

**OLDCASTLE
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

INSPIRE - MOTIVATE - EDUCATE

Goreu Cam, Cam Cyntaf - The most important step is the first step



School Dog Policy

November 2025

School Dog Policy

Introduction

Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

This policy outlines measures put in place to allow the dog to be present on the school premises

School Policy

- The dog is owned by Oldcastle Primary School.
- Only the school dog is allowed on the premises as it is a working dog. This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Dogs on School Grounds Policy](#)
- All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Principal has given prior permission.
- The dog is a golden retriever chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children and is very sociable and friendly.
- Staff, parents and children are informed that a dog will be in school. Information will be shared on the school website and posters at main reception.
- The Health and Safety Manager has produced a risk assessment, and this will be reviewed annually.
- Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog.
- All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in school.
- If the dog is ill he will not be allowed into school.
- The dog will be with a member of staff when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.
- Children will not be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- Children will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog.
- Children should remain calm around the dog.
- Children should never go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping or eating.
- Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog. Everyone must wait until the dog is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
- If the dog is surrounded by a large number of children, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Children should not eat close to the dog.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog.
- All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival
- Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
- The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.

- The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure
- All concerns will be responded to by Headteacher
- The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.
- The curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog.
- This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside school.

Reasons to have a dog in school

Research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment can achieve the following:-

- 1) Improve academic achievement
- 2) Increase literacy skills
- 3) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Help prevent school refusing
- 8) Motivate children who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in school:

Behaviour: In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that pupils can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Behaviour problems occur in school and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students.

Education: Reading programmes with dogs are doing wonders for some pupils. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. "It might be less stressful for a child to read aloud to a dog than to a teacher or a peer. After all, a dog won't judge or correct you." Dogs are used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," pupils find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have pupils read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love.

Social Development: Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help older pupils build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. With a dog in school, pupils have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming.

As a reward: Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the pupils. Pupils who have performed well during the week or those

who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the school dogs. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities pupils will be allowed to undertake. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the pupils they are spending time with.

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Who is the legal owner of the dog and who pays for its costs?

The legal owner of the dog will be Oldcastle Primary School.

Q Is the dog from a reputable breeder?

Yes. The dog is a pedigree Labrador that is Kennel club registered.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

The dog will be kept in the office area. The office is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision. The dog will also have a space to spend time in classrooms and other designated areas where children can interact safely. The dog will also attend meetings with staff to support further socialisation, following consultation with staff beforehand.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog and a reputable dog behaviourist.

Q Who is responsible for training?

The School will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Appropriate professional training will be obtained.

Q How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all?

In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks outside of school. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

The dog will be walked regularly and given free time outside when children are in lessons. The dog will be carefully trained over a period of time and will have unlimited access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school and this will be no different for children and adults that are allergic to dogs. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. The breed of dog is known for minimal moulting, they

will be given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

Q My child is frightened of dogs; how will you manage this?

Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with the school dog. We hope to work closely with parents of children who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.