

Animals in Education Policy

Aim: to provide guidance on the management of animals in schools for the purposes of medical health needs, a disability, educational learning, social and emotional wellbeing.

ESSENTIAL POLICY FOR:

Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department, Headteachers, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Staff

Date issued: July 2022 by: Kelly Massey Health and Safety Officer

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Revision History

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June 2022	0.1	Draft for review
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September 2022	2.0	No amendments required
August 2023	3.0	Blue text added in section 2.1 Annex B,C,D and E
May 2024	4.0	Annexes D & E Staff welfare provider changed
October 2024	5.0	Section 2.2 Therapy dog Training providers expanded
May 2025	6.0	Minor grammar issues only

1. INTRODUCTION

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility, and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with animals. In addition to these benefits, there are certain circumstances where assistance animals may be required to support a child with a disability or medical health need. Animals in schools for the purposes of educational learning, and mental health and wellbeing reasons, can bring about great enjoyment within the classroom but some animals that are required to assist a child for medical needs or for a disability are known as a 'service' animal and should be treated as a working dog.

This document sets out the management responsibilities associated with the different circumstances for an animal being brought into school and provides information on the educational departments who can further support.

This document does not include staff who bring dogs into work. HR should be contacted to discuss these circumstances.

Dogs owned by members of the public/ parents / visitors are not allowed anywhere on the school premises or grounds.

2. TYPES OF ANIMAL USE

Depending on the circumstances, there are different types of animals used in schools which have different roles and purposes.

2.1 Assistance Dog: a trained dog to support deaf, visually impaired and disabled people and people with medical conditions (such as epilepsy) in a variety of ways. A recognised assistance dog provides an extension of the persons abilities and is allowed by law to accompany their owner into public places such as shops, restaurants, and travel on public transport. Assistance dogs can also be trained to support children and adults who have been diagnosed with Autism and other mental health conditions.

People with disabilities that use assistance dogs have important rights under the *Equality Act 2010*. The law protects people against disabilities to ensure that they can enjoy the same rights as everyone else. The *Equality Act 2010* prohibits discrimination against those who need an assistance dog.

In the UK there is no assistance dog register, so it is not possible to register a dog as an assistance dog, regardless of where it has been trained. Where an assistance dog has been placed with an individual by an organisation/charity the assistance dog must be accredited by one of the following memberships affiliated with ADUK and evidence must be provided to the Headteacher: [Find an Assistance Dog Charity - ADUK \(assistancedogs.org.uk\)](#) . Where an owner's pet dog has been trained to support an individual, the assistance dog must be accredited by [Service Dog Certification | Empowering you and your service animal \(servicedogcertifications.org\)](#)

Guide dogs are trained for a specific partnership and individual training programmes are designed to meet the needs of the person and the dog. This training is overseen by the Guide Dog UK Training team and mobility instructors.

2.2 Pets As Therapy (PAT): are animals that are used to benefit people in a therapeutic way. This includes dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and chickens.

Pet Therapy Dogs that are trained by volunteers are dedicated pet owners who give up their spare time to help others. Volunteers visit all types of establishments, including schools to support young people to improve literacy skills, reading, encourage confidence and help improve mental health and wellbeing.

For the safety of the dog and the people they visit, all therapy dogs must be very calm, friendly, sociable and must be trained to respond to commands regardless of distractions around. A therapy dog can be trained by its owner or with professional assistance. There is no legal requirement for a therapy dog to be professionally trained, however there are some UK charities such as the [Therapy Dogs Nationwide](#) and [Pets As Therapy](#) charity who will assess the dog's temperament and attitude for carrying out this type of work.

To qualify as a Pet Therapy Dog for the purpose of supporting staff and pupils in schools within our Trust, the dog must have been assessed and accredited by either:

- [Therapy Dogs Nationwide](#) charity
- [Pets As Therapy](#) charity
- [Therapy Dog Training UK | Train My Dog To Be A Therapy Dog](#)
(completion of all three stages are required):
 1. *Online workshops 1 and 2,*
 2. *Temperament assessment,*
 3. *Certification*

Other therapy animals used in schools are usually owned by the school or a member of staff. It is therefore the responsibility of the Headteacher to determine the right animal for the setting, considering the temperament and habits of the animal in relation to practical activities and that the appropriate training and accreditation is in place.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring:

- parents have been informed that a therapy pet or assistance dog will be used in school and parents have made the school aware of any known allergies. This information will be shared with all staff
- parents and staff have been asked to inform the Headteacher of any phobias in relation to the animal
- staff have informed the Headteacher of any known allergies and/or is pregnant

