr Littlewood and lives with him and his family. All expenses incurred in caring for the dog are covered by Mr Littlewood.
- Miniature Labradoodles and Cockapoos are sociable and amenable dogs that are intelligent and therefore easy to train and eager to please. Labradoodles and Cockapoos are affectionate and good with children.
- Labradoodles and Cockapoos have low to non-shedding coats and therefore their coats do not tend to bother allergy prone people.
- Parents have been informed that two dogs will be in school. A risk assessment has been produced and this will be reviewed annually.
- The dogs will be toileted off site.
- The dogs will be kept up to date with all relevant inoculations. They will also be wormed and have regular flea/tick treatments.
- If the dogs are unwell they will not be allowed into school.
- The dogs will be kept on a lead when moving around the school and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.
- Pupils must never be left alone with the dogs and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with pupils.
- Pupils should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dogs.
- Pupils should remain calm around the dogs.
- Pupils should not put their face near the dogs and should always approach them standing up.
- Pupils should never go near or disturb the dogs if they are sleeping in their crates.

- Pupils must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. If the dogs are displaying any signs of stress they should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not eat in the vicinity of the dogs.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dogs.
- New people in school should be informed of the dogs presence and a sign should be on the door of any room that the dogs are working/resting in.
- Any dog excrement, urine or vomit will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately, with the affected area appropriately disinfected.
- The School will continue to have a 'No Dogs On Site' policy for all dogs other than the school dogs.

Benefits of a School dog

- Emotional support – this can be offered in the form of "Walk & Talk therapy" or cuddles. This may be required for any number of reasons e.g. bereavement or stresses at home
- Stress Relief – a calming effect results from tactile contact with the dog and a release of endorphins. Again this may be required for a myriad reasons e.g. ASD, SATS stress, upset from minor injury, friendship issues. A dog is fun to be around and will generally lift the mood of children and staff
- Increases self-esteem – a puppy is attentive, involvement in the looking after of an animal can demonstrate responsibility and success
- Creating a family environment – through collective ownership which also promotes responsibility
- Encourages physical activity – e.g. daily mile, Golden Time, lunchtime walks.
- Pain management and incentive e.g. walking, physio
- Attendance – distraction by the dog can assist with a difficult drop off and may encourage children to come to school happy. Reward systems may also be put in place for 100% attendance of a group of children.
- Social development – a dog is a conversation starter for those that may have friendship issues and to encourage different social interactions. It also promotes turn taking and thinking of others.
- Encourages responsibility – thinking of the dog's needs and caring for others
- Tackles fear of dogs –as children may be introduced to the puppy in controlled and supervised environment
- Respect of animals – overfamiliarity with dogs is dangerous. Education on how to behave around dogs and other animals is required for all children.
- Behaviour Management – time with the dog may be used as a reward
- Speech and language development

- Literacy – increased vocabulary may be encouraged and can support topic work
- Reading dog – as a dog is non-judgmental, less confident readers are encouraged to read out loud in a calm environment
- The Wider Community - dogs can help pupils to interact with members of the wider community. For example, pupils may take the dog to visit care homes and help others to benefit from this therapeutic support.