



Dog Safeguarding Policy

September 2025

The welfare of our animals is central to what we do. We are advocates for our animals; this allows them to be the best therapy dogs possible.

The following safeguarding policy has been created to ensure the dogs wellbeing and physical health are always considered when working with them.

This policy is specific to Mo (dog) working with Sara Richardson at St. Michael and All Angels Primary School. .

- Visits must be mutually beneficial for the dog and the organisation/individual they are visiting. This will be monitored closely.
- Sara Richardson will only use positive methods when training and supporting their dog.
- Sara Richardson has completed the PAWS dog behaviour/stress signal training allowing them to be aware of stress signals their dog may exhibit.
- Sara Richardson will withdraw their dog if they feel their dog Mo is stressed. A stressed dog will not be able to support the client effectively.
- Mo must be well exercised before they attend sessions/visits and have regular (non negotiable) breaks if they are onsite for a full 4 hour period. The definition of a break is non contact time away from all other humans and dogs. It can be quietly resting or going for a walk or sniff.
- Water must be available at all times.

- Once **Mo** is comfortable in their environment they may support the client off lead. This is to allow Mo free choice so they can opt out of an interaction if they need to. This supports their stress levels allowing them to regulate themselves. (prior permission required).
- Always be dog led. Asking them to sit, stay, come can be used but we actively encourage Sara Richardson to observe the dogs body language to see if they are enjoying the activity. Over working and or expecting too much from them can result in learnt helplessness behaviours or over aroused stressed behaviours.
- Visits to organisations/Therapy spaces will last a maximum of 4 hours. If the maximum contract is in place several non restrictive/ compulsory breaks and rest times must be included to allow the Mo dog to recuperate. 4 hours does not mean 4 hours contact time with clients.
- A safe, quiet rest area must be provided where the dog will not have to engage with humans. This area must be a safe space that no one other than the dogs caretakers have access to.
- If Mo under the weather, ill or injured they should not work. You know your dog best and should advocate for their needs.
- Sara Richardson will communicate, set boundaries and manage the expectations of the visit to ensure a mutually beneficial visit takes place. Taking into account how many people are engaging with Mo , the environment and the activities Mo is taking part in.
- **Sara Richardson** will seek guidance from our trainers and/or your own positive dog trainer if you have any concerns for your dog's health/behaviour. If we work as a team we can support our PAWS dogs positively.