

# **LDST SCHOOL DOG POLICY**

## **Minimum Requirements and Expectations of Schools**

## **OUR TRUST PRAYER**

Heavenly Father,  
Let peace, friendship and love grow in our schools.  
Send the Holy Spirit to give  
excellence to our learning,  
love to our actions and  
joy to our worship.  
Guide us to help others,  
so that we may all  
Learn, Love and Achieve, Together with Jesus.

Amen

# Introduction

This policy provides guidance for schools when considering introducing a dog into the school environment. It is not exhaustive but outlines LDST's minimum requirements and expectations when taking on a school dog.

We understand that research shows there is significant potential for dogs to help young people in a range of educational environments, bringing benefits to their academic, emotional and social development. However, bringing a dog into school is a significant commitment which should be carefully understood and planned. At the heart of the safety and success of any programme will be a clear focus on the wellbeing of the dog, as well as the children and staff in the school.

Each school is required to have its own School Dog Policy (which will include why the breed was chosen, roles and responsibilities, codes of conduct, training undertaken, legal owner/handler).

Detailed below are six key requirements to help and inform any decision to introduce a dog into your school as well as details of where you can get further help and advice.

## Key Considerations 'Planning for Success'

### 1. RIGHT REASONS

You must know, and be able to clearly articulate, why you want a dog in your school (Complete Appendix A). You must be able to demonstrate that you have fully considered what it involves.

- Ensure you understand the practical considerations of having a dog in school (e.g. toileting; hygiene standards; the need for a structured and planned timetable for your dog and their handler; space for the dog to rest for significant periods during the school day; areas of school that are unsuitable for a dog).
- Understand the standards for working with dogs in schools (see Kennel Club Bark and Read Standards below).
- Understand the costs associated with the dog and who will be responsible for them.
- Make appropriate insurance arrangements to cover your dog and their activities in school (please see Appendix B response from the RPA regarding cover it provides). *The following insurance company has also been recommended by schools:* <https://www.petbusinessinsurance.co.uk/pet-business-insurance.aspx>
- Assess the risks and know what you will do if things do not go as planned (engage Compliance Education and undertake a risk assessment – see Appendix C: Animals in School Risk Assessment).
- Have a back-up plan in place to care for the dog when they cannot attend school (e.g. if they are unwell).

## **2. RIGHT COMMITMENT/SUPPORT**

You must have support from governors, staff, parents/carers and students/pupils to introduce a dog into your school.

- Engage all your stakeholders as you plan, to enable you to make informed decisions.
- Ensure you understand and manage any concerns up front (e.g. allergies; fears; cultural issues).
- Shape your plans based on the feedback you receive.

## **3. RIGHT PLACE**

You must assess that your school is an appropriate environment for a dog, and for the individual dog you select.

- Consider your school from a dog's perspective. Remember, a school is not a natural home for a dog.
- Take advice and make an informed choice about the right dog and the most appropriate arrangements for your school.
- Consider the times the dog will be in school and where they will be based.
- Understand how you will need to adapt the school environment to meet the dog's needs.
- Remember, if your dog does not feel safe, there may be a risk to students/pupils.

## **4. RIGHT TRAINING**

You must have a suitable socialisation and training programme in place to prepare the dog for school life.

- Be aware that a dog is unlikely to be mature enough to work in a school environment until they are at least one year old and have completed all their training.
- Don't expect your dog to 'get' school life; you will need to prepare them. An effective, gradual, socialisation process to introduce them into the school environment will support them to feel secure and relaxed with the children and the environment.
- Get your dog assessed to ensure they have the right temperament and have reached the right levels of training and skills to interact with students/pupils in school.
- Make sure you know where to get help from a qualified and experienced dog trainer who is committed to positive training techniques.

## **5. RIGHT SUPPORT FOR YOUR DOG**

You must have a dedicated and experienced person who understands the dog's needs and who will support the dog at school and at home (while also understanding the needs

of your students/pupils).

- Ensure the handler has a good understanding of dog behaviour and body language and, specifically, that they have built a trusted relationship with the dog.
- Ensure they are committed to positive training techniques and to responding to the changing needs of the dog over time.
- Ensure your dog is always supported when in school. A dog should never be left alone with students/pupils.
- Ensure the handler will not be distracted by other duties when handling the dog.
- Set standards in school and ensure everyone sticks to them – the dog's wellbeing should never be compromised neither should the safety of individuals in school.

