



The Coppice Primary School

Thrive Dog Policy

Written by	Becky Heptinstall (Senior SENDCO), Callum McGarry (SENCO) & Elaine Small (Thrive Coordinator)
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Introduction:

Contact and interaction with animals has many benefits for children. They can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills. In addition to these benefits, many children take simple, yet enormous pleasure from interaction with animals. At The Coppice, we have two school dogs, who supports us in bringing all these benefits to our children! Specifically, our dogs work within the Thrive department – a social and emotional development team who work closely with many pupils across our school.

Risks of bringing a dog into a school environment:

There are potential risks within our everyday lives, including the school environment. Life is not about avoiding risk, but about recognising and managing those risks. In the case of our school dogs, the risk has been carefully assessed to ensure the safety of all pupils, staff and visitors.

Thrive dog information and policy:

One of our Thrive dogs, Rufus, is owned by Mr Richard Mace, our school caretaker. Rufus lives nearby, along with the rest of his family. He is brought into school daily. Our other Thrive dog 'M' is owned by Mrs Small, our Thrive practitioner. 'M' is brought into school daily too by Mrs Small.

Rufus is a schnauzer, 'M' is a cross breed, Toy Poodle and Shih Tzu. They both have a mild temperament and moulting is of the lowest level.

- The Headteacher, Mr Hutt, and the Chair of Trustees, Kathryn Byng, both agree to Thrive dogs working in school.
- All staff are aware that the school has two Thrive dogs.
- This document is accessible to all parents, via the school website.
- The Thrive coordinator will review the policy and risk assessment annually.
- Any staff, visitors or pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs should notify the school for risk assessment review and should not go near the dogs.
- If the dogs are ill, they will not be allowed into school until fully recovered.
- The dogs will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk 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 dogs are present with pupils.
- Pupils should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dogs. Pupils should remain calm around the dogs. They should not make sudden movements and must never

stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for 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 or eating.
- Pupils must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dogs.
- If the dogs are surrounded by a large number of pupils, the dogs could become nervous and agitated. Therefore the adult in charge of the dogs must ensure that s/he monitors the situation.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or baring of teeth indicate that the dog is feeling angry or threatened. Flattened ears, tail lowered or between their legs, hiding behind their owner, whining or growling are signs that the dog is frightened or nervous. If the dogs display any of these warning signs they should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.
- Children should not feed, or eat close to the dogs.
- Children should always wash their hands after handling the dogs.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately, with the affected area appropriately disinfected.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Trustees has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

As with all policies in school the Headteacher has the overall responsibility for ensuring they are implemented. However, in practice, the responsibility for the implementation of this policy will be delegated to the Thrive Leader.

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance as and when required.

Appendix 1

Generic reasons to have a dog in school:

Bullying: All schools can be affected by bullying, with pupils anxious about attending school for fear of taunting and abuse. It is important that all schools recognise this potential problem and have robust strategies for dealing with bullying and supporting pupils. Within the Thrive programme, pupils who have been unkind to others are encouraged to identify and empathise with the dogs. This, in turn, can be used to support the learning of empathy for their peers.

Attendance: For children with poor attendance, the school dogs can act as an incentive to come to school. Children learn about the time and dedication needed to care for a pet and are then more motivated to attend school to help meet the needs of the pet. With adult supervision, children are able to get involved in many aspects of pet care, from grooming and exercise to giving affection and playing.

Behaviour: Problems can occur in school and interfere with learning. The Thrive team specifically works with pupils who have social and emotional difficulties (that can often manifest in challenging behaviour). Activities involving the Thrive dogs are carefully planned and used to support and motivate these pupils.

Reading: Reading to dogs can support the development of reading skills. Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to the dogs – after all, a dog will sit and listen, even if you make mistakes! Dogs can be used to encourage struggling readers to practise reading aloud.

Social Development: Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching pupils: social skills and responsibility; the impact of positive and negative reinforcement; responsibility and boundaries. Children who work with the Thrive dogs have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming and can help to promote their own self-care. Pupils can also develop sharing and cooperative skills when working with other pupils to ensure care of the dogs.

Support Dogs: The Thrive dogs can help pupils who have been bullied, abused, are going through upsetting/difficult times or are scared/phobia of dogs. The dogs will bring much joy and help to all the pupils they meet and are happy to provide plenty of affection to the pupils they are spending time with. Pupils who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

The wider community: Dogs can be a great way to help pupils to interact with members of the wider community. For example, Pupils may take the dog to visit other schools, hospitals or care homes and help others to benefit from this therapeutic support.

Appendix 2

Thrive Dog FAQs:

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

A: The legal owner of the dogs will be Mr Mace (Rufus) and Mrs Small (M) and they will bear the costs associated with owning the dog. The school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.

Q: Are the dogs from reputable breeders?

A: The dogs are from a home where both parents were seen and they have been chosen for their temperament.

Q: Will the dogs be a distraction?

A: The dogs will primarily be kept in the office area or Thrive room. These areas are separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure that the dogs are mainly coming into contact with children during planned Thrive or other pupil support sessions. The dogs will also have time to visit classrooms and walk outside. This will be closely supervised so that children can interact safely.

Q: Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A: Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources. See **Appendix 3** for the risk assessment.