- staff have been informed, through staff briefings, that the school will be using a pet as therapy, or a child requires an assistance dog. Lessons and timetables will reflect this.
- the health and welfare of any animal on the premises is always maintained including outside of school hours
- Assistance Dogs and Pet Therapy Dogs have received training and proof of accreditation is held
- the 'Parent School Agreement' for the use of an assistance dog on school premises has been signed by the parent/carers and Headteacher– **Annex A**
- Third Party Insurance is held for an Assistance Dog, and this has been checked with '*The Risk Protection Arrangement RPA*' for schools for confirmation of adequate cover – **Annex B** (note: Pet Therapy Dogs provided by a volunteer through a charity, will be covered by the Trusts Insurance through the RPA.)
- the handler/owner of the Pet Therapy Dog/Assisted Dog has visited the school including areas where it will be expected to support, prior to working, and is familiar with the sound of the fire alarm and/or school bell
- the school's Special Educational and Disability (SEND) Lead has been made aware of a child who will require an Assistance Dog or Therapy Pet at school, and this has been recorded in the child's – individual healthcare/welfare/safeguarding plan.
- where there is doubt as to the essential need or suitability of such an animal, the school may revert to the Trust SEND Lead for further advice.
Notwithstanding the above, the presence of the animal in school is subject to final approval by the Headteacher, considering the list of banned animals in **Annex C** and in the case of Therapy animals, the provision of a suitable location for such interactions which will not unduly stress the animal or the child.
- appropriate safety arrangements are in place including completing the Trust model risk assessment templates in **Annex D** and **Annex E**
- the SET Infection Control Policy is shared with staff and adhered to

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

To ensure the health and safety of the animal(s) and school community, the risks associated with animals must be managed appropriately.

4.1 ANIMAL WELFARE

Every animal kept in school should have a 'care' programme established to ensure the animals maintenance and welfare standards are always maintained including:

- regular and appropriate nourishment
- water always
- checks on general health – vet checks when necessary
- regular parasite control and vaccination
- will be taken to the vets if becomes unwell

- designated toilet/walking area
- a comfortable environment, tailored to the animal's needs in terms of heat, light, space, cleanliness, noise levels, shelter, and the possible impact of other animals and humans in the vicinity
- visual checks will be made of areas of the school where dogs / cats walk to ensure there are no hazards that could hurt the animal for example: broken glass, chemical spills, food (chocolate - is highly toxic to dogs)
- claws are clipped and kept short

Where animals are brought in for a short period – for example just for a day/ hour – a protocol should be implemented which ensures the wellbeing of the animal, for the duration of its visit. This should include:

- provision of water
- designated toilet/walking area – including disposing of dog foul

The animal should not come into school if showing signs of being unwell or has been unwell in the past 48 hours.

4.2 ANIMAL HANDLING

Pupils will naturally wish to handle animals, but certain considerations need to be addressed in advance of any such activities. The following points should be adopted:

- the animal is used to being handled
- the animal is not likely to be stressed by excitable pupils
- where there is a correct way to hold any animal, this must be taught to pupils from the outset
- handling of small animals should be carried out over a table or preferably some form of soft surface to minimise the risk of injury caused by falling or being dropped
- dogs will be always kept on a lead and under the full control of the handler
- pupils should always wash their hands after touching the animal
- pupils should be reminded of what is the appropriate behaviour around the animal
- pupils will not be left alone with pet therapy animals and will be always supervised
- pupils will not feed animals unless directed to do so by the appropriate adult in charge
- pupils should refrain from disturbing animals to handle when they are resting or sleeping

Assistance Dogs should not be touched or distracted whilst in service and will wear a high vis jacket to show they are working. Pupils and staff should be briefed on this and reminded regularly of the appropriate behaviour. Where assistance Dogs are used for identifying the onset of a medical episode such as fainting/seizure, it is important that staff and key pupils have been made aware of the meaning of the dog's signals and commands. It is the responsibility of the handler to provide information on the dog's behaviours and command words in the event of a medical episode.

4.3 HYGIENE, DISEASES, PARASITES, AND ALLERGIES

Adopting good hand hygiene and applying safe handling rules, helps to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Infectious diseases which are transferrable from animal to human are known as '*Zoonotic*' diseases. Specific zoonotic diseases can be very serious for pregnant women, and this should be considered in the individuals risk assessment. To avoid the possible risk of infection, pregnant women should avoid handling (including washing of items and other contaminated materials) that may have come into contact with animals, especially animals that have recently given birth.

To reduce the risks of allergic reactions, consideration should be given to confining the presence of animals to a limited part of the school. This could be a single classroom, or a room which preferably does not contain carpets or any heavy upholstery to avoid harbouring hair, fur, and skin cells. For circumstances where a pupil has an Assistance Dog and who will move through several areas of the school during the day, the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the class timetables and routes around the school are arranged to enable those with severe allergic reactions avoid coming into contact with the dog.

