**Sutton C of E (VC) Primary School**



**School Dog Policy (Proposed)**

**September 2022**

1. **Values and vision statement**

*Our vision as a Church of England school places Christian values at the heart of everything we do. The values are encapsulated in the acronym STRIVE - ‘Safety, Togetherness, Respect, Integrity, Valued and Excellence’. As a school community, we aim to serve one another and work together for the common good, so that everyone can experience life in all its fullness. (John 10:10).*

*The parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32) can represent our children, who are nurtured here, and enabled to live life in its fullness through our teaching and care. It can also represent our school flourishing within our community and the community connecting to our diverse world.*

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We hope that a School dog will be another tool in assisting every child to be the very best they can be by supporting their social, emotional and mental health needs.

**Introduction**

Research has shown many benefits to therapy and reading dogs in school settings. Sutton CE (VC) Primary School hope to introduce a therapy dog into the emotional well-being provision at school. This policy is designed to set out to students, parents and visitors the reasons for having a school dog at our school and the rules and responsibilities to ensure the safety of students, staff, visitors and the school dog (Sections 3 and 4 – Principles and Code of Conduct).

Although there is a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment, this can be mitigated against with a robust risk assessment to ensure the safety of all students, staff and visitors (Appendix A - Risk Assessment).

**School Policy**

This policy relates solely to the dog ‘Poppy’ (the school dog), owned by the member of staff, Katie Pendle.

* The Governors have the right to refuse entry to any dog.
* Only the school dog is allowed on the premises. All other dogs must not come on site unless they are a known therapy or assistance dog and the Headteacher has given specific permission beforehand.
* The school dog is a Fox Red Labrador chosen because it is an intelligent breed that will respond well to training and which is known to be good with children and is very sociable and friendly.
* The Governing Body agree that a school dog may benefit the children and staff of Sutton C of Primary School.
* Staff, parents and children have been informed by letter that a dog will be in school. The Headteacher has approved a risk assessment and this will be reviewed annually.
* Staff, visitors and children 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 school. Poppy will spend her time in Sea Turtles classroom.
* If the dog is ill he will not be allowed into school.
* Only when parental permission has been granted will children be allowed to handle Poppy.
* The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk and will be under the full control and supervision of a trained adult.
* Children must never be left alone with the dog and there must be appropriate adult supervision at all times.
* Children should be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog. Children will receive instruction and teaching about how to behave around animals.
* Children 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. Children should not put their face near a dog and should always approach it standing up.
* Children will not be left unsupervised with the dog.
* Children should never go near or disturb the dog that is sleeping or eating.
* Children must not be allowed to play roughly with the dog.
* Everyone must wait until Poppy is sitting or lying down before touching or stroking him.
* The maximum number of children allowed to work with Poppy at one time is 4.
* 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.
* Children are not permitted to eat close to the dog.
* Children handing Poppy will be taught how to do this safely..
* Children will be instructed to always wash their hands after handling a dog.
* Any dog foul will be cleaned immediately and disposed of appropriately.
* All visitors will be informed about the dog and related protocols on arrival and office staff will relay visitor issues to the Headteacher as soon as possible. Appropriately trained staff will maintain records and anecdotal evidence of the work and impact of the school dog.
* The office will know the whereabouts of the dog and which staff are supervising at all times.
* The dog will be included in the fire evacuation procedure under the supervision of Katie Pendle

**Actions**

If someone reports having an issue with the dog, this information must be passed to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher as soon as possible. All concerns will be responded to by the Headteacher.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the school has a written policy for dogs in School.

The Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher 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 school.

**Reasons to have a dog in school**

Academic research has shown many benefits to therapy and reading dogs in school settings. Sutton CE (VC) Primary School would like to introduce the use of a therapy dog into the emotional well-being provision at school. This policy is designed to set out to students, parents and visitors the reasons for having a school dog and the rules and responsibilities to ensure the safety of students, staff, visitors and the school dog (Sections 3 and 4 – Principles and Code of Conduct). Although there is a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment, this can be mitigated against with a robust risk assessment to ensure the safety of all students, staff and visitors (Appendix A - Risk Assessment).

