

Harmony Dog Policy

Students can benefit educationally and emotionally when having a dog onsite, increasing their understanding of responsibility and develop their empathy and nurturing skills through contact with the dog. In addition to these benefits, students take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a Harmony environment?

Yes, there is, however, the benefits of having dogs onsite far exceed the number of injuries or incidents caused by a dog. Therefore, it is just another risk that needs to be managed. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out and this is included in this document.

Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the Harmony site at any time unless specifically authorised by a senior member of Harmony staff.

Harmony Policy

- The senior staff have the right to refuse entry to the dog.
- Staff, parents and students have been informed that a dog will be in Harmony. VB has produced a risk assessment and this will be reviewed regularly unless an incident occurs.
- Staff, visitors and students known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. All visitors will be informed on arrival that there is a dog in Harmony.
- If the dog is ill he will not be allowed into Harmony.
- 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 that is sleeping or eating.
- Students must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
- Dogs express their feelings through their body language. Growling or bearing 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 he should be immediately removed from that particular situation or environment.

- Students should not eat close to the dog.
- Students should be careful to stroke any dog on his body, chest, back and not by his face or top of head.
- Students should always wash their hands or use sanitising gel after handling a dog.
- Any dog foul should be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately by the supervising adult.
- All visitors will be informed about the dogs and related protocols on arrival.

Actions

If someone reports having an issue with a dog, this information must be passed to a senior member of staff as soon as possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior staff are responsible for implementing this policy.

Teachers, staff, pupils, parents and visitors are required to abide by this policy.

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 Harmony.

Appendix 1. Reasons to have a dog in Harmony

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the Harmony environment can achieve the following: -

- 1) Improve academic achievement
- 2) Increase literacy skills

- 3) Calming behaviours
- 4) Increase social skills and self-esteem
- 5) Increase confidence
- 6) Teach responsibility and respect to all life
- 7) Help prevent truancy
- 8) Motivate students who are often less attentive

The following information has been taken from a range of sources to provide further detail about the benefits of having a dog in Harmony:

Behaviour:

In some schools, dogs are making a difference in the behaviour of pupils. Researchers report that students can identify with animals, and with empathy for the dog, can better understand how classmates may feel. Behaviour problems occur in Harmony and these can interfere with learning. Some schools are using dogs to improve behaviour problems by promoting positive behaviour in students. In a controlled study, students were found to have fewer disciplinary referrals in schools with a dog than Schools without. Students' behaviour improved toward teachers, and students also showed more confidence and responsibility. Additionally, parents reported that students seemed more interested in Harmony as a result of having a dog at Harmony.

Attendance:

Students may feel a sense of responsibility towards a dog in providing attention and love it has been seen in cases studies that attendance can improve in some students when there are dogs in a Harmony.

Education:

Students do not perceive that dogs judge in the same way as a teacher or a peer and this can encourage students to try activities that they would not normally be prepared to. With the presence of a "calm and well-trained dog," students find social support and peer interaction.

Dogs are incredibly calm and happy and give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling learners. The dogs also provide confidence to students as they do not make fun of them when they get things wrong. *[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 intra and interpersonal skills among the students they mix with.]*

Social Development:

Dogs in Harmony offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching students' social skills and responsibility. Specifically, Harmonys are using dogs to help older students build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries. Older students use dogsto help communicate, teach kindness, and empower students.

With a dog in Harmony, 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 classroom 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 Harmony.

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, will be rewarded with spending time during lunch or break to interact with these dogs. 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 students' social skills and self-esteem.

Support Dogs can work with students on a one-one basis and will especially help those students who have been bullied, abused, going through upsetting/difficult times or even scared/phobic of dogs. The dog will bring much joy and help to all the students they meet and are happy to provide plenty of hugs to the students they are spending time with. Students who struggle with social interaction can find a reassuring friend in a dog.

Appendix 2 Harmony Dog Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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

A Harmony will not be the legal owner of any dog nor will it incur any costs associated with any dog on site other than specific pet insurance taking out before they come into Harmony.

Q Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

A Yes, Harmony sought advice from many sources, including other APS that successfully have a Harmony dog and a reputable dog behaviourist.

Q Who is responsible for training?

A Where appropriate the owner will be responsible for ensuring the dog is adequately trained.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene, our Harmony dogs will be toileted when taken out for short walks in the grounds or in the garden where staff will pick up as soon as possible. Only staff members will clear this away appropriately leaving no trace on the ground, cleaning the area with disinfectant if needed.