The SET Infection Control Policy should be referred to for further information.

Pupils and adults should always wash their hands thoroughly soon after handling any animal or its cage/equipment

- cuts and abrasions on hands and arms should be covered to minimise the risk of infection
- cleaning routines and arrangements for the disposal of animal waste should be carried out with due regard for good hygiene standards
- contaminated surfaces should be washed and disinfected
- any dog / cat foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately
- kitchen sinks should not be used to bathe animals or wash their cages/equipment in
- where staff and/or pupils are known to have allergies to animals/ plants /bedding, it is sensible to restrict their exposure to prevent an allergic reaction. In these cases, the Headteacher must ensure a safe operating procedure is in place that considers any student with a health care plan or an employee with a known allergy
- To further reduce the risks of infection, dogs and cats should receive regular flea and worming treatment. Pupils with an Assistance Dog will agree to regular treatment being undertaken in the 'Parent School Agreement'.

4.4 PHYSICAL INJURY

Animals can become aggressive, bite, scratch, and nip if they are feeling threatened. These emotions are a natural behaviour and can be a pre-warning signal that the animal is distressed, nervous or frightened. It is important that pupils are made aware of how to behave around animals and are shown how to approach the animal to pet/touch/ handle safely. To reduce the risk of physical injury, suitable precautions should be taken to include:

- The level of protection afforded by the animal's housing
- The need for staff and pupils to adhere to the safe handling rules
- Staff and Pupils must not disturb animals that are nocturnal or sleeping/resting
- Pupils to be calm, relaxed and quiet around the animal

Where staff or pupils have fears or phobias about animals, these should be respected, and appropriate arrangements made to ensure the separation of the animal from the staff or pupil(s) concerned.

5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 OUT OF HOURS CARE

Where school-based animals are taken home by pupils to support with care over the school holidays, a suitable '*home-school agreement*' should be devised to encourage the observation of the same principles at home as those governing in the school – both from the perspective of pupil safety and animal welfare.

5.2 FIRE SAFETY

The welfare and safety of the staff and pupils is paramount and must always be priority in the event of a fire. The handler/ owner of a dog is responsible for ensuring its evacuation alongside the rest of the school community. Clear arrangements must be in place around what to do if the Pet Therapy dog or Assistance Dog will not follow instructions in the event of an evacuation. The procedure will form part of the 'parent school agreement'.

For school-based animals, the Headteacher or nominated individual is responsible for including the evacuation of the animals if safe to do so. The fire actions plan states 'staff must not be delayed in their own evacuation or be put at increased risk to evacuate animals'. Staff must be briefed on the procedure.

FURTHER SUPPORT

The Health and Safety Team are available for further support and hold risk assessment templates for animals in education. For schools with an assisted dog, a '*parent school agreement*' template is also available.

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Parent – School Assistance Dog Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to set out clear responsibilities and accountability to ensure the safety of all stakeholders in relation to the use of an Assistance Dog in school to meet the needs of a specific pupil.

The following points are non-negotiable. The Assistance Dog will only be permitted into school with full agreement of the statements below and signature of this document (in conjunction with the Assistance Dog Risk Assessment).

The Owner refers to the parent/carer of the individual child requiring the support of the Assistance Dog.

1. The Owner takes full responsibility for all disruption, injury, illness and/or damage to property caused by the Assistance Dog regardless of the situation arising.
2. The Owner confirms that the child has the skills and knowledge to ensure the Assistance Dog is always kept under control regardless of the situation. Please refer to the Assistance Dog Risk Assessment for details of procedures when the child is medically unable to be in control of the Assistance Dog.
3. The Owner confirms that they hold valid Third-party Insurance, and that proof of coverage has been received by the school including confirmation of adequate cover from Risk Protection Arrangement for Schools.
4. The Assistance Dog must be always kept on a lead and supervised/controlled by the pupil unless otherwise stated in the Assistance Dog Risk Assessment.
5. The Assistance Dog must wear a jacket to identify that they are a working dog and a suitable collar and lead which fits correctly and firmly.
6. If the Assistance Dog becomes a nuisance or disruptive to the learning of others including but not limited to jumping up, not being under the control of the pupil, fouling on site, showing signs of 'guarding', aggressive behaviour towards others in the school community, the Headteacher reserves the right to review the agreement with the owner and will decide (with the full support of the Trust) on the appropriateness of the Assistance Dog continuing to being in school. Should such an incident occur, the Owner agrees to immediate collection of the Assistance Dog from school without the need for consultation by the school.
7. There is a designated area for the Assistance Dog both indoor and outdoor where he/she is allowed, and this must be strictly adhered to. The Assistance Dog must not be taken around the school site unless supporting the pupil to class. Please refer to the Assistance Dog Risk Assessment for details of procedures.
8. The owner will provide confirmation of regular flea and worming treatment.