## 6. RIGHT PREPARATION

You must have a clear plan and procedures to prepare your school for the introduction of a dog.

- Take time to educate students/pupils and staff to understand the dog's needs and how to act around and engage with the dog.
- Produce a timetable for the dog, with clear rest periods away from students/pupils.
- Review how things are going regularly and make changes as required e.g. reduce the dog's time in school if there are signs of fatigue.
- Have a clear plan in place of what you will do if things do not go as planned.

## Further Information

**Bark & Read:** [Standards of Practice for Providers of Animal Assisted Interventions in Schools](#)<sup>1</sup>, issued by the Kennel Club. These standards provide clear guidance to people and organisations who wish to work with a dog in a school and to schools regarding their responsibilities towards the dogs and the young people who take part in these programmes.

**Animal Assisted Intervention International (AAII):** AAII is an international practitioners' organisation which has published [standards of practice](#)<sup>2</sup>. See section on Animal Assisted Education for standards relating to work in schools.

**Canine Assisted Learning:** The [CAL Affiliate programme](#)<sup>3</sup> is designed for schools / organisations that would like one of their members of staff to work with their own dog. This would involve a detailed assessment to establish the best way to implement a bespoke training plan for the school team and dog to work together to provide homegrown support to their school and children.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1935/bark-and-read-standards-of-practice.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://otaus.com.au/publicassets/80cfd523-2030-ea11-9403-005056be13b5/AAII-Standards-of-Practice.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.canineassistedlearning.com/school-assistance-dogs/services/affiliate-school-dogs/>

**Dogs for Good:** You can find more information about Community Dogs for Schools programme at [www.dogsforgood.org/](http://www.dogsforgood.org/)

**Advice on dog behaviour and training:**

- [Association of Pet Dog Trainers \(APDT\)](https://apdt.co.uk/)  
<https://apdt.co.uk/>
- [Institute of Modern Dog Trainers \(IMDT\)](https://www.imdt.uk.com/)  
<https://www.imdt.uk.com/>
- [Animal Behaviour and Training Council \(ABTC\)](https://abtc.org.uk/)  
<https://abtc.org.uk/>
- Dogs Helping Kids – Puppy Training  
Appendix D1
- Dogs Helping Kids – Advanced Training  
Appendix D2

## Appendix A: Rationale

*You must know, and be able to clearly articulate, why you want a dog in your school*

**Type of Dog**

**Purpose**

- why do you want a therapy dog?**
- Who will benefit from having a therapy dog?**

**Outcome**

- What will you achieve by having a therapy dog?**

**Who will look after the therapy dog?**

**Timescale**

## APPENDIX B: Risk Protection Arrangement (summary of cover)

RPA will provide an indemnity if a school is legally liable to pay compensation in the event of third-party death/injury or third-party property damage caused by an animal that is owned by or under the control of the school.

Unless covered under a more specific pet insurance policy, the RPA will also provide an indemnity under the Third Party Liability section if an animal brought into school for educational or therapy/wellbeing reason, causes any third party property damage or injury to a third party (including pupils/students) to the extent that the school is legally liable to pay compensation or damages to the claimant.

The Employers Liability section will provide an indemnity to the school if the school is legally liable to pay compensation to damages to an employee injured by an animal on school premises in the course of the employee's employment with the school.

The RPA would not provide an indemnity to the individual owner of the animal for their legal liability.

The RPA rules do not exclude damage to the school property caused by the animal but cover for Material Damage claims are subject to the member retention (excess) of £500 per loss reducing to £250 each and every loss for Nursery and Primary schools.

To confirm the RPA would not compensate the school if an animal dies or is stolen, and will not provide cover for vet fees if the animal becomes ill or is injured therefore separate insurance would be required if needed.

The animals will not be covered under the RPA and separate insurance will be required, if needed. However, we can confirm that the RPA will provide indemnity to the member school when handling the animals to the extent that the school are legally liable (negligent) in causing injury to school staff under the Employers Liability section and injury to third parties (including pupils/students etc.) and damage to their property under the Third Party Public Liability. The RPA will defend claims and provide damages or compensation that the school is legally required to pay to the claimant.



