

Dogs in school risk assessment

Important note: This risk assessment identifies typical examples and controls to illustrate how schools may manage certain risks. These can be used as a guide to think about hazards in your school and the steps needed to manage those risks. In order to be compliant with the law and protect your community, you must consider the specific hazards and controls your school needs and **must not** use this template without assessing your school's risks.

[Sir James Knott Nursery School](#)

Assessment conducted by: John Croft	Job title: Headteacher/ SENDCo	Covered by this assessment: Yes
Date of assessment: 27.02.26	Review interval: Annually	Date of next review: March 2027

Risk rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	Major: Causes major physical injury, harm or ill health.	High (H)	H	Medium (M)
	Severe: Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	H	M	Low (L)
	Minor: Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	M	L	L

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Policy and procedures	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher ensures that all staff, and where appropriate, pupils and their parents, are aware of and adhere to the following school policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health and Safety Policy - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy - First Aid Policy - Animals in School Policy - Behavioural Policy - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy - Fire Safety Policy • The SBM ensures that the school's insurance covers dogs being on the premises. • The headteacher ensures that the dog is cared for in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. 	Y	Headteacher	27.02.26	M

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Dog's welfare		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog has access to fresh, clean water at all times. The dog has access to a cool and quiet place where it can be left undisturbed. Pupils leave the dog alone when instructed by their teachers. The dog's welfare is considered as a priority when planning the activities that it will participate in. If an activity risks the dog's welfare, the activity is amended. Noise is kept to a minimum during the activities that the dog is participating in, e.g. if the dog is participating in a school performance, the audience is instructed not to clap until the dog has left the stage. The headteacher ensures that the dog has adequate and frequent toilet breaks and any waste is appropriately disposed of. 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	L

Area for concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog is not over-stimulated, as this can lead to potentially dangerous behaviour. • The dog is not made to participate in potentially distressing activities. • The school complies with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. • The dog is familiar with the members of staff and pupils who are participating in the activity with the dog. • Flash photography is not used when the dog is present. • The dog is given opportunities to exercise and move around independently in a secure area, e.g. the headteacher's office. • The headteacher ensures that the dog is fit to participate in specific activities and is not brought into the school if it is unwell. 				

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the dog becomes unwell while at school, the dog's owner takes it home. • Before any activity is carried out, the headteacher ensures everyone participating in the activity understands how to treat and behave around the dog, e.g. not using flash photography, not shouting or clapping and not running around. • Activities do not cause harm, discomfort or stress to the dog. 				
Site Security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two adults are appointed to be responsible for the dog. • The site manager ensures that the site is secure and that precautions are in place to limit the chance of the dog getting loose. • The dog is kept on a lead when it is not in its housing or in a secure location, e.g. in the headteacher's office. 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	M

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The headteacher ensures that all appropriate doors are closed when the dog is participating in an activity, e.g. in a school hall. The site manager ensures that the premises is secure, e.g. fences are not broken. 				
Evacuation procedures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where necessary, the school's Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy is reviewed to ensure it includes provisions for the dog. The person handling the dog during specified activities is responsible for the dog's safety during an invacuation, lockdown or evacuation. Where the handler is a pupil, e.g. if the dog is participating in a school performance, another appointed member of staff is responsible for the dog's safety. 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	L
Disobedience and dangerous behaviour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The handler is equipped and trained to react to and control any dangerous behaviour. 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	L

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the person handling the dog for a specific activity is a pupil, e.g. in a school performance, they are given training to handle the dog, and the pupil and dog are given an opportunity to bond. • Pupils are not expected to handle the dog unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their parents have provided permission. - They feel safe and confident in doing so. - They have received training to handle the dog. • The dog's obedience is ensured as far as reasonably possible; however, staff, pupils, visitors and parents understand that animals can be unpredictable. • The headteacher ensures that a plan is in place for if the dog is unable to carry out an activity, e.g. if the dog is stressed, and participating in the activity would cause further distress or could lead to dangerous behaviour. 				