9. The school site including floors will be sufficiently cleaned to ensure it is suitable for staff and pupils. The school cannot guarantee a sterile floor or other areas of the school. This applies to all areas of the school. The school does not accept any liability for injury or illness to the Assistance Dog whilst on the school premises under any circumstances. This is inclusive but not limited to areas of the school, such as the science laboratory where the presence of small splinters of glass or remnants of chemical spillage cannot be fully eliminated. Similarly with spillages of food (e.g., chocolate) which may have been dropped around the school.
10. The Assistance Dog will not enter any areas where food is prepared or served. Please refer to the Assistance Dog Risk Assessment for details of procedures.
11. Should a medical situation involving the pupil occur, the school will prioritise the needs of the pupil and will do its best to accommodate the Assistance Dog as outlined in the Assistance Dog Risk Assessment.
12. In the event of a fire, the school's priority is to evacuate all staff and pupils in the school. Should the Assistance Dog not follow instructions or cannot be picked up by the pupil/allocated support person, the Assistance Dog will be left behind. Please refer to the Assistance Dog Risk Assessment for details of procedures.

Headteacher Signature		Date	
Parent Signature		Date	

Insurance Indemnity for Therapy animals

Our schools sometimes have animals that are cared for by the pupils or are brought into school for educational/therapy/wellbeing purposes.

What cover does RPA provide for these animals / activities?

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) 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 during the employee's employment with the school.

The RPA does 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 loss for Nursery and Primary schools.

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 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.

For the avoidance of doubt, the RPA will 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.

Note: For circumstances where an Assistance Dog is used, Third-Party insurance cover held by the owner, should be checked with RPA to obtain confirmation of adequate cover-

RPA Advice RPAAdvice@WillisTowersWatsonSecure.Com.

It is the responsibility of Headteachers to arrange for copies of any third-party insurance documents held by owners of assistance dogs to be forwarded to RPA.

Banned Animals

In the UK, it is against the law to own certain types of dogs. These are:

- Pit Bull Terrier
- Japanese Tosa
- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro

Any breed of dog from the above list or a dog that matches the characteristics of a Pit Bull Terrier, is not allowed onto the school premises in any circumstances. This includes the Bully XL which has been responsible for 9 deaths since 2021.

Other animals not considered appropriate to be brought into school include but are not limited to:

- Reptiles and any other exotic animals banned from importation into the UK
- Rats
- Mice
- Cats
- Ferrets
- Spiders

If in doubt, contact the Trust Health and Safety department for further advice.

Email: health.safety@setrust.co.uk

Assistance Dog Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment



Activity: Assistance Dog to support: insert name of pupil	Review: Annually or in the event of a significant incident or material change.
Assessor:	Reviewed by: _____ on: _____ Date of next review: _____

This Risk Assessment is a model risk assessment template which must be reviewed and amended to reflect the individual's need for an Assistance Dog including any risks associated with the individual's medical health condition.

The Risk Assessment must be completed in conjunction with the '*Parent – School Assistance Dog Agreement*'.

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
1	Disability Health condition	Pupil (name) Staff Others in the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A teaching assistant supports pupil when in a lesson. Pupil has an individual Health Care Plan in place which IS reviewed and updated. For specific control measures relating to the management of the pupil's disability / health condition – refer to the health care plan. Trained first aiders are always on site. 	Insert risk rating for each box, e.g.: Acceptable (4)		Insert risk rating for each box, e.g.: Acceptable (4)

