

Dogs in school risk assessment

Rothbury First School



Assessment conducted by: H Duffield	Job title: Headteacher	Covered by this assessment:
Date of assessment: 4.3.25	Review interval: annual	Date of next review: March 2026

Related documents

[Behavioural Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Social, Emotional and Mental Health \(SEMH\) Policy](#),
[First Aid Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Infection Control Policy](#).

Risk rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	Major Causes major physical injury, harm or ill-health.	Low (L)	Medium (M)	High (H)
	Severe Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	Low (L)	Low (L)	Low (L)
	Minor Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	Medium (M)	Medium (M)	Medium (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
Policy and procedures	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Headteachers ensure 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 - Behavioural Policy - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy ● The Headteachers ensure that the school's insurance covers using the dog for the specific planned activities, e.g. having a therapy dog. ● The Headteachers ensure that the dog is cared for in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L
Dog's welfare	L	<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. ● The Headteachers ensure that the dog has adequate toilet breaks and any waste is appropriately disposed of. ● The dog is not over-stimulated. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Headteachers' office. • The Headteachers ensure 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 Headteachers ensure 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	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three adults are appointed to be responsible for the dog: • The dog is kept on a lead when it is not in its housing or in a secure location, e.g. in the Headteachers' office. • The Headteachers ensure that all appropriate doors are closed when the dog is participating in an activity, e.g. in a school hall. 	Y	Headteachers and School Secretary	March 2025	L

Disobedience and dangerous behaviour	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The handler is equipped and trained to react to and control any dangerous behaviour. <p>Pupils are not expected to handle the dog unless:</p> <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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dog's obedience is ensured as far as reasonably possible; however, staff, pupils, visitors and parents understand that animals can be unpredictable. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L
Parent notification/ permission	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteachers inform 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 used as a therapy dog or supporting children with reading The Headteachers obtain consent from parents for pupils to be in proximity with, or to handle, the dog. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L
Dog's health	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteachers are in charge of feeding and caring for the dog while on the school premises. The headteachers are responsible for permitting people to touch the dog. The dog is permitted to go in the Headteachers' 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. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 				
Hygiene	M	<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. Pupils and staff who touch the dog are instructed to wash their hands afterwards, with visitors advised to do likewise, and sufficient hand washing facilities are provided throughout the school. 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. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L
Injuries	M	<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. Pupils, staff and visitors are only permitted to stroke the dog during allocated time slots. 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	Headteacher	March 2025	L

Dog's housing and equipment	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Headteachers ensure that the dog has housing that meets its physical and psychological needs. The Headteachers ensure 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. 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 Headteachers ensure that the dog's housing has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comfortable resting area. A suitable amount of clean bedding material. All dog equipment is stored in the Headteachers'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. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L
Allergies	L	<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. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils, staff and visitors are advised to wash their hands thoroughly after touching the dog. 				
Phobias	L	<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	March 2025	L
March 2025						
Awareness of policies and procedures	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteachers ensure that all appropriate staff, pupils and their parents, are aware of and adhere to the following school policies: Infection Control Policy • The Headteachers consider 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. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L
Dog's health and welfare	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 coronavirus is suspected, the handler arranges a test with the vet. • Visits and sessions are postponed if the dog is unwell or has tested positive for coronavirus, and the dog is kept at its designated home until it has recovered. • 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: 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The dog has not shown symptoms consistent with those of coronavirus for at least 72 hours without medical management - It has been 10 days since the handler's symptoms began or, if no symptoms were present, 10 days since their positive test result • The dog is not allowed to lick or give 'kisses' to any individuals. 				
Infection control	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with the dog is limited only to those participating in the session or visit. • Sessions are limited to 3 pupils in addition to the handler and 1 member of school staff. • Where possible, groups are organised in line with the existing pupil groupings 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. <p>Where possible, the windows of the allocated room are kept open to improve air flow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All allocated rooms are cleaned before and after use for therapy visits and sessions. • The dog's lead, collar, harness and other supplies are disinfected regularly. • 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. 	Y	Headteacher	March 2025	L