



**CANSFIELD**

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

# School Dog Policy

<u>Approval Date</u>	24 <sup>th</sup> November 2022
<u>Policy Review Date</u>	September 2023
<u>Chair of Governors</u>	
<u>Headteacher</u>	

### **1. Why Do We Have a School Dog?**

Over the last decade an increasing body of research has emphasised the value that a school dog can bring. Therapy dogs, in particular, are now used in a range of settings that include healthcare, education and customer facing industries. Highlights of this research have suggested that having a school dog can bring a sense of community and togetherness, while a fully trained Therapy Dog can also offer particular advantages for young people and staff in supporting mental health, helping agitated individuals settle more quickly and also helping individuals overcome anxieties.

### **2. Who is the School Dog?**

The school dog is Maggie, who was born in July 2022. She is a cockerpoo from a breeder based on the Isle of Man who has a strong history of raising calm and settled dogs. In choosing the breeder, the parents have been met as have older siblings to ensure that they have a suitable temperament. This is Maggie:



### **3. Who owns the school dog?**

The school dog is owned and was purchased by Dr Baker and the ownership status of Maggie will not change. When not in school, Maggie resides at Dr Baker's house. All aspects of Maggie's care and upkeep are covered by Dr Baker. The school contributes to the cost of the specialist training for Maggie to become a Therapy Dog.

### **4. What training will Maggie complete?**

Maggie is currently completing the Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Training scheme. It will see her move from Puppy Foundation, to Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards towards the end of the academic year 2022-23. She is also spending a day every week at a 'doggy day care' provider to ensure that she is comfortable with other dogs. In the academic year 2023-24 it is anticipated that Maggie will begin the second stage of her Therapy Dog training, with a view to this being fully complete by the end of the 2023-24.

## 5. What links will Maggie have with school prior to her achieving full Therapy Dog status?

Until Summer 2023 Maggie will pay occasional visits to school to meet students and staff and become acclimatised to the building and the number of people in our community. During this time, she will be under continuous supervision from a member of staff. From Summer 2023 onwards, presuming that her training has progressed to a suitable level, it is anticipated that she will attend school more regularly, but will remain under the continuous supervision of a colleague.

## 6. What provision is in place to mitigate any risks associated with a dog on the school premises?

Based on our research into Maggie's parents and family members and observations of her behaviour to date, we are as confident as we can be that Maggie has the right temperament to be part of the school community. Maggie is completing a highly regarded and accredited programme of training. Until this is complete, she will have a very limited role at school that will be limited to supervised engagement with students while on a lead. However, Maggie is an animal and with this comes a degree of risk. A full assessment has been completed to mitigate any risk that might be associated with having Maggie on the school premises, which can be found in the appendix to this document.

## 7. Does this change the school's approach to other dogs on site?

No. In line with the Equality Act 2010 we ensure that where a person has a registered assistance dog that they are allowed entry to the school. Beyond that we would not expect to have any other animals on site unless they are part of an event that has been separately risk assessed.

## 8. Is insurance in place for the school dog while on site?

In addition to Public Liability Insurance, the school has also taken out specialist insurance for having a school dog on site.

## 9. What should I do if I have any concerns or questions about this policy?

Email or call into school and a suitable member of staff will talk through the policy and address any questions or concerns you might have.

## 10. Appendix: School Dog Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who is at risk	Risk rating	Control measures
Allergies	Staff and pupils	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Parents and pupils informed about School Dog and given opportunity to share particular concerns in this regard</li><li>- Interaction with the School Dog is completely voluntary and those who may have an allergy can choose not to engage in anyway</li></ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The chosen breed of the school dog, Cockapoo, is hypoallergenic</li> </ul>
Phobias	Staff and pupils	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents and pupils informed about School Dog and given opportunity to share particular concerns in this regard</li> <li>- Interaction with the School Dog is completely voluntary and those who may have an allergy can choose not to engage in anyway</li> <li>- In the event the school was made aware of a particularly severe phobia we would ensure that the school dog had not interaction with the individual at all. Likewise, we could explore ways in which we could support with helping the individual address the phobia as part of a structure programme</li> </ul>
Activities of dog while on site	Staff and pupils	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A member of staff remains with the school dog at all times</li> <li>- Staff and students are made aware of what appropriate behavior around a dog should involve and what it should not involve.</li> <li>- The member of staff monitors the school dog closely and in the event they become overwhelmed or tired, immediately return to a safe space.</li> <li>- While the school dog is fully trained in this regard, the member of staff always carries appropriate materials to clean up urine or faeces in the event an accident were to happen.</li> <li>- Students who misbehave around or upset the school dog are spoken with and temporarily removed from the vicinity of the dog</li> <li>- There is a clear time limit on activities, as recommended by trainers, so the school dog does not get tired.</li> </ul>
Damage caused to school materials, equipment and the school site	Site	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The school dog remains on a leash at all times.</li> <li>- The school dog is kept in a secured room with closed doors</li> <li>- Staff bring suitable toys if necessary</li> <li>- Areas and classrooms are cleared as much as possible before dogs visit</li> </ul>