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		Disability / health condition (insert how the pupil and school community can be harmed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil is supervised by a teacher and TA during class time. Key members of pupils (buddies) have been appointed to assist the pupil throughout the day. Should the pupil have a medical episode, key friends will stay with the Assistance Dog and move to a safe area to allow for first aiders to attend. Should the pupil experience a medical episode at the time of an evacuation, the EVAC chair can be used. Key friends or key member of staff will supervise the Assistance Dog. Those appointed with this responsibility have been informed of their role. 			
	Various items left on the floor of areas in the school the dog resides	Dog Toxicity of chemicals and certain foods through ingestion Puncture wounds/ lacerations through coming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before entering classrooms/ hall / main areas of the school, the teacher conducts visual checks to identify any hazardous equipment, chemicals, food. Pupils and staff have been briefed on the importance of clearing up spills, food items, small objects, and broken glass. Pupils are responsible for alerting a member of staff to any of the above and disposing of/clearing away where appropriate. In secondary schools, Science and Art classrooms - blades and sharps are not left out and a visual check is made by the teacher before the pupil and Assistance Dog arrives for the lesson. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		<p>into contact with sharps</p> <p>Foreign body through ingestion of small objects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In D&T classes small fragments of metal have been swept away before the pupil and Assistance Dog arrive for the lesson. • Where possible the pupil will have a designated seat closest to the door to reduce movement around the classroom and allow enough space for the Assistance Dog. • The Assistance Dog is on a lead and always supervised. • The Assistance Dog will not be given food/treats by others in the school community. • The Assistance Dog will not enter any areas where food is prepared or served. • The pupil and Assistance Dog have a safe space/ designated area to sit and eat lunch. • If the Assistance Dog becomes hurt or unwell on site, the owner will seek veterinary treatment immediately. • The '<i>Parent – School Assistance Dog Agreement</i>' has been signed by the parent/carers covering sections relating to liability of injury/illness and hazards on floors when at school. 			
	Dog bite/ scratch	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assistance Dog has been accredited by one of the memberships set out in section 2.1 of the SET Animals in Education policy certifying the Assistance Dog has been trained and meets the 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		Others in the school community Interaction with the dog, dog jumping up- could cause injury through biting/ scratching	<p>requirements/standards set by the membership provider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog has been trained to be always controlled by the owner. • Staff and pupils have been briefed on the appropriate behaviour around the Assistance Dog and are regularly reminded. • The Assistance Dog is always on a lead. • The Assistance Dog wears a suitable collar/ harness which fits correctly and firmly. • The Assistance Dog's claws are clipped and kept short. • Should the Assistance Dog show signs of guarding or aggressive behaviour, the '<i>Parent - School Assistance Dog Agreement</i>' is in place and the Headteacher has the right to review this and adapt the current measures in place. • The owner holds third party insurance cover. The insurance cover has been checked with '<i>The Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA)</i>' as adequate. 			
	Noise, barking	Staff Pupils Others in the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and pupils are aware of the behavior displayed by the Assistance Dog to alert the pupil of a medical episode, which may involve barking. • Staff have been told what to say to the Assistance Dog to stop it from barking once attention has been noticed. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		<p>Disruption of education</p> <p>Discomfort for those with hearing impairments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil has appointed buddies who will support navigating the school when not in class, these people have been told what to say to the Assistance Dog to stop it from barking once attention has been noticed. The Assistance Dog will visit for a walk around of the school when there are no pupils to allow the Assistance Dog to familiarise itself without being overwhelmed. The Assistance Dog will then visit the school whilst pupils are in the classroom. The visit will be a short introduction to familiarise itself with the environment as it will be when working. During the initialisation stages, the <i>'Fire Alarm' / 'school bell'</i> will sound to enable the Assistance Dog to be familiar with the sound. Should the Assistance Dog become a nuisance, the owner will remove the Assistance Dog from the class/area. The Headteacher has the right to review and adapt measures set out in the <i>'Parent-School Assistance Dog Agreement'</i>. 			
