



Inspire each other – Grow together

School Dog Risk Assessment

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 St Joseph's have been considering obtaining a dog as a school therapy pet for some time and the decision was made in June 2023 to go ahead with the project.

The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

- For the school to have a pet that was able to live as naturally as conditions in school would allow.
- For the animal to be properly cared for outside of the school 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 'Arthur' should inform Mrs Carr. There are no diseases associated with the puppy and all vaccinations and regular health checks will be up to date. Arthur will also be insured.

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

Key: 1 (Low risk) 5 (High risk)

Hazard	Risk	Risk 1 – 5	Controls in place	Review date
Dog getting over excited when interacting with children.	<p>Child knocked to the ground</p> <p>Child scratched by dog</p> <p>Child bitten by dog</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>All staff will have been introduced to the dog and expectations of having a school dog.</p> <p>The dog will always be in the care of a responsible adult and will never be allowed to roam freely around the school premises.</p> <p>Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.</p> <p>Pupils have been and will continue to be taught about the consequences of their actions. Education of this nature is continually given to children.</p> <p>Pupils will be taught what to do to prevent the dog from chasing them.</p> <p>The dog will undergo formal training from the age of 8 weeks with an experienced ability dog trainer.</p> <p>Arthur will attend the vets regularly to ensure he is in good health and that his claws are kept short.</p>	Risk Assessment will be reviewed after Arthur has completed one half-term in school.
The dog gets loose from his crate or from his lead.	<p>Child knocked to the ground</p> <p>Child scratched by dog</p> <p>Child bitten by dog</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>The dog will be familiar with his crate and will feel happy and safe during the school day.</p> <p>In the very unlikely event of Arthur getting loose from his crate, there will be two members of staff (Mrs Griffiths & Mrs Allen) who will be called upon.</p> <p>These staff have also volunteered to supervise the dogs for times when Mrs Carr may be unavailable.</p>	Risk Assessment will be reviewed after Arthur has completed one half-term in school.

Dog hair causing allergies.	Children or staff have allergic reactions	1	<p>Parents/Carers have been asked to inform the school of any known allergies. A list of any children who should not interact with the dogs will be kept by Mrs Carr and the class teachers will be informed.</p> <p>Pupils will have the opportunity to interact with the dogs as they wish and those with allergies will be able to opt out of interaction.</p> <p>Pupils will be told to wash their hands after active participation with the dogs. There will be hand sanitiser available for pupils to use after contact with the dogs.</p>	Risk Assessment will be reviewed after Arthur has completed one half-term in school.
Children getting germs from the dogs.	Children/ staff will contract diseases that can be carried by dogs	1	<p>Should the dogs defecate on the school site, a member of staff will clear this up immediately and dispose of it in a safe manner. The area will then be disinfected as required.</p> <p>All immunisations (including rabies vaccination) are kept up to date in accordance with guidance, and a register of this is kept by Mrs Carr and the vet practice which the dog is registered.</p> <p>Worming and flea treatment is carried out monthly.</p> <p>Arthur will not go in the school dining hall at meal times and he will never go into the school kitchen.</p> <p>Pupils will be told to wash their hands after active participation with the dogs. There will be hand sanitiser available for pupils to use after contact with the dogs.</p>	Risk Assessment will be reviewed after Arthur has completed one half-term in school.

Financial cost of the dog's upkeep.	School unable to afford ongoing cost of the dog's day to day upkeep or medical bills	1	Arthur is the responsibility of Mrs Carr and she would be financially responsible for his care. Mrs Carr is responsible for Arthur's care outside of school hours.	Risk Assessment will be reviewed after Arthur has completed one half-term in school.
A claim is made against the Academy regarding behaviour of the dog.	School not adequately covered financially	0	The Academy's public liability insurance cover covers the dog whilst on site and working with any pupils on site.	Risk Assessment will be reviewed after Arthur has completed one half-term in school.