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school 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 children who are often less attentive

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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

A The legal owner of the school dog is Katie Pende;s he will bear the costs associated with owning the dog; the school budget will support insurance and staff training costs where appropriate.

Q **Is the dog from a reputable breeder?**

A Yes. The dog is from a home where both parents were seen and has been specifically chosen for its temperament.

Q **Will the dog be a distraction?**

A The dog will be kept in the Sea Turtles room, which is separate from the classrooms / playground area to ensure it only comes into contact with children who are happy to have contact and have parental permission for this, under strict supervision.

The dog can spend pre-arranged times in classrooms, the library and in the garden where children can interact safely.

Q **Has a risk assessment been undertaken?**

A Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully have a school dog and a reputable dog behaviourist.

Q **Who is responsible for training?**

A Katie Pendle will be the legal owner of the dog and as a result, will be responsible for its training.

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

A In the interest of health and hygiene our school dog will be toileted when taken out for short walks off the grounds. Katie Pendle will be responsible for clearing any mess 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 and will be exercised before attending school. Parents will be able to give permission in advance to allow their child to be able to walk with a member of staff and the dog during that time. The dog will be kept in Sea Turtles room and will only have planned and supervised contact with children and visitors. We will work carefully to ensure the dog’s welfare is always considered.

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

A Children will not need to touch the dog, which will relieve the possibility of allergic reactions. Individual needs will always be met and we are happy to work with parents to put additional control measures in place for individual allergies. Poppy is given a high quality food and regularly groomed to reduce any possibility of allergens.

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

A Access to the dog is carefully managed and supervised and children do not need to have close contact with it unless permission for this has been given. 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.

*Appendix 1 Risk Assessment*

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| **Assessment conducted by**: Katie Pendle  | **Job title:** HLTA / ELSA | **Covered by this assessment**: Dogs brought in to school by staff to work with children |
| **Date of assessment:** September 2022 | **Review interval:** Yearly  | **Date of next review:** August 2023 |

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| Purpose of the school dog | Many people have studied dogs in attempts to decipher their behaviour, and the theories abound. However, you just have to witness the interactions between dogs and children to realise the potential for **greatness**. With the proper training and supervision, a dog can **enrich** a child’s life. The key reasons we are introducing a dog to school are: 1. 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. The relationship that develops can be life-changing for a child and a great support system as they themselves continue to grow and develop. 2. Dogs teach children **patience**. Dogs do not always do as they are told first time! 3. Dogs teach children **compassion**. Just like humans, dogs feel emotion and pain. They are prone to injuries and the infirmities of age during their relatively short lives. 4. 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 can 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 (pun intended!). 5. 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 even on your worst day. |
| About the school dog | Our school dog is a female fox red Labrador called **Poppy**. Poppy will live with the HLTA, Katie Pendle, and her family. Poppy is from a breeder which is a member of the Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme. This is a scheme which promotes good breeding practice (www.thekennelclub.org.uk). The Labrador is the most popular of all pedigree breeds and their popularity comes from their versatility as family companion, service dog and guide dog. Poppy has passed a temperament assessment (Kennel Club Good Citizen Silver Award Exercise) which includes:- walking by the road, waiting, noises, touch, cars, engines, distractions, controlled greeting, collar, lead and equipment. Poppy will regularly visit the vet for check-ups. Whilst she is there they will administer worm and flea treatments as well as make adjustments to her food intake to ensure she remains a healthy weight. Poppy has completed workshop level 1 and 2 Dog Therapy UK training with her owner, Katie Pendle. Poppy will now be able to interact with children and adults. For children this will only be if parents/carers have given permission to do so. Katie Pendle (dog handler) has insurance to have Poppy in school. The certificate for this is stored in the gdrive file. In addition to the 5 key reasons for Poppy joining us outlined in the purpose, we also believe she will improve the children’s understanding of our values and learning dispositions, and help to improve and secure higher levels of attendance and punctuality. |