	Worms/ fleas / ticks / infectious diseases	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnant members of staff will notify the Headteacher, and an individual risk assessment will be conducted. Staff and Pupils have been told not to touch the Assistance Dog; this reduces the risk of zoonosis. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		Others in the school community Zoonosis through contact with a parasite, infectious disease Bites from parasites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assistance Dog receives regular flea and worming treatment which covers ticks. This evidence has been provided to the school by the owner. • If the Assistance Dog shows signs of an infectious disease not covered by routine parasitic control, the Headteacher will ask the owner/handler to remove the Assistance Dog from the school and seek veterinary treatment. • Pupil, staff, and other pupils adopt good hand hygiene. • Cuts and abrasions on hands and arms are covered to minimize the risk of infection. • Floors are washed with an anti-bacterial detergent and carpets vacuumed at the end of the school day by the school cleaners. • Kitchen / classroom sinks will not be used to wash up the Assistance Dog's equipment. • Staff have received a copy of the SET/WC Infection Control Policy. 			
	Faeces/ Urine	Staff Pupils Others in the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant members of staff will notify the Headteacher, and an individual risk assessment will be conducted • The Assistance Dog will be walked under supervision to a designated area to go to the toilet. • The Assistance Dog MUST stay on its lead. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		Zoonosis through contact with faeces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is responsible for supplying poo bags and picking up the faeces immediately and disposal in a designated bin. The pupil must wash their hands immediately after. The Assistance Dog will not enter any areas where food is prepared or served. Staff have received a copy of the SET/WC Infection Control Policy 			
	Allergies	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p> <p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Anaphylactic shock</p> <p>Rash, hives, respiratory disorder</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteacher has sent out letters to parents, carers, and staff to identify those with allergies. The Headteacher has developed a safe operating procedure that considers any pupil with a health care plan or an employee with a known allergy. This has been shared with staff. Lessons, timetables and routes around the school have been arranged to avoid those with known allergies. Those with severe/life threatening allergies always carry emergency medication with them. First aiders are always on site. Those identified with allergies will not interact with the Assistance Dog at all. The Assistance Dog is always on a lead and under control. The Assistance Dog is kept clean and well groomed. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floors are washed with an anti-bacterial detergent and carpets vacuumed at the end of the school day by the school cleaners. 			
	Phobia	Staff Pupils Others in the school community Increased anxiety, stress, upset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The headteacher has sent out letters to parents, carers, and staff to identify those who may have a phobia of dogs. Where staff or pupils have fears or phobias about dogs, appropriate arrangements have been made to ensure the separation of the Assistance Dog from the staff or pupil(s) concerned. 			
	Road collision due to a loose dog	All persons and the dog due to a vehicle or bicycle taking action to evade a loose dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assistance Dog is always on a lead and supervised. The Assistance Dog wears a suitable collar/ harness which fits correctly and firmly. The Assistance Dog is under the control of the pupil. The Assistance Dog is wearing an identification jacket. Risk reduction measures are in place for the movement of traffic at the school- such as to reduce speed, evolving from the traffic risk assessment. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
	Damage caused to the school materials, equipment, and the school site	School resources and premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assistance Dog is always on a lead and under the control of the pupil. The '<i>Parent – School Assistance Dog Agreement</i>' has been signed by the parent/carers and Headteacher covering sections relating to liability of injury/illness, hazards, damage to property. 			
	Fire Evacuation	Staff Pupils Others in the school community Smoke inhalation through delayed evacuation as a result of the dogs' actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assistance Dog and pupil will take part in a fire evacuation without the other school community to allow the Assistance Dog to be familiar with the sound. This will be conducted after school as part of the initialisation stages. The Assistance Dog is always on a lead and under the control of the pupil. Pupil will follow the rest of the school in an evacuation with the Assistance Dog; no unusual requirements are needed. If the Assistance Dog will not follow the pupil to evacuate, and refuses to be picked up, the Assistance Dog will be left behind. Refer to the '<i>Parent – School Assistance Dog Agreement</i>.' Staff and pupils will not delay their own evacuation or be out at increased risk to evacuate animals. 			
	Stress	Pupils Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and Pupils have been consulted with on the purpose of the Assistance Dog. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		<p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Heightened anxiety of staff and Pupils</p> <p>Distress</p> <p>Mental health issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassurance has been given to staff and pupils that the Assistance Dog is trained in a way to not be a nuisance or bark in class reducing disruption of education. Should this become an issue, a '<i>Parent-School Assistance Dog Agreement</i>' is in place and the Headteacher has the right to review this and to adapt the current measures in place. Staff can access counselling through the trust EAP support system 'Health Hero' formally Validium. Staff encouraged to speak with the Headteacher if they have any concerns. Pupils are encouraged to speak with a teacher if they have any concerns or worries. 			

