David Ross Education Trust

Broadening Horizons

DRET Dog Policy

Information for Cedar Road Primary School

2026-27

Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All Trustees, Members, Governors, Trust Staff, Pupils and Visitors to an Academy.
Dissemination:	This policy will be made available on the Trust's Policy Centre.
Review Frequency:	This policy will be reviewed every three years unless guidance states more frequent.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog.

1.2. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

1.3. Dogs are not allowed on academy premises. Properly trained assistance and therapy dogs are permitted following consultation with the Principal.

1.4. If the academy decides to have a dog, the academy dog is the only dog permitted on the academy site at any time. This is to safeguard all staff, pupils and the dog, as the level of training and behaviour of other dogs is unknown.

2. Reasons to have a dog in an academy

2.1. **Behaviour** - Behaviour problems occur in schools and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to help promote positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than academies without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that children seemed more interested in school as a result of having a dog.

2.2. **Attendance** - Children can be encouraged into school using caring for a dog as an incentive.

2.3. **Social development -** Dogs in a school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students social skills and responsibility. Specifically, with a dog in the classroom, students have the opportunity to learn how to care for the animal. This includes walking and grooming. Researchers report that involving students in the daily care of school dogs is a positive experience, promoting their own daily care. The students also learn about responsibility, caring and sharing when helping each other take care of a dog at the academy.

2.4. **As a reward** - Dogs will be gentle and loving, but at the same time full of fun and enjoyment for the students. Those students who have performed incredibly well during the week or those who have made progress in a certain subject, or those who have achieved tasks set for them, may be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with the dog. Walking, grooming, playing and training are some of the responsibilities students will be allowed to undertake. It has been proved that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Support Dogs can work with students on a one to one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

2.5. **Reading** - Children who might be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are likely to be less scared to read to a dog. With the presence of a calm and well-trained dog, students find social support and peer interaction. Dogs are incredibly calm and happy to have students read to them or join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session. Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling, emerging readers. The dogs also provide confidence to children as they do not make fun of them when they read, but above all they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Research has proved that students who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in interpersonal skills among the students they mix with. Bullying can be a problem in all schools with students anxious about attending school for fear of taunting and abuse. But in some schools dogs are making a difference in the fight against bullies. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and

with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. It was found that violent behaviour in students who participated declined by 55%, and general aggression went down 62%

3. Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?

3.1. There is inevitably a risk in having a dog in any school, though there are a variety of accidents which can happen within the academy environment which far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed.

4. Dog policy

4.1. Where a school decides to have a therapy dog, the curriculum will support learning about dogs and how best to behave around our dog. This will include highlighting that not all dogs are well trained, and that caution must be used around unknown dogs outside the academy.

4.2. The dog (Dudley) will be owned by Patrica Allen. We have weekly Dudley visits through the Pets as Therapy Read 2 Dogs programme. The dog is chosen for its very mild temperament and non-moulting coat. The owner, Patrica Allen will be responsible for Dudley's regular visits to the vets, injections and inoculations.

4.3. The Chair of the Academy Scrutiny Committee (ASC), and the Principal have both agreed that the academy can have a dog.

4.4. Staff have been informed, through staff briefing, that the academy will have a dog. Parents have been informed by letter if their child is chosen to have a reading session with Dudley. At the start of each block of reading sessions there will be information shared with the children concerning the academy dog and parents will be given an opportunity to speak to the principal with regards to the academy dog. Senior leaders have produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually. The risk assessment is attached as **Appendix 1.**

4.5. In the event of an emergency evacuation the adult supporting Patricia Allen and Dudley, will accompany them to the Fire Evacuation point.

4.6. Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must remain at a manageable distance. Parents are able to inform the academy of any allergies on admission.

4.7. If the Dudley is unwell he will not be allowed into academy.

4.8. The dog will normally be kept on a lead and harness when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult.

4.9. There may be occasions when the dog is working off lead, but this will only happen in an enclosed space and under the control of an adult. Before removing the lead, all present will be consulted.

4.10. Students must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with students.

4.11. Students should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Students should remain calm around the dog. They should not make sudden movements and must never stare into a dog's eyes as this could be threatening for the dog. Students should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up. Students should never go near or disturb the dog when it is sleeping or eating. Students must not be allowed to play too roughly with the dog.