## APPENDIX C – RISK ASSESSMENT

<b>Area/Activity Assessed</b>	Animals in school [ <i>to be adapted for school dog</i> ]	<b>Date</b>	
<b>Assessment Completed By</b>		<b>Person(s) Consulted</b>	

<b>Persons Exposed</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Contractor</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Young Person</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Expectant Mother</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Visitors and/or Public</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Trespassers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Frequency of Exposure</b>	<b>Continually</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Hourly</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Daily</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Weekly</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Monthly</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Yearly</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Duration of Exposure</b>	<b>Less than 1hr</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>1-2 hrs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>3-4 hrs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>5-6 hrs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>7-8 hrs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>More than 8 hrs</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Probability - (5=Very Likely, 4= Likely, 3= Quite Possible, 2= Possible, 1= Unlikely) Severity - (5=Catastrophic, 4=Major, 3=Moderate, 2=Minor, 1=Insignificant)	0-8 - Low risk No Action Required. 9-15 - Medium risk Ensure adequate controls are in use. 16-25 - High Risk Stop operation and implement adequate control measures
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# Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment No:

No	Hazard	Initial			Existing Control Measures	Residual			Additional Controls
		Severity	Probability	Risk		Severity	Probability	Risk	
1	Animals that are not clean or carry disease/fleas etc.	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All persons who come into contact with the animals wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap after the session.</li> <li>• Pupils/students are encouraged not to put their hands in their mouths / to their eyes etc. after touching the animals</li> <li>• All animals are regularly washed / cleaned by their owner and have regular checks by a suitably qualified vet.</li> </ul>	3	1	3	
2	Allergy to certain animals	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons with known allergies to named animals are exempt from handling or getting exposed for long periods to that particular animal.</li> <li>• All children need permission from parents before interacting with the dog and a list of those pupils/students with allergies must be kept by the handler.</li> <li>• Disposable gloves or other personal protective equipment can be provided and worn by the person if required.</li> <li>• Parents are informed.</li> </ul>	4	2	8	

# Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment No:

No	Hazard	Initial			Existing Control Measures	Residual			Additional Controls
		Severity	Probability	Risk		Severity	Probability	Risk	
3	Animals in school	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only keep suitable animals in school (eg hunting or herding breeds of dogs are not suitable)</li> <li>• Ensure hands are washed before and after handling.</li> <li>• Keep animal house/cage clean and disinfect regularly.</li> <li>• Prevent contact between kept animals and their food and wild animals to avoid disease transmission.</li> <li>• Carefully wash all animal scratches or bites. If in any doubt about infection seek medical advice.</li> <li>• Consider carefully and record, what animals can be brought into school, by pupils/students, parents, demonstrators or anyone else.</li> </ul>	3	2	6	
4	Animal fouling	3	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All animals that are not caged / boxed or are “house trained”. The animal handler has a “spillage kit” with suitable cleaning and disinfectant materials should an “accident” occur whilst at the school.</li> <li>• A special pet run has been built outside.</li> <li>• The pet run is cleaned regularly.</li> <li>• There will be a designated toileting area away from pupils/students which will be clearly signposted.</li> </ul>	3	1	3	

# Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment No:

No	Hazard	Initial			Existing Control Measures	Residual			Additional Controls
		Severity	Probability	Risk		Severity	Probability	Risk	
5	Pupil behaviour	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils/students are informed of the correct behaviour (e.g. noise levels, not to “poke” or tease the animals, etc.).</li> <li>Pupils/students ignoring the rules will be excluded from the activity session with the dog.</li> <li>Pupils/students are supervised at all times.</li> </ul>	3	1	3	
6	Animal refuge place	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A quiet area is established, pupils/students are informed that the animal is not to be disturbed whilst in his/her refuge place.</li> <li>The refuge place is gated to prevent unauthorised access</li> </ul>	3	1	3	

## ACTION ARISING FROM RISK ASSESSMENT

# Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment No:

No	Risk Rating	Action Required:	Person (s) Responsible	Target Date	Date Completed



## Acknowledgement

The following members of staff have read this risk assessment.  
Their signatures are confirmation that they have read and understood all of that which is within its contents.

Name	Signature	Date	Name	Signature	Date

## APPENDIX D POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION SCHEDULE

### Review Schedule

Policy Author	Trust Corporate Services Director
Policy Approver	Trust Executive Team
Current Policy Version	1.0
Policy Effective From	1 June 2022
Policy Review Date	30 June 2025

### Revision Schedule

Version	Revisions	By whom
1.0	Original document produced	TCSD