



Holmes Chapel Primary School and Nursery

School Dog Risk Assessment

Includes:

Purpose and introduction

Planning for a dog

Day to Day Management

Interaction with pupils and staff

Pupils and staff interaction with the school dog

Hygiene/Health

Activities involving the school dog, including walking

Risk Assessment reviewed: September 2026

Date of next review: September 2027

Purpose
1. Dogs teach children responsibility. Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they may not get from school or other responsibilities. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop. 2. Dogs teach children patience. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time! 3. Dogs teach children compassion. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives. 4. Dogs teach children about socialisation. Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children can learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park (pun intended). 5. Dogs are fun. Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up even on your worst day. “Dogs are a powerfully cost-effective way of helping children feel more secure at school and a low-tech approach to reducing anxiety”. Sir Anthony Seldon (Vice Chancellor University of Buckingham).

Introduction
Holmes Chapel Primary School’s visiting School Dogs ‘Barra’ and ‘Skye’ live with our part-time Year 5 teacher, Mrs Waddington and her family. Barra is a well-behaved dog who has the right temperament for being a real asset to HCPS as he is calm. Skye started visiting the school from a very young puppy and has been very well socialised because of this. Both dogs are Labrador retrievers, a breed well-renowned for their gentle and obedient temperament. When they are young, both attended puppy classes and then working gundog classes where they excelled. Barra is now retired. Barra and Skye have public liability insurance, this means they can come into school. Both dogs regularly visit the vet for check-ups and booster vaccinations. They are regularly wormed and treated for fleas under the direction of a local veterinary team. In addition to the 5 key reasons for the dogs joining us outlined in the purpose, we also believe they are a great asset in supporting and helping to improve children’s mental health. The children around school are always so pleased to see them.
Planning for a Dog
How has school planned for this? - Research has been carried out to ensure that we have selected a suitable breed of dog for our school, pupils and staff - A full risk assessment and policy is written and will be available on the website - When the dog works in school, consent will be sought for each child to have contact

- All contact will be carefully planned and children will be supervised with the dog by a member of staff
- When not working, the dog will be based in the school offices yet most of the time they are in school, they are in Mrs Waddington's classroom.
- The dogs are introduced to our new reception class each year and will be introduced to our Nursery children during the Autumn term.

What about allergies?

- All areas of the school are vacuumed and surfaces are wiped down daily
- Movement around the school will be controlled
- The dogs are regularly groomed
- Any children working with the dogs will wash their hands.

Day to Day Management

The dog will:

- Not be allowed in school if unwell
- Be kept at heel or on a lead when moving between classrooms or when on a walk
- Be under the full control and supervision of an adult at all times
- Will be kept in a quiet office/classroom with a quiet area for resting
- Be fully trained to a bed
- Have had all injections

Our pupils will:

- Meet the dog in a group of no more than 3 children, following 'approach, ask, pet, goodbye'
- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog every time they meet them

Our pupils will not:

- Have sole responsibility for, or be left alone, with the dog
- Clear up dog foul (children must never be allowed to do this)

Area: Interaction with pupils and staff				
Reason: To ensure the school dogs interact appropriately at all times				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating - Trivial / low / medium / high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
School dog biting a child or adult	Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger. Barra and Skye live with Mrs Waddington who handles them all the time to ensure that they are used to interaction with children. Neither dog has ever shown any signs of aggression and are very well socialised pets who love attention.	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dogs without supervision Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way. Emergency Paediatric First Aiders onsite are trained in responding to dog bites.
Jumping up / scratching	If the school dogs become excited there is a danger that they could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	The temperament of both dogs and their training involves not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful. A letter is sent home asking parents to sign and return the form if they are unwilling for their child to have contact with the school dogs. Parents asked to explain their wishes to their child and ask them not to approach the dogs if they do not want any contact	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dogs without supervision. The school dogs are under control by an authorised adult

Running loose	If the school dogs were to run loose, they could hurt children/adults or damage property	The school dogs will be contained. When out on the school field, the dogs are under whistle control. Both dogs stop and sit to the stop whistle (one hard blast).	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dogs are appropriate and effective
Direct interaction with children/ staff	If the school dogs are allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/ staff could be scratched	No interaction is allowed without authorisation. Interaction will be cancelled if the school dogs shows signs of incorrect behaviour. Rewards/praise will be given to reinforce the desired behaviour	Medium	Ensure that the dogs are approached in the agreed manner
Destruction of materials	If allowed the school dogs may chew/destroy some school materials/resources	The school dogs will be contained at all times. The school dogs have their own toys to play with and normal school resources will be removed. They only ever plays with their own toys.	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dogs is appropriate and effective

Area: Pupils and staff interaction with the school dogs				
Reason: To ensure the school dogs are effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium/ high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with dogs	If a child/adult interacts with the school dogs in the incorrect or inconsistent way, this will affect the school dogs training and have a negative impact on future interaction	Agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dogs. There cannot be any interaction with the school dogs without authorisation	Medium	If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dogs, the adult with the dogs will have the interaction stopped