Q How will the dog's welfare be considered?

A The dog will be walked regularly. The dog 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 students have allergies?

A Students will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. We already manage a number of allergies at Harmony and this will be no different for students 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.

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

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and students do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. We hope to work closely with parents of students who are fearful of dogs to alleviate their fear and to teach them how to manage this.

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment

HAZARDS	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Further Action	Action by who	Action when	Review
Allergies	Staff, students and visitors may suffer an allergic reaction to the dog	- informing parents that there will be a Harmony dog in residence and request information on allergies - Reception to advise visitors that a Harmony dog and request they advise of any allergies if they are likely to have contact with the dog - Harmony is cleaned on a daily basis	no	Hand washing facilities available	As required	
Asthma	Staff, students and visitors could have an allergic reaction to the dog	student paperwork shows	no		As required	
Biting, jumping up, scratching	Staff, students or visitors could be hurt if dog gets over excited or distressed	Students will not be left alone with the dog	no			
Dog being tired	Staff, students or visitors could be hurt or upset if the dog	- Students will not be left alone with the dog - Dog will be given downtime at regular intervals	No	owners of dog	As required	

	becomes stressed					
Dog escapes	Staff, students, visitors, dog	1. Dog will remain on leash at all times offsite	No			
Fear/phobia		1. Conversation informing parents that a dog will be in residence.	No	Senior staff		
Financial costs	Harmony, dogowner	1. Legal owners of the dog are responsible for his care and day to day costs 2. Outside hours the dog lives with the owner	No	Owner/Harmony		
Fire Alarm		1. Dog will be managed by owner	No	Owner		

Hand washing	Staff, students, visitors could become ill through contact with the dog or it's waste	1. Sanitary handwash available in medical/welfare room 2. All faeces are safely disposed of	No	Owners and Harmony staff		
Hygiene	Staff, students, visitors could become ill through contact with the dog or it's waste or other transferable illnesses	1. Adult disposing of faeces will wash hands/use sanitising gel 2. Dog's bedding should be washed regularly 3. If ill the dog will not come to Harmony	No			
Illness	Staff, students, visitors could become ill through contact with the dog or it's waste or other transferable illnesses	1. Dog will receive regular worming and flea treatments 2. If unwell the dog will not attend Harmony and will not return until he is fit to do so	No			
New starters	Staff, students	1. All new staff and students will be advised about the Harmony dog.	no	Senior staff		
Noise/ barking	Students who cannot cope with noise	1. Dog will be introduced to a variety of noises to mitigate reaction 2. Student could be upset by	No	1. The dog is not a barking dog and training has been undertaken to ensure barking is not an issue		

		noise and lash out at the dog				
Toileting	Staff, students, visitors walking in dog faeces	1. Dog has been toilet trained 2. Dog will be toileted before coming into Harmony 3. All dog waste will be collected and disposed of by a responsible adult using a waste bag and disposed of in general waste bin 4. Adult will wash hands with soap immediately after dealing with faeces		1. Dog taken to designated area regularly 2. Designated area clearly signposted		
Working environment	Some areas of Harmony are not appropriate for a dog Eg kitchen	1. Dog will not be allowed access to any controlled areas				

How to Be Safe and Kind Around Our Dog

The dog is here to help us feel calm, happy and safe.

To make sure everyone — children, staff and the dog — enjoys being together, here are our rules:

1. Ask first

Always check with the adult looking after the dog before you stroke or play with it.

2. Gentle hands

Stroke the dog gently on its back or shoulder. Don't pull ears, tail, or fur.

3. Calm voices

Speak quietly near the dog. Loud shouting or sudden movements can make the dog feel worried.

4. No food sharing

Don't give the dog food or treats unless an adult says it's okay. Some foods are not safe for dogs.

5. Respect space

If the dog is in its bed, eating, or resting, leave it alone. Everyone needs quiet time.

6. Stay with an adult

Always be with an adult when you are with the dog. Never take the dog out on your own.

7. Wash hands

After stroking the dog, wash your hands with soap and water.

8. Say how you feel

If you are worried, scared, or don't want to be near the dog, tell an adult. It's always okay to say "no thank you."

Remember

The dog is here to help us feel calm and cared for.

Being kind and respectful keeps the dog happy and keeps us all safe.

Adults will always be nearby to help.



Date written: Sept 2021 (VB)

Signed:

Date: 16th September 2025

S. Baker Victoria Ball