



*Be watchful. Stand firm in your faith. Be strong. Be courageous. And let everything you do be done in love.  
1 Corinthians 16: 13-14*

## **A Policy on Dogs in School**

*Written January 2020*

### **Rationale:**

We at Pattishall CE Primary School pride ourselves on the school's nurturing ethos and mission to *build a happy, safe learning environment; where whoever you are, wherever you're from and whatever your starting point, we will nurture you, love you and work with you - so that you leave us knowing that you can change the world, as we grow together in God's love.* And as such, everything we do is done with love. Our education is not just about learning to read and write, it about developing the whole child.

- **Dogs teach children responsibility.** Having to remember to feed, provide water and show support for a dog can give children a sense of importance and satisfaction that they can't get from school or other chores. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop.
- **Dogs teach children patience.** Dogs do not always do as they are told first time!
- **Dogs teach children compassion.** Just like humans, dogs feel emotions and pain. They are prone to injuries and infirmities of age during their relatively short lives.
- **Dogs teach children about socialisation.** Like most of us, dogs are social animals who enjoy and need attention and affection. By learning how to interact with a dog, children learn how to better socialise with other children. If they can learn the social cues of a dog, then interacting with humans who can talk will be a walk in the park!
- **Dogs are fun.** Last, but certainly not least, dogs are a lot of fun. They greet you with a wagging tail every day and can cheer you up when no one else can.

Having animals in school lends itself to our mission, so following much research, including liaison with many other schools, we have decided to recruit a new member to the Pattishall family. But his/her full integration will be a journey, as documented in this policy.

If you would like to find out more about School Dogs and the benefits to children, the following links make interesting reading! [The Guardian Newspaper](#) [Another Layer of Happiness](#).

By googling 'our school dog' you will see how many dogs there are in schools around the country.

### **The desired attributes for our chosen school dog:**

- Calm
- Low risk of causing allergy
- Well socialised
- Well trained

Whilst the school dog has a role in school, his/her legal owner is (Mrs McLean), and as such (Mrs McLean) will incur all costs; including public liability insurance, veterinarian care, food and sundries. When (Mrs

***Pattishall Primary is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.***

McLean) leaves, the school dog will leave too. But this policy will serve as a template for any incumbents who also see the value in having animals in school.

### **School dog job description:**

- To provide comfort to children who need to regulate their emotions.
- To provide comfort to adults – improving wellbeing.
- To further create a family atmosphere: not all families can have a dog in their home.
- To listen to readers.
- To inspire imaginative writing.
- To be walked (with adult supervision and permission from parents/carers) by Year 6.
- To be trained by the children.
- To inspect the classes each morning.
- To be part of the Nurture Provision.

### **Progression from Puppy to School Dog:**

On the advice of a registered trainer, the school dog should come into school on several occasions as a puppy, in order to familiarise him/her with the rhythms of the days and the quantity of people (and therefore fuss) he/she will encounter.

- From (January 2020), the school dog will begin as an 'office dog', housed in his/her crate/run with access to clean water and his/her food.
- We will begin his/her School Dog training by ignoring him/her when coming in and out of the room and leaving him/her for short bursts.
- Older children will be invited to assist in his/her basic training e.g: 'on your bed' 'down' 'wait' etc. Under (Mrs McLean's) supervision.
- Younger children will be invited to say 'hello', practising the rules listed below.
- The school dog will complete her basic training course (Trainer: Kimberley Cox).
- Once the school dog has reliably mastered toileting and lead training, he/she will begin her morning rounds on the lead.
- The school dog will move on to advanced training, once basic training is complete.
- Once he/she has mastered walking off the lead, he/she will have the run of the offices; but will always be on a lead when walking through school.
- There will be a sign in the office to alert everyone that the school dog is in the building.
- On turning one, he/she will be integrated into the Nurture suite and visit classes for Golden Time.
- He/she will always receive a walk at lunchtime and in the evening.

### **Rules to be established by all stakeholders:**

All children at school are taught how to approach dogs and how to respond to unwanted behaviour. They are taught that they must ask if they wish to pet the school dog and know how he/she is trained to greet people. This is an important life-lesson for the children.