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| **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 |

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| **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 | • The headteacher ensures that all staff, and where appropriate, pupils and their parents, are aware of and adhere to the following school policies: - Health and Safety Policy - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy - First Aid Policy - Animals in School Policy - Behaviour Policy - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy - Fire Safety Policy • The headteacher considers whether the school needs to register the dog as a performance animal, in accordance with the Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925. If yes, the headteacher calls the LA and follows local procedures to register the dog. • The School’s Business Officer ensures that the school’s insurance covers using the dog for the specific planned activities, e.g. using the dog in a school performance or having a therapy dog. • The headteacher ensures that the dog is cared for in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.* Dog documentation including:- inoculations, flea and worm, chip, id disc are stored on the gdrive. SENCO to review this is updated annually.
 |  Y        | Headteacher  | 9.9.2022  | M |
| Dog’s welfare  | H | • 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. • 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.  |  Y       | HLTA / ELSA | 01.09.21  | M |

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|  |  | • 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. Sea Turtles room. • The HLTA (KP) ensures that the dog is fit to participate in specific activities and is not brought into the school if it is unwell. • 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. (Assembly to explain).• Activities do not cause harm, discomfort or stress to the dog.  |    Yes   | Katie Pendle | 06.09.2022 | L |
| Site Security  | H | • 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. Harness to be on at all times.• 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. | Yes    | Headteacher/ Site Manager /KP | 06.09.22  | M |
| Evacuation procedures  | H | In the event of a fire, follow school’s procedures. Adult responsible to child out onto the field and then stand at a distance from others on the field. Poppy to hear the fire alarm within the first half term without children present to ensure she feels comfortable with the noise and is familiar with the routine. This to repeated annually. • The person handling the dog during specified activities is responsible for the dog’s safety during a lockdown or evacuation. • Children to never be left unattended with the dog.  |  Yes    | Headteacher  | 9.9.2022  | M |
| Disobedience and dangerous behaviour | H | • The handler is equipped and trained to react to and control any dangerous behaviour. Children are taught to be calm and quiet when in any animals presence. This is through sessions, assemblies and specific class sessions.  | Yes  | Katie Pendle  | 01.09.212 | L |

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|  |  |  • Pupils will not handle the dog unless: - 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 HLTA / ELSA 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. • If the dog is not behaving appropriately during an activity, e.g. it is barking excessively or running away, the HLTA 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 handler uses a toy dog instead.  |    Yes       | Katie Pendle | 09.09.2022 | M |
| Parent notification/permission | H | • The SENCO 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 a reading dog or used as a therapy dog. • The SENCO has given parents a chance to opt out their child for them 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 / open evening / sports day |   Yes    | SENCO (SW) | 09.09.22  | L |
| Dog’s health  | H | • 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, Sea Turtles / headteacher / deputy head teachers office, which is kept clean and secure for the wellbeing of the animal, pupils, staff and visitors.  | Yes    | Katie Pendle | 09.09.22  | M |

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|  |  | • 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 regular 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 cool and ensure the dog avoids too much activity during the hottest part of the day.The dog is not to come into school if they are in season. |   Yes | Katie Pendle | 06.09.2022 | L |
| Hygiene  | H | • 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 and disposed in a dog bin close by.. There will be a small designated bin which will be used. Poppy will be taken off the site regularly to allow her to urinate. • 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 sufficient hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school. Handwashing facilities are next door to Poppy’s work space. • 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. |   Yes     | Katie Pendle Site Manager  | 09.09.2022  | L |
| Injuries  | H | • The dog is well trained and is used to coming into close contact with people (and children).. • 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. | Yes    | Katie Pendle | 06.09.22 | M |