Q: Who is responsible for training?

A: Mr Mace and Mrs Small are the legal owners of their own dogs and, as a result, will be responsible for training.

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

A: In the interest of health and hygiene, our school dogs will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds. 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 dogs' welfare be considered?

A: The dogs will be walked regularly and given free time outside. Pupils may accompany the dogs on these walks, under close adult supervision. The dogs are trained and have access to food and water. We will work carefully to ensure the dogs' welfare is always considered.

Q: How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A: No children will be required to touch the dogs. 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 breeds of both dogs are known for minimal moulting, they are given high quality food and are both regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

A: Access to the dogs is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. 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.

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment

Area/Activity Assessed	Animals visiting a school for educational purposes (Thrive Dogs)	Date	1-4-21
Assessment Completed By	Rebecca Heptinstall	Person(s) Consulted	Elaine Small, Richard Mace

Probability (Prob)	5= Very Likely, 4= Likely, 3= Quite Possible, 2= Possible, 1= Unlikely	Low	0-8	Low risk no action required
Severity (Sev)	5= Catastrophic, 4= Major, 3= Moderate, 2= Minor, 1= Insignificant	Medium	9-15	Medium risk ensure adequate controls are in use
		High	16-25	High risk stop operation and implement adequate control measures

This Risk Assessment and identified Control Measures has been established following consultation with the Head Teacher and other responsible staff. Staff acknowledgment as to their understanding of the control measures to be applied is included as the last page to this document

Hazard	Initial			Existing Control Measures	Residual			Additional Controls
	Sev	Prob	Risk		Sev	Prob	Risk	
1. Animal behaviour <i>Staff or pupils could be injured if an animal is brought into school that is not comfortable in that environment and likely to react badly, including bites, kicks and scratches.</i>	3	5	15	Checks are carried out prior to the visit to ensure that animals which are to be brought in are docile, friendly and gentle in the presence of children; Pupils are warned of the hazards of the animal before hand Animals are closely supervised by an adult pupils are closely supervised by an adult A First Aid kit is available and there is access to a First Aider at all times.	4	2	8	

					<p>Suitable travel arrangements are in place for the animal as are entry and exit to and from the school premises.</p> <p>Large animals such as horses, donkeys etc kept on a lead that is controlled by the owner</p>				
2.	<p>Disease, Illness & Allergic reaction</p> <p><i>Staff or pupils could suffer ill health if they come into contact with animal faeces or urine or animals that are infected</i></p>	4	3	12	<p>Any animal being brought into school will be from a reputable company or parent who should be able to prove that the animal is well cared for and has received the appropriate vaccinations.</p> <p>Parents are asked to identify any pupils known to have allergic reactions to animals and these pupils have very restricted access to animals that may trigger a response</p> <p>For larger animals appropriate toilet facilities are provided and all waste produced, whether accidental or routine, are handled and disposed of hygienically and contaminated items and surfaces properly washed and disinfected;</p> <p>Pupils and adults always wash their hands soon after handling any animal (or coming into contact with the soil, bedding, water, etc, in an animal's housing)</p> <p>Arrangements are made prior to the visit for pupils with a known allergy.</p> <p>Medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside once the animal and the afflicted person are kept apart</p>	4	2	8	
3.	<p>Animal phobias</p>	3	3	9	<p>Pupils are encouraged to take part however never to be forced.</p> <p>Where there are pupils with phobias, the animals are not banned from coming into school but every effort is made to segregate the</p>	3	2	6	

	<i>Staff or pupils could suffer distress themselves or distress the animal if they become scared or upset around the animal</i>				<p>animals from people with phobias. This may mean moving the pupil or staff member to another room until the animal visit is over.</p> <p>Arrangements are made prior to the visit for pupils with a known phobia.</p>				
4.	<p>School emergency evacuation (drill or real)</p> <p><i>Animal is distressed by evacuation and behaves in an unexpected way, e.g. becoming defensive or trying to escape. Animal could be left behind as not able to respond to emergency alarms.</i></p>	3	2	6	<p>The Thrive dogs are accompanied by an adult at all times. In the event of an emergency evacuation, immediately proceed to the nearest fire exit and then the adult walks as far as possible from other people evacuating whilst maintaining a safe distance from the building.</p> <p>Where possible, the Thrive dogs to be present for sounding of the alarms outside of school hours to observe their response. At present, Thrive dog Rufus is owned by the school caretaker but the Thrive Practitioner has responsibility for Rufus and her own Thrive dog 'M' throughout the day.</p> <p>If the Thrive dogs manage to escape from an adult during the evacuation, the adult must still evacuate immediately and notify staff outside of the dog's absence.</p> <p>Thrive dogs are signed in when onsite, so that the dog can be accounted for if there is an evacuation.</p>	3	1	3	

ACTION ARISING FROM RISK ASSESSMENT

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

Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our GDPR Data Protection Policy.

All data will be handled in accordance with the school's GDPR Data Protection Policy.

Name of policy	Content	Reason for policy	Who does it relate to?	Where is it stored?
Thrive Dog Policy	Guidelines to follow relating to the dog in Thrive	To provide clarity	Pupils & Staff	Secure Network drive

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements
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