Use of rewards / treats	Hygiene must remain a priority for good health. Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats	Alcohol gel will be available to all adults and soap will be freely available in all washrooms. Treats will only be given to the school dogs with authorisation	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands / use alcohol gel after handling treats. Treats to be out of sight to ensure they can only be used after authorisation
Pupil/staff knowledge of interaction with a puppy / dog	If adults and children have limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dogs or themselves	The Dog's Trust resources are used with the children KS1 – Happy Dog Rules for KS1 KS2 - How to Behave Safely around Dogs EYFS – KS1 resources adapted to meet the needs of EYFS	Medium	There will be an agreed format for how to interact with the school dogs - Greeting a dog – 1. Stand still and stay quiet 2. Ask the adult if you can say hello to the dog 3. Let the dog sniff you 4. Stroke her on her back and side 5. Stop and count to three 6. If she is happy, she will stay. If not, she will be taken away or you walk away Approach, ask, pet, goodbye If the dog is over excited 1. Stand still and be quiet 2. Cross arms and put them over your neck and chest 3. Look away from the dog 4. The adult will take the dog away If the dog has something of the children's 1. Tell him 'Drop' firmly 2. Give him a dog toy instead SWAP Dogs do not like to be hugged or grabbed around the neck. They prefer to snuggle. Let him choose.

				When he is resting or sleeping on his bed – leave him alone to sleep. Keep calm around him and keep your arms and hands down. Only up to three children at a time to say hello and pat her.
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Area: Hygiene / Health				
Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dogs do not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dogs being in school				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium/ high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?
Worms / fleas	If the school dogs are not treated for worms, there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans	The school dogs are treated every month and every six months. The local vets ensure they are correctly treated for worms and fleas	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet
Faeces	If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	The school dogs will only be walked under supervision. No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision. The dog will be taken to be clean in an area well away from the children (in an area where children do not play) and faeces will always be cleared up immediately into a suitable poo	Low	If a child or adult finds faeces on the school field/playground they will report it to an adult immediately. It will then be cleared up straight away and disposed of appropriately.

		bag and disposed of in an appropriate bin.		
Allergies	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	Children will not be in contact with the school dogs if we have received a request from parents/guardians. If a child has an allergy the school dogs will not carry out tasks near the child	Medium	A child in Year 1 has a mild allergy to dogs. The dogs are not to go into that classroom and their visits to the KS1 corridor are kept to a minimum. The dogs are supervised if they are in the KS1 corridor during the school day.
Contact with food preparation areas	If the school dog enters a food preparation area, this could be unhygienic	The school dogs will be in a contained area or on a lead at all times around school. They will never enter the school kitchen	Low	
Cleaning hands after interacting with the school dog	If hands are not cleaned, children/adults could become unwell	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dogs	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands

Area: Activities involving the school dog, including walking				
Reason: To ensure that the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community				
Step 1 Identify the hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed & how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk Rating Trivial / low / medium/ high / stop	Step 4 Is anything further needed?

Walking the dog on and off the site	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed. Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk	No child will be allowed to walk the dog off site. When walking the dog on site, the child will be able to hold the lead. The child will be encouraged to tell him or her to walk at heel – the dog's head and shoulder are next to the child's legs. The child will be encourage to give their attention to the dog and use warm tones to praise him for walking gently at heel.	Medium	Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dogs are allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes
Playing fetch with the dog	The dogs becoming over boisterous and knocking over other children. The dogs snatching a ball out of a child's hand.	The dog, children who are playing with him and the adult supervising will use a quiet area of the school playground/field to play.	Low	The children playing with a dog will be supervised at all times. They will be shown how to engage with him. Careful consideration needs to be given if other children are outside when playing with Barra and Skye.
Visits to classroom	If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure, he or she may become over excited	The school dog will only visit classroom visits with an adult who is aware of the procedures stated. The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop	Medium	Careful consideration will be given to when the school dogs can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant
School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed, she or he may become aggressive or boisterous	The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and he and she will be under the control of a supervising adult	Low	Monitor the school dogs' reaction to school events. If the school events are too overwhelming, the school dogs might not attend school on that day

Fire	The dog, children and staff by the dog not being evacuated in a safe manner	Whichever member of staff is working with the dog or has them in their charge will ensure that the dogs are evacuated in a safe and calm manner. The lead must be on and the dog told to walk at heel. The member of staff will then evacuate the building via the quickest route along with any child/children in their care. They will make their way to the bottom playground where the children will join their class. The dogs will then be sat calmly on the bottom playground away from children and if needed taken onto the school field to be further away.	Low	The dogs should be part of at least one fire drill exercise so that any issues can be addressed.
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Signature: N. Waddington	Review date: September 2026 Next review date: September 2027
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