1. Ignore - speak to me first
2. Ask permission to approach
3. Four paws on the floor (everyone needs to be consistent with this).
4. Take turns (the children – not the dog...)
5. No barking (the dog – not the children...)

6. Let sleeping dogs lie (we recognise that a school can be a tiring experience for a dog, especially with their heightened sense of smell!)

### Appendix 1 - Risk assessment:

Reason: To ensure the school dog interacts appropriately at all times				
Hazard	Who may be affected?	Control measures in place.	Risk after control measures.	Further action?
Biting	Child or adult could be hurt if the school dog bites	The school dog is being trained not to bite. When the dog is approached in the correct way there is very limited danger. <i>Dotty lives with 2 children who handle her all the time to ensure that she is used to it</i>	Low	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision Ensure that all interaction with the school dog is completed in the agreed way
Jumping up / scratching	If the school dog becomes excited there is a danger that she could jump up and knock a child over or leave a scratch mark	<i>The temperament of Dotty and her training programme has involved not jumping up with praise/rewards being given when successful</i> No interaction will be made with any children unless the school has written permission from parents/carers	Medium	Ensure that children and adults do not interact with the school dog without supervision The school dog will be enclosed in a play pen when people come to interact with her or under lead control by an authorised adult
Running loose	If the school dog was to run loose, she could hurt children/adults or damage property	The school dog will be contained at all times either in an office (with a clear sign on the door), in a play pen or on a lead	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective
Interacting with children / adults	If the school dog is allowed to interact when not in the correct frame of mind children/ staff could be scratched	No interaction is allowed without authorisation Interaction will be cancelled if the school dog shows signs of incorrect behaviour Rewards/praise will be given to reinforce the desired behaviour	Medium	Ensure that the school dog is approached in the agreed manner
Destruction of property	If allowed the school dog may chew/destroy some school materials/resource	The school dog will be contained at all times The school dog will have his own toys to play with and normal school resources will be removed	Low	Monitor that the equipment used to contain the school dog is appropriate and effective

Reason: To ensure the school dog is effectively supported to interact appropriately at all times				
Incorrect / inconsistent interaction with the school dog.	If a child/adult interact with the school dog in the incorrect or inconsistent way this will affect the school dogs training and have a negative impact on future interaction	Agreed guidelines that must be followed at all times when interacting with the school dog There cannot be any interaction with the school dog without authorisation	Medium	If there are any inconsistencies in approach with the school dog the adult/child will have the interaction stopped
Use of rewards / treats	Children and adults could be harmed if the school dog is over excited when receiving a reward/treat Children/adult must clean their hands after handling treats	Alcohol gel will be available to all adults. Cleansing foam is available outside the toilets – children will be directed to these. Treats will only be given to the school dog with authorisation	Low	Reminders to the children to wash hands / use alcohol gel after handling treats Treats to be locked away to ensure they can only be used after authorisation
Pupil / adult knowledge of	If adults and children have	The Dog's Trust will	Medium	There will be an agreed