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the dog is not behaving appropriately during an activity, e.g. it is barking excessively or running away, the headteacher removes the dog and a contingency plan is implemented. For example, if the dog is participating in a school performance, but is nervous about going onto the stage, the headteacher uses a toy dog instead. 				
Parent notification/permission		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The headteacher informs parents that the dog will be present on the school's premises. Parents are informed of the activities that the dog will be participating in, e.g. the dog will be performing in a school production or used as a therapy dog. The headteacher obtains consent from parents for pupils to be in proximity with, or to handle, the dog. Parents are informed if they are likely to come into contact with the dog, e.g. at a school performance. 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	L

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Dog's health		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog's designated handler is in charge of feeding and caring for the dog while on the school premises. The handler is responsible for permitting people to touch the dog. The dog is permitted to go in the headteacher's office, which is kept clean and secure for the wellbeing of the animal, pupils, staff and visitors. The dog is given no opportunity to come into contact with wild rodents on or off the school premises. The dog is fully inoculated. The dog goes to the vet for a termly check-up, to identify whether the dog has any transmittable diseases. On hot days, the handler ensures there are appropriate provisions in place to keep the dog 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	L

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		cool and ensure the dog avoids too much activity during the hottest part of the day.				
Hygiene		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog is suitably toilet trained. The designated area for the dog to defecate is situated away from pupils and staff. All faeces are immediately picked up by the handler, using a clinical waste bag, and disposed of into a clinical waste bin. The handler immediately washes their hands with sufficient soap and water after picking up faeces. Any soiled dog bedding is immediately disposed of in sealed clinical waste bags and placed into a clinical waste bin. The handler takes the dog's bedding home regularly to wash it. Any pupils, staff and visitors who touch the dog are advised to wash their hands afterwards, and 	<u>Y</u>	<u>Headteacher</u>	<u>03.03.26</u>	<u>L</u>

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		<p>sufficient hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone with an exposed wound who touches the dog has the wound suitably covered. • If the dog is ill with an infection or a disease, it does not return to the school until it has recovered. • Hand sanitiser is provided for anyone who touches the dog. 				
Injuries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog is well trained and is used to coming into close contact with people. • Pupils, staff and visitors around the dog are closely supervised by the handler. • Pupils, staff and visitors are advised not to put their face close to the dog. • The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the handler. 	<u>Y</u>	<u>Headteacher</u>	<u>03.03.26</u>	<u>M</u>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils, staff and visitors are only permitted to stroke the dog during allocated timeslots, with the exception of service dogs which should not be touched at any time . The dog is provided with a place it can go to get away from people. The dog is trained to not pull on the lead or jump up at people. 				
Dog's housing and equipment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The headteacher ensures that the dog has housing that meets its physical and psychological needs. The headteacher ensures that the dog's housing is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure, e.g. escape proof. - Clean and free from parasites and vermin. - Free from hazards, e.g. sharp edges. - Well-ventilated. 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	L

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Dog's housing and equipment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheltered from extreme weather. - Set at a suitable temperature, humidity and light level. - Sheltered from noises that may upset it. - Capable of providing a darkened sleeping area. • The headteacher ensures that the dog's housing has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A comfortable resting area. - A suitable amount of clean bedding material. • The headteacher ensures that the dog is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lie fully stretched out. - Turn around without touching either the walls or the ceiling. - Stand in its natural posture. 				

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move in its natural manner. - Rest comfortably. • All dog's bedding/housing is checked for defects on a weekly basis by the site manager. • All dog equipment is stored in the headteacher's office when not in use. • The dog's food and water bowls are kept out of the path of people to avoid any trips. • Any spillages from the dog's bowls are wiped up immediately. 				
Allergies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and staff known to have allergies to animals have restricted access to the dog. • All pupils, staff and visitors are advised not to touch their face after touching the dog. • All pupils, staff and visitors are advised to wash their hands thoroughly after touching the dog. 	Y	Headteacher	03.03.26	M

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A supply of antihistamine tablets is kept in the nursery office in case anyone has an allergic reaction. The headteacher establishes whether parents have allergies to dogs, and activities where parents may come into contact with the dog, e.g. at a school performance, are amended as necessary. 				
Phobias		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils and staff known to have a phobia of dogs are given restricted access to the dog. The dog is prohibited from roaming freely around the school without the supervision of the handler. During busy times, such as breaks, the dog is kept in a safe and secure area away from any commotion. 	Y	Headteacher	27.02.26	L