*Actions determined as required but not yet in place should be placed in the "Additional controls needed" column. Record any other **significant** findings and actions required to reduce risk further where existing controls are insufficient, assigning these actions to an appropriate manager or member of staff.*

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL CONTROLS

Additional Action No	Details	Owner	Date completed
1			
2			
3			
4			

METHODOLOGY

Consequence						
Likelihood		Extreme (5) Death or permanent disablement	Major (4) Partial disablement	Moderate (3) Medical Treatment	Minor (2) First Aid Treatment	Insignificant (1) No Injuries
	Almost Certain (5)	25	20	15	10	5
	Likely (4)	20	16	12	8	4
	Possible (3)	15	12	9	6	3
	Unlikely (2)	10	8	6	4	2
	Rare (1)	5	4	3	2	1

Action levels		How the risk should be managed
16-25	Unacceptable	Use or activity to stop/ not go ahead, substantial and possibly immediate improvements or additional control measures needed.
10-15	Significant	Use or activity to stop/ not go ahead. Improvement or additional control measures needed.
05-09	Adequate	Use or activity may continue or go ahead BUT risks may be further reduced by some improvement to safety arrangements.
01-04	Acceptable	No further action, but ensure controls are maintained and reviewed.

Risk Assessment	
Activity: Therapy Pets - including dogs	Review: Annually or in the event of a significant incident or material change
Assessor:	Reviewed by: _____ on: _____ Date of next review: _____

This Risk Assessment is a model risk assessment template which must be reviewed and amended to create a bespoke risk assessment for the specific animal being used for therapy.

Where a Therapy Dog is used to meet the specific needs of an individual, the risk assessment must reflect any risks associated with the individual's medical/mental health needs. Areas within the document that are hi-lighted in blue are specifically relating to the pupil and therefore their initial should be inserted.

If a therapy animal is being used in school for the purposes of supporting positive mental health and wellbeing of all the school community, section 1 of this document can be removed.

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
1	Disability Health condition	Pupil (name) Staff Others in the school community Disability / health condition (insert how the pupil and school community can be harmed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil is supported by a teaching assistant when in lesson. Pupil has an individual Health Care Plan in place which has been reviewed and updated. For specific control measures relating to the management of the pupil's disability / health condition – refer to the health care plan. Trained first aiders are always on site. Pupil is supervised by a teacher and TA during class time. Key members of pupils (buddies) have been appointed to assist the pupil throughout the day. 	Insert risk rating for each box, e.g.: Acceptable (4)		Insert risk rating for each box, e.g.: Acceptable (4)
2	Various items left on the floor of areas in the school where the animal resides.	Dog / other animal Toxicity of chemicals and certain foods through ingestion. Puncture wounds/ lacerations through coming into contact with sharps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before entering classrooms/ hall / main areas of the school, visual checks are conducted by the teacher to identify any hazardous equipment, chemicals, food. Pupils and staff have been briefed on the importance of clearing up spills, food items, small objects, and broken glass. Pupils are responsible for alerting a member of staff to any of the above and disposing of/clearing away where appropriate. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		Foreign body through ingestion of small objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pet therapy dog is on a lead and always supervised. The therapy animal will not be given food/treats by others in the school community unless permission given by the handler/owner or class teacher as part of the feeding regime. The therapy dog will not enter any areas where food is prepared or served. If the therapy animal becomes hurt or unwell on site, the handler/owner/school will seek veterinary treatment, as necessary. Insurance cover for a therapy pet that is owned by or under the control of the school is covered by the RPA for schools – <i>refer to appendix in the Schools in Education Policy.</i> 			
3	Physical Injury Bite, scratch, nip	Staff Pupils Others in the school community Interaction with the dog- dog jumping-up could cause injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The therapy dog is always on a lead. The therapy dog wears a suitable collar/harness which fits correctly and firmly. The therapy animal claws are clipped and kept short. Staff and pupils have been briefed on the appropriate behaviour around the therapy animal and are regularly reminded. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		<p>though biting/Scratching</p> <p>Interaction through inappropriate/ unsafe handling</p> <p>Warning response through feeling nervous/frightened/ threatened/overwhelmed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and pupils will not disturb therapy animals who are nocturnal/ resting /sleeping/ eating. 			
4	Noise, barking	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p> <p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Disruption of education.</p> <p>Discomfort for those with hearing impairments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The therapy dog will then visit the school whilst pupils are in the classroom. The visit will be a short introduction to familiarise itself with the environment. During the initialisation stages, the '<i>Fire Alarm</i>' / '<i>school bell</i>' will sound to enable the therapy dog to be familiar with the sound. Should the therapy dog become a nuisance, the owner will remove the therapy dog from the class/area. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
5	Worms/ fleas / ticks/ infectious diseases	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p> <p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Therapy animal</p> <p>Zoonosis through contact with a parasite, infectious disease.</p> <p>Bites from parasites.</p> <p>Therapy animal suffers with Skin irritation, anemia, vomiting and diarrhea through infestation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant members of staff will notify the Headteacher, and an individual risk assessment will be conducted. • The therapy animal receives regular flea and worming treatment which covers ticks (where applicable). This evidence has been provided to the school by the owner of a therapy dog. • If a therapy dog displays signs of parasite infection at the time of visiting, regardless of proof of treatment, the Headteacher will ask the owner/handler to remove the therapy dog from the school premises. Parents will be notified of any potential cross-contamination and actions required. • Staff and other pupils adopt good hand hygiene, washing hands immediately after handling the animal, cleaning the cage/ bedding/ equipment. • Cuts and abrasions on hands and arms are covered to minimize the risk of infection. • Floors are washed with an anti-bacterial detergent and carpets vacuumed at the end of the school day by the school cleaners. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitchen / classroom sinks will not be used to wash up the therapy pet's equipment. Staff have received a copy of the SET/WC Infection Control Policy. If the therapy animal (owned by the school) shows signs of an infectious disease not covered by routine parasitic control, the school will seek veterinary treatment. 			
6	Faeces/ Urine	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p> <p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Therapy animal</p> <p>Zoonosis/infectious diseases though contact with faeces, urine.</p> <p>Theory animal suffers fly strike, urine scalding, matted fur through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnant members of staff will notify the Headteacher, and an individual risk assessment will be conducted. The therapy dog will be walked under supervision to a designated area to go to the toilet. The therapy dog MUST stay on its lead. The owner/handler is responsible for supplying poo bags and picking up the faeces immediately and disposal in a designated bin. The owner/handler must wash hands immediately after. The therapy dog will not enter any areas where food is prepared or served. Staff and pupils will wash their hands immediately after an animal has defecated on their hands whilst handling. 	<p>3</p> <p>Acceptable</p>		<p>3</p> <p>Acceptable</p>