4.12. If the dog is surrounded by a large number of students, the dog could become nervous and agitated. Therefore, the adult in charge of the dog must ensure that they monitor the situation.

4.13. 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 dog is displaying any of these warning signs it should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

4.14. Children should not feed or eat close to the dog.

4.15. Children should always wash their hands after handling a dog. As an academy we will provide anti-bacterial gel.

4.16. Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by an adult.

5. Record keeping

5.2. The Trust will retain records evidencing compliance with this policy, as set out in the Trust's Data Retention Policy.

5.3. Records kept in connection with conflicts of interest and related party transactions must be compliant with the Trust's policy on General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR") Compliance.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. The dog's owner is responsible for ensuring that the Kennel Club's standards of practice are adhered to at all times https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1935/bark-and-read-standards-of-practice.pdf and that the required training is undertaken. Documentary evidence of this training must be provided to the Principal before the dog is allowed into the academy. If the training involves a trip to the academy as part of the program, this will be agreed by the Principal prior to the visit.

6.2. If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Principal as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Principal.

6.3. The Principal is responsible for implementing this policy.

6.4. Teachers, staff, children and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

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

7. Policy Status

7.1. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment

Appendix 2 - Academy Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Appendix 1

Risk Assessment

Introduction:

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. The team at Cedar Road has had a dog as an academy therapy pet for some time.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the academy to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the academy day.
- To have a pet that the children could interact with and also be of benefit to the children's social and emotional development.

It is accepted that interacting with animals is not appropriate for all children but for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent who does not want their child to interact with Dudley is invited to write to Mrs Mills and inform them of their wishes. There are no diseases associated with the dog as the owner will be responsible for consulting with the vet to ensure vaccinations are up to date and regular health checks and necessary treatment in a timely manner. A copy of Dudley's health records will be updated and kept in the academy. Dudley will also be insured by the owner.

The risk assessment below is a working document and will be checked annually by key staff and the governing body.

Hazard	Risk	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	Child knocked to the ground. Child scratched by dog. Child bitten by dog.	The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the academy premises. NB Dudley is usually based in the library, if this is unavailable he will be based in the quiet room or other suitable space. Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog. The dog will always be on a short lead or carried when it is not in the academy office while the children are in academy. Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children, and often to the whole academy through assemblies and PSHE sessions.	July 2027 or sooner if needed

		Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them. The dog will attend the vet's regularly to ensure it is in good health and that its claws are kept short.	
The dog causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	Parents have been asked to inform the academy of any known allergies before the introduction of the dog to the academy. A list of any children/ staff who should not interact with the dog will kept in the academy and noted on Bromcom. The children will have the opportunity to interact with the dog as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction. Children will be taught to wash their hands after active participation with the dog	July 2027 or sooner if needed NB Parents are informed every half term if their child is in Dudley's reading group and asked for their approval.
Children getting germs from the dog.	Children or staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs.	Should the dog defecate on the academy site a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe way. All immunisations are kept up to date in accordance with the European Pet Passport Scheme and a record will be kept of this. Flea and worming treatment is carried out at regular intervals. The dog will not be allowed in the academy dining hall at mealtimes; and never in the food preparation area.	July 2027 or sooner if needed

Appendix 2

Academy Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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

A The legal owner of the dog will be Patricia Allen, volunteer; they will bear the costs associated with owning the dog.

Q How was the dog chosen?

A Dudley is part of the Pets as Therapy programme. He has been specifically chosen for his temperament.

Q Will the dog be a distraction?

A The dog will be kept in the library area or Riley Room. This is separate from the classrooms / playground

area to ensure the dog only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Patrica Allen will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training. Patrica and Dudley are part of the Pets as Therapy Read 2 Dogs programme.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene Dudley will, if needed, be toileted on a short walk in the grounds. The dog's toilet area will be to the front of the school where pupil access is limited during the school day. Only staff members will clear this away.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A Dudley will be kept in the library area and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. Dudley is only in school for one morning a week. Dudley will be carefully trained and will have unlimited access to water. We will work carefully to ensure the dog's welfare is always considered.

Q How will this be managed where children have allergies?

A Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at the academy 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 dog is given high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

A Access to the dog 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.