interaction with the school dog	limited knowledge of how to interact correctly this could result in harm to the school dog or themselves	deliver an assembly to the whole school on approaching dogs (Mrs McLean) will share the rules regularly		format for how to interact with the school dog
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Reason: To ensure that pupils, staff and the school dog to not have an increased risk of illness as a result of the school dog being in school				
Worms / fleas	If the school dog is not treated for worms there is a danger that germs can be transferred to humans	The school dog will be treated regularly at a local vets to ensure she is correctly treated for worms and fleas	Low	Monitor that vet visits happen promptly and take actions suggested by the vet
Faeces / urine	If a child/adult come into contact with the school dog's faeces some germs could be transferred	The school dog will only be walked under supervision <i>Dotty is fed AVA dried food, therefore her poo is dry and very small.</i> Any accidents are to be cleaned using infection control powder which neutralises bacteria and odour. No child will be asked to pick up the dog's faeces, this will always be undertaken by the adult in supervision	Low – there is a far greater risk of a child causing bodily fluids (sneezing, coughing, licking, dribbling, vomiting, urinating or a diarrhoea accident) on the carpet, or for someone to walk dog / fox mess off the street into the classroom on their shoes, as we well know from much experience. We are fully equipped with specialist cleaning equipment and procedures for such mess: <i>but Dotty is now trained, so the risk for her is now negligible.</i>	If a child finds faeces on the school field/playground they will report it to an adult
Allergies	If a child is allergic to dogs they could become unwell	Children can only be in contact with the school dog once the school has written permission from parents/carers If a child has an allergy the school dog will not carry out tasks near the child	Medium	
Access to the dog's food / treats	If a child has access to the school dog's treats/food and eats some they could become unwell	All of the school dogs resources will be kept in the office No child will be allowed to enter the school dog's area without authorisation	Low	Remind children not to enter area
Contact with food prep areas	If the school dog enters a food preparation area this could be unhygienic	The school dog will be in a contained area or on a lead at all times around school She will never enter the school kitchen	Low	
Hand washing	If hands are not cleaned children/adults could become unwell	All adults and children will clean their hands after interaction with the school dog	Low	Remind children and adults to clean their hands

Reason: To ensure the school dog has a meaningful and safe impact on the school community				
Walking	Children could be harmed during a walk offsite if they are not focussed Children might be harmed if they do not interact correctly when the school dog is on a walk	If the school dog is taken off site normal risk assessed procedure will take place No children will take the lead when the school dog goes for a walk unless authorised to do so by accompanying adult No children will be allowed to interact with the school dog when he is	Medium	Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount of time the school dog is allowed to walk around school during play/lunchtimes

		on a walk unless permission is given		
Classrooms	If the school dog visits a class and the children do not follow the correct procedure she may become over excited	The school dog will initially only make classroom visits with (Mrs McLean) The children in classrooms will follow the agreed procedure or interaction will stop	Medium	Careful consideration will be given to when the school dog can visit classrooms and be under the control of the class teacher or teaching assistant
Feeding	If a child tries to interact when the school dog is eating he may respond aggressively	No child will be allowed in the school dog's contained area when she is eating Children may prepare the food for the school dog (washing their hands afterwards) All feeding will be supervised	low	Reminders to the children feeding the school dog to not interact when she is eating
School events	If the school dog is overwhelmed she may become aggressive, noisy or boisterous	The school dog will only attend school events if they are appropriate and she will be under the control of a supervising adult	low	Monitor the school dog's reaction to school events If the school events are too overwhelming the school dog might not attend school on that day
Other dogs	If the school dog encounters another dog she may become boisterous	No other dogs will be allowed on the school premises, other than PAT dog Lady and Dolly At no time will the school dog be walked by a child and as a result if another dog is seen this will be dealt with by the supervising adult	low	Monitor the school's dog's approach when transferring schools and react appropriately

### Other dogs in school:

As a rule, **dogs are NOT ALLOWED on the school site**. You may NOT bring your family pet on to the playground for any reason.

There are a few exceptions to this rule **by prior arrangement with the Head Teacher**.

Any visiting dogs must show their vaccination passport and insurance documents, must always be on a lead and have a good reason to be there – for example a new puppy being carried in; or a dog in training for therapeutic, assistance or police work.

The level of thought that has gone into the training and establishing Dotty as a school dog can be seen in this document. We cannot be overrun with the risks that bringing family pets on to the playground brings.

Dotty is the designated school dog.

Lady is our designated PAT Reading dog, who visits for two hours weekly.

No other dogs are allowed on site without special permission.

### FAQs

#### Will the dog be a distraction?

The school dog is based in the offices. The office is separate from the classrooms/playground to ensure he/she only meets children who are happy to have contact, under strict supervision. His/her visits to classrooms will be supervised and on the lead. The children will soon get used to her being part of the family, as they do with their pets at home.