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		heavy soiled bedding/cages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy animal cages and bedding will be cleaned daily to avoid buildup of faeces and urine. • Therapy animal cages/equipment will not be cleaned in kitchen/classroom sinks. • Floors are washed with an anti-bacterial detergent and carpets vacuumed at the end of the school day by the school cleaners. • Therapy animals are checked over daily to ensure a glossy clean coat. Paying particular attention around the animals' anus. • Therapy animals will not be kept outside in cages/hutches during the summer months to avoid 'fly strike.' • Staff have received a copy of the SET/WC Infection Control Policy 			
7	Allergies	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p> <p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Anaphylactic shock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher has sent out letters to parents/ carers and staff to identify those with allergies. • The Headteacher has developed a safe operating procedure that considers any pupil with a health care plan or an employee with a known allergy. This has been shared with staff. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
		Rash, hives, respiratory disorder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a therapy dog is used lessons, timetables and routes around the school have been arranged to avoid those with known allergies. Those with severe/life threatening allergies always carry emergency medication with them. First aiders are always on site. Those identified with allergies will not interact with the therapy animal. The therapy dog is always on a lead and under control. The therapy animal is kept clean and well groomed. Floors are washed with an anti-bacterial detergent and carpets vacuumed at the end of the school day by the school cleaners. 			
8	Damage caused to the school materials,	School resources and premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The therapy dog is always on a lead and under the control of the owner/handler. Therapy animals are kept in a secure and locked cage/house. 			
9	Road collision	All persons and the therapy dog due to a vehicle or bicycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The therapy dog is always on a lead and supervised. The therapy dog wears a suitable collar/harness which fits correctly and firmly. 			

Ref	Hazards	Who might be harmed /how	Risk control measures	Initial risk rating and score	Additional controls needed to further reduce risk (action number in brackets)	Outcome risk rating and Score
	due to a loose dog	taking action to evade a loose dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The therapy dog is under the control of the owner/handler. The therapy dog is wearing an identification jacket. Risk reduction measures are in place for the movement of traffic at the school- such as to reduce speed, evolving from the traffic risk assessment. 			
10	Fire Evacuation	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p> <p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Smoke inhalation through delayed evacuation as a result of the dogs' actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The therapy dog will take part in a fire evacuation without the other school community to allow the therapy dog to be familiar with the sound. This will be conducted after school as part of the initialisation stages. The therapy dog is always on a lead and under the control of the owner/handler. The owner/handler will follow the rest of the school in an evacuation with the therapy dog; no special requirements are needed. If the therapy dog will not follow the owner/handler to evacuate, and refuses to be picked up, the therapy dog will be left behind. Staff and pupils will not delay their own evacuation or be put at increased risk to evacuate animals. 			

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteacher will assess the appropriate and safest way of evacuating the animal, which will identify key staff with responsibilities. These key members of staff will have been briefed on the procedure. 			
11	Negative impact	<p>Staff</p> <p>Pupils</p> <p>Others in the school community</p> <p>Heightened anxiety of staff and Pupils.</p> <p>Phobia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and Pupils have been consulted with on the purpose of the therapy animal. Reassurance has been given to staff and pupils that the therapy dog is trained in a way to not be a nuisance or bark in class reducing disruption of education. Should this become an issue, the Headteacher will ask the owner/handler to remove the therapy dog from the area/classroom. Staff can access counselling through the trust EAP support system 'Health Hero' formally Validium. Staff encouraged to speak with the Headteacher if they have any concerns. Pupils are encouraged to speak with a teacher if they have any concerns or worries. The headteacher has sent out letters to parents/ carers, and staff to identify those who may have a phobia of the therapy animal. 			

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where staff or pupils have fears or phobias about the therapy animal, appropriate arrangements have been made to ensure the separation of the therapy animal from the staff or pupil(s) concerned. 			

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