

School Dog Policy

Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest

Policy Owner:	Headteacher
Approved by Governors:	Full Governing Body Meeting
Date:	Monday 2 nd March 2026
Review Date:	March 2027

1. Introduction

Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest recognise the positive impact that animals can have on children's **emotional wellbeing, confidence, communication and social development.**

A carefully managed school dog can:

- Support children's emotional regulation
- Promote calm and nurturing interactions
- Encourage communication and language
- Support children with anxiety or additional needs
- Promote responsibility and empathy

The school dog will always be managed safely and in line with **EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements.**

2. Aims

The aims of having a school dog are to:

- Support children's **emotional wellbeing**
- Promote **positive relationships**
- Develop **confidence and self-esteem**
- Provide calming experiences
- Support children with **SEND needs**
- Promote respectful behaviour towards animals

3. Safeguarding

The safety of children is paramount.

The school dog will:

- Always be supervised by a trained adult
- Never be left alone with children

- Only be handled by authorised staff
- Have controlled access to learning environments

Staff will monitor:

- Children's behaviour around the dog
- The dog's behaviour
- Signs of stress or anxiety

If concerns arise, the dog will be removed immediately.

4. Supervision

The school dog will:

- Be supervised at all times
- Only interact with children when an adult is present
- Be accompanied by the designated handler
- Have a quiet rest space

Only approved staff will:

- Walk the dog
- Feed the dog
- Manage interactions

5. Health and Welfare

The school dog will:

- Have up-to-date vaccinations
- Receive regular veterinary checks
- Have flea and worm treatments
- Be groomed regularly
- Be clean and well cared for

Veterinary records will be kept on file.

6. Hygiene

To maintain good hygiene:

Children and adults must:

- Wash hands after touching the dog
- Avoid touching the dog's mouth
- Avoid face-to-face contact

Staff will:

- Clean any accidents immediately
- Use appropriate cleaning products
- Maintain clean dog bedding

The dog will:

- Be toileted before entering school
- Have a designated toileting area outdoors

7. Areas Restricted to the School Dog

The school dog will not enter:

- Food preparation areas
- Kitchens
- Toilets
- Nappy changing areas
- Medical areas

Access to learning spaces will be supervised and controlled.

8. Children's Interactions

Children will be taught how to behave safely around the dog.

Children will learn to:

- Approach calmly
- Stroke gently
- Wash hands afterwards
- Leave the dog alone when resting
- Not disturb the dog when eating

Children will **never be forced** to interact with the dog.

9. Allergies and Phobias

The school will:

- Inform parents about the school dog
- Obtain consent where appropriate
- Record allergies
- Provide alternative arrangements if needed

Children with allergies or fears will be supported appropriately.

10. Behaviour Expectations

The dog must:

- Have a calm temperament
- Be well trained
- Be suitable for working with young children

The dog will be removed from school if:

- Signs of aggression occur
- Signs of stress occur
- Health concerns arise

11. Risk Assessment

A full risk assessment is in place and will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated if circumstances change
- Reviewed following any incident

12. Insurance

The school dog will be covered by:

- Public liability insurance
- School insurance arrangements where applicable

Documentation will be kept on file.

13. Responsibilities

Headteacher

Responsible for:

- Overall management
- Risk assessment approval
- Policy review
- Safeguarding oversight

Dog Handler

Responsible for:

- Daily care
- Supervision

- Monitoring behaviour
- Maintaining hygiene
- Ensuring rest periods

Staff

Responsible for:

- Following procedures
- Supervising children
- Reporting concerns

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following any incident
- If the school dog changes

15. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessments
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

16. Approval

Headteacher:



Chair of Governors: _____

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