**How will you ensure the dog remains an asset to the school?**

A well-behaved dog is a joy to have around a school and brings a sense of calmness and community. This is what a school dog provides. The school dog should be brought into school from a very early age so that he/she can be moulded and trained. With professional guidance from an experienced dog trainer, (Mrs McLean) will train the school dog to a high level. The dog has been assessed as to having the right temperament.

**Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

Yes, it forms part of this policy document for ease of reference. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice, including from other schools that successfully have a school dog.

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

In the interest of health and hygiene the school dog is toileted off site and is not allowed outside onto the school grounds off the lead.

**Will Dotty be allowed on the school playground?**

Only on the lead, once the rules have been established.

**How is the dog's welfare considered?**

The school dog is walked at least once during the school day. He/she has a bed and free access to water in the Head's office. Children can only approach her after asking permission and staff know what signs to look for if she is uncomfortable or stressed. If the dog is unwell he/she will not come into school.

**How will this be managed where children have allergies?**

One of the advantages of (short-haired miniature-dachshunds) is that they hardly shed; this means they are much less likely to cause an allergic reaction in humans. However, children will not need to touch him/her, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at school 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, for example, keeping designated spaces dog-free.

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

Access to the school dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with him/her. 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. *We have had exceptional success with this, both with Dotty and Lady the Lurcher – our PAT dog.*

## **Appendix 2 - Letter to parents / carers:**

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am delighted to inform you that, following an induction period, we have appointed a new member to the Pattishall CE Primary team!

Dotty is a 6-month-old, short-haired, miniature, dapple dachshund. And she is GORGEOUS!

She lives in a family home with Mr McLean, me and our two daughters: Elspeth (age 4) and Bethan (age 11). Until 14/01/2020 she also lived with our 12-year-old collie-cross, Otis.

I have been a dog-owner for 28 years and Mr McLean has had dogs all his life. We are committed to the welfare and training of Dotty. She is now toilet trained and has several basic commands under her belt.

She has an excellent temperament, and due to extensive socialisation, is used to interactions with people and other animals, including children of all ages. When she meets someone, her default is to roll over for her tummy to be tickled!

Her purpose is to support Lady in listening to readers and generally in the promotion of wellbeing, as part of our overarching ethos. Her full job description is in our policy.

Dotty will be based in my office and there will be rules in place around interaction with her, to protect the welfare of both her and the children. The children will be taught how to approach her and support me with her training. She will not be off the lead and free around school during the school day.

No child will have to interact with either Lady or Dotty if they are nervous or have an allergy. We are seeking your permission today for your child to be allowed access to Dotty. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you do not give your permission.

A lot of research and careful planning has gone into appointing Dotty as part of the team. I hope that she will bring a lot of joy along the way!

If you would like to know more, or have any questions, please do read our extensive policy and risk assessment, including FAQs, attached with this communication.

With my kindest regards,

Mrs Emma McLean  
Head Teacher

### **Appendix 3 –**

#### **Meet Dorothy McLean (aka Dotty!):**

Dorothy's birthday is 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019. She is a KC registered smooth-coated, miniature-dachshund and was purchased by Mrs McLean 20/09/2019 from a private breeder. Dotty's mother, father and brother from the same litter were seen in the family home. Both the McLeans and the breeder attended the 8-week vet-check, microchipping and first vaccinations appointment.

She lives in the family home with Mr and Mrs McLean and their two daughters: Elspeth (age 4) and Bethan (age 11). Until 14/01/2020 she also lived with the family's 12-year-old collie-cross, Otis.

Mrs McLean has been a dog-owner for 28 years and Mr McLean all his life. They are committed to the welfare and training of Dotty.

She has an excellent temperament, and due to extensive socialisation, is used to interactions with people and other animals, including children of all ages. When she meets someone, her default is to roll over for her tummy to be tickled! She has no fear of crowds.

Whilst Dotty has a role in school, her legal owner is Mrs McLean, and as such Mrs McLean will incur all costs; including public liability insurance, veterinarian care, food and sundries (such as Dotty's extensive wardrobe). When Mrs McLean leaves, Dotty will leave too.



