

Background

Dr Carr, the leadership team and the governors at Woodlands Primary School have considered having a school dog for some time. The rationale to have a School Dog is as follows:

- 1.To have a pet that the children could interact with, to be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.
- 2.To utilise the School Dog as a vehicle for developing empathy, care and consideration of the welfare needs of other living beings, both human and non-human.
- 3.To utilise the School Dog as an additional method for rewarding children for desired skills or good work, by earning appropriate interactions with the School Dog.
- 4.For the school to have a pet that is able to coexist within the school environment so that it's physical and emotional needs are considered and met.
- 5.That the School Dog will be properly cared for outside of the school day.

The School Dog will live with Dr Carr in her home in the first instance and will be introduced to the school environment and the children gradually. The school team will be responsible for upkeep of an appropriate health monitoring and care regime including vaccination and any other medically necessary health checks or treatments. A register of the dog's annual health check will be kept both by school and the vets' surgery.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but that for the majority it has the potential to provide multiple positive benefits. Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with the school dog will be invited to inform school of their wishes in writing.

This risk assessment will be reviewed annually and the impact of the school dog will be evaluated by the school leadership team.

PART A. ASSESSMENT DETAILS:			
Area/task/activity: Companion/Reading/Therapy Dog in School			
Location of activity: Woodlands Primary School			
School name: Address & Contact details:	Woodlands Primary, Eddisbury Road, CH66 2JT	Name of Person(s) undertaking Assessment:	Victoria Carr
		Signature(s):	
Headteacher (Name):	Victoria Carr	Date of Assessment:	September 2026
Signature:		Planned Review Date:	Annually
How communicated to staff:	via email and zoom	Date communicated to staff:	September 2026

PART B. Definitions:	
QADT <i>Qualified and accredited dog trainer</i>	A dog trainer who holds one or more OFQUAL recognised qualifications as a dog trainer/dog behaviourist and who has been independently assessed successfully, to earn membership to a professional dog organisation that is a signatory to the UK Behaviour and Training Charter.
DH <i>Designated handler</i>	An adult who has received sufficient training and coaching by the QADT , to understand canine body language, accurately assess the dog's emotional state including stress levels and non-aversive dog handling and training methods, as recognised in the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs, issued under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

PART C. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL MEASURES:

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
General information	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below	◆ Staff always refer to the CLEAPSS document GL211-An introduction to keeping and handling Therapy Dogs in schools http://science.cleapss.org.uk/Resource-Info/GL211-An-introduction-to-keeping-and-handling-animals-in-school.aspx
General information	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	All below	◆ Follow guidance issued by the DogsTrust on School Dogs to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and best practice.
Insurance			◆ Dogs to be provided with harnesses, leads, collars and identification tags. ◆ Dog to have an insurance that covers personal injuries to children/staff. ◆ School has public liability insurance that covers school dogs.

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Poor hygiene	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Infection, illness	♦ Cuts and abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms are to be covered before handling the dog; ♦ Pupils and adults must always wash their hands as soon as possible after handling the dog or after coming into contact with bedding, toys water bowl etc.; ♦ Reception & KS1 pupils hand washing is to be supervised to ensure that it is done properly; ♦ Reception & KS1 pupils are to be closely supervised to ensure they do not put their fingers in their mouths before hands have been washed; ♦ The dog will not be allowed to walk unrestricted around classrooms; ♦ Dog cage/bedding is appropriately cleaned as necessary; ♦ All incidents of dog urine, faeces, vomit will be dealt with using appropriately hygienic methods. ♦ The DH's will arrange to dispose of any uneaten dog food, if the dog is fed in school, before it begins to decompose or attracts pests such as flies and vermin.
Manual handling	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, Therapy Dog	Physical injury	♦ Pupils and visitors are requested/instructed not to lift/carry the dog as this could injure themselves or the dog. DHs will supervise any interaction with the dog. ♦ The dog will either be wearing appropriate equipment or appropriate equipment will be available for use, e.g. harness, lead, long line. All such equipment will be approved by, and used in accordance with training from, the QADT