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|  |  | • Pupils, staff and visitors are only permitted to stroke the dog during allocated timeslots/ sessions.• 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.  | Y | Katie Pendle | 06.09.22 |  |
| Dog’s housing and equipment | H | • The HLTA (KP) ensures that the dog has housing that meets its physical and psychological needs. • The HLTA (KP) ensures that the dog’s housing is: - Secure, e.g. escape proof. - Clean and free from parasites and vermin. - Free from hazards, e.g. sharp edges. - Well-ventilated. - 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 HLTA (KP) ensures that the dog’s housing has: - A comfortable resting area. - A suitable amount of clean bedding material. • The headteacher ensures that the dog is able to: - Lie fully stretched out. - Turn around without touching either the walls or the ceiling. - Stand in its natural posture. - Move in its natural manner. - Rest comfortably. • All dog’s bedding/housing is checked for defects on a weekly basis by Katie Pendle.• All dog equipment is stored in Sea Turtle class 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. | Yes     | Katie Pendle | 09.09.22  | L |
| Allergies  | H | • Pupils and staff known to have allergies to animals have restricted access to the dog. Emma Wilkinson to record on pupil asset.• All pupils, staff and visitors are advised not to touch their face after touching the dog.  | Yes   | Headteacher / Emma Wilkinson | 09.09.22  | M |

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|  |  | • All pupils, staff and visitors are advised to wash their hands thoroughly after touching the dog. • A supply of antihistamine tablets is kept in the medical room cabinet 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. |   Yes |  |  | M |
| Phobias  | M | • 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. | Yes    | Katie Pendle | 06.09.22 | L |
| **Coronavirus (COVID-19)** |
| Awareness of policies and procedures | M | • The headteacher ensures that all appropriate staff, pupils and their parents, are aware of and adhere to the appropriate school policies. • The headteacher / SENCO considers whether it is safe to resume therapy visits or sessions and postpones them where necessary, e.g. if the dog or their handler is unwell. | Yes    | Headteacher  | 09.09.22  | L |
| Dog’s health and welfare  | H | • The handler is aware of the symptoms that coronavirus could present in dogs and monitors the dog’s health at all times. * If the dog handler suspects Poppy is unwell, to keep her at home until she is recovered.

• If the dog becomes unwell whilst at the school, the handler calls the vet and keeps the dog away from pupils, staff and any members of the public. Gloves and a face covering are worn when caring for the dog. • If the handler presents symptoms of coronavirus or tests positive, they remain at home with the dog for 10 days and restrict contact with the dog as much as possible. If they must interact with the dog, they wear a face covering and gloves. • Visits and sessions resume only when all of the following criteria apply: |    Yes     | Katie Pendle  | 06.09.22  | M |

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|  |  | • The dog is not allowed to lick or give ‘kisses’ to any individuals. |      |  |  |  |
| **Infection** **control**  | **H** | • Contact with the dog is limited only to those participating in the session or visit. • Sessions are limited to a small number of pupils in addition to the handler and always a member of school staff. * Sessions are limited to 3.5 hours a day with a break for Poppy inbetween. Pupils to be aware that some sessions may be delayed if Poppy is becoming tired.

• Where possible, groups are organised in line with the existing pupil groups used in school. • Before and after each contact with the dog, the handler and all individuals wash their hands – individuals do not touch any part of their face with unwashed hands. • Individuals who are, or have been, displaying symptoms of coronavirus do not come into contact with the dog until they have fully recovered. • Individuals who have weakened immune systems are advised to stay away from the dog unless parental and/or doctor permission is granted. • The handler and the dog do not move around the school during busy times and stay within their allocated room as much as possible. • Where possible, the windows of the allocated room are kept open to improve air flow. • All allocated rooms are cleaned before and after use for therapy visits and sessions. |      Yes         | Katie Pendle | 06.09.22  | M |

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| **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** |
|  |  | • The dog’s lead, collar, harness and other supplies are disinfected regularly. Poppy to have her name tag on at all times,with the owner's telephone number.• Items that are usually handled by multiple people, e.g. toys and blankets, are not used during sessions or visits. • Individuals are not permitted to handle objects that could go in the dog’s mouth, e.g. treats or toys without washing their hands regularly. Children encouraged to keep their hands away from their mouth.  |   | Katie Pendle | 09.09.22 | L |