



Brentfield Primary School

Children of Today, Champions for Tomorrow

School Dog Policy

Head Teacher	Mrs N. Harmer
Person Responsible	Ms S. Rawat
Reviewed	February 2026
Next Review Date	February 2027

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1. Introduction

We believe that our school dog plays a unique and valuable role in enriching all areas of our children's wider education, personal development, skills, and well-being, while actively promoting our Brave values.

The integration of our school dog into the school community is carefully planned and managed. We ensure ongoing compliance with all relevant health and safety, safeguarding, and welfare regulations in order to protect pupils, staff, visitors, and the dog at all times.

This policy applies solely to our designated school dog, 'Poppy'. It does not alter or affect the school's right to prohibit other dogs from entering the school premises.

Please refer to the School Dog Risk Assessment (Appendix 1) for further details regarding control measures and operational procedures.

2. The Benefits of a School Dog

Research has shown that school dogs like Poppy can help children in many ways:

- **Making school more welcoming:** Pupils feel more included and connected to their classmates and teachers when a dog is part of the class.
- **Building empathy and responsibility:** Caring for the dog helps children learn to be gentle, responsible, and kind to others.
- **Helping children stay calm and focused:** Dogs can support emotional regulation and help children feel less anxious.
- **Improving communication:** Children are more likely to talk and share when a dog is present.
- **Positive effect on the school environment:** Schools with dogs report better classroom behaviour and a more positive overall atmosphere.

"If children are partnered with a dog to read to, for example, the dog provides comfort, encourages positive social behaviour, enhances self-esteem, motivates speech and inspires children to have fun and enjoy the non-judgemental experience."

Bark & Read – The Kennel Club (<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/barkandread>)

"Therapy Dogs Nationwide dogs have also shown to help with special needs and autistic children and adults by giving focus and providing a calming environment."

Therapy Dogs Nationwide (<http://www.tdn.org.uk/schools/>)

Dogs can motivate learners with low levels of confidence and language skills, generate a supportive learning environment, and foster responsibility and empathy (Fine, 2000; Lewis and Grigg, 2020).

3. Legal and Compliance

The policy operates in line with:

- Animal Welfare Act 2006 – ensuring the dog's welfare is maintained.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – managing risks associated with having a dog on school premises.
- Equality Act 2010 – providing accessibility and considering allergies, phobias, or other needs of pupils, staff, and visitors.
- Department for Education (DfE) safeguarding guidance.
- The School's Safeguarding policy.

4. Dog Suitability

Careful consideration has been given to the following:

- **Breed Considerations:** Poppy is an F1B Cavapoo, meaning she is 75% Poodle and 25% Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. She was selected for her enhanced hypoallergenic qualities and low-shedding coat. Now fully grown, Poppy remains a small-sized dog.
- **Health Clearances:** Poppy's vaccinations and preventative treatments are all up to date and she continues to receive regular health checks to ensure her ongoing wellbeing.
- **Temperament Testing:** Poppy has been attending the school since she was a puppy and is now very familiar with the noises, layout, and general movement within the school environment. She regularly takes part in meetings and group activities to ensure she remains comfortable around new people and larger groups.

5. Dog Welfare

Living Arrangements: While at school, Poppy resides in the Inclusion Room, where she has a quiet and comfortable space away from the hustle and bustle of daily school life. Outside of school hours, she lives with her primary caretaker, Ms Rawat.

Diet, Exercise, and Rest: Poppy follows carefully planned guidelines for her feeding schedule, exercise routine, and designated rest periods. These are managed and monitored by the Inclusion Lead to ensure her wellbeing and consistency.

Healthcare Plan: Poppy is fully insured and all her vaccinations, worming treatments and veterinary checks are up to date. If she becomes unwell, she will not take part in any school activities until she has fully recovered.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Governors: The Governing Body holds the responsibility for ensuring that the school has a written policy in place regarding the school dog.

Headteacher: The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented and adhered to across the school.

School Dog Caretaker: The Inclusion Lead, Ms Rawat, is the designated primary caretaker. She is responsible for Poppy's training, daily care and wellbeing and for ensuring that Poppy is always appropriately supervised when interacting with pupils.

Staff, Pupils, Parents and Visitors: All staff, pupils, parents and visitors are expected to abide by this policy and to act with care and respect towards Poppy at all times.

7. Day-to-Day Management

Poppy will:

- During school hours, be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk.
- Always be under the full control and supervision of an adult.

Pupils will:

- Not be left alone with Poppy.

- Be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around Poppy:
 - Ask the supervising adult before approaching
 - Remain calm and quiet
 - Do not disturb her when she is eating or sleeping
 - No feeding unless supervised
 - Allow her to sniff and approach before touching her
 - Be gentle

If Poppy shows signs of distress, she will immediately be removed from the situation by a supervising adult.

Staff meetings, assemblies, and classroom learning will include guidance on interacting safely with dogs and information specific to Poppy.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if required.