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Slips, trips and falls	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors, Therapy Dog	Physical injury	◆ Good standards of housekeeping must be maintained at all times. The dog will be moved around the building on a suitable lead by staff which will be used in accordance with their training from the QADT to reduce the risk of anyone tripping over the dog. ◆ Pupils are supervised by a DH at all times when handling the dog. In the event of urine, faeces or vomit around school, this will be cleaned up immediately to both reduce the risk of slips, and falls and to reduce the risks from poor hygiene.
Diseases, parasites and allergies	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Illness, allergic reaction	◆ Parents and Carers are asked to identify any pupils known to have allergic reactions to dogs and these pupils will only be allowed interaction with the dog, as identified by a specific risk assessment and the implementation of any control measures; ◆ Any pupils who are not known to have allergies, but who may appear to develop one, are instructed to avoid all further contact with the dog and parents/carers informed; ◆ Medical assistance will be sought where an allergic reaction does not subside after a reasonable timeframe, the dog and the affected person will be kept apart; ◆ Dog food will be kept safe and secure to prevent unauthorised access and to keep away from pests.

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Infection/ill health	Therapy Dog Staff, Pupils and Visitors	Illness	◆ The dog will undertake an appropriate health monitoring and care regime including vaccination and any other medically necessary health checks or treatments. Information about these events are kept in the Dog Information folder held in the main school office. The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring all relevant documentation is up to date and available as required. ◆ To reduce the risk of infection/bacteria spread when the dog has had a comfort break, a responsible person/Headteacher will ensure that all faeces is safely disposed of using appropriate personal protective equipment and poop bags (tied and disposed of in an external bin. ◆ If the dog visits the outside area with children all incidents of urine, faeces or vomit must be cleaned up appropriately to prevent Staff, Pupils and Visitors coming into contact with harmful bacteria etc. ◆ If the dog is ill in school, it will be taken home/to the vets as necessary. ◆ If the dog is ill away from school it will kept out of school until it has returned to full health.
Companion dog eating food in school	Therapy Dog	Physical injury/upset stomach	◆ The dog must only eat its own food and treats and must not be fed by pupils or other adults without authority from and under the supervision of a DH. Only treats provided by the DH will be given to the dog. Under no circumstances will food originally intended/provided for a pupil or other adult, be given to the dog. ◆ To prevent accidental feeding, the dog will not enter the staff room or the main school dining hall whilst food is being prepared/served/consumed. All food will be kept out of the dog's reach e.g. in a store cupboard off the floor.

Companion Dog behaviour	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Bites, scratches	◆ Pupils are warned of the general hazards and risks posed by some dogs; ◆ Procedures are introduced and pupils are taught the correct handling of the dog. There are resources for this here: http://www.peteducationresources.co.uk/learning-resources/ ◆ All DH s will receive initial training and instruction from the QADT before acting in this capacity. ◆ Further instruction, information and advice will be sought from a QADT, as necessary, with timeliness appropriate to the concern or incident. ◆ The dog is actively supervised by a DH when in the presence of children; ◆ Pupils are closely supervised by the DH when in contact with the dog; ◆ A First Aid kit is available. Any dog scratches and bites must be carefully washed and a first aider contacted; ◆ In line with existing school procedures, all accidents/incidents will be reported and investigated; ◆ Socialisation and training are vitally important for every dog and should be ongoing throughout their life. Undertaking ethical and appropriate training methods to comply with the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs, issued under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 is important for appropriate human-dog relationships. Playing appropriately with the dog and giving them safe toys and chew toys helps prevent boredom. ◆ All pupils, staff and visitors are made aware of the rules of human behaviour when interacting with the dog; ◆ Headteacher/DH s will provide regular reminders to pupils and other staff members about the dog's needs and what might make them worried/nervous/excited or display undesired behaviour;
Companion Dog Welfare	Companion Dog	General wellbeing	◆ The dog will be exercised regularly by a DH or DH supervised pupil. ◆ Relevant gates will be kept closed during exercise periods, regular checks of any fencing for breaches will be added to the schedule of school building H&S/maintenance schedules to ensure the dog cannot escape.

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
			♦ The dog will be taken out regularly to allow for comfort needs.
Companion Dog Welfare	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers	Companion Dog death Pupil upset	♦ Dog to have access to clean water throughout the day; ♦ Provision is made for the dog's welfare out of school hours e.g. the dog lives with the Headteacher. ♦ The dog has regular veterinary health checks, if it is unwell, it will be removed from the school environment until it is feeling better or treated by a vet. ♦ The dog is given regular breaks away from interacting with pupils. ♦ The dog will only be allowed interaction with pupils at times and in contexts that are in the welfare interests of the dog.
Companion Dog Welfare	Companion Dog	General wellbeing	Environment – the dog will have their own draught free bed in a quiet place, secured safely when in a car, daily exercise according to breed, age and health, adequate toileting opportunities throughout the day, a specified separated dog exercise and toileting area a poop scoop and disinfection chemicals in case of accidents, dogs should be safe from any hazards or poisons inside and outside. Diet – An appropriate diet according to age, breed and lifestyle will be provided and 24 hour access to water will be available. Companionship – due to the social nature of the dog they will never be left alone for periods of time that are inappropriate for its mental or physical development or its current ability to be settled when isolated.

List of significant hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Who might be harmed?	Type of harm	Existing controls (Actions already taken to control the risk)
Cleanliness	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Companion Dog	General wellbeing	◆ Regular cleaning of all areas is carried out by Site Maintenance Officer/Cleaner/nominated staff; ◆ Workplace Inspections are undertaken on a regular basis by Headteacher/ Site Maintenance Officer/Cleaner/nominated staff; ◆ Headteacher/ DH ensures that the dog is cleaned/groomed on a regular basis prior to coming into school; ◆ The dog is kept in the Headteacher's office or an area supervised by a DH, when not interacting with staff/pupils. ◆ Blankets/bedding and crate 'safe place' are regularly monitored and inspected, and cleaned as required, all blankets and bedding are cleaned off site by the Headteacher; ◆ Windows can be opened to provide fresh circulating air;
Fire/Emergency Situation	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, visitors Companion Dog	Physical Injury/Fatality	◆ The dog is accompanied at all times and will be taken to the Fire Assembly Point by Headteacher/ DH as they evacuate themselves;
Noise	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers Companion Dog	Physical Injury	◆ Headteacher to instruct anyone coming into contact with the dog to keep noise levels low to avoid upsetting/startling the dog; ◆ Staff to monitor the behaviour of students and dog, including noise levels; ◆ The dog will undertake appropriate socialisation activities and be monitored, in accordance with the advice of the QADT in respect of noise likely to be encountered e.g. walking through the school playground during break times/lunch time;

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Security of Premises	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers Companion Dog	Physical Injury	◆ Controlled access, Safeguarding policy available; ◆ Staff to supervise pupils outside the building; ◆ The dog is either in a secure area under the supervision of an DH or is under the control of a DH using a harness & lead, as appropriate. ◆ Gates are kept locked - permission to access school grounds is sought from the Headteacher/nominated person;
Visiting other Schools/Premises	Pupils, teachers, adult helpers, Companion Dog	Physical injury	◆ Consent is received from the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team/other before arranging any visit to another premise; ◆ A DH to accompany and supervise the dog at all times, in addition to staff required to supervise pupils; ◆ If the dog needs to be transported, a suitable method is used e.g. strapped in with a safety device attached to seatbelt in the vehicle or is placed in their crate whilst travelling in the vehicle; ◆ The dog is given the opportunity to take water and to take a comfort break prior to and during travelling, as necessary in the circumstances; ◆ Confirm date and time of visit prior to the initial visit by the dog, discussions between both parties are recommended; ◆ Site is assessed to ensure suitability of a visit by the dog; ◆ Pupil visit risk assessments to be undertaken/reviewed as necessary; ◆ Parent/Pupil consent forms to be completed; ◆ Only a DH will handle the dog on other premises and will have the overriding decisions in respect of the dog at all times. ◆ Comply with all premises procedures; ◆ Signage to be displayed indicating "Dog on Premises" while the dog is on site;

This risk assessment will apply to a school dog providing the control measures described are in operation and there are no further local significant hazards.

I certify that the risk assessment above fully applies to a school dog in Woodlands Primary School.

Signed: *Victoria Carr*

Name: Victoria Carr

Risk Assessor